University of Toronto
Human Biology Program & Summer Abroad Programs, Woodsworth College

HMB395Y0

GLOBAL MIGRATION AND HEALTH – PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FIELD

Course Syllabus – Summer 2026
June 29 – July 23

We would like to acknowledge the land of the Zapotecs, Mixtecs, Mazatecos, Chinantecos, Mixe, Chatino, Trique, Huave and other Indigenous Peoples on which this course is taught.

We also acknowledge the traditional territories of the Mississauga of the New Credit First Nation, Anishnawbe, Wendat, Huron, and Haudenosaunee Indigenous Peoples on which the University of Toronto now stands.

We pay our respects to all our ancestors and to the Elders and Knowledge Keepers of all the wisdom traditions.

As we discuss global migration and forced displacement, we reflect on the colonialism, broken treaties, forced displacement, genocide, state-sanctioned oppression, violence, racism, and injustices perpetrated against Indigenous Peoples, in Mexico, Canada and around the world, over hundreds of years, and ongoing today.

May we be honest about our complicity in upholding the status quo and honour our responsibility to lead by example and advocate for change at the individual, institutional, and systemic levels.

Time:	Daily, from Monday to Thursday, 9am-12pm, plus special afternoon sessions and field trips (see Course Calendar)
Location:	Oaxaca (June 29 – July 16) and Mexico City (July 20-23), Mexico

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About the Instructor

Over the past four decades, I have worked as a journalist, researcher, educator, and manager of health-related interventions on four continents and at least 15 countries, including Mexico, mainly in the global south. I have spent many years in Latin America, have a good cultural understanding of the region – its extreme diversity and complexity, and speak Spanish fluently. I have completed a Master of Public Health with a global health emphasis at the University of Wales College of Medicine, Cardiff, UK, and a PhD in the Institute of Health Policy, Management, and Evaluation, at the University of Toronto. Both my Master thesis and doctoral dissertation focus on the links between the migration experience and health. I have been teaching at the University of Toronto since 2006. I teach both graduate and undergraduate courses in global health, migration and health, and the links between the polycrisis, displacement, and health. My research interests focus on the impact of the global economic regime and multiple ecological crises on migration fluxes and health. As an integral part of my academic work, I am also interested in issues of quality of life and scholarship in the context of the neoliberal university.

1. INTRODUCTION AND COURSE RATIONALE

HMB395Y0 – Global Migration and Health – Perspectives from the Field adopts an interdisciplinary approach to introduce students to human migration as an increasingly significant global phenomenon and a fundamental determinant of health. Impacted by and interacting with other structural determinants of health, migration influences the health status of those who move and of individuals, communities, and entire societies in countries of origin, transit, and resettlement, presenting significant challenges in terms of both policy development and health care organization and delivery.

Incorporating scholarly work from the fields of public health, the social sciences, and law, the course is based on readings, small-group and plenary discussions, lectures, and experiential activities. As Mexico is at the same time the country with the largest number of emigrants in the world, a major migration route, and an increasingly important migration destination, it represents an ideal location for a course of this nature.

This course offers students the opportunity to acquire a more direct understanding of the experience of both international and internal migrants, their communities of origin, the communities who host them, and the organizations that work to support them, than the one they would get by taking a comparable course offered on campus, in Toronto, due to the relative geographic isolation of Canada and the particular features of the Canadian immigration system.

2. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

a. Define key terms, explain core concepts, and recognize the essential features of the human migration phenomenon
b. Recognize the links between migration and other historical and present-time global phenomena
c. Recall, summarize, and contrast some of the major alternative theories of migration
d. Analyze the role of migration as a social determinant of health, and its interactions with other determinants, with a perspective from the South
e. Apply critical, practical and creative thinking to the analysis of specific migration & health issues; and,
f. Locate and assess additional resources and identify further opportunities for personal and professional development in the migration & health field

3. COURSE LOCATION

The first three weeks of the course are offered in Oaxaca, the capital city of the State of Oaxaca and one of the most beautiful cities in southern Mexico. Oaxaca is rich in history and both archeological and architectural treasures. It is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Members of several Indigenous Peoples represent more than 30% of the population in the State. Indigenous culture is very strong in the region, with a significant proportion of the population speaking one of many Indigenous languages as their first and sometimes only language. Oaxaca is often acknowledged as the culinary capital of Mexico. The city is in the foothills of the Sierra Madre mountain range at an elevation of 1,500m. The range of temperatures, in July, is between a minimum of 16, at night, and a maximum of 30 °C. The course includes ***one local afternoon field trips to a local centre assisting migrants,*** and ***one full-day field trip to a traditional Indigenous medicine centre located approximately two hours from Oaxaca***. In addition, ***the last week of the course will be held in Mexico City***. It will be an important opportunity to meet researchers from some of the major academic institutions in the country and advocates working with migrants in Mexico and Latin America.

4. COURSE FORMAT

Daily three-hour sessions, from 9am to 12pm, Mondays to Thursdays, represent the backbone of this seminar course. I don't use the term '*seminar*' lightly: ***students play a central and active role in the learning process***.

