NFS 244  
Nutrition in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention  
Spring 2018

Instructor: Lizzy Pope, PhD RD  
Office: 254 Carrigan Wing  
Email: efpope@uvm.edu  
Phone: 802-656-4262  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:00-12:00 and Wednesdays 10:45-11:45.

Teaching Assistant: Michael Murphy, mpmurphy@uvm.edu

COURSE OVERVIEW

How does nutrition promote health? Even when nutrition scientists believe they have found a nutrient/diet that promotes health or disease, further research commonly reverses these beliefs, leaving the general public and even nutrition professionals themselves confused about what dietary pattern actually does lead to better health. In each section of the grocery store, one must consider where a particular food comes from, what nutrients it contains, how it was manufactured, how it fits into one’s total diet, and more. In this course students will examine how different foods may or may not contribute to better health, and critically critique controversies surrounding popular and recommended eating patterns. Students will also identify common decision-making shortcuts used for health-related decisions, and ways to influence behavior to encourage healthier lifestyles.

REQUIRED READINGS AND iCLICKERS

iClicker - You will need to register your iclicker online, so I am able to record when you click in. To do this go to Blackboard, and register your iclicker using the link in the middle of the page when you log-in.  
What to Eat. (2007). Marion Nestle  
In Defense of Food. (2009). Michael Pollan  
Predictably Irrational (2010). Dan Ariely

Many readings will be posted on blackboard.

COURSE FORMAT AND EVALUATION

How Does This Class Work?  
NFS 244 uses a relatively new way of assessing student learning called specifications grading. With specifications grading work either meets the satisfactory standard, or does not. There is no partial credit, and the only letter grade you receive will be your grade at the end of the semester, all assignments will be assessed as “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory.” In this system, assignments are “bundled” into four tiers representing the requirements to
master a set of learning goals and earn the corresponding letter grade. To earn a particular grade, you need to meet ALL the requirements in that grade bundle.

**Why Specs Grading?**
My primary goal for NFS 244 is to help you learn about dietary choices that will lead to increased health, and ways we can help influence clients' behaviors to promote health. The assignments are designed to determine whether you’re meeting the course objectives or you’re not. I’m instituting this grading system because I’m hoping it will increase engagement with the material, while decreasing stress over grades. I’ll be happy if everyone gets an A, but I’ll also be happy if everyone gets the grade they set out to get. Maybe you want to allocate your resources to other classes and get a “C” in this one. That’s fine, this structure lets you choose to do that by handing in less work, but the work you do hand in still needs to meet the specific assignment standards. If you want to earn an “A” you will need to engage with the material frequently and produce quality work. In order to be successful in this system you will need to VERY carefully review assignment requirements before handing things in. Let’s state that again. Whenever you are completing an assignment in this course you should expect that on blackboard the criteria needed to reach “satisfactory” are clearly denoted. Meet those.

**Coming Prepared for Class**
To be prepared for each class you should come with your iclicker, and a laptop/tablet/other device where you can access blackboard. I ask that you do not use your laptop or electronic device to take notes, only to complete online assignments when specified in class. Research shows that students who use their laptops during class do not learn class information as well as students who do not use their laptops. There are so many distractions online, and it’s so hard to resist them even when you have the best intentions. By not using your computer to take notes, you won’t be tempted to shop or watch Netflix etc. If I see repeated instances of you using your technology for purposes unrelated to class, I reserve the right to ask you to not use technology in class. I realize that I’ll need to make class interesting, and I will absolutely do my best to make it worth your attention!

I also will expect that you have done the assigned readings, and can reflect on them or use them in class if needed. Coming with an open mind and an intention to give class your best effort would also be great!

**Learning Objectives:**
Those who earn a “D” in the course will have demonstrated the ability to:
- Describe and compare the benefits, drawbacks, and controversies surrounding products from each section of the grocery store.
- Illustrate a decision-making heuristic, and how it can be capitalized on for health promotion.
Those who earn a “C” in the course by illustrating a higher level of understanding will have also demonstrated their ability to:
- Formulate a personal evidence-based philosophy on what nutrition for health actually means, and prepare a meal plan that supports health.

Those who earn a “B” in the course by illustrating a higher level of mastery will have also demonstrated their ability to:
- Summarize and critically interpret scientific and lay-press readings on contemporary nutrition.
- Answer people’s random questions about “what’s healthy,” and be able to explain why the latest fad diet is rubbish.

