

HDFS 497
Childhood Obesity: Causes, Consequences, and Solutions

Fall 2016
Wednesday 8:00AM - 11:00AM
Hammond Building 206

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Office hours: Tuesday 4-5pm BBH 316; other times available by appointment

Course Description

Childhood obesity is an important public health issue in the United States and worldwide. This course will introduce students to numerous risk and protective factors for childhood obesity within the environmental contexts of:

- Home/family
- School/child care
- Food retail environments
- Media (e.g., TV, Internet)

The course will initially focus on the prevalence and health consequences of childhood obesity. Students will then learn about conceptual frameworks of childhood obesity that explain how individual and environmental factors interact to contribute to childhood obesity risk. Existing approaches to the prevention and treatment of childhood obesity within each environmental context will be reviewed.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Describe longitudinal trends and demographic patterns in the prevalence of childhood obesity in the United States
2. Describe the physical and psycho-social health consequences of childhood obesity
3. Apply the socio-ecological model to the development of childhood obesity
4. Identify risk and protective factors for childhood obesity, with an emphasis on modifiable environmental factors
5. Describe how children's environmental contexts could be optimized to promote healthy growth
6. Develop and discuss strategies for the prevention of childhood obesity

Students will have the opportunity to express their own learning objectives for the course and some course material will be tailored accordingly to best serve the students in the course.

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Assignment Due
1	Introduction; Prevalence, disparities, health consequences; Theoretical frameworks of childhood obesity	None (Completed in class)
2	Home: Risk/protective factors, Approaches for prevention and intervention	Week 2 – Listen, Read, Report
3	School/child care: Risk/protective factors, approaches for prevention and intervention	Week 3 – Listen, Read, Report
4	Food retail environments: Risk/protective factors, approaches for prevention and intervention	Week 4 – Listen, Read, Report
5	Media: Risk/protective factors, approaches for prevention and intervention	Week 5 – Listen, Read, Report

Required Reading and Materials

All required readings and links to other materials (e.g., podcasts, discussion boards) will be posted on Canvas. There is no textbook required for the course. Students are expected to have access to a camera (e.g., cell phone camera) and a computer with Internet throughout the course. Students who do not have such access are asked to see the instructor. Students are encouraged to bring their laptops to class for note taking and discussion, but they are not required in class.

Classroom Environment

This course will combine lecture format with interactive group discussion. Students will be expected to come prepared to discuss their weekly *Listen*, *Read*, and *Report* assignments and contribute their thoughts and questions to the group. The instructor and students will work together to create a challenging and supportive learning atmosphere. All remarks made in class and on the discussion boards should be respectful.

Grading Policy

Students are expected to monitor their own grades and raise any concerns to the instructor as early as possible.

A	94% and above
A-	90 - 93%
B+	87 – 89%
B	84-86%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-79%
C	74-76%
C-	70-73%
D	60-69%
F	59% and below

Basis for Grades

Evaluation	Grading Scale	Possible Points
Attendance	0 – Did not attend class 3 – Attended class	15 (3 x 5 class periods)
Class Participation	0 – Does not demonstrate thoughtful engagement during the class period 4.5 – Demonstrates partial engagement 9 – Fully engaged throughout the class period; Listens to other students, responds appropriately, and/or asks good questions	45 (9 x 5 class periods)
Report Assignments	0 – Assignment not turned in or is off topic 5- Assignment is submitted but lacks evidence of thoughtful engagement with course material and key concepts covered in the <i>Listen</i> and <i>Read</i> portions. 10 – Assignment is submitted on time and demonstrates thoughtful engagement with course material and key concepts covered in the <i>Listen</i> and <i>Read</i> portions.	40 (10 x 4 weekly assignments)

Course Assignments

Each week, you will be asked to complete three at-home assignments: *Listen*, *Read*, and *Report*, in that order. For *Listen* you will listen to a relevant podcast recorded by the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity. For *Read*, you will read portions of a relevant journal article. For *Report*, you will use the knowledge you gained during the *Listen* and *Read* portions to complete a hands-on assignment that will be submitted on Canvas in a weekly discussion board. Details for each week are outlined in the Weekly Assignments document.

Late Work Policy

Weekly *Report* assignments are due by 5pm on the Tuesday before class each week. This will allow the instructor to read the students' responses and incorporate them into class discussion the next day. *Report* assignments submitted after the due date/time will be accepted through Tuesday 9/20 at 5pm for up to half credit.

Class Attendance Policy

Class attendance is required. Given this course only meets five times, it is essential that students make every effort to come to every class on time and ready to actively participate in their learning. Communication with the instructor about any absences or lateness is important and each case will be given individual consideration using the guidelines below.

Students are responsible for letting the instructor know **as soon as reasonably possible** if there is a conflict that prevents attendance for all or part of one class. Some absences are easily anticipated, such as absence due to travel associated with the student's membership in an extra-curricular activity (e.g., athletics, music, community service) or absence due to religious observance. When possible, students should provide documentation of the event when alerting the instructor of the anticipated absence.

Other absences are hard to predict, such as illness, injury, or family emergency. In these cases, the student should notify the instructor as early as reasonably possible, preferably before the missed class. Students who cannot physically make it to class but feel up to participating remotely through Skype should contact the instructor before class to make such arrangements.

For all absences, regardless of the reason, the student will need to set up meeting with the instructor at a mutually agreed upon time and format (i.e. through Skype or in person) to get the information that was covered in class and discuss the previous weeks' assignment(s). It is the student's responsibility to set this meeting or the student will lose credit for class attendance for the day that was missed..

If a student misses three or more classes for any reason, the student will be asked to set up an appointment among the instructor, the student, and the student's academic advisor to determine if it is possible to remain in the class or if it should be dropped due to missing over half of this group discussion oriented course.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University's Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.

Academic integrity includes a commitment by all members of the University community not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others." (Faculty Senate Policy 49-20, 2007).

Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students who are found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions and will be reported to the University's Judicial Affairs office for possible further disciplinary sanction

Note to students with disabilities:

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services, ODS located in room 116 Boucke Building at 814-863-1807(V/TTY). For further information regarding ODS, please visit their web site at <http://www.equity.psu.edu/ods/> Instructors should be notified as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for reasonable academic adjustments.” (Office for Disability Services, 2006)