

New York University / The Steinhardt School of Education  
Department of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health

E33.2213: NUTRITION IN PUBLIC HEALTH, FALL 2006 (September 7 Version)

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Mondays 4:55 to 6:35 p.m.  
Silver (31 Washington Pl) Room 408

30 hours: 3 points Co-requisite: Research Methods

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### OVERVIEW: PUBLIC HEALTH NUTRITION

Public health nutrition addresses ways to improve the food choices, dietary intake, and nutritional status of diverse population groups. It differs from dietetics in two critically important ways. It focuses on populations at the level of communities, regions, or nations rather than on individuals in clinical settings, and it also focuses on improving environmental more than on individual determinants of dietary intake. Its core methods involve (a) assessing nutritional problems and needs, (b) determining the environmental or "ecological" causes of those problems and needs, (c) identifying intervention points, (d) developing policies and programs to intervene at those points, (e) implementing the policies or conducting the programs, and (f) evaluating the effectiveness of the policies or programs. This course mainly covers (a) through (d); it touches briefly on (e) and (f).

DESCRIPTION: This course is an introduction to the concepts, principles, and scope of practice of public health nutrition. It emphasizes the distinction between population-based and individual-based approaches to prevention and alleviation of diet-related conditions, as well as the societal, economic, environmental, and institutional determinants of food intake and nutritional status. It introduces the elements of nutrition policies and programs for improving the nutrition and health status of diverse population groups, and for overcoming barriers to their implementation.

### COURSE OBEJCTIVES

1. Define the scope of practice of public health nutrition.
2. Distinguish population-based approaches to nutrition intervention from methods that focus on changing the behavior of individuals.
3. Identify the principal biological, cultural, socioeconomic, and nutritional determinants of diet-related disease risks among diverse population groups, and describe how such determinants affect food intake, health status, and the effectiveness of nutrition interventions.
4. Identify the causes and consequences of the "nutrition transition" from conditions of undernutrition to those of overnutrition in developing countries.
5. Identify the principal food safety problems in industrialized and developing countries and public health approaches to ensuring the safety of the food supply.
6. Describe the principal public health policies and programs designed to address food insecurity, hunger, and nutritional deficiencies, and those designed to address conditions of overnutrition and diet-related chronic disease among diverse population groups.
7. Describe public health policy needs, goals, and approaches to nutrition intervention in diverse populations, barriers to policies, and methods to advocate for policies to improve the nutritional status of diverse population groups.

## COURSE MANAGEMENT

The course will run on the NYU Blackboard system: course handouts, announcements, correspondence, and other class matters are online. To access the site, you *must* have--and use--an NYU e-mail address and password. You activate your account by going to <http://start.nyu.edu>. Set up your ID and password; then go to <http://home.nyu.edu>. Click on Academics, then Classes, then the course name. You should check the site at least once a week—and definitely on the day before class—to obtain updated course information. For help: <http://www.nyu.edu/its/faq/blackboard>.

## EVALUATION AND GRADING

Attendance, participation	15%
Safety net project	20%
Intervention project	65%

Grading is based on breadth and depth of research; cogency of argument; adherence to format; quality of the work; consistency with reality; readability; and other such matters.

## EXPECTATIONS

- Inform instructor *in advance* by e-mail if you are not going to be in class.
- Class begins on time: arrive on time.
- Inform instructor *in advance* if you need to leave early.
- Turn off all cell phones and electronic devices; if you forget, turn it off or leave the class.
- Request a class break if you think one is needed.
- Complete assigned work on time; there will be penalties for late work.
- Plan ahead: no incomplete grades are given (except in dire, documented emergency).
- Check Blackboard regularly for messages regarding class assignments and scheduling.
- Your voice matters: participate!

