

**MDSC 535**  
**Psychosocial Oncology**

**Instructors:**

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**Office Hours/Policy on Answering Student Emails**

Office hours are by appointment. All course communication must occur through your @ucalgary email, and emails will be answered as soon as possible, generally within 48 hours

**Time and Location:**

Wednesdays 12:30pm-3:15pm

For location see D2L

**Prerequisite/Co-Requisite:**

None

**Course Description:**

Psychosocial Oncology focuses on understanding the research and developing the understanding in health care practitioners of the central concepts related to caring for cancer patients and their families.

**Overarching Theme**

Psychosocial Oncology is a course offered to graduate students and to advanced undergraduate students who are either enrolled in an Honours program or have a record of high academic achievement. The course is recognized by the Cumming School of Medicine and the Department of Psychology, and Faculties of Social Work and Nursing.

Psychosocial Oncology is the study of the psychosocial ramifications of cancer for patients and their families. Its foundations include the basic assumption that psychosocial sequelae are an integral part of the disease process for cancer patients and those who support them. The course will look at possible causes of psychosocial problems in cancer patients and families (biological, psychological, and social), and also at how patients and families are helped through the difficult transitions resulting from a cancer diagnosis, treatment, recurrent disease, and end of life care. The course is seminar-based and will consist in a series of presentations by various experts in the field. Each presentation will be accompanied by a reading list.

**Global Objectives**

As much as possible, the course will encourage:

- critical and creative thinking
- effective oral and written communication
- the analysis of problems, the growth of insight and intuition in understanding psychosocial problems associated with cancer

- the acquisition of more advanced knowledge leading to the emergence of research ideas and to the development of interpretive, assessment, and treatment skills for active practitioners.

### Course Learning Outcomes

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

1. understand basic concepts in psychosocial oncology
2. understand the impact of cancer from the patient, family, or caregiver perspective throughout the trajectory of the disease
3. formulate research hypotheses on the basis of detailed reviews of the literature
4. discuss knowledge and interventions that help patients, families, and caregivers who experience emotional distress
5. understand the role of multidisciplinary interventions in working with cancer patients and their families

### Transferable Skill Development:

Many of the skills and abilities that you are developing in your coursework are transferable to the workforce, graduate and professional studies and other facets of life. Employers seek applicants with transferable skills because they can be an asset in the workplace, regardless of industry or sector. Transferable skills are core skills for your success in building your future career.

The work that you will do in MDSC 535 will help you build the following transferable skills:

- **Collaboration:** Work respectfully with others from different backgrounds, cultures, and countries.
- **Verbal Communication:** Learn and share information by presenting, listening, and interacting with others.
- **Creativity and Innovation:** Find different and better ways to do things, being curious, thinking imaginatively.
- **Critical Thinking:** Actively and skillfully conceptualize, apply, analyze, synthesize, and/or evaluate information (data, facts, observable phenomena, and research findings) to make a reasoned judgement or draw a reasonable conclusion.
- **Information Literacy:** Find, understand, and use information presented through words, symbols, and images
- **Problem solving:** Identify an issue, find and implement a solution, and assess whether the situation has improved.
- **Written Communication:** Share ideas and information by using words, images, and symbols.

### Learning Resources

There is no specific textbook required. A list of required and recommended readings for each lecture will be posted on Brightspace by Desire2Learn (D2L). All readings (often journal articles) will be available via the U of C library electronic journal access. Students will be responsible for accessing and/or obtaining the reading materials before the lecture. If not otherwise accessible, readings will be distributed by the instructor(s) the week before the lecture.

The U of C policy of acceptable use of material protected by copyright will be duly followed.

### A Note regarding readings

A list of required readings will be outlined on D2L and links and documents will be made available, where possible. Required readings have been chosen carefully to inform you and enhance the lecture material. **Students are REQUIRED to complete assigned readings BEFORE each lecture.** Instructors will proceed in class on the assumption that students have read completely the assigned readings. Students should be aware that many of the readings they will be assigned may be of an unfamiliar nature and style. Students should allot sufficient time to allow for several reads of the assigned material.