We will use our time in class to:

- Discuss the material for the current module, in small groups and in plenary
- Meet and interact with a few course contributors who will enrich the learning experience by sharing their perspectives
- Deepen and expand, through short, interactive lectures, our understanding of the topics covered during the course
- Clarify difficult points and answer questions; and
- Identify key take-home lessons.

In addition, three two-hour afternoon sessions will be held, at the beginning of the course, to present and discuss some of the methodological approaches and tools used in the course.

We will use ***Quercus*** for virtually all other course-related activities.

A requirement for enrolling in HMB395Y0 is having ***completed 9 full course equivalents***. If you do not meet this requirement but are interested in the course, please reach out to me as exceptions may be possible.

Also, ***if you have completed HST405H – Global Migration and Health, you cannot enroll in this course.***

The most important requirements, however, are:

- ***A genuine interest in the topic explored by this course***; and,
- ***Enthusiasm, intellectual curiosity, and a desire to actively learn and contribute to the successful delivery of the course***.

HMB395Y0 is offered only for the second time, in 2026, and is a work in progress. We are all co-learners. Some aspects of the course will be tweaked, over the four weeks, if we feel a need for it. To help with this, at the end of each week you will have the opportunity to anonymously ***share feedback***. Without your feedback, I cannot take care of the small, and sometimes bigger, problems that always appear during a course.

You are always encouraged to ask me questions, during our daily sessions, on Quercus, or by email. Asking questions is an indicator of interest, engagement and maturity. Once again, we are all here to learn!

5. ATTENDANCE

Class attendance and participation in field trips are mandatory, as for all Summer Abroad Programs courses, ***and will be monitored***. Students missing more than half of a class or of a field trip will be reported to the On-Site Coordinator. ***Students missing a class/the majority of a class or a field trip without a valid documented excuse***, such as illness, ***will be automatically withdrawn from the course***.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND ASSIGNMENTS

General Aspects

To achieve excellent results, you should plan to dedicate, on average, ***25-30 hours a week*** to this course. This time includes attending daily sessions, reading the course material, working on the course assignments, and participating in field trips. Obviously, this is just an estimate and the time needed by each of you to excel may vary considerably. ***For each assignment, I will make available, on Quercus, instructions, evaluation criteria, and tips.***

This course has neither a mid-term exam nor a final exam. Instead, I will evaluate you according to the following criteria.

Evaluation Criteria/Assignments	Weight	Deadlines
Active contributions to the course	10%	Ongoing
Weekly assignments (four, 5%-15% each)	40%	July 2, 9, 16, and 23
In-class presentation (group assignment)	20%	July 22
Final paper (group assignment, due after return)	30%	July 31, at 5pm

Active contributions to the course (10%)

Actively contributing to the course is a lot more than just attending the daily sessions and field trips. The course is designed to encourage as much as possible ***active and collective learning***. We all have something to teach to and learn from each other. The work in class is the most significant time to learn. Also, what we learn together in class will significantly help you submit high-quality assignments. 'Active contribution points' can be earned in many different ways such as, among many others, by:

- Asking relevant, meaningful, smart questions
- Actively engaging in class discussions and activities
- Sharing personal experiences, ideas, perspectives, and well-supported opinions, particularly when they enrich the ongoing discussion and open new interpretative windows
- Identifying and sharing interesting connections/tensions/contradictions between a topic currently under discussion and other topics covered during this course or in other courses you have already completed
- Skillfully reporting back the results of small-group discussions
- Contributing to the discussion forums, available on Quercus
- …

By mid-course, I will give you a sense of how you are performing in terms of participation.

Weekly assignments (5%, July 2; 10%, July 9 and 16; 15%, July 23)

To help you find the appropriate incentives to engage with the course material on an ongoing basis and not fall behind, an essential condition to be able to actively participate in class, at the end of each week/module you will have to complete a ***weekly assignments*** that represent an additional opportunity to reflect, individually, on the materials for the module. ***Weekly assignments are completed in class, on Thursdays, during the last hour of the daily session***. Detailed instructions to complete the weekly assignments will be made available on Quercus and discussed in class at the beginning of the course.

In-class presentation (20%)

As a term project, you will work in small, randomly-selected groups to analyze and critically reflect on a topic relevant to the course. You will be able to select your favourite topic out of a list I will make available early in the course. Throughout the course, we will protect time to discuss your term projects. My intention is to support you as much as possible for you to reach excellence. The first part of the term project will be an oral, in-class presentation of the work done. ***Presentations will take place on July 22***. I will post detailed instructions for in-class presentations on Quercus.

Final paper (group assignment) (30%)

Immediately after your presentations, you will receive feedback from both your peers and me. That feedback will be useful for you to 'polish' the work done and submit it, as an essay that represents the second and final part of your term project. ***The essay is due on July 31st, at 5pm***, that is, after we come back from Mexico. I will post detailed instructions for the final assignment on Quercus.

The use of generative artificial intelligence for the preparation of in-class presentations and final assignments ***is strongly discouraged but allowed, following the specific instructions that will be made available early in the course***.