## REQUIRED READING

- Gibney MJ, Margetts BM, Kearney JM, Arab L. *Public Health Nutrition*. Blackwell, 2005 (available at NYU bookstore).
- Wansink, B. *Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More Than We Think*. Bantam, 2006 (available at NYU bookstore after mid-September)
- Simon, M. *Appetite for Profit: How the Food Industry Undermines Our Health and How to Fight Back*. Nation Books, 2006 (available in NYU bookstore after late October)
- Background; review of basic nutrition: U.S. Department of Agriculture & U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005*. [www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document](http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document).
- Selected readings from journals, books, and government documents. These are listed below and either are posted on Blackboard (see Course Documents), or are online. Additional readings may be assigned as the class progresses, based on current events as reported in newspapers, magazines, newsletters, and journals.
- In-depth reading for class assignments.

## RESOURCES

PUBLIC HEALTH AT NYU: The NYU Public Health Alliance is a joint project of Steinhardt and Wagner public health and public policy students: subscribe to the listserve and receive announcements of lectures and other activities at [public-health-association@forums.nyu.edu](mailto:public-health-association@forums.nyu.edu)

## WEBSITES

* American Public Health Association (APHA)	<a href="http://www.apha.org">www.apha.org</a>
* Public Health Association of NYC (PHANYC)	<a href="http://www.phanyc.org">www.phanyc.org</a>
* Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI)	<a href="http://www.cspinet.org">www.cspinet.org</a>
National agricultural library	<a href="http://www.nutrition.gov">www.nutrition.gov</a>
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov">www.cdc.gov</a>
National Center for Health Statistics, CDC	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov/nchs">www.cdc.gov/nchs</a>
Economic Research Service, USDA	<a href="http://www.ers.usda.gov">www.ers.usda.gov</a>
Food and Nutrition Service, USDA	<a href="http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns">www.fns.usda.gov/fns</a>
Center for Nutrition Policy & Promotion, USDA	<a href="http://www.usda.gov/cnpp">www.usda.gov/cnpp</a>
Food & Drug Administration	<a href="http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/">http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/</a>
Government Accountability Office	<a href="http://www.gao.gov">www.gao.gov</a>
Institute of Medicine, Food & Nutrition Board:	
<a href="http://www.iom.edu/iom/iomhome.nsf/Pages/Food+and+Nutrition+Board">www.iom.edu/iom/iomhome.nsf/Pages/Food+and+Nutrition+Board</a>	

\* These organizations welcome student members, have student (or low) membership rates, and publish information about public health nutrition.

## WRITING RESEARCH TERM PAPERS

*Resources for writers:* dictionaries, guides to English usage (Strunk & White), quotations, online at [www.bartleby.com](http://www.bartleby.com).

*Reference citation style:* most nutrition and health journals follow variations of the Uniform Requirements for Biomedical Journals. See instructions at [www.icmje.org](http://www.icmje.org). Each journal has its own variation of the basic reference style, but all follow Uniform Requirements. See, for example:

Am J Public Health	<a href="http://www.ajph.org">www.ajph.org</a>	Click on Instructions to Authors
Am J Clin Nutr	<a href="http://www.ajcn.org">www.ajcn.org</a>	Click on Author Services
J Am Diet Assoc	<a href="http://www.eatright.org/journal">www.eatright.org/journal</a>	Click on Guidelines for Authors
J Nutr	<a href="http://www.nutrition.org">www.nutrition.org</a>	Click on Author's Guide

Uniform Requirements require standard abbreviations for journals. See:

<http://library.caltech.edu/reference/abbreviations>.

## WRITTEN WORK

All work must be typed, double-spaced, on one side of paper leaving one-inch margins, clearly marked with your name, titled with the issue you are discussing, and presented in a readable font (if you are using anything smaller than 12-point, you must clear it with the instructor). Number pages. Do not exceed page limits. Write your work carefully. Use grammar and spell checks.

