

GEOG 2160B – Healthy Cities

Course Outline: Section 001 Winter 2026

This course is taught in-person with some asynchronous elements

1. Course Information

Classes Start	Spring Reading Week	Classes End	Stay Day(s)	Exam Period
January 6	February 14-22	April 9	April 10-11	N/A

Tuesday January 13, 2026: Last day to add a second-term half course

Monday February 16, 2026: Family Day

Monday March 30, 2026: Last day to drop a second term half course without penalty

Course Instructor	Contact Information	Office Hours
Dr. Jason Gilliland	Geog2160inbox@uwo.ca	By appointment

Teaching Assistant(s)	Contact Information	Office Hours
Angus Cruikshank	Acruiks2@uwo.ca	TBD
John Hutchenreuther	Jhutche5@uwo.ca	TBD
Neil Kovacs	Nkovac3@uwo.ca	TBD
Rayne Pratt	Rpratt8@uwo.ca	TBD

Communicating with the Instructional Team

- Students should direct all questions related to the course (i.e., assignments, quizzes, surveys, course content) to their assigned Teaching Assistant (TA) using the UWO email addresses of the TAs listed above. Teaching assistants are assigned to students based on the first letter of the student's last name: A-E (TA = Angus); F-K (TA = John); L-R (TA=Neil); and S-Z (TA=Rayne).
- For other issues, students should email the instructor using **geog2160inbox@uwo.ca**.
- Remote or in-person consultations may be requested by emailing the designated teaching assistant or instructor; however, requests must be made at least two days in advance of the requested meeting date to accommodate scheduling.

2. Calendar Description

A survey course exploring the connections between urban environments, health, and wellbeing, including key historical developments, theories, problems, and solutions. Hands-on activities throughout will teach skills and knowledge suitable for careers in planning, urban development, public health, medicine, business, civil engineering, and municipal government.

2 lecture hours, 1 lab hour, 0.5 course

Antirequisite(s): None

Prerequisite(s): None

Prerequisite checking is the student's responsibility

Senate Regulations state, “unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

3. Textbook

All course materials will be posted to OWL Brightspace. Materials will typically be posted 4-7 days in advance of the scheduled lecture. Students are expected to attend all lectures having completed the assigned materials. This material is testable on all assessments.

4. Course Objectives and Format

The places we live, work, and play impact our health and wellbeing. This introductory course explores the concept of the “healthy city” from the perspective of the fields of geography, urban studies, real estate, psychology, economics, health studies, and medicine. This course is suitable for students from all faculties interested in learning about how urban places can shape our health. Through dynamic lectures and hands-on lab activities, students will discover the theories, methods, and techniques that can be used to create healthier cities for all. This is a career-focused learning opportunity that will be practical, realistic, and informative. Skills developed in this course will be transferable to a wide range of disciplines and are expected to be in significant demand among employers in government, corporate, and commercial sectors.

The objective of this course is to explore a variety of topics, including: how historical urban development patterns have led to a wide range of unhealthy landscapes in North America; the urban response to climate change; the impact of parks and nature on health and wellbeing; the role of food environments in shaping urban health; the triple-bottom line of public transit; the importance of walkable and bikeable cities to health and safety; the links between housing and health, and how to design cities for all. Exercises will be conducted throughout the term for students to learn how to complete policy evaluations, environment audits, geographic information system (GIS) mapping, and other techniques that are in-demand skills for employers.

- There will be some asynchronous coursework posted on OWL Brightspace that should be COMPLETED PRIOR TO the lecture.

- Attendance is required to participate in the course content Quizzes.
- Missed work should be completed within 72 hours.
- All course material will be posted to the OWL Brightspace learning environment: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/d2l/home>. Any changes will be indicated on the OWL site and communicated and/or discussed with the class.

Current versions of all popular browsers (e.g., Safari, Chrome, Edge, Firefox) are supported with OWL Brightspace; what is most important is that you update your browser frequently to ensure it is current. All JavaScript and cookies should be enabled.

If students need assistance, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help page](#). Alternatively, they can contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#). They can be contacted by phone at 519- 661-3800 or ext. 83800.

5. Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the built and natural features of a city that can impact human health and wellbeing;
- Define and explain the theories that inform research, policy, and practice around healthy cities across a range of academic disciplines;
- Apply the skills that are useful for analyzing complex urban problems and developing solutions that are practical and cost-effective; and
- Articulate the value of interdisciplinary thinking and collaboration in urban health to a range of public, professional, and academic audiences.

This course contributes to achieving the Department of Geography and Environment's learning outcomes, by encouraging students to:

- Combine geographic knowledge with a focused understanding of theories and practices in other disciplines;
- Describe and explain, analyze, and interpret geographical phenomena outside the classroom by engaging with people, places, and environments;
- Analyze real-world problems and policy applications using geographical concepts, skills, and understanding; and
- Communicate geographic ideas and understanding effectively to a variety of audiences in writing, orally, and graphically.

This course contributes to achieving Western University's degree learning outcomes, by providing opportunities for students to:

- Develop a sense of discovery that drives their ability to ask and frame questions, seek out connections that are not immediately obvious, and identify, analyze and solve problems;
- Use disciplinary discourse, technical language, and research methods to identify, locate, and evaluate oral, print, graphic, numerical, scientific, or digital information in the process of solving complex problems;
- Interact and collaborate with other individuals and groups using appropriate

language and reasoning so that it is clear and accessible to a variety of audiences; and

- Develop habits of constructive skepticism, differentiation, and intellectual adaptability in approaching phenomena, artefacts, issues, or arguments to identify underlying assumptions, agendas, purposes, audiences, points of view, paradigms, evidence, implications, and logical strategies that inform careful judgments.

6. Course Content and Schedule

Week	Dates	Topics
1	January 6	Course Introduction <i>(Survey #1)</i>
2	January 13	Planning & Health: How We Built Cities That Make Us Sick
3	January 20	Parks & Nature: Green Prescriptions for Better Health <i>(Survey #2)</i>
4	January 27	Climate Change, Cities and Health <i>(Assignment #1 due)</i>
5	February 3	Careers in Healthy Cities <i>(Quiz #1 on Weeks 1-4)</i>
6	February 10	Public Transit and the Healthy City <i>(Survey #3)</i>
	February 17	Spring Break: Read, Recreate, Rest
7	February 24	Active Transportation: Walk, Bike, Roll for Health
8	March 3	Road Safety & Injury Prevention <i>(Assignment #2 due)</i>
9	March 10	GIS for Healthy Cities <i>(Quiz #2 on Weeks 5-8)</i>
10	March 17	Feeding the City: Urban Food Environments & Health <i>(Survey #4)</i>
11	March 24	Gimme Shelter: Linking Housing & Health
12	March 31	Designing Healthy Cities for All <i>(Assignment #3 due)</i>
13	April 7	Panel: Healthy Cities for Tomorrow <i>(Quiz #3 on Weeks 9-12) (Survey #5)</i>

7. Communication

- Students should check the OWL site every 48 hours
- A weekly update will typically be provided on the OWL announcements
- Students should email their instructor and teaching assistant(s) using the email addresses listed in Section 1 above. Students will typically receive a response within 48 business hours (i.e., Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm).
- For any communication, the centrally administered **e-mail account** provided to students will be considered the individual's official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that their e-mail account is able to receive messages, and any e-mail received from the University at their official university address is attended to in a timely manner.

8. Evaluation

Below is the evaluation breakdown for the course. Any deviations will be communicated.

Assessment	Format	Weighting	Due Date
Course Content Quiz #1	In class. Mixed format (Multiple choice, fill in the blanks, short answer)	15%	February 3
Course Content Quiz # 2	In class. Mixed format (Multiple choice, fill in the blanks, short answer)	15%	March 10
Course Content Quiz #3	In class. Mixed format (Multiple choice, fill in the blanks, short answer)	15%	April 7
Topical Surveys	Online via OWL Brightspace	5 @ 1% each (5% total)	Jan 6, Jan 20, Feb 10, Mar 17, April 7
Thematic Assignment #1	Submission to OWL Brightspace	15%	January 27
Thematic Assignment #2	Submission to OWL Brightspace	15%	March 3
Thematic Assignment #3	Submission to OWL Brightspace	20%	March 31

There is **no final exam** in this course. The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course. Alternative assessments are not possible as they would not match the intended learning objectives for the course.