Those who earn an “A” in the course by illustrating the highest level of mastery will have also demonstrated the ability to:
- Creatively communicate nutrition and health messages to a broad audience in multiple formats.

Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) Student Learning Outcomes that NFS 244 meets:
KRDN 1.1 – Demonstrate how to locate, interpret, evaluate and use professional literature to make ethical, evidence-based practice decisions

Grade Bundles:
Minimum Requirements for an A:
1. Attend 27 classes where you are on-time and prepared. This will be measured by:
   a. Receiving 27 iclicker points
   b. Completing and submitting 27 in-class activities.
2. Complete 14 Reading Responses earning satisfactory – At least 3 responses must be creative responses and at least 3 responses must be written responses.
3. Complete the “How is this still a thing?” assignment, earning satisfactory.
4. Complete the Evidenced-Based Meal Plan assignment at satisfactory level including the Recipe Review section of assignment.
5. Complete group project at satisfactory level.
6. Be present for presentations of group projects.

Minimum Requirements for a B:
1. Attend 24 classes where you are on-time and prepared. This will be measured by:
   a. Receiving 24 iclicker points
   b. Completing and submitting 24 in-class activities.
2. Complete 11 Reading Responses earning satisfactory – At least 1 response must be a creative response, and at least 1 response must be a written response.
3. Complete the “How is this still a thing?” assignment, earning satisfactory.
4. Complete the Evidenced-Based Meal Plan assignment at satisfactory level including the Recipe Review section of assignment.
5. Complete group project at satisfactory level
6. Be present for presentations of group projects

Minimum Requirements for a C:
1. Attend 20 classes where you are on-time and prepared. This will be measured by:
   a. Receiving 20 iclicker points
   b. Completing and submitting 20 in-class activities.
2. Complete 8 Reading Responses earning satisfactory - At least 1 response must be a creative response, and at least 1 response must be a written response
3. Complete the Evidenced-Based Meal Plan assignment at satisfactory level do not include the recipe review section.
4. Complete group project at satisfactory level
5. Be present for presentations of group projects

Minimum Requirements for a D:
1. Attend 16 classes where you are on-time and prepared. This will be measured by:
   a. Receiving 16 iclicker points
   b. Completing and submitting 16 in-class activities.
2. Complete 6 Reading Responses earning satisfactory
3. Complete group project at satisfactory level
4. Be present for presentations of group projects

“Candies” and Flexibility
Sometimes life happens, and you need to revise an assignment or turn one in late. Every student will be given 3 “candies” this semester. Just like real-world candy, this virtual candy is a special treat and will help make a subpar situation a bit better if used wisely and occasionally. You can use candies for the following:
- To revise an assignment that you did not earn “satisfactory” on. Revision must be completed within one week of receiving the original grade.
- To turn in a Reading Response assignment up to 72 hours late. NOTE that candies cannot be used to extend deadlines on any other types of assignments.
- Cashed in at the end of class to build your case for receiving a “+” grade, so an A+, B+, C+, D+.

Throughout the course there may be opportunities to earn additional candies. These opportunities will be announced in class and could include going to a specific talk, participating in a research project, or completing a bonus assignment. DO NOT beg for these opportunities. They are a possibility but are not guaranteed. Do not count on them to earn the grade you want.

How do I earn a “+” or a “-“ grade within one grade-level? I.e. how do I earn an A+, B+, C+, A-, B-, C-
“+” or “-“ grades will be awarded when a student’s level of achievement falls between bundles. For example, if you have met all the requirements for the “A” bundle, but missed 3 rather than the allowed 2 classes, you would receive an A-. If you met all the requirements
for the “B” bundle and did 12 reading responses instead of 11, you would receive a B+. So, if you just exceed, or just fall short of a certain bundle you will be awarded a “+” or “-“ grade.

**Bargaining**
The course is setup so that you need to complete every assignment in a certain grade bundle in order to achieve that grade. If you do not complete every activity in a grade bundle please do not ask for special dispensation to achieve that grade. I will not bargain with you. Again, I WILL NOT BARGAIN WITH YOU. You can use candies to revise an assignment, and falling just short or just past a grade bundle can result in a “+” or “-“ grade, but please do not ask me to relax the grading bundles for you, that is not fair to the work your peers have done.

**ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW**

**Reading Response Activities** – The reading response activities ask you to think critically and creatively about the course’s readings and reflect on what you learned or what you don’t understand about the readings. There are two types of reading response options, written and creative. You can find detailed instructions and the specifications to achieve “satisfactory” work on blackboard.

**What’s the big deal about . . . ?/How Is This Still A Thing?** – Make a poster or website that delineates the pros and cons of a product or diet that has generated much “buzz.” Choose from the list of topics included in the assignment description. Your poster/website should be based on facts, but also colorful, creative, and attention-grabbing. Very clear instructions are posted on blackboard.

**Evidence-Based Meal Plan** – You will be given a food diary of an aspiring Hollywood mega star Rock J West. You will assess Rock’s recorded intake, and then based on the information provided about Rock’s background and goals, as well as the information you have used to formulate your personal nutrition philosophy, you will need to create an alternative three-day meal plan for Rock. You will justify the type of meal plan you create using scientific articles and course readings as appropriate. To earn an “A” or a “B,” you will also include three recipes in your meal plan, one of which you have actually cooked, and provide a review of that recipe. Specifications for “satisfactory” and detailed instructions are on blackboard.

**Creative Group Project** – Promote or debunk a common diet or eating strategy. You will be given a diet or eating strategy to promote or debunk in a Public Service Announcement (PSA). You will need to identify a behavioral economic strategy that could be used for “good” in your particular scenario, and then create a “PSA-style” video to educate the general public about the diet. DO NOT create a handout with nutrition information on it or write a paper. The point is to use your creative juices and the powers of influence that you’ve learned about to promote or debunk a certain diet. Specific directions and the criteria to achieve satisfactory can be found in blackboard.
LATE POLICY
If an assignment cannot be submitted on blackboard, it is due by the beginning of class on the date specified. If an assignment can be submitted via blackboard, it is due by midnight on the specified due date. No late assignments will be accepted. You can use a candy to extend a due date by 72 hours.

COMMUNICATION
I want to facilitate your success in the course and will be happy to meet with you during office hours, or schedule an appointment as needed. **If you want to set up an appointment with me please email me three possible times you can meet.** Also, I do not generally answer emails during the evenings or weekends (work-life balance is important for health!), but I do promise to do my absolute best to get back to you within 1 working day.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
UVM has an Academic Integrity policy that should be adhered to during this course. You can find a copy of the policy here: [http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/acadintegrity.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/acadintegrity.pdf).

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS
Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. Each semester students should submit, in writing to their instructors, but the end of the second full week of class, their documented religious holiday schedule for the semester. Faculty must permit students who miss work for the purpose of religious observance to make up this work.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS
Students requiring special assistance due to a disability are asked to contact the instructor during the first week of classes so that reasonable accommodation for the disability can be determined and arranged. Disability documentation, testing, and accommodations are coordinated through the Student Accessibility Services office on campus: [http://www.uvm.edu/~access/](http://www.uvm.edu/~access/).

ACADEMIC-ATHLETIC CONFLICTS
Student athletes need to notify me of any classes they may miss due to documented athletic conflicts by the end of the second week of the semester. We will then work on a plan to allow the student-athlete to make-up any work they miss because of an athletic conflict.

RESEARCH
Dr. Pope is taking part in a UVM Center for Teaching and Learning Initiative on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. She is working with an Education Professor, Dr. Sharon Ultsch to assess Specifications Grading. As this is a new-ish grading scheme, we’re interested in evaluating the effectiveness of this assessment method vs. traditional grading. To do this, we’ll be asking you for feedback throughout the course in the form of short in-class reflective questions and the option to participate as an informant throughout the course as well as in a focus group at the end of the course. We’ll also be reviewing
overall class performance on assignments and comparing it to previous years. There is nothing extra you need to do to participate in this research. Your name will never be mentioned and your work will always remain anonymous. We’re assessing how the overall assessment plan helps or hinders student learning, not the performance of individual students. If you do not feel comfortable participating, please let me know, and we will not include your work in the project. Please feel free to talk with me about any questions you have.