### Learning Technology Requirements

Brightspace (by D2L) is located on the University of Calgary server and will be used extensively for communication with students. **It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they receive all posted communications and documents and that they receive emails sent by instructors or fellow students through D2L.** Only your @ucalgary.ca email address may be linked to D2L. Please ensure that you are regularly checking your @ucalgary.ca account.

### Evaluation

The University policy on grading and related matters is described in section F of the 2023-2024 Calendar.

In determining the overall grade in the course, the following weights will be used:

Assessment Methods	Description	Weight %	Due Date and Time
Mid-term #1	<p>Take home written exam, one week to complete. Submit the exam in the appropriate D2L dropbox.</p> <p>The course learning outcomes addressed by this assignment are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. understand basic concepts in psychosocial oncology</li><li>2. understand the impact of cancer from the patient, family, or caregiver perspective throughout the trajectory of the disease</li><li>3. understand the role of multidisciplinary interventions in working with cancer patients and their families</li></ol>	25%	Given Oct 4, Due <b>Oct 11 at 12:40 PM</b>

Assessment Methods	Description	Weight %	Due Date <u>and</u> Time
Mid-term #2	<p>Take home exam, knowledge dissemination tool, one week to complete. Submit the exam in the appropriate D2L dropbox.</p> <p>The course learning outcomes addressed by this assignment are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss knowledge and interventions that help patients, families, and caregivers who experience emotional distress</li> </ol>	25%	Given Nov 1, <b>Due Nov 8 at 12:40 PM</b>
Term paper	<p>15- page academic paper (usually in APA style) on a subject of the student's choice. Discuss the subject with the instructor prior to writing to assure that the subject is appropriate in the context of the course. Submit the paper in the appropriate D2L dropbox.</p> <p>The course learning outcomes addressed by this assignment are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formulate research hypotheses on the basis of detailed reviews of the literature (when applicable)</li> <li>2. Discuss knowledge and interventions that help patients, families, and caregivers who experience emotional distress</li> </ol>	35%	<b>Due Nov 22 at 11:59pm</b>

Assessment Methods	Description	Weight %	Due Date <u>and</u> Time
Final Assignment	<p>Take home written assignment, one week to complete. Submit the assignment in the appropriate D2L dropbox.</p> <p>The course learning outcomes addressed by this assignment are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand the role of social disparities in cancer</li> <li>2. understand the role of multidisciplinary interventions in working with cancer patients and their families</li> </ol>	15%	<b>Final assignment given, due on Friday Dec 8 in D2L dropbox no later than 11:59 PM</b>

There is no final examination.

A student's final grade for the course is the sum of the separate assignments. It is not necessary to pass each assignment separately in order to pass the course.

**A Note regarding Writing Assignments:**

Writing skills are important to academic study in all disciplines. In keeping with the University of Calgary's emphasis on the importance of academic writing in student assignments (section E.2 of 2023-24 Calendar), writing is emphasized, and the grading thereof in determining a student's mark in this course. The Bachelor of Health Sciences values excellence in writing. Competence in writing entails skills in crafting logical, clear, coherent, non-redundant sentences, paragraphs and broader arguments, as well as skills with the mechanics of writing (grammar, spelling, punctuation). Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. The University of Calgary offers instructional services through the Students' Success Centre's Writing Support Services (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/writingsupport/>) for students seeking feedback on assignments or seeking to improve their general writing skills. Students are **strongly encouraged** to take advantage of these programs.