## THE SAFETY NET PROJECT

Because so much of Gibney et al, *Public Health Nutrition*, describes international problems and methods for dealing with them, most of the additional reading in this course focuses on uniquely American issues and actions. Advocates for the American poor increasingly complain about the weakening of the "safety net" for low-income women and children (the groups most vulnerable to problems related to undernutrition). For this project, which should be done in groups of 2 to 4 people, you are to research and identify the principal elements of the nutrition safety net for American women and children—programs that either provide food or provide the means to obtain food—and to evaluate its overall adequacy.

One way too think about this project is to ask: "If I were an unmarried, unemployed mother of two children under the age of 5 living in New York City without a bank account, car, or health insurance (but housed in some way), what kinds of resources are available to help me survive and feed my children?" [In the course of your research, you might ask whether any such women exist in America and, if so, how many in New York City and nationally.]

This project requires you (or your team) to read widely about food assistance and welfare programs, to summarize the relevant features of the most significant of these programs in a Table, and to provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the "net" as a whole and of the overall adequacy of these programs for meeting the nutritional needs of low-income women and children. If New York City's safety net differs in any important way from the national scene, you should also take that difference into consideration.

You will present the results of your research in a short paper of no more than 3 double-spaced pages of text. The summary table and reference list can be attached as additional pages.

Your paper should follow the format indicated above and should include:

- Title page with list of "authors"
- Your analysis and evaluation of the adequacy of the safety net - no more than 3 double-spaced pages
- A Table that summarizes programs comprising the safety net and their most relevant features (and their strengths and weaknesses)
- A list of print and electronic references consulted, presented in a standard citation format

Your analysis should be supported by the data you present in the Table. You may argue that the net is adequate, inadequate, or something in between but whatever position you take should be based on evidence presented in the Table. Grading will be based on comprehensiveness and depth of research, relevance and consistency of the information presented, cogency of argument, clarity of presentation, and adherence to format. All members of the team will receive the same grade.

Due dates: October 2, team list. October 30, paper due.

## THE INTERVENTION PROJECT

As public health nutrition professionals, you will be confronted with any number of challenges in identifying the needs of groups with which you are working, developing programs to meet those needs, overcoming barriers to implementing those programs, and determining whether the programs have done what they were supposed to do. Needs assessment and program planning, implementation, and evaluation constitute the core of public health nutrition practice at any level—agency, community, national, or international—so no matter what you end up doing professionally, you will need skills and experience in these areas.

This assignment requires you to tackle a problem in public health nutrition as if you were going to try to do something about it. What can you—as an individual or working with an established group—do to address a public health nutrition problem. You will choose a problem of interest; document the nature, severity, extent, and consequences of that problem; describe the environmental determinants of the problem; and design an “ecological” public health approach to preventing the problem.

To successfully complete this assignment, you will need to read widely and deeply about the problem you choose and about the kinds of programs that have been used—successfully or not—to address it or similar problems. You will need to be realistic about what can and cannot be accomplished and about the resources that will be needed to make your intervention succeed. Within expected constraints, your paper should attempt to answer the question: how can you, personally, working as an individual or as part of a group, make real progress in addressing the problem from a public health perspective.

You will present the results of your research in a short paper—no more than 5 pages (tables, figures, references can be attached as extra pages)—following a standard format for presentation, reference citation, and references.

Your paper should include:

- Title page (it should state the public health nutrition problem your paper discusses)
- Introduction: overview of problem and origins and where discussion is headed (~1 page)
- Discussion and analysis of nature, severity, extent, and consequences of that problem, and its environmental origins (~2-3 pages)
- Discussion and analysis of your suggested intervention (~1-2 pages)
- References cited in text (keyed to text citations)
- Ecological diagram specific to your topic
- Outline of steps needed to achieve your proposed intervention
- Additional Tables, Figures, or other attachments, as needed

Grading will be based on extent and depth of research, depth of understanding of the problem chosen, relevance of the intervention for addressing the problem, depth of analysis, clarity of presentation, and adherence to format. You will do this project on your own, but the intervention you suggest may involve joining a group or getting a group involved.