**SCHEDULE**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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| Jan 16 | Course Intro  
What Does Nutrition for Health Promotion Look Like To You?  
The U.S. Government’s Guidelines | - The syllabus | - 

| Jan 18 | Finish Course Intro and Review Procedures for finding and Evaluating Scientific Journal Articles | - | - |

“Eat Food. Mostly Plants. Not Too Much.” – Michael Pollan

| Jan 23 | Nutritionism  
Foods vs. Nutrients | - In Defense of Food – Intro, Part 1 | - Reading Response 1 Due |
| Jan 25 | The Western Diet | - In Defense of Food – Part 2  
- O’Connor, 2016 – “How the Government Supports Your Junk Food Habit” | - 

| Jan 30 | Eat Food. | - In Defense of Food – Part 3, Ch 1, 2  
- What to Eat – Intro, Ch 1  
- Abbott 2014, “Sugar substitutes linked to obesity” | - |
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Material</th>
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| Feb 1  | Center Aisles – Processed Foods - Wheat | - Glanz et al., 2012, “Retail Grocery Store Marketing Strategies and Obesity An Integrative Review”  
- Splitter, 2017 – “Processed Food’ Gets an Unfair Bad Rap” | Reading Response 2 Due |
| Feb 6  | Center Aisles - Sugar               | - What to Eat – Ch. 26  
- Esfahani et al., 2011, “The application of the glycemic index and glycemic load in weight loss: a review of the clinical evidence”  
- Brouns et al., 2013, “Does wheat make us fat and sick?”  
- Specter, M., 2014, “Against the Grain” | |
| Feb 8  | Center Aisles - Fat                 | - What to Eat – Ch. 32  
- Chowdhury et al., 2014, Association of Dietary, Circulating, and Supplement Fatty Acids With Coronary Risk  
- Harvard Medical School, 2017 – “The Truth About Fats: The | Reading Response 3 Due |
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<th>Date</th>
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| Feb 13 | Beverages                | **What to Eat** – Ch. 33 and 34  
- Shankar et al., 2013,  
  “Non-nutritive sweeteners: Review and update” |  
- Reading Response 4 Due |
| Feb 15 | Ketchup Day!             | No readings  
- Introduction to the Case Study Assignment |  
- Reading Response 4 Due |
| Feb 20 | Mostly Plants.           | **In Defense of Food** – Part 3, Ch 3  
- Clarys et al., 2013,  
  “Dietary Pattern Analysis: A Comparison Between Matched Vegetarian and Omnivorous Subjects”  
- Orlich et al., 2013,  
  “Vegetarian Dietary Patterns and Mortality in Adventist Health Study 2”  
- Widmer et al., 2014,  
  “The Mediterranean Diet, its Components, and Cardiovascular Disease”  
- Grose, 2014, “10 Ways to Recognize Orthorexia”  
- **OPTIONAL READING** –  
  “Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Vegetarian Diets” |  
- |
| Feb 22 | Produce Section – What to Choose?  
Organic, GMO, Frozen? | **What To Eat** – Ch. 2, 3, 4, & 5  
- Wunderlich & Gatto, 2015 – “Consumer |  
- Reading Response 5 Due  
- What’s the Big Deal . . . Poster Due |
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading 1</th>
<th>Reading 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar 1</td>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>What To Eat – Ch. 6, 7, 8</td>
<td>Charles, 2016 – “Congress Just Passed A GMO Labeling Bill. Nobody’s Super Happy About it”</td>
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<td>Mar 6</td>
<td>No Class – Town Meeting Day!</td>
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<td>Mar 8</td>
<td>Dairy Substitutes</td>
<td>What to Eat – Ch. 12</td>
<td>Kamihiro et al., 2014, “Meat quality and health implications of</td>
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<td>Mar 13</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>Mar 15</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>Mar 20</td>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>What to Eat – Ch. 13, 14, &amp; 15</td>
<td>Kamihiro et al., 2014, “Meat quality and health implications of</td>
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<td>Mar 22</td>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>- <strong>What to Eat</strong> – Ch. 16, 17, 18, 19, &amp; 20</td>
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<td>- <strong>O’Connor, 2014</strong>, “Ask Well: Wild Fish vs. Farmed Fish”</td>
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<td>- <strong>Rosenbloom, 2016</strong> – A User’s Guide to Buying Seafood</td>
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<td>- <strong>Reading Response #8 Due</strong></td>
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<td>Mar 27</td>
<td>Supplements – Do you need them?</td>
<td>- <strong>What to Eat</strong> – Ch. 37</td>
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<td>- <a href="https://ods.od.nih.gov/HealthInformation/DS_WhatYouNeedToKnow.aspx">https://ods.od.nih.gov/HealthInformation/DS_WhatYouNeedToKnow.aspx</a></td>
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<td>- Peruse the NIH Office of Dietary Supplements to familiarize yourself with what’s available: <a href="https://ods.od.nih.gov">https://ods.od.nih.gov</a></td>
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<td>- <strong>Brody, 2016</strong> – “Studies Show Little Benefit in Supplements”</td>
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| Mar 29 | Not too much - Obesity | - **AND, 2016**, “Position of Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Interventions for the Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults”  
- **In Defense of Food** – Part 3, Ch 4  
- **Thomas, 2017** – “Intuitive and Mindful Eating for Weight Loss”  
- Popular Press Diet articles on blackboard | - **Reading Response #9 Due** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Apr 3 | Public Health Campaigns | - **Bomkamp, 2016**, “Restaurants prepare to put calories on menus, after years of delays”  
- **Bleich et al., 2015**, “Restaurants With Calories Displayed on Menus Had Lower Calorie Counts Compared to Restaurants Without Such Labels”  
- **Carroll, 2015**, “The Failure of Calorie Counts on Menus”  
- **Mozaffarian et al., 2014**, “The Real Cost of Food”  
- **O’Connor, 2016**, “Coke and Pepsi Give Millions to Public Health, Then” | - **Evidence-Based Meal Plan Assignment Due** |
| **How Can We Shift Health Behaviors? Behavioral Economics and Influence Techniques** | | |