**Grading Scheme:**

Letter Grade	Description	Percentage
A+	Outstanding performance	96-100
A	Excellent performance	90-95.99
A-	Approaching excellent performance	85-89
B+	Exceeding good performance	80-84
B	Good performance	75-79
B-	Approaching good performance	70-74
C+	Exceeding satisfactory performance	65-69
C	Satisfactory performance	60-64
C-	Approaching satisfactory performance	57-59
D+	Marginal pass	54-56
D	Minimal pass	50-53
F	Does not meet course requirements	0-49

**Missed Components of Term Work:**

**Students will lose 5% per day late past the deadline for all assignments, including weekends.**

Assignments will **NOT** be accepted more than 72 hours after the posted deadline and students failing to submit any assignment within this time frame will receive a mark of zero. **Students who miss an assignment will receive a mark of zero unless the instructor has been previously notified. There will be NO exceptions to this policy.**

**Extensions will NOT be granted** on any assignment or quizzes in MDSC 535. The only exceptions to this are those in keeping with the University Calendar (debilitating illness, religious conviction, or severe domestic affliction) that are received in writing and with supporting documentation. Traffic jams and late or full buses are common events in Calgary and are NOT acceptable reasons for late arrivals to class, meetings and examinations. Please note that while absences are permitted for religious reasons, students are responsible for providing advance notice and adhering to other guidelines on this matter, as outlined in the University Calendar (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-4.html>).

**Course Evaluations and Student Feedback**

Student feedback will be sought at the end of the course through the Universal Student Rating of Instruction (USRI) and a qualitative student evaluation. Students are welcome to discuss the process and content of the course at any time with the instructor. Students may also address any concerns they may have with Dr. Fabiola Aparicio-Ting, Associate Dean (Undergraduate Health and Science Education) in the Cumming School of Medicine ([feapartic@ucalgary.ca](mailto:feapartic@ucalgary.ca)).

**Attendance**

Because enrollment in the course is limited to a small number of participants (10 to 12) and because the course is given in a seminar form, students are expected to attend regularly and to participate in class discussions. 'Cherry picking' lectures according to interest is strongly discouraged, as selective attendance affects the overall atmosphere and functioning of the group.

**Conduct During Lectures**

The classroom should be respected as a safe place to share ideas without judgement - a community in which we can all learn from one another. Students are expected to frame their comments and questions to lecturers in respectful and appropriate language, always maintaining sensitivity towards the topic. Students, employees, and academic staff are also expected to demonstrate behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment.

As members of the University community, students, employees and academic staff are expected to demonstrate conduct that is consistent with the University of Calgary Calendar, the Code of Conduct and Non-Academic Misconduct policy and procedures, which can be found at

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-conduct/policy> .

**Students are expected to take notes during class and should not rely solely on material supplied by the instructors. Instructors may or may not post lectures notes to D2L, at their individual discretion. Instructors may cover concepts or examples in class that may not be posted to D2L but may be assessed.**

**Use of Internet and Electronic Communication Devices in Class**

The Bachelor of Health Sciences program aims to create a supportive and respectful learning environment for all students. The use of laptop and mobile devices is acceptable when used in a manner appropriate to the course and classroom activities. However, research studies have found that

inappropriate/off-topic use of electronic devices in the classroom negatively affects the learning of others during class time.

Students are responsible for being aware of the University's Internet and email use policy, which can be found at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-electronic-resources-and-information-policy>.

## **UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY POLICIES AND SUPPORTS**

### **Copyright**

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy>) and requirements of the Copyright Act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks, etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>.

### **Instructor Intellectual Property**

Course materials created by instructors (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may **NOT** be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the professor. **The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited.** Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course **at the same time** may be allowed under fair dealing.

### **Academic Accommodations**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures listed below. The Student Accommodations policy is available at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/access/prospective-students/academic-accommodations>. Students needing an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Accommodation-for-Students-with-Disabilities-Procedure.pdf>). SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodations to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to Dr. Fabiola Aparicio-Ting, Associate Dean (Undergraduate Health and Science Education) in the Cumming School of Medicine ([feaparic@ucalgary.ca](mailto:feaparic@ucalgary.ca)).

### **Academic Misconduct**

The University of Calgary is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. The University of Calgary has created rules to govern all its members regarding the creation of knowledge and the demonstration of knowledge having been learned.

