GEOG 503 ADVANCED TOPICS IN HEALTH GEOGRAPHY Fall 2018

Instructor: Professor Mylene Riva and Professor Nancy Ross

Class Meeting Times: Wednesdays 11:35-14:25

Location: Burnside 429

Contact information: Prof. Riva, Burnside Hall Rm. 419, mylene.riva@mcgill.ca
Prof. Ross, Burnside Hall Rm. 420, nancy.ross@mcgill.ca

Readings: A list of readings is attached. Readings are available electronically through MyCourses.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a critical review of advanced topics in health geography, including perspectives on environmental and social determinants of health and chronic disease. Seminars will focus on critical appraisal of conceptual and methodological approaches in health geography research. Students will develop independent project topics throughout the course, and have the opportunity to focus on selected themes in health geography.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:
1. Identify and describe dominant paradigms and conceptual approaches in health geography.
2. Critically appraise literature in the health and geographic sciences.
3. Evaluate alternative methodological approaches to health geography research.
4. Facilitate seminar discussions on selected health geography themes.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD

There will be one 3-hour seminar every Wednesday. Seminars will include both instructor-led and student-led group discussion. Students are expected to complete readings and prepare to participate actively during all class discussions.
METHOD OF EVALUATION

Evaluation
Thematic presentation 20%
Proposal for systematic review 10%
Final Paper 50%
Final presentation of review paper 10%
Participation 10%

Thematic presentations: Students will present and facilitate a review of a selected paper for one of the course themes (Weeks 5 through 9). Students will be expected to identify an empirical paper appropriate to the week’s topic, provide it to the instructor to post for class-wide reading, present a summary and critical appraisal of the research, and facilitate discussion related to the research and thematic topic.

Proposal for Systematic Review: Students will propose a systematic review in an area of interest to them. The proposal should be about 3 pages in length and communicate the need for a systematic review of a particular body of work. Search strategy and study inclusion criteria should be described as well as an estimate of the number of studies to be included in the review. The proposal is due Wednesday, October 17th, 2018.

Final paper: Students will prepare a systematic review of the literature (5,000-word maximum) on a topic related to their research interests. This review should incorporate principles of systematic review learned in class and incorporate realist philosophy and critical appraisal where appropriate. The aim is to produce a publishable quality paper that will also inform the student’s research. Students will present their reviews to the class in the final course sessions. The papers are due one week after the last class - Wednesday, December 5, 2018 by 5pm. Please submit two hard copies of the paper – one for each of Prof. Riva and Prof. Ross.

Final presentation of review paper: Students will prepare a short presentation of their independent review paper, including a summary of the background, review objectives, methodology, key findings, and implications of their work.

Participation: Class participation is a requirement of the course. Quality of contribution is preferred over quantity. Overall class preparation and participation as well as performance in student-led discussion will be assessed for the participation grade. Class participation will be evaluated based on evidence that students have read assigned readings and prepared for class, and regular, thoughtful contribution to weekly discussions.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Policies governing academic issues which affect students can be found in the Handbook on Student Rights and Responsibilities, Charter of Students’ Right (online at http://www.mcgill.ca/files/secretariat/greenbookenglish.pdf).

Academic Integrity: 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/student/srr/honest for more information).

Language of Submission: 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.

Student assessment: For information on university and department policies for student assessment, please go to http://www.mcgill.ca/geography/studentassessment
## COURSE SCHEDULE 2018

