
Health, Environment & Society

GEOG 3206B Fall 2026

CARLETON UNIVERSITY

Department of Geography and Environmental Studies

Class: Thursdays 5:35-8:25 pm, in person

Brightspace Link: Health, Environment and Society

Instructor: Marylynn Steckley

Office Hours: Thursdays 4:00-5:15 Rm. 2113 Dunton Tower

Teaching Assistant: TBD

Office Hours:

Email:

Course Description

“Where you live should not determine whether you live or die” — Bono. These words from U2's lead singer capture a central insight of health geography: place matters. Where we live shapes our disease risk, access to care, and life expectancy. Yet, health geographers have long demonstrated that health is not just about genetics or individual choices. Rather, health is actively *produced* through dynamic relationships among people, environments, and the social, political, and economic systems that structure everyday life. Understanding health therefore requires asking not only *why* some people become sick, but *how* health and illness are created and maintained, and who benefits from the ways they are organized. In this course, we will explore how physical environments, built environments, food systems, climate change, and social inequalities shape health outcomes across populations, while considering how power, ideology, and historical processes influence who is exposed to risk, who has access to resources, and whose health is prioritized. We'll examine questions like: Why are suicide rates patterned differently across genders and places? How can the layout of a grocery store influence what we eat? How do power, ideology and the state influence the uptake of cosmetic surgeries in specific places? Why do some communities become "Blue Zones" where people routinely live past 100? And who has the power to shape the environments in which health is produced? By combining theoretical perspectives with contemporary case studies from Canada and around the world, students will develop a critical understanding of the relationships among health, environment, and society, while exploring the social and environmental changes needed to create healthier and more equitable futures.

Learning Objectives

1. Explain how health and disease are shaped through interactions among biological, environmental, social, political, and economic processes across multiple scales.
2. Critically evaluate how power, inequality, and historical processes influence patterns of physical and mental health.
3. Understand how social constructions of health, nature, gender, and illness shape health experiences, environmental policy, and health inequalities.
4. Explore how physical environments, built environments, food systems, and climate change influence patterns of health and disease.

Readings

Available at the Carleton Bookstore and the MacOdrum Library.

Green, John. 2025. Everything is Tuberculosis. Penguin Random House Canada. \$26

Elliot, Alicia. 2019. A Mind Spread Out on the Ground. Anchor Canada. \$21

Evaluation

Following Communication Protocol	5 %
Attendance & Exit Tickets	20%
Mid-term Exam	15 %
Final Exam	20 %
Book Report 1 (In -Person)	20 %
Book Report 2 (In -Person)	20 %

Land Acknowledgement

As we learn together, we acknowledge that Carleton University is situated on the traditional, unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinàbeg Nation, and we honour the enduring relationship of Indigenous peoples with this land.

Course Outline

Week 1, September 10th: Why Some are Sick and Others Healthy?
<i>Required Reading: Course Syllabus & Review Brightspace Modules</i>
Week 2, September 17th: Introducing Social Determinants of Health
<i>Required Reading: Green, J. 2025. Everything is Tuberculosis. Introductions & Chapters 1-5</i>
Week 3, September 24th: Social Determinants of Health — Distal
<i>Required Reading: Green, J. 2025. Everything is Tuberculosis. Chapters 6-10</i>
Week 4, October 1st: Social Determinants of Health — Intermediate
<i>Required Reading: Green, J. 2025. Everything is Tuberculosis. Chapters 11-15</i>
Week 5, October 8th: Social Determinants of Health — Proximal
<i>Required Reading: Green, J. 2025. Everything is Tuberculosis. Chapters 16-23</i>
Week 6, October 15th: TEST 1 & Book Report
Week 7, October 22nd: Social Constructions of Health
<i>Required Reading: Elliot pgs 1-22, “A Mind Spread Out on the Ground” & “Half-Breed: A Racial Biography in Five Parts”</i>
Fall Break: Oct 26th-30th

Week 8, November 5th: Mental Health
<i>Required Reading: Elliot pgs 31-42 and 71-90, "Weight" and "Scratch"</i>
Week 9, November 12th: Gender and Built Environments
<i>Required Reading: Elliot, pgs 121-134, "On Forbidden Rooms and Intentional Forgetting"</i>
Week 10, November 19th: Food Systems
<i>Required Reading: Elliot pgs 91-116, "32 grams per Dose"</i>
Week 11 November 26th: Blue Zones
<i>Required Reading: Elliot pgs 195-218 "Extraction Mentalities"</i>
Week 12, December 3rd: In Class Book Report
Week 13: Flex Class
Final Exam (20%)

Course Assessments Overview

Attendance & Exit Tickets: 20%

- Full attendance at 9 of 10 classes (test/book report days not included) and full completion of associated exit tickets will result in a grade of 100% for Attendance & Participation.
- Each class, students will be provided with an "exit ticket", which includes a series of questions and concepts for students to complete prior to the end of class.
- Exit tickets will be provided only within the first 15 minutes of the class start time.
- To receive a full attendance point, exit tickets must be completed fully and comprehensively and submitted at the end of class. If you must leave early (and submit your exit ticket before the end of class, the instructor may grant you 50% on your attendance grade that week at their discretion. If an exit ticket is poorly completed, you may either not receive an attendance point, or the instructor may give you a warning and encourage you to improve your work the following week, at their discretion.
- Note that you have one "freebee" attendance/exit ticket absence for cases of illness, bereavement or mental health. There is no need to notify the instructor of your absence.