Academic Misconduct refers to student behaviour that compromises proper assessment of a student's academic activities and includes (but is not limited to): cheating, fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance, failure to comply with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessments in their courses, and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar. **It also includes using of third party websites/services to access past/current course material, essay/assignment writing services, or real-time assistance in completing assessments, seeking answers to assessment questions and similar, whether paid, bartered or unpaid.**

For information of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures, please visit; <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-academic-misconduct-policy>.

Additional information is available on the Academic Integrity website at: <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/learning/academic-integrity>.

### **Recording of Lectures**

Audio or video recording of lectures (or similar) is prohibited except where explicit permission has been received from the instructor.

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act**

Student information will be collected in accordance with typical (or usual) classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary

### **Appeals**

If there is a concern with the course, academic matter or a grade, first communicate with the instructor. If these concerns cannot be resolved, students can proceed with an academic appeal, as per Section I of the University Calendar. Students must follow the official reappraisal/appeal process and may contact the Student Ombuds' Office (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/ombuds>) for assistance with this and with any other academic concerns, including academic and non-academic misconduct. Students should be aware that concerns about graded term work may only be initiated **within 10 business days** of first being notified of the grade. <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-2.html>

### **\*MEDIA RECORDING (if applicable)**

Please refer to the following statement on media recording of students: [https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Media-Recording-in-Learning-Environments-OSP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Media-Recording-in-Learning-Environments-OSP_FINAL.pdf)

### **\*Media recording for lesson capture**

The instructor may use media recordings to capture the delivery of a lecture. These recordings are intended to be used for lecture capture only and will not be used for any other purpose. Although the recording device will be fixed on the Instructor, in the event that incidental student participation is recorded, the instructor will ensure that any identifiable content (video or audio) is masked, or will seek consent to include the identifiable student content to making the content available on University approved platforms.

### **\*Media recording for self-assessment of teaching practices**

The instructor may use media recordings as a tool for self-assessment of their teaching practices. Although the recording device will be fixed on the instructor, it is possible that student participation in



the course may be inadvertently captured. These recordings will be used for instructor self-assessment only and will not be used for any other purpose.

### **\*Media recording for the assessment of student learning**

The instructor may use media recordings as part of the assessment of students. This may include but is not limited to classroom discussions, presentations, clinical practice, or skills testing that occur during the course. These recordings will be used for student assessment purposes only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

### **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Policy**

The University recognizes that all members of the University Community should be able to learn, work, teach and live in an environment where they are free from harassment, discrimination, and violence. The University of Calgary's sexual violence policy guides us in how we respond to incidents of sexual violence, including supports available to those who have experienced or witnessed sexual violence, or those who are alleged to have committed sexual violence. It provides clear response procedures and timelines, defines complex concepts, and addresses incidents that occur off-campus in certain circumstances. Please see the policy available at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Sexual-and-Gender-Based-Violence-Policy.pdf>.

### **Resources for Support of Student Learning, Success, Safety and Wellness**

Student Success Centre	<a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/</a>
Student Wellness Centre	<a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/</a>
Student Advocacy and Wellness Hub (CSM)	<a href="https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/mdprogram/current-students/student-advising-wellness">https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/mdprogram/current-students/student-advising-wellness</a>
Distress Centre	<a href="http://www.distresscentre.com/">http://www.distresscentre.com/</a>
Library Resources	<a href="http://library.ucalgary.ca">http://library.ucalgary.ca</a>

### **Wellness and Mental Health Resources**

The University of Calgary recognizes the pivotal role that student mental health plays in physical health, social connectedness and academic success, and aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive supports when needed. We encourage you to explore the excellent mental health resources available throughout the university community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support or skills-building available through the SU Wellness Centre (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/services/mental-health-services>) and the Campus Mental Health Strategy (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>).

### **Student Ombuds' Office**

The Student Ombuds' Office supports and provides a safe, neutral space for students. For more information, please visit [www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/ombuds/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/ombuds/) or email [ombuds@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ombuds@ucalgary.ca)

### **BHSc Student Faculty Liaison Committee (SFLC)**

The BHSc SFLC, with elected representatives from all majors, serves to raise issues of interest to BHSc students to the program administration, including items pertaining to curriculum, scheduling and events. A list of current representatives can be found on the BHSc website.