Paper due: December 18

**PUBLIC HEALTH NUTRITION CLASS SCHEDULE: OVERVIEW**

CLASS	DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
1	September 11	Introduction: Course overview	Reading list

**Public health nutrition tools (for assessing food and nutrition problems and their causes)**

2	September 18	Defining the scope and practice of public health nutrition	Reading list
3	September 25	Assessing the nutritional status of individuals and populations: diets and activity levels	Reading list
4	October 2	Identifying public health problems and strategies	Reading list <b>DUE:</b> Safety net project team list
	October 9	Columbus Day Holiday	
5	October 16	Setting dietary goals and guidelines for individuals and populations	Reading list <b>DUE:</b> Intervention project topic and preliminary description

**Public health nutrition problems (and program and policy approaches to solving them)**

6	October 23	Improving the safety of the food supply	Reading list
7	October 30	Identifying influences and determinants of food choice	Reading list <b>DUE:</b> Safety net project
8	November 6	Addressing diet-related conditions of undernutrition	Reading list
9	November 13	Guest Lecture: Michele Simon Advocating for public health policies	Reading list
10	November 20	Improving the nutritional status of women and children	Reading list
11	November 27	Addressing the nutrition transition to conditions of overnutrition	Reading list
12	December 4	Addressing obesity and its consequences	Reading list

**Public health nutrition programs (and how to make them work)**

13	December 11	Developing and implementing policies for public health nutrition	Reading list
14	December 18	To be arranged	<b>DUE:</b> Intervention project

## NUTRITION IN PUBLIC HEALTH, FALL 2006: READINGS

### Week 1: September 11

#### Introduction: Course overview

- U.S. Department of Agriculture & U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005*. [www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document](http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document).

### Week 2: September 18

#### Defining the scope and practice of public health nutrition

- Gibney et al, chapter 1
- Nestle M. Nutrition in public health and preventive medicine. In: *Public Health & Preventive Medicine*, 15<sup>th</sup> edition (eds. Wallace RB, Kohatsu N), Appleton & Lange, 2007, in press (on Blackboard).
- Cannon G. The rise and fall of dietetics and of nutrition science, 4000 BC - 2000 CE. *Public Health Nutrition* 2005;8(6A):701-705 (on Blackboard).
- Wallack L, Lawrence R. Talking about public health: developing America's "second language." *Am J Public Health* 2005;95:567-70 (on Blackboard).

### Week 3: September 25

#### Assessing the nutritional status of individuals and populations: diets and activity levels

- Gibney et al, chapters 2 (pages 26-34, 57-65), 3, and 4
- Browse the USDA Food Services Research Group website, with special attention to "What We Eat in America" website, "Overview." Start at:  
[http://www.ars.usda.gov/Main/site\\_main.htm?modecode=12-35-50-00](http://www.ars.usda.gov/Main/site_main.htm?modecode=12-35-50-00)
- USDA food "consumption" website: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/foodconsumption/>
- USDA food composition website: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/Data/>

### Week 4: October 2

#### Identifying public health problems and strategies

- Gibney et al, Chapters 5 and 6
- Healthy People 2010. Go to <http://www.healthypeople.gov/default.htm>. Read "About Healthy People." Scroll down and click on "Full Text of Second Edition." Click on Volume II (Second Edition). Look for and read through Chapter 19: Nutrition and overweight. [Note: also scan other sets of objectives for food safety; maternal and child health; and specific diet-related diseases.]

