

**NRSC 221 / GEOG 221 Environment and Health
Fall 2013**

(3 credits: winter Downtown campus; fall Macdonald campus; alternating year cycle)

Instructors: Dr. Nancy Ross & Dr. Ian B. Strachan
Rowles House MS2-076
After class or After class or
by appointment by appointment.
514-398-4307 514-398-7935
If you use email: "Subject: GEOG221".

Prerequisite: none

Content and learning outcomes:

Environments, both physical and social, are fundamentally implicated in the health of human populations. These environments are constantly in flux but the rapidity of change of two of these – the global climate and the urbanization of populations warrant special attention. A changing climate will likely bring increased frequency and duration of temperature extremes, exacerbated by the physical properties of urban environments (e.g., the urban heat island effect) and the concentration of atmospheric pollutants in urban landscapes. The diversity of populations concentrated within cities means that some groups are better equipped than others to ward off the health effects of environmental exposures. This course introduces physical and social environments as factors in the production of human health, with emphasis on the physical properties of the atmospheric environment as they interact with diverse human populations in urban settings. Students completing this course should have gained an appreciation of the merit of interdisciplinary approaches in understanding and remedying contemporary human health issues that have environmental etiologies.

Method: Two 1.5 hour lectures per week; assignments; examinations.

Course Requirements:

Assignments:

There will be three assignments to be completed individually which will provide you with the opportunity to fine tune and demonstrate your understanding of concepts described during the lectures. The assignments are designed around the major course themes. The course MyCourses page will have links to the assignments where you can download the necessary materials.

Required texts (both available through the bookstore):

- 1) Coursepack for GEOG221/NRSC221 Environment and Health
- 2) Klinenberg E (2003). Heatwave: Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Read this leisurely throughout the first half of the course like you would a good novel.

Other Readings: available through MyCourses

We will explore the interrelated concept of Environment and Health through the examination of several topics within which we will link the physical and social environments.

Selected Topics:

- Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy
- Environmental burden of disease
- Air pollution
- Ultraviolet radiation and sun exposure
- Urbanization
- Urban heat islands
- Odour nuisance and dispersion
- Noise and psychosocial effects

Evaluation: 40% Three assignments
 25% Mid-term Examination
 35% Final Examination

Policy on lateness:

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified on the assignment when handed out. In fairness to those who complete assignments on time, a penalty of 10% per day will be imposed. No assignments will be accepted for grading once any graded assignments have been returned. However, circumstances occasionally arise which will be taken into consideration. If you are having academic/personal difficulty – come and discuss your situation with the course instructors in advance of the due date!

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/) for more information). Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. McGill's Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures appears in the [Handbook on Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). Article 15(a) of the Code, which is devoted to plagiarism, reads as follows:

“No student shall, with intent to deceive, represent the work of another person as his or her own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, research report, project or assignment submitted in a course or program of study or represent as his or her own an entire essay or work of another, whether the material so represented constitutes a part or the entirety of the work submitted”.

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.