



Understand the social impacts of health from an interdisciplinary perspective.

Medicine alone is not the answer.

Health, Aging & Society

Health and health care are evolving globally at a rapid pace. People can live longer and positive cultures of aging have changed expectations later in life.

At the same time, health care access is not always fair and quality of life is not equal. Social and ethical issues continue to shift. Complexity within healthcare is increasing and new technologies are continually emerging. Mental health and addictions escalate despite new pharmaceutical interventions.

Engaging with communities and sharing perspectives lead to real world solutions to improve well-being. Our programs equip students to approach these issues through the critical and constructive social sciences lens.

Students will discuss questions, such as:

- How do changing technologies impact the way we understand and respond to health and illness?
- How do people's social circumstances, ranging from their income to the neighbourhood they live in, impact their health?
- How do components of a person's identity (including ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and others) shape a person's health outcomes?

Enrol directly in Health & Society I

Students can apply directly to Health & Society I from high school. Enrolment is limited and possession of the published minimum grade requirements does not guarantee admission.

Degree options

At the end of Level I, students who meet the requirements outlined below can pursue the following degree options:

Honours Aging & Society B.A.	Grade Point Average of at least 5.0 (C) including a grade of at least C in HLTH AGE 1BB3 (HLTH AGE 1AA3 or HLTHAGE 1ZZ3 must be completed by the end of Level II)
Honours Health & Society B.A.	Grade Point Average of at least 5.0 (C) including a grade of at least C in HLTHAGE 1AA3 or HLTHAGE 1ZZ3 (HLTHAGE 1BB3 must be completed by the end of Level II)
Honours Aging & Society, Specialization in Mental Health & Addiction B.A.	Grade Point Average of at least 5.0 (C) including a grade of at least C in HLTHAGE 1CC3 and a grade of at least C in HLTHAGE 1BB3 (HLTH AGE 1AA3 or HLTHAGE 1ZZ3 must be completed by the end of Level II)
Honours Health & Society, Specialization in Mental Health & Addiction B.A.	Grade Point Average of at least 5.0 (C) including a grade of at least C in HLTHAGE 1CC3 and a grade of at least C in HLTHAGE 1BB3 (HLTHAGE 1BB3 must be completed by the end of Level II)
Combined Honours B.A. in Aging & Society and Health & Society	Grade Point Average of at least 5.0 (C) including a grade of at least C in HLTHAGE 1AA3 or HLTHAGE 1ZZ3 and a grade of at least C in HLTHAGE 1AA3 or HLTHAGE 1ZZ3
Minors	Health, Aging & Society Mental Health and Addiction

Level I courses

Health, Aging and Society 1AA3

An Introduction to Health and Society

Health, illness, and health care are concepts that have many social, cultural, political, and economic dimensions that go beyond the biomedical perspective.

Health, Aging and Society 1BB3

An Introduction to Aging and Society

Take a look at the multi-disciplinary study of aging. Issues explored include: the myths and stereotypes of aging; health care in Canada; and the changing body, mind, and self.

Health, Aging and Society 1CC3

Introduction to Mental Health and Illness

Delve into the social study of mental health, placing particular emphasis on the changing conceptions of cause, diagnosis, and treatments across time and socio-cultural boundaries.

Health, Aging and Society 1ZZ3

Inquiry: Introduction to Health and Society

This inquiry course is designed to develop skills basic to an introduction to the key themes and questions concerning health and health care from within social sciences perspectives.

Beyond first year

Choose from a variety of courses, such as:

- Social Identity, Health and Illness
- Aging and Health Care Systems
- Geographies of Death and Disease
- Drugs, Sex and Alcohol: Society and its Addictions
- Perspectives on Disability, Chronic Illness and Aging
- Ethical Issues in Health and Aging
- Community Based Research
- Global Health
- Narratives of Illness
- Representations of Mental Illness

Careers & Experiential Education

Through Careers & Experiential Education programs, you can participate in paid internships, a tuition-free career planning course, academic placements and job shadowing.

Specialization or Minor in Mental Health and Addiction

These options equip you to be knowledgeable about how mental health, addiction and society interact. Key areas of study include:

- The relationship between mental health and marginalization, the construction of illness, and the social determinant of health
- Understand how social and non-biomedical interventions can impact mental health and addiction as well as promote wellbeing

Skills development

Our students develop a broad range of transferable skills that adapt easily to a changing workplace, including:

- Critical thinking
- Research and analysis skills
- Problem-solving
- Expository writing
- Communication skills
- Teamwork
- Time management

Graduate Studies

Our graduates go on to graduate work in a variety of MA programs worldwide. Higher level studies in our department include:

- MA in Health and Aging
- PhD in Health and Society
- PhD in Social Gerontology

Potential careers

- Health Policy/Social Policy Research
- Care Coordinators
- Marketing
- Mental Health Researcher
- Recreation/Activation staff in long-term care
- Project Coordinators
- Education Coordinators
- Public Health
- Addictions Researcher

A health, aging & society degree also provides the foundation for post-graduate studies in the same discipline, medicine and law.

"One of the best ways to understand a society is to analyze the lines dividing the healthy and the ill, whether physically or mentally. In my courses, I encourage students to move beyond our taken-for-granted assumptions about these issues." – Mat Savelli



"McMaster has felt like a second home as soon as I stepped onto campus. It has allowed me to step out of my comfort zone, engage with people around me in meaningful ways and take all the skills I've learned in my degree into my future career."

Raquel Munoz,
Honours Aging & Society