**Note: October 9 is Columbus Day holiday**

## Week 5: October 16

### Setting dietary goals and guidelines for individuals and populations

- Press accounts of the Institute of Medicine's report on fish risks and balances
- Gibney et al: Chapter 7
- Leitzmann C. Wholesome nutrition : a suitable diet for the new nutrition science project. *Public Health Nutrition* 2005;8(6A):753-759 (on Blackboard)
- Dietary Reference Intakes: <http://lab.nap.edu/nap/cgi/discover.cgi?term=dietary+reference+intakes&restric=NAP&GO.x=24&GO.y=18>; click on the book covers to find downloadable PDF summaries; read the ones on calcium, potassium, and carbohydrate (sugars).
- USDA report on intake compared to DRIs: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/SP2UserFiles/Place/12355000/pdf/usualintaketables2001-02.pdf>
- USDA and DHHS. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. [www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document](http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document).
- Review the USDA's 1992 Food Guide Pyramid at <http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/pyrabklt.pdf>.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Food Guide Pyramid, 2005. [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov). Do your own "My Pyramid Plan," and browse the entries listed under "For Professionals:" <http://www.mypyramid.gov/professionals/index.html>.
- USDA. Research Summary Report for MyPyramid Food Guidance System Development, August 2005 (on Blackboard).
- MyPyramid brochure: Steps to a Healthier You, 2006 (on Blackboard)
- Joint WHO/FAO Expert Report on Diet, Nutrition, and the Prevention of Chronic Disease. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization, 2003 ("The 916 Report"), at <http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/publications/trs916/download/en/index.html>. Read the Introduction, browse the contents, and read pages 54-59 in chapter 5.1.
- Joint WHO/FAO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity, and Health, May 22, 2004, at [http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/strategy/eb11344/strategy\\_english\\_web.pdf](http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/strategy/eb11344/strategy_english_web.pdf). Note recommendations for sugar intake.

## Week 6: October 23

### Improving the safety of the food supply

- Government Accountability Office (GAO). Oversight of food safety activities: federal agencies should pursue opportunities to reduce overlap and better leverage resources (GAO-05-213), March 2005. [Note: the GAO website is [www.gao.gov](http://www.gao.gov)]
- U.S. government food safety programs: [www.foodsafety.gov/](http://www.foodsafety.gov/). Explore.
- The USDA food safety website: [www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/s7\\_0\\_A/7\\_0\\_1OB?navid=FOOD\\_SAFETY&parentnav=FOOD\\_NUTRITION&navtype=RT](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/s7_0_A/7_0_1OB?navid=FOOD_SAFETY&parentnav=FOOD_NUTRITION&navtype=RT). Explore. Look for consumer information, statistics, and recall information.
- The FDA food safety website: [www.cfsan.fda.gov/list.html](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/list.html). Browse the links to Foodborne Illness, HACCP, Imports, Food Defense and Terrorism (click on Alerts). Be sure to look at Recalls at [www.fda.gov/opacom/7alerts.html](http://www.fda.gov/opacom/7alerts.html).
- Center for Science in the Public Interest food safety advocacy information is at [www.cspinet.org/foodsafety/index.html](http://www.cspinet.org/foodsafety/index.html). Click on the link to *Outbreak Alert!* and browse that report.

**Week 7: October 30****Identifying influences and determinants of food choice**

- Gibney et al, Chapter 8
- Wansink B. *Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More Than We Think*. Bantam, 2006.
- Wansink B, et al. Ice cream illusions: bowls, spoons, and self-served portion sizes. *Am J Prev Med* 2006;31:240-243 (on Blackboard).
- Wansink B, Chandon P. Meal size, not body size, explains errors in estimating the calorie content of meals. *Ann Intern Med* 2006;145:326-32 (on Blackboard).
- Bamshad M. Genetic influences on health. *JAMA* 2005;294:937-946 (on Blackboard).
- Marmot M. Social determinants of health inequalities. *Lancet* 2005;365:1099-1104 (on Blackboard).

**Week 8: November 6****Addressing diet-related conditions of undernutrition**

- Gibney et al, chapters 10-13
- *Wall Street Journal* series on poverty in America: June 14, 15, 20, 2006 (on Blackboard).
- Poverty in the U.S. See US Census Bureau at [www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/poverty.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/poverty.html). Look at "Overview" and "What's New."
- Jeffrey Sachs. Can extreme poverty be eliminated? *Scientific American*, September 2005 (on Blackboard).