### **Student Union (SU) Information**

The SU Vice-President Academic can be reached at (403) 220-3911 or [suvpaca@ucalgary.ca](mailto:suvpaca@ucalgary.ca); the SU representatives for the Cumming School of Medicine can be reached at [medrep1@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:medrep1@su.ucalgary.ca) or [medrep2@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:medrep2@su.ucalgary.ca).

**Student Success Centre**

The Student Success Centre provides services and programs to ensure students can make the most of their time at the University of Calgary. Our advisors, learning support staff, and writing support staff assist students in enhancing their skills and achieving their academic goals. They provide tailored learning support and advising programs, as well as one-on-one services, free of charge to all undergraduate and graduate students. For more information visit: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success>

**Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points**

As part of the University of Calgary Emergency Evacuation plan, students, faculty, and staff should locate the closest Assembly Point in case of Fire Alarm. Safety signage is posted throughout the campus showing the locations and the possible route to these locations. All students, faculty, and staff are expected to promptly make their way to the nearest Assembly Point if the Fire Alarm is activated. No one is to return into campus facilities until an all clear is given to the warden in charge of the Assembly Area. For more information, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/building-evacuation/assembly-points>

**Safewalk**

Campus security will escort individuals, day or night, anywhere on campus (including McMahon Stadium, Health Sciences Centre, Student Family Housing, the Alberta Children's Hospital and the University LRT station). Call 403-220-5333 or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk>. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot pay booths. Please ensure your personal safety by taking advantage of this service.

## Class Schedule

CLASS SCHEDULE			
Course Schedule Date	Topic, Activities & Readings	Instructor	Assignments/Due Dates & Times
September 6	Introduction to Psychosocial Oncology and Overview:	Fiona Schulte	
September 13	Epidemiological Approaches to Cancer Research  Engaging Patients in Research	Miranda Fidler-Benaoudia  Perri Tutelman	
September 20	Psychobiological Aspects of Cancer  Screening for Distress in Cancer Treatment Environments	Tavis Campbell  Barry Bultz	
September 27	Developmental issues and family dynamics in adults with cancer  Psychosocial challenges of caregivers of cancer patients	Guy Pelletier  Sara Beattie	
October 4	Psychosocial aspects of complementary and alternative therapies in Cancer		<b>First Mid-term take home exam given</b>  <b>Students to consider a final paper topic and discuss it with the facilitator if not yet done</b>
October 11	Cognition and cancer	Guy Pelletier	<b>First Mid-term take home exam due</b>
October 18	Ethics and Informed Decision-Making in Oncology  Medical assistance in dying (MAiD): implications for psychosocial oncology	Kyle Anstey	
October 25	Fear of Cancer Recurrence  Exercise and cancer	Perri Tutelman  Julia Duan (Nicole Culos- Reed lab)	
November 1	Sexuality and Cancer	Lauren Walker	<b>Second mid-term given</b> <b>Class Presentations</b>

<b>CLASS SCHEDULE</b>			
<b>Course Schedule Date</b>	<b>Topic, Activities &amp; Readings</b>	<b>Instructor</b>	<b>Assignments/Due Dates &amp; Times</b>
November 8	Social disparities and cancer; Indigenous considerations in cancer diagnosis and treatment	Debora Allatt and Warren Michael	<b>Second mid-term due</b>
November 15	Term Break		
November 22	Pediatric Psychosocial Oncology  Adolescents and Young Adults with Cancer	Wendy Pelletier/Fiona Schulte  Fiona Schulte/Perri Tutelman	<b>Term Paper Due 11:59pm</b>
November 29	Psychosocial aspects of palliative and end of life care Psychopharmacology for psychosocial oncology	Jessica Simon  Steve Simpson	
December 6	Trauma and Cancer  Psychotherapeutic issues in Psycho-Oncology	Andrea Feldstain  Celestina Martupullo	<b>Final assignment given, due on Friday Dec 8 in D2L dropbox no later than 11:59 PM</b>