

GPHY 887*
THE GEOGRAPHY OF HEALTH
AND HEALTH CARE

Winter 2012

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Course Concept

Medical geography is generally defined under two major themes: the geography of disease and the geography of health care. The thrust of research under the disease theme has been to examine the spatial diffusion of disease and the linkages among disease, the physical environment and human practice. Some typical examples are modelling the spatial diffusion of measles and the geography of AIDS. The thrust of research under the health care delivery theme has been to examine issues related to the location of health care deliverers, facilities and consumers. The location of physicians and the impacts of mental health facilities on neighbourhoods are typical examples of this theme. Recently, this view of medical geography has been overtaken by arguments for a geography of health and health care. The geography of health and health care emphasises a more “critical” geography, which seeks to take into account “place”, “structure” and “agency,” “health and the environment,” and “globalization.”

This graduate seminar has three goals. First, to evaluate the underlying arguments for the traditional definition of medical geography and new ways of defining a geography of health and health care. Secondly, to consider a selection of topics which are of current interest to medical/health geographers. Some possible topics are women's health and health care, restructuring of health care systems, ageing and health, and the links between health and the environment. At the organisational meeting of the course, a set of topics will be chosen by the seminar group depending on the particular interests of the participants. The third goal of the seminar is to situate much of the discussion within the context of changing Canadian and global public policy towards the delivery of health care, the implications for people's health, and what this means for those involved in the delivery of health care.

Course Organisation

One three hour seminar will be held each week. Participants are expected to read all pre-assigned materials and be prepared to discuss the readings. Participants are also expected to contribute to the discussion of their colleagues' presentations.

Course Evaluation

Evaluation will be based on the oral and written presentation of two papers. The topics for the papers are to be selected by the student with the agreement of the instructor. Each paper will be worth 50 percent of the final grade. Papers will be approximately 5000 words in length. Papers will be submitted within one week of the oral presentation to the seminar group.

Time and Place: Wednesdays 9:00 to 12:00. The Rutherford Room - E310 Mackintosh-Corry Hall