

THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

Course Outline - Fall 2015

GEOGRAPHY 346- GEOGRAPHY OF ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Aleck S. Ostry Office: B314 – Social Science and Math Bldg

Health Research Senior Scholar. He has the history of public health), and a PhD in the social determinants of health within a

Location of Weekly Lectures and Time Slot: Elliot 162; Monday and Thursday 1:00-2:00

Office Hours: Email Dr. Ostry if you'd like an appointment

Lecture Powerpoint Slides: These are available on the University of Victoria website

Course Readings: Readings related to each lecture are available on the course website

II. COURSE OUTLINE & OVERVIEW

Geographic focus:

The geography of this course provides a basic background in environmental health geography with a focus on food security and climate change

Course Description:

Present day pressures placed on environments through the expansion of the human population, development activities, and the rapidity of change in global climate warrants special attention to linkage between the environment (physical and social) and human health. Specifically, humans have forever altered their interaction with their environments, and as a result, have produced both direct adverse health and more indirect ones that operate through complex pathways. This first third of the course explores basic principles of environmental health geography with a focus on impacts of social, cultural, and work environments on human health.

Arguably, two of the most important environmental factors at work in BC, in terms of their impact on human health are due to the impacts of agriculture and mining/energy extraction in the province. In the second third of the course we focus on the agricultural principles learned in the first half of the course are applied to an in depth investigation of the links between how we grow our food, environmental change, and human health. We explore more fully the regional food security situation in BC both in relation to human health and in relation to environmental impacts including climate change. The final third of the course focuses on the impact of mining and energy extraction industries in BC on human health. In considering impacts of agriculture on food security and health and impacts of mining/energy extraction on health we use examples from our current research.

Prerequisites

Minimum grade of B in GEOG 211. An undergraduate course in statistics or a basic understanding of statistical concepts will be helpful.

Main Textbook:

BC Atlas of Health and Wellness available on geography department web site.

Additional Readings

Canadian Institute for Health Information. 2006. How Healthy are Rural Canadians? An Assessment of Their Health Status and Health Determinants. Ottawa: Canadian Institute for Health Information.

Environmental Assessment Office, 2010. Environmental Assessment Office User Guide, Government of British Columbia, Victoria, BC, April, 2010.

Forget, G., and Labelle. 2001. An ecosystem approach to human health. International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health, Supplement to 7(2):S36.

Ostry A, and Morrison K. 2008. Developing and Utilizing a Database for Mapping the Temporal and Spatial Variation in the Availability of "Local Foods" in British Columbia. Environmental Journal (Special Issue on Food and Environment) 36(1):21-33.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2009): World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision. New York - Executive Summary (pg. xix – xxvi) + Canada (pg. 172 Table A. Estimates).

Course components for evaluation

Mid-term Exam (25%)

Essay (35%)

Final Exam (40%)

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*NOTE: Attendance for the midterms and final examinations are mandatory. Exceptions will be made only under the following conditions:

- o the instructor has been informed in person at least 2 weeks before the time of the exam or due date for the research assignment that the absence will occur.
- o the student has proper written documentation of a serious medical or compassionate cause for the absence and presents this to the instructor at least 2 weeks before the exam or due date for the research assignment.

x INSTRUCTIONS FOR ESSAY – DUE NOVEMBER 4th

- o The essay is worth 35% of the mark.
- o The essay should be a maximum of 5 pages double spaced and typed, including references with 1" margins and a 12 point font.
- o In the essay you will critically review ONE of the selected readings for the class. Using this article as the basis of your review you must also find additional TWO academic articles (for a total of THREE articles) that build on this topic that you find of interest. The two extra articles reviewed must be from academic journals associated with the discipline of health geography, such as Health & Place and Social Science & Medicine.
- o Students are expected to adhere to proper academic writing and referencing styles, as well as critically analyze articles as opposed to simply summarizing results. Students are advised to consult the following articles on critically reading academic articles for instruction.
- o Essays will be graded on organization; use of proper grammar, sentence structure and spelling, and critical writing skills.

x CLASS PARTICIPATION: Students are expected to come to each class. This is particularly important as this course does not have an assigned text book. The instructor will NOT give out his notes or lectures to students who miss lectures. In addition students are expected to actively participate in class discussions.

5. Grading Scale:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	D	F
90-100%	85-89%	80-84%	77-79%	73-76%	70-72%	65-69%	60-64%		

D	Marginal Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.
COM	Complete (pass). Used only for Unit courses and those credit courses designated by the Senate. Such courses are identified in the course listings.

** As stated in the 2012 Calendar