Students are responsible for all material covered in class lectures and tutorials, as well as the assigned materials posted on OWL Brightspace

Course Content Quizzes: There are 3 course content quizzes, each one is in mixed format and based on the 4 previous weeks of classes and associated material on OWL. Each quiz is to be completed in person during class time on the scheduled date indicated above. Each quiz is worth 15%, for a total of 45%. The 2 best grades out of the 3 quizzes will be used to calculate the final quiz grade of 45%. See ***Flexibility Statement*** below for how quiz grades will be weighted.

Surveys: At key points throughout the term students will be administered topical surveys. These surveys will be designed to encourage students to think more about course topics and to gather information to help the instructors deliver the course more effectively. There are 5 surveys in total, each worth 1% of the final grade. Students will receive full marks if they fully complete each survey by answering each question (there are no right or wrong answers).

Assignments: There are 3 assignments throughout the term. All assignments are due at 11:55pm EST on the identified due date unless otherwise specified.

Written assignments will be submitted to Turnitin (statement in policies below). Students will have unlimited submissions to Turnitin.

Rubrics will be used to evaluate assessments and will be posted with the instructions. All assignments are evaluated using fair, objective, and structured assessment criteria that is based on the assignment instructions, course objectives, and learning goals.

After an assessment is returned, students must wait 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting the teaching assistants. Requests for a review of a mark must be **submitted within one week of an assignment being returned to the class**. Each re-review of an assignment will be undertaken by the instructor, as well as one or more additional teaching assistants. Note: there is a possibility that a re-review of an assignment may result in the grade being lowered, raised, or staying the same.

Click [here](#) for a detailed and comprehensive set of policies and regulations concerning examinations and grading. The table below outlines the University-wide grade descriptors.

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

Information on Late or Missed Evaluations:

- **Surveys have flexible deadlines.** Topical **Surveys** will close one week after they are assigned. Therefore, to receive the Survey credit you may complete the online Survey any time between the week it was assigned (noted above) and no later than Wednesday at 11:55pm the following week. After one week, the 1% credit will be forfeited.
- **Assignments have flexible deadlines.** You may submit any **Assignment** within **72 hours** (i.e., by Friday at 11:55pm) of the assignment deadline specified above. You do not need to email the course instructor or teaching assistants to request this option nor are you required to provide any justification or documentation. **Quizzes** are exempt from this flexible deadline policy, as each quiz must be completed during the designated class.
- All other extension requests outside the scope of this policy will only be granted to students with approved documentation from their faculty's academic counselling office. All documentation must be submitted to academic counselling within 48 hours

of the identified assignment deadline, otherwise a late penalty will be applied.

- **Late Assignments** submitted more than 72 hours after the identified assignment deadline and without formal documentation from academic counselling will be subject to a **late penalty of 10% per day**.
- **Late Assignments** submitted 1 week (or more) after the identified assignment deadline and without formal documentation from academic counselling will receive a **mark of zero**.

Grades will not be adjusted on the basis of need. It is important to monitor your performance in the course. Remember: *You* are responsible for your grades in this course.

9. Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

General Information about missed work:

University policy on academic considerations are described [here](#). This policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation. Further information about academic considerations, and information about submitting this self-attestation with your academic consideration request may be found here.

Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.

Flexibility statements

Please note that because the submission deadlines for the three **Thematic Assignments** already include flexibility in the form of **three penalty-free grace days (72 hours)**, academic consideration will not be granted for assessments submitted following the end of the period of flexibility, and late penalties will be applied (i.e., 10% per day as indicated above under ***“Information on Late or Missed Evaluations”***).

This course has 3 quizzes, but to be more flexible for students, only the average of your 2 highest quiz marks will count towards your final quiz grade total of 45%. For example:

Scenario A) If a student writes 3/3 quizzes, the lowest quiz grade will be dropped and only the two best quiz grades will be used in the calculation of the final 45% grade for quizzes. (E.g. Quiz #1 = 13/15, Quiz #2 = 8/15, Quiz #3 = 15/15, then final Quiz grade = $(13+15)/30 = 93.333\%$ (or 42/45).