7. COURSE POLICIES

Maintaining a Safe Learning Space

Given the highly contentious nature of many of the topics covered in this course, you will be exposed to opinions that may differ radically from your own. This is the nature of academia! Discussion is open and ***disagreement is not only allowed but also encouraged. Yet, in all cases, opinions and disagreements must be expressed respectfully!*** Both the classroom and Quercus are safe and inclusive spaces that welcome all participants. All individual and group contributions are received in a positive and respectful way. The official statement on respectful discourse suggested by the University of Toronto follows.

"The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities."

How I Assess Your Contributions

I will NEVER assess your contributions to the course, whether they are made during in-class sessions, on Quercus, or through assignments, on the basis of the ideas or opinions you express!

Instead, my assessment is based on:

- the way you support with evidence and logic those ideas and opinions;
- the clarity and precision of your language; and,
- the critical and independent thinking qualities of your contributions.

Communication

To ensure an efficient and a rapid response, for all course-related emails, please ***either email me directly from Quercus or, if you use your personal email, make sure you***:

1) Use your official University of Toronto email account; and,
2) Include a subject line that starts with 'HMB395Y0 - ' and clearly describes the focus of your message.

You emails are a top priority for me, but they may get lost among the many I receive every day, unless you follow these two simple rules. I will strive to respond within 24h.

If your intention is to ask a question, in your email, first make sure that the question has not yet been addressed in the syllabus, in the instructions and evaluation rubrics for specific assignments, or anywhere else on Quercus. Also, unless your question is of a personal nature, ***instead of emailing it, please either use the Q&A Forum available through Quercus or ask it in classroom***, as the whole class can benefit from the answer. Don't be afraid to ask questions publicly: we all miss something, from time to time. Trust me: you are never the only one with that question! ***If a question is of a personal nature***, however, please email me.

Finally, please, make sure you check regularly ***Quercus*** for new information and last-minute changes.

Grading

Grading will be in accordance with the grade scale for undergraduate education included in the official University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy.

Academic Integrity

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. Academic integrity is a fundamental value of learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that your degree is valued and respected as a true signifier of your individual academic achievement.

The University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty, the processes for addressing academic offences, and the penalties that may be imposed. You are expected to be familiar with the contents of this document. Not knowing the rules is not excuse! Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

- In papers and assignments:
  - Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement
  - Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor
  - Making up sources or facts
  - Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment (this includes working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work)
- On tests and exams:
  - Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone
  - Looking at someone else's answers
  - Letting someone else look at your answers
  - Misrepresenting your identity
  - Submitting an altered test for re-grading
- Misrepresentation:
  - Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes
  - Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation website. The use of this tool is voluntary and you have the right to request an alternative arrangement.

Extensions and Penalties for Late Assignments

You can take advantage of an ***automatic 48h extension on the final assignment***. To benefit from these extension, you don't need to request any permission. Do take advantage of this extension, if you really need to, but, please, ***strive to submit the final assignment by the due date. Being on time is a fundamental skill to learn and one of the most difficult to develop!***

Additional extensions for extraordinary personal emergencies or illness can be granted but ***they require official documentation, according to University of Toronto policies, and must be discussed with me as early as possible, as soon as you realize there is a problem, and not when the deadline for the assignment has passed or is just hours away***.

Late assignments will be penalized ***10 percentage points per day*** and will only be ***accepted up to one week after the due date***, unless an extraordinary extension has been granted. ***IMPORTANT: late assignment do not benefit from the automatic 48h extension***. Therefore, if you submit more than 48h after the deadline, each and every day will count in the calculation of the penalty.

Accessibility and Accommodation

The University provides academic accommodation for students with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the University courses and programs.

If you know you require accommodation, or even if you just think you might require accommodation, please contact Accessibility Services, by following the link, as early in the term as possible, as securing an appointment may take significant time. You can also call 416-978-8060 or email accessibility.services@utoronto.ca. If you have a ***letter of accommodation*** related to this course, please share it with me as soon as possible and, if possible, at the beginning of the term, to ensure I can be as supportive as possible.

8. DATES TO REMEMBER

First in-person session	June 29
Weekly assignments	**July 2, 9, 16, and 23**
Final date to drop the course without academic penalty	July 13
Group presentations	**July 22**
Last in-person session	July 23
Final assignment due	**July 31, at 5pm**

9. COURSE STRUCTURE

Some aspects of the course structure will be adjusted 'in real time.' This is particularly true for topics covered during the last module. ***Readings, slides, additional materials for each module, and a detailed course calendar will be made available on Quercus***.

MODULE TOPICS

Module 1 (June 29 – July 2) – Introduction to Migration as a Global Phenomenon; Migration Theories

Module 2 (July 6 – 9) – Migration and Health

July 8, in the afternoon, visit to centre for the protection of migrants

Module 3 (July 13 – 16) – Contemporary Migration

July 15, full-day visit to traditional Indigenous medicine centre

Module 4 (Mexico City) (July 20 – 23) – Local Perspectives; the Future of Migration; Conclusions