| Apr 5 | Public Health Campaigns | - **Bomkamp, 2016**, “Restaurants prepare to put calories on menus, after years of delays”  
- **Bleich et al., 2015**, “Restaurants With Calories Displayed on Menus Had Lower Calorie Counts Compared to Restaurants Without Such Labels”  
- **Carroll, 2015**, “The Failure of Calorie Counts on Menus”  
- **Mozaffarian et al., 2014**, “The Real Cost of Food”  
- **O’Connor, 2016**, “Coke and Pepsi Give Millions to Public Health, Then” | |
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| Apr 10 | Behavioral Economics | - *Predictably Irrational* – Introduction, Ch 15  
- *Liu et al., 2013*, “Using Behavioral Economics to Design More Effective Food Policies to Address Obesity”  
- *Marchiori et al., 2017*, “Unresolved Questions in Nudging Research: Putting the Psychology Back in Nudging”  
- Reading Response #10 Due |
| Apr 12 | Biases – Loss aversion, status quo bias | - *Predictably Irrational* – Ch. 3, 8, 9  
- *Kahneman, 2011*, “Thinking Fast and Slow chapter excerpts”  
- *Richards, 2013*, “Overcoming an Aversion to Loss” |
| Apr 17 | Biases – Relativity/context, Choice Architecture | - *Predictably Irrational* – Ch. 1, 10  
- *Hollands et al., 2013*, “Altering micro-environments to change population health behavior: towards an evidence base for choice architecture interventions”  
- Reading Response #11 Due |
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<th>Agenda Item</th>
<th>Reading Material</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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| Apr 19 | Biases – Hot vs. Cold, Present-Biased Preferences, Visceral Factors, Willpower | - **Cohen & Babey, 2012,** “Candy at the Cash Register – A Risk factor for Obesity and Chronic Disease”  
- **Sunstein, 2017,** “Nudges that Fail” | Apr 26, 2014 |
| Apr 24 | Biases – Anchors: Habits, Framing, and Social Norms                         | - Predictably Irrational – Ch. 6, 7  
- **Baumeister & Tierney, 2011,** “The Perfect Storm of Dieting” | Reading Response #12 Due |
| Apr 26 | Influence Strategies 1: Authority, Commitment, & Social Proof               | - **McCoy, 2014,** “Half of Dr. Oz’s Medical Advice is Baseless or Wrong, Study Says”  
- **Reynolds, 2017,** “Running May Be Socially Contagious” | Group Project Proposal Due |
| May 1  | Influence Strategies 2: Reciprocation, Liking, & Scarcity                   | - **Spiegel, 2012,** “Give and Take: How the Rule of Reciprocation Binds Us” | Reading Response #13 Due |
| May 3  | Catch-Up/Group Project Work Session                                          | - No Readings                                                                  | Reading Response #14 Due – This is your Individual Evidence Summary that will be included in your group project. |

**Reading Period**

- Creative Group Projects Due!
- Self and Peer Evaluations Due