Midterm Exam (15%) and Final Exam (20%)

- There are two closed-book, in-person tests during the term: Test 1 is worth 15%, and the Final Exam is worth 20%. Each of these includes multiple-choice and true-false questions, and each is 60 minutes in length. The Final Exam is cumulative, covering all lecture material.
- Make-Up Tests: In the case of an emergency (bereavement, illness, etc.), students may be permitted to take a makeup test. To qualify for a makeup test, students must notify the TA of their absence *before* the respective test. Requests for make-up tests that are made *after* the test will not be accommodated. Students must also complete Carleton's Academic Consideration for Coursework Form and must send a copy of this form to the TA.

Communication Protocol (5%)

To ensure effective communication in this class, please follow these guidelines:

1. Post all course-related and logistical questions on the Brightspace Q&A Forum. Before posting, check if your question has already been answered.
2. For more detailed questions about assignments, tests, or the course more broadly, you have two options:
 - A. Schedule a meeting with your TA by email: you can request a meeting via phone or Zoom.
 - B. Visit the instructor during office hours.
3. Email Policy: Students should please refrain from emailing the instructor. If there is a case of emergency, you may email the instructor using the subject line: "GEOG3206 Meeting Request" and include available times, your phone number, and a brief description of the issue. In this event, I will schedule a call with you as soon as I can.
4. Please do not inform the TA or the instructor if you are late or absent for class. We will be able to tabulate your absences based on exit tickets and the instructor prefers to protect student privacy and does not ask students to disclose reasons for absences.

48-Hour Window Policy: To support effective communication and minimize stress, we strive to promptly address your questions. Rushed communication and potential frustrations are more likely just before assignments or tests are due, and after grades have been released. This policy is designed to foster respectful communication. Please refrain from posing questions to your TA within 48 hours before or after assignment due dates or tests. Questions sent during these periods will not receive a response until the window has passed, except in cases of illness or emergency. If you are unwell, you may still contact the instructor following the guidelines outlined in No. 3 of our communication policy above.

Appeals Policy: If you wish to challenge a grade, you must do so within five days of receiving your assignment or test results. To appeal a grade, your first step is to draft a half-page appeal outlining the specific grading discrepancies you have identified. In this letter, you should identify the grading error specifically and provide justification and evidence to substantiate your claim. Send this letter to your TA, and request a meeting time. Only valid appeals will be reviewed.

Book Reports (20% each)

Overview: There are two in-class book reports in this course: Book Report 1: *Everything Is Tuberculosis* by John Green and Book Report 2: *A Mind Spread Out on the Ground* by Alicia Elliott. Each book report will take place in person and will be completed individually in Weeks 6 and 12. Students will have approximately 60–90 minutes to complete the assignment. The purpose of these assignments is not to test your memory of the book. Instead, they are designed to assess your ability to connect the books to course concepts and themes. You should think of these assignments as short analytical essays rather than summaries. The quality of analysis is more important than the length. Strong reports are focused, well-supported, and analytical rather than overly broad or descriptive.

Permitted Material: Students may use their own annotated hard copy of the assigned book. Books may be checked by the TA upon entry to class. Your book may include highlighting and underlining, sticky tabs, margin notes and written comments, symbols and annotation systems developed by the student. For Book Report 1, students may only use their annotated copy of *Everything Is Tuberculosis*. For Book Report 2, students may only use their annotated copy of *A Mind Spread Out on the Ground*. Students

may not use: printed or digital book copies (or whole book), electronic devices, study guides, printed summaries, course slides, audiobooks or separate notes while writing the book reports.

Instructions

Book Reports should be written in essay form. Although you are writing under time constraints, strong book reports will still demonstrate the key components of effective academic writing:

Introduction: Begin with an engaging introduction that introduces your topic and captures the reader's interest. Clearly identify the central issue, theme, or question that you will explore. Your introduction should also establish a clear argument, purpose, or guiding idea that connects the book to course concepts and themes.

Analysis: The majority of your report should focus on analysis rather than summary. Strong reports will:

- Draw on specific examples, details, facts, statistics, and quotations from the book.
- Incorporate relevant concepts, examples and discussions from class.
- Connect the book to course frameworks and themes, such as: Determinants of Health, Social Determinants of Health, Health Inequalities, The Triangle of Human Ecology, Health Geography
- Explain how individual experiences described in the book connect to broader social, political, environmental, historical, and geographical processes.
- Develop your argument with evidence from both the book and the course

Students are encouraged to focus on a specific theme, question, or argument rather than attempting to summarize the entire book.