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Folder(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;Sept 5</td>
<td>First meeting: introductions, student-led discussion about their research interests, course expectations, review of the syllabus</td>
<td>MR + NR</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong>&lt;br&gt;Sept 12</td>
<td>Pragmatics of systematic review - getting a handle on the health literature – Class meets in Humanities and Social Sciences Library’s eClassroom, Main floor of the Humanities and Social Sciences Library (aka the McLennan Library Building).</td>
<td>Library Session</td>
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<td><strong>Week 3</strong>&lt;br&gt;Sept 19</td>
<td>An introduction: Health geography, epidemiology, population level perspectives</td>
<td>MR + NR</td>
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<td><strong>Week 4</strong>&lt;br&gt;Sept 26</td>
<td>Critical appraisal of health literature systematic review – theory</td>
<td>MR + NR</td>
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<td><strong>Week 5</strong>&lt;br&gt;Oct 3</td>
<td>Social gradient in health</td>
<td>MR + students</td>
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<td><strong>Week 6</strong>&lt;br&gt;Oct 10</td>
<td>Housing and health</td>
<td>MR + students</td>
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<td><strong>Week 7</strong>&lt;br&gt;Oct 17</td>
<td>Neighbourhoods and health</td>
<td>MR + students</td>
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<td><strong>Week 8</strong>&lt;br&gt;Oct 24</td>
<td>Built environment and chronic disease</td>
<td>MR + students</td>
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<td><strong>Week 9</strong>&lt;br&gt;Oct 31</td>
<td>Population health intervention research</td>
<td>MR + students</td>
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<td><strong>Week 10</strong>&lt;br&gt;Nov 7</td>
<td>Student paper presentations</td>
<td>ALL</td>
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<td><strong>Week 11</strong>&lt;br&gt;Nov 14</td>
<td>Student paper presentations</td>
<td>ALL</td>
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<td><strong>Week 12</strong>&lt;br&gt;Nov 21</td>
<td>Student paper presentations</td>
<td>ALL</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 13</strong>&lt;br&gt;Nov 28</td>
<td>Course conclusions</td>
<td>MR + NR</td>
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READINGS (please check My Courses for final listing of readings)

An Introduction to Health Geography, Epidemiology, Population Level Perspectives,
Scan the latest issue of Health and Place (https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/health-and-
place/vol/53/suppl/C) and Social Science and Medicine  
20: 15-33.
Susser M, Susser E. Choosing a future for epidemiology: I. Eras and paradigms. American Journal of  

Critical Appraisal
Elwood M. Forward projection—using critical appraisal in the design of studies. International Journal of  
Epidemiology, 2002; 31: 1071–1073.
Greenhalgh T. How to read a paper: getting your bearings (deciding what the paper is about). BMJ,  
1997; 315: 243-246.
Greenhalgh T, Taylor R. How to read a paper: Papers that go beyond numbers (qualitative research).  
Greenhalgh T. How to read a paper: Statistics for the non-statistician. II: "Significant" relations and  
Greenhalgh T. How to read a paper: Papers that summarize other papers (systematic reviews and  
Paper that we will appraise together: Généreux M, Auger N, Gouéou M and Daniel M. Neighbourhood  
socioeconomic status, maternal education and adverse birth outcomes among mothers living near  

Systematic Review
Pawson R, Greenhalgh T, Harvey G, Walshe K. Realist review – a new method of systematic review  
designed for complex policy interventions. Journal of Health Services Research and Policy, 2005;  
10: 21-34.
Barnett-Page E, Thomas J. Methods for the synthesis of qualitative research: a critical review. BMC  
Medical Research Methodology, 2009; 9: 59.
Greenhalgh T, Peacock R. Effectiveness and efficiency of search methods in systematic reviews of  
Greenhalgh T, Kristjansson E, Robinson V. Realist review to understand the efficacy of school feeding  

Example published systematic reviews from GEOG 503:
DeBono NL, Ross NA, Berrang-Ford L. Does the Food Stamp Program cause obesity? A realist  

Social Gradient in Health
Link BG, Phelan J. Social conditions as fundamental causes of disease. Journal of Health and Social  
Phelan JC, Link BG, Tehranifar P. Social conditions as fundamental causes of health inequalities:  
three, evidence, and policy implications. Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 2010; 51:  
Evans G, Kim P. Multiple risk exposure as a potential explanatory mechanism for the socioeconomic- 

Housing

Neighbourhoods and Health

Built Environment and Chronic Disease

Population Health Intervention Research