

HEALTH AND AUSTERITY

Term

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Lecture: Wednesday 7pm-10pm

Office: TBD
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Contents

Course Description.....	3
Course Objectives	3
Required Materials and Texts	3
Class Format.....	3
Course Evaluation – Overview	3
Media Monitoring Assignment (20%), due every lecture.....	3
Mid Term Exam (30%), due in class Oct 9	4
Essay Proposal (20%), due November 13th.....	4
Essay (30%), due December 9th.....	4
Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings	4
Week 1 – Introduction to Austerity and Health (Sept 4).....	4
Week 2 – A History of Austerity/What is Austerity? (Sept 11).....	4
Week 3 – Austerity, Morality, and Health (Sept 18)	5
Week 4 – Health and Austerity (Sept 25).....	5
Week 5 – Political Economy of (Health)Care Under Austerity (Oct 2)	5
Week 6 – Time/Space Compression and Austerity (Oct 9).....	6
Week 7 – Reading Week (Oct 14 - 18).....	6
Week 8 – Landscapes of Distress (Oct 23)	6
Week 9 – Welfare vs. Workfare (Oct 30)	6
Week 10 – Housing (Nov 6).....	7
Week 11 Racism (Nov 13).....	7
Week 12 – Precarious Employment (Nov 20)	7
Week 13 – Psychological Impact of Austerity (Nov 27)	8
Week 14 - Creating better policy (Dec 4).....	8
Course Policies	8
Submission of Assignments.....	8

Grades.....	8
Late Assignments	9
Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work	9
Avenue to Learn	9
Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection	9
Course Modification	9
University Policies	10
Academic Integrity Statement.....	10
Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.....	10
Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)	10
Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy	11
Extreme Circumstances.....	11

Course Description

There are mounting pressures on governments at all levels to reign in public spending and deal with increasing and sizable public debt. This leads governments to target the core of the welfare state (healthcare, housing, welfare payments, social/community care, long term care, disability, mental health care) with austerity programs. These cuts have consequences for the health and wellbeing of the people who rely on these programs as well as those who do not. This course will explore Austerity as a political determinant of health and one that leads to increasingly complex and negative health effects.

Course Objectives

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

- Understand what Austerity is, its basic history, and its effects on health
- Have a basic understanding of the social determinants of health
- Have a basic understanding of therapeutic landscapes
- Critically engage with media reports on government policy
- Better structure and write university level essays

Required Materials and Texts

- The readings can be found on avenue to learn.

Class Format

The lecturer will expect students to have prepared for the class by reading the required readings. He will open the class with a call for questions about the readings. After this he will move on to the lecture, which will introduce material outside of the readings and broaden the students understanding of that week's topic. Typically, there will be a break of 15 mins halfway through the class. The class will end with general questions, and or a discussion of current events and their relation to the class.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Media Monitoring Assignment – One due every lecture for a total of 13 which together equal 20% of your grade
2. Mid Term Exam (30%)
3. Essay Proposal (20%)
4. Essay (30%)

Media Monitoring Assignment (20%), due every lecture

Students are to collect one media article on austerity, public cuts, or a reduction in government spending each week. They are to write 250 words about how these cuts might affect the health of individuals directly or indirectly. The article and 250 words

(double spaced) are due in class each week but can be sent via email to the instructor before the class. Each one is graded out of ten with ten being the most well thought out or creative approach to the article.

Mid Term Exam (30%), due in class Oct 9

This Mid Term exam will consist of 35 multiple choice questions, based on the weeks leading up to that class. Students will have an hour to complete the exam after which class will resume after a short break.

Essay Proposal (20%), due November 13th

Students will propose a topic for their paper, choose one off of a list of topics, or develop an essay out of the media monitoring assignment. The proposal will consist of 6 sources that will potentially be used in your paper as well as a thesis statement and outline for the rest of the paper.