Conclusion: End with a strong conclusion that moves beyond simply repeating earlier points.

Effective conclusions will:

- Reinforce the significance of your argument.
- Demonstrate what broader lessons can be learned from the book.
- Connect the discussion back to health, society, environment, or inequality.
- Leave the reader with a compelling, insightful, or thought-provoking final observation.

Example Topics

For example, a strong report on *Everything Is Tuberculosis* might explore:

- Tuberculosis through the Triangle of Human Ecology.
- The role of poverty and inequality in shaping disease outcomes.
- The relationship between biology and social determinants of health.
- Why tuberculosis persists despite being curable.
- The way place, environment and geography influence patterns of illness and treatment

Marking Guide

Criteria	Weight
Argument, Critical Analysis and Continuity	25%
Application of Course Concepts	35%
Use of Evidence and Examples from the Text	30%
Writing Clarity and Organization	10%

Note that standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points, is the following:

Percentage	Letter Grade	12-point scale	Percentage	Letter Grade	12-point scale
90-100	A+	12	67-69	C+	6
85-89	A	11	63-66	C	5
80-84	A-	10	60-62	C-	4
77-79	B+	9	57-59	D+	3
73-76	B	8	53-56	D	2
70-72	B-	7	50-52	D-	1

Mental Health: As a University student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you.

Emergency Resources (on and off campus): <https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

Carleton Resources:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off-Campus Resources:

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

Policy on The Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools:

As our understanding of the uses of AI and its relationship to student work and academic integrity continues to evolve, students are required to discuss their use of AI in any circumstance not described here with the course instructor to ensure it supports the learning goals for the course.

AI use in this course: Students may use AI tools for sharing ideas, clarifying challenging concepts, or getting started on projects. Some acceptable uses include:

- Brainstorming ideas (e.g., generating essay topics with ChatGPT, using Microsoft Word's Smart Lookup to find inspiration and related topics).
- Creating outlines (e.g., using AI to structure an essay or presentation flow, using Microsoft Word's Outline View with AI suggestions).
- Providing definitions or explanations of complex concepts (e.g., using AI to explain a difficult theory, e.g., using Microsoft Word's Researcher tool to find relevant information).

Documenting use of AI: It is necessary to document your use of AI in this course, using the following guidelines:

- Identify and cite AI-generated text (e.g., ‘The following paragraph was generated by ChatGPT/Microsoft Word’s Researcher tool’). Please consult resources on the [Library website](#).
- Review, edit, and ensure the accuracy and originality of final submissions.
- AI-generated content should not exceed 30% of the total assignment length.

Why have I adopted this policy? This policy supports the use of AI as a supplementary tool, helping students develop ideas and structure their work while emphasizing the importance of transparency and personal engagement with the content. AI can be used for inspiration and foundational support, and can encourage students to critically assess and refine AI-generated material.

Academic Integrity: The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include: reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source; submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else; using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment; using another’s data or research findings; failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks; handing in “substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs. Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They may include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

Academic Accommodation: Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (students.carleton.ca/course-outline). You should provide any additional information on your requirements for short-term informal accommodations. If you require supporting documentation for short-term considerations, you may only request the [Academic Consideration for Coursework form](#). You may not request medical notes or documentation. Consult the [Academic Consideration Policy for instructors](#) information page for more details.

Pregnancy obligation: write to the instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the Pregnancy Accommodation Form ([click here](#)). Communications: Carleton E-mail Accounts: All email communication to students from BGIInS will be via official Carleton University email accounts and/or cuLearn. As important course and University information is distributed this way, it is the student’s responsibility to monitor their Carleton and cuLearn accounts.

Religious obligation: write to the instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of Sexual Violence: As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>.

Accommodation for Student Activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

Communications: Carleton E-mail Accounts: All email communication to students from BGIInS will be via official Carleton University email accounts and/or cuLearn. As important course and University information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton and cuLearn accounts.

Classroom Recording: Unauthorized student recording of classroom or other academic activities (including advising sessions or office hours) is prohibited. Unauthorized recording is unethical and may also be a violation of University policy. Students requesting the use of assistive technology as an accommodation should contact the **Paul Menton Centre**. Unauthorized use of classroom recordings – including distributing or posting them – is also prohibited. Under the University's **Copyright Policy**, faculty own the copyright to instructional materials – including those resources created specifically for the purposes of instruction, such as lectures slides, lecture notes, and presentations. Students cannot copy, reproduce, display, or distribute these materials or otherwise circulate these materials without the instructor's written permission. Students who engage in unauthorized recording, unauthorized use of a recording, or unauthorized distribution of instructional materials will be referred to the appropriate University office for follow-up.