Scenario B) If a student only writes 2 of the 3 quizzes, the average of the grades on those 2 quizzes will be used in the calculation of the final 45% grade (E.g. Quiz #1 =

15/15, Quiz #2 = 12/15, Quiz #3 = did not write, then final Quiz grade = $(15+12)/30 = 90\%$ (or 40.5/45).

Scenario C) If a student only writes 1 quiz, that 1 quiz mark will be used to calculate the final 45% grade. (E.g. Quiz #1 = 15/15, Quiz #2 = did not write, Quiz #3 = did not write, then final Quiz grade = $(15+0)/30 = 50\%$ (or 22.5/45).

Scenario D) If a student does not write any of the 3 quizzes, their final quiz grade will be 0% (or 0/45).

Academic consideration will not be granted for missed quizzes.

Absence from Course Commitments

Students must familiarize themselves with the Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs

Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request at the central academic consideration portal. Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term without supporting documentation. Note that supporting documentation is **always** required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically schedule during the last week of the term. Students should also note that the instructor may designate one assessment per course per term that requires supporting documentation. This designated assessment is described elsewhere in this document. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor of this course, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline. Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness should use the Student Medical Certificate or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner.

Course Assessments that Require Supporting Documentation

None

Academic Consideration for Course Components with Flexible Deadlines

This course uses flexible deadlines for assignments and surveys. The deadlines can be found above in the course outline. For each assignment or survey, students are expected to submit the assignment or complete the survey by the deadline listed. Should illness or extenuating circumstances arise, students are permitted to submit their assignment or survey up to 72 hours past the deadline without academic penalty. Should students submit their assignment or survey beyond 72 hours past the deadline, a late penalty of 10% per day will be subtracted from the assessed grade. As flexible deadlines are used in this course, requests for academic consideration will not be granted. If you have a long-term academic consideration or an accommodation for disability that allows greater flexibility than provided here, please reach out to your instructor at least one week prior to the posted deadline.

Accommodation for Religious Holidays

Students should review the policy for [Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#). Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

10. Use of Electronic Devices

An electronic device capable of accessing OWL Brightspace and the web-based client of ArcGIS is required for this course. No electronic devices will be allowed during the Quizzes.

11. How to Be Successful in this Class:

Students enrolled in this class should understand the level of autonomy and self-discipline required to be successful.

1. Invest in a planner or application to keep track of your courses. Populate all your deadlines at the start of the term and schedule time at the start of each week to get organized and manage your time.
2. Make it a daily habit to log onto OWL to ensure you have seen everything posted to help you succeed in this class.
3. Follow weekly checklists created on OWL or create your own to help you stay on track.
4. Take notes as you go through the lesson material. Keeping handwritten notes or even notes on a regular Word document will help you learn more effectively.
5. Connect with others. Try forming a study group and try meeting on a weekly basis for study and peer support.
6. Do not be afraid to ask questions. If you are struggling with a topic, check the online discussion boards or contact your instructor(s) and or teaching assistant(s).
7. Reward yourself for successes. It seems easier to motivate ourselves knowing that there is something waiting for us at the end of the task.

12. Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In this course, you are encouraged to use AI tools to generate ideas, explore topics, and assist in brainstorming. However, AI tools may not be used to write or complete your assignments. All submitted work must be your original writing, analysis, and reasoning. Using AI-generated content in your assignments is considered academic misconduct and will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary actions.

12. Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a [Scholastic Offence](#).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All

papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

13. Western's Commitment to Accessibility

The Department of Geography and Environment strives at all times to provide accessibility to all faculty, staff, students and visitors in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519-661-2147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. [Information regarding accommodation of exams](#) is available on the Registrar's website.

More information about ["Accessibility at Western"](#) is available.

14. Mental Health

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit Western's [Health and Wellness website](#) for more information on mental health resources.

15. Support Services

[Western's Support Services](#)
[Student Development Centre](#)

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html.

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

16. Important Dates

Monday January 5: Classes resume

Tuesday January 13: Last day to add a second term half course

Monday February 16: Family Day – Department Office Closed

February 16-20: Spring Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)

Monday March 30: Last day to drop a second term half course

Thursday April 9: Classes end

April 10 and 11: Study days

April 12-30: Examination Period