Essay (30%), due December 9th

The essay must be based on the essay proposal and will be a maximum of 2000 words double spaced with a minimum of 6 sources which do not include class readings. There should be a title page with the student's name, student number, course, and title of the paper. The paper should be referenced using the APA style and include a bibliography.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 – Introduction to Austerity and Health (Sept 4)

Sept 4 – A Basic introduction to the course and its assignments

Readings: None

Notes: This class will go over the syllabus and introduce the structure of the course as well as screen the movie *I, Daniel Blake* (2016).

Week 2 – A History of Austerity/What is Austerity? (Sept 11)

Sept 11 – This class will cover the origins of Austerity.

Readings:

Chapter 1: A Primer on Austerity, Debt, and Morality Plays. *Austerity: The History of a Dangerous Idea* by Mark Blyth, 2013

Chapter 5: Ontario in an Age of Austerity: Common Sense Reloaded in *The Public Sector in an Age of Austerity: Perspectives from Canada's Provinces and Territories* by Bryan Evans and Carlo Fanelli 2018

Notes: This class will provide a primer on what Austerity is, where it came from and how it became popular among governments.

Week 3 – Austerity, Morality, and Health (Sept 18)

Sept 18 – This class will introduce the complicated relationship between Austerity and morality.

Readings:

John Clarke and Janet Newman. The Alchemy of Austerity. *Critical Social Policy*. 32 (3). 2012

Lydia Morris. The Moral Economy of Austerity: Analyzing UK Welfare Reform. *The British Journal of Sociology* 67 (1). 2016

Notes: This class will begin by looking at the evidence for Austerity as a social policy, it will then move on to other explanations and ways that it has been justified to the public.

Week 4 – Health and Austerity (Sept 25)

Sept 25 – This class will look at the broader health effects of austerity

Readings:

Chapter 1: Introduction. *How Politics Makes Us Sick: Neoliberal Epidemics* by Ted Schrecker and Clare Bamba

Introduction **and** A Plague on All Your Houses. *The Body Economic: Why Austerity Kills* by David Stuckler and Sanjay Basu

Notes: This class examines the health effects of austerity, how we might track these effects, and some other unintended consequences of austerity.

Week 5 – Political Economy of (Health)Care Under Austerity (Oct 2)

Oct 2 – This class examines the effects of Austerity on healthcare environments

Readings:

Emptying Beds: The Work of an Emergency Psychiatric Unit. By Lorna Rhodes. 1991 (Chapter posted on Avenue to Learn)

Angeliki Kerasidou. Empathy and Efficiency in Healthcare at Times of Austerity. *Health Care Analysis* 27. 2019

Notes: This class will examine the effects that austerity can have on health teams and health care environments.

Week 6 – Time/Space Compression and Austerity (Oct 9)

Oct 9 – How Austerity compresses time and space (*In-Class Mid Term EXAM*)

Readings:

Chapter 17: Time—Space Compression and the postmodern condition. *The Condition of Postmodernity* By David Harvey 1990

Of Timescapes, Futurescapes and Timeprints. Public talk given at Luneburg University. Barbara Adam

Notes: The class will begin with an exam. After a short break the class will resume. The readings for this class are meant to prepare students for the lecture where the concepts introduced in the readings will be discussed within the context of Health and Austerity

Week 7 – Reading Week (Oct 14 - 18)

Reading Week

Week 8 – Landscapes of Distress (Oct 23)

Oct 23 – This class introduces the larger and more indirect effects Austerity can have on health and healthcare

Readings:

Sarah Wakefield and Colin McMullan. Healing in places of decline: (re)imagining everyday landscapes in Hamilton, Ontario. *Health & Place* 11. 2005

Martin McKee, Aaron Reeves, Amy Clair, and David Stuckler. Living on the Edge: Precariousness and Why it Matters for Health. *Archives of Public Health* 75:13 2017

Notes: This class will introduce the concept of therapeutic landscapes and how austerity can remake once neutral or therapeutic landscapes into landscapes of distress.