**Week 9: November 13**

**Guest Lecture: Michele Simon** (see her blog at [www.informedeating.org/blog](http://www.informedeating.org/blog))

**Advocating for public health policies**

- Simon, M. *Appetite for Profit: How the Food Industry Undermines Our Health and How to Fight Back*. Nation Books, 2006. Read all of it, including the appendices.

**Week 10: November 20****Improving the nutritional status of women and children**

- Gibney et al, chapters 15-18
- Huxley R. Early nutritional determinants of coronary artery disease: a question of timing? *Am J Clin Nutr* 2006;84:271-2 (on Blackboard).
- USDA/ERS. V. Oliveira. The Food Assistance Landscape, March 2006 at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/eib6-2/>. Also see Related Briefing Rooms at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Browse/FoodNutritionAssistance/>. Read: Measuring Household Food Security at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/measurement.htm>.
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: Food Assistance at <http://www.cbpp.org/pubs/fa.htm>.
- Neuberger Z, Greenstein R. WIC-only stores and competitive pricing in the WIC program, May 17, 2004 at <http://www.cbpp.org/5-17-04wic.htm>.
- Thurow R. Entrepreneur finds millions are left on the breakfast table. *Wall Street Journal*, August 31, 2006 (on Blackboard).
- LeBlanc M, et al. Food assistance: how strong is the safety net? *Amber Waves*, September 2006:11-15 (on Blackboard).

**Week 11: November 27****Addressing the nutrition transition to conditions of overnutrition**

- Gibney et al, chapter 9, 19, 20, 21.
- Caballero B. A nutrition paradox—underweight and obesity in developing countries. *N Engl J Med* 2005;352:1514-16 (on Blackboard).
- Mendez MA, Monteiro CA, Popkin BM. Overweight exceeds underweight among women in most developing countries. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2005;81:714-21 (on Blackboard).
- Miech RA et al. Trends in association of poverty with overweight among US adolescents, 1971-2004. *JAMA* 2006;295:2385-93 (on Blackboard).
- Food Research and Action Center. The paradox of obesity and hunger, June 2006 at [http://www.frac.org/html/hunger\\_in\\_the\\_us/hunger&obesity.htm](http://www.frac.org/html/hunger_in_the_us/hunger&obesity.htm).

**Week 12: December 4****Addressing obesity and its consequences**

- Gibney et al #14,19,20
- Romero-Corral A, et al. Association of bodyweight with total mortality and with cardiovascular events in coronary artery disease: a systematic review of cohort studies. *Lancet* 2006;368:666-78 (on Blackboard).
- Adams KF et al. Overweight, obesity, and mortality in a large prospective cohort of persons 50 to 71 years old. *N Engl J Med* 2006;355:763-78 (on Blackboard).
- National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity. Obesity and Other Diet- and Inactivity-Related Diseases: National Impact, Costs, Solutions, 2005 online at [www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/NANA\\_advocates\\_national\\_policies.pdf](http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/NANA_advocates_national_policies.pdf).
- Malik VS, et al. Intake of sugar-sweetened beverages and weight gain: a systematic review. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2006;84:274-88 (on Blackboard).
- Nestle M, Jacobson MF. Halting the obesity epidemic: A public health policy approach. *Public Health Reports* 2000;115:12-24 (on Blackboard).

**Week 13: December 11****Developing and implementing policies for public health nutrition**

- Gibney et al #21,22 (scan)
- U.S. government actions: [www.healthierus.gov](http://www.healthierus.gov). Look for government programs that address obesity prevention.
- CDC programs to address obesity: [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity). Look at definitions, trends, and recommendations.
- National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA): [www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/nana.html](http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/nana.html).
- Wallack L, Lawrence R. Talking about public health: developing America's "second language." *Am J Public Health* 2005;95:567-70 (on Blackboard for Week 2).

**Week 14: December 18**

To be arranged (no reading assignment)