Overview
In this course we examine the impact of the physical environment on human health and health behaviors. Environmental factors to be examined include characteristics of the built and natural environment, housing and neighborhood, as well as sprawl and the dominance of the automobile. We conceptualize “health” broadly to include physical health, obesity, mental health, and cognitive functioning, as well as health behaviors such as diet and physical activity. Working within the life course perspective, we focus on environmental factors that act as either protective mechanisms – fostering the long-term resilience of individuals -- or as risk factors – contributing to long-term vulnerability.

http://courses.cit.cornell.edu/dea661/index.htm

Readings:
Articles on blackboard: www.blackboard.cornell.edu

Requirements & Grading
• Discussion Leadership 15%
Each week, 1 (or 2) student(s) will prepare discussion questions in advance and email these questions to the class by the Sunday (5:00 pm) prior to our meeting. These student(s) will then facilitate discussion in class.

• Class participation & mini assignments 30%
Participation is critical. In addition to contributing to discussion, participation will involve completing several mini-assignments such as environmental evaluations, collecting a bit of data through interviews, observation, etc. or some brief analysis and writing. Students are also invited to participate in a “good news show & tell,” the last ~20 minutes of each class.

• Bridging the Gap: Science to Action 20%
  • Topic, community contact, and idea due Feb 29th
  • Product & presentation due April 11th
Create a research evidence-based product to address a real health/ healthy environment issue in the local community. You need to connect with a real agency or organization to be your partner or client. The “product” might be a 5-minute video, a booklet or brochure, or a website, for example. Themes might include: “Walk Your Kids to School,” “Build a Park,” “Test for Radon” or health impact assessment of a local proposed project.

• Final Paper ~20 pages. 25% due Tuesday April 24
  • Topic Idea 1-2 pages -- due Monday March 5
  • Paper Draft 5% due Friday March 30
  • In-Class Presentation of Final Paper 5% on Wednesday May 2

Your final paper will explore a topic related to environments and health. The paper must include a thorough, well-organized literature review (with at least 10 references – mostly journal articles). The paper may be either a research grant proposal or an empirical research paper (for which you collect some data & report your findings).
OTHER RELEVANT RESOURCES:


WEBSITES:


Active Living Research, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation http://www.activelivingresearch.org/


Health Impact Assessment, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention http://www.cdc.gov/healthplaes/hia.htm

The Story of Stuff http://www.storyofstuff.com/

Dangerous by Design http://t4america.org/resources/dangerousbydesign2011/

Helping Johnny Walk to School http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/historic-schools/additional-resources/community_centered_schools.html

COOL TOOLS:

- Walkscore http://www.walkscore.com/
- Gap Minder http://www.gapminder.org/
Week 1

25 January, Wednesday  
Introduction: Environmental Impacts on Health


Optional Readings 1:

Week 2

1 February, Wednesday  
Historical background: Environment & Public Health

Chapter 2: Urban design: creating an active city, p. 22-24; peruse 25-


Optional Readings:

Week 3

8 February, Wednesday  
Theoretical Grounding: Human Ecology & Health Promotion & The Life Course Perspective


Optional readings are not provided on electronic reserve. Some may be useful resources for final paper.
Optional Readings:


Week 4                  HOUSING
15 February, Wednesday  Housing & Health – Physical Health & Mental Health


Optional Readings:


Week 5                  NEIGHBORHOODS
22 February, Wednesday  Neighborhoods, Nutrition & Health


**Optional Readings:**


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**29 February Bridging the Gap Topic, Community Contact and Idea DUE ~1 page**

**Week 6 THE ENVIRONMENT & HEALTH BEHAVIORS**

**29 February, Wednesday** The Obesity Epidemic

**Environment & Physical Activity**

Chapter 6: Understanding the built environment. (pp. 99-116)


Kuhlman, R. *Helping Johnny Walk to School*. National Trust for Historic Preservation [peruse]


**The Individual**


**Optional Readings:**


**Costs and Consequences of sedentary living: new battleground for an old enemy. President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, Series, 3 (16) (March 2002).**


5 March, MONDAY 12:00 noon Paper Ideas Due – 1-2 pages w/ at least 5 citations

**Week 7**

7 March, Wednesday The Food Environment: From Micro to Macro


Optional Readings:


**Week 8**

14 March Poverty, Race & Health


**Week 9**

---------------------------  **SPRING BREAK**  ---------------------------

**Week 10**

**28 March**  The Life Course & Health


*Optional Readings:*


**30 March, FRIDAY 12:00 noon Final Paper Draft Due**

**Week 11**

**THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

**4 April, Wednesday**  The Natural Environment & Human Well-Being


*Optional Readings:*


**Week 12**

11 April, Wednesday **BRIDGING THE GAP**

**Week 13**

18 April, Wednesday **Consumption; Environmentalism & Sustainability**

**Consumption & Affluenza**

London, B. (1932). Ending the depression through planned obsolescence. (pdf retrieved from Wikipedia)


Optional: Ch 18 An emerging epidemic, pp141-147; Ch 19 The age of affluenza, pp148-154.


**Environmentalism & Sustainability: Taking Care of our Planet**


Optional Readings:

For more resources see: http://www.storyofstuff.com/reading.php#consumption


Conservation Psychology website: http://www.conservationpsychology.org/

**Week 14**

24 April, TUESDAY **Final Papers Due by 12:00 noon**

**Week 15**

2 May, Wednesday **Presentation of Final Papers**