Week 9 – Welfare vs. Workfare (Oct 30)

Oct 30 – This class will examine welfare regimes and the effects they can have on health

Readings:

Christopher Deeming. Foundations of the Workfare State – Reflections on the Political Transformation of the Welfare State in Britain. *Social Policy & Administration* 49 (7) 2015

Chapter 3: The Institutionalisation of Despair and Diminishing Expectations in *Crisis, Austerity, and Everyday Life* by Gargi Bhattacharyya 2015

Notes: This class will examine welfare regimes arguing that they are in fact workfare regimes and can be extremely detrimental to the health of those who are involved.

Week 10 – Housing (Nov 6)

Nov 6 – This class will evaluate the effects of Austerity on public housing

Readings:

Chapter 3: Public Housing Policy in an International Context in *Regent Park Redux: Reinventing Public Housing in Canada* by Laura C. Johnson and Robert E. Johnson. 2017

Hilary Thomson and Sian Thomas. Developing Empirically Supported Theories of Change for Housing Investment and Health. *Social Science & Medicine* 124. 2015

Notes: This class will examine public housing and explore the effects that Austerity has had on public housing in England. It will also link housing as a determinant of health. The instructor will provide details on the upcoming essay proposal assignment.

Week 11 Racism (Nov 13)

Nov 13 – This lecture explores how racism and austerity are connected

Readings:

Introduction in *Dying of Whiteness: How the Politics of Racial Resentment is Killing America's Heartland* by Jonathan Metzl. 2019

Chapter 4: Austerity and Extending the Racial State in *Crisis, Austerity, and Everyday Life* by Gargi Bhattacharyya. 2015

Notes: The essay proposal is due today and must be handed in to the lecturer in person.

Week 12 – Precarious Employment (Nov 20)

Nov 20 – This lecture will explore where precarious employment fits within austerity and a landscape of distress

Readings:

Daniel Kopasker, Catia Montagna, and Keith Bender. Economic insecurity: A Socioeconomic Determinant of Mental Health. *Social Science & Medicine – Population Health* 6. 2018

J Benach, A Vives, G Tarafa, C Delclos, and C Muntaner. What Should We Know About Precarious Employment and Health in 2025? Framing the Agenda for the Next Decade of Research. *International Journal of Epidemiology* 2016.

Notes: The lecturer will return the essay proposals.

Week 13 – Psychological Impact of Austerity (Nov 27)

Nov 27 – This class will examine the psychological impact of austerity

Readings:

Laura McGrath, Vanessa Griffin, Ed Mundy. The Psychological Impact of Austerity: A Briefing Paper. *Educational Psychology Research and Practice* 2 (2). 2016

Esther Hitchen. Living and Feeling the Austere. *New Formations* 87. 2016

Eleanor Wilkinson and Iliana Ortega-Alcazar. The Right to be Weary? Endurance and Exhaustion in Austere Times. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. 44. 2019

Week 14 - Creating better policy (Dec 4)

Dec 4 – This class will explore the future of Austerity and also our place within this future.

Readings:

Lauren Berlant. Slow Death (Sovereignty, Obesity, Lateral Agency). *Critical Inquiry* 33 (4) 2007

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

Please submit the assignments in class or electronically.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C

MARK	GRADE
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

All submissions are due by 11:59pm on the due date. Late submissions will be penalized 3% per day.

Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF)

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”. Students must contact and discuss the new date for submission with the instructor as soon as possible.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn (A2L) plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish to submit their work through A2L and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or A2L. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Course Modification

The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of the course during the term. If any modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the

students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#), located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which credit has been obtained.
- Improper collaboration in group work.
- Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. [Student Accessibility Services](#) can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

If you require this course outline in an alternate/accessible format, please contact the Department of Health, Aging & Society (ext. 27227 | e-mail: hasdept@mcmaster.ca).

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office

normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.