MSocSci. in Planetary Health and Wellbeing

23 October 2026

Core Courses

PHW5101 Planetary Health

Planetary Health addresses the health impacts of human disruptions on Earth. This course adopts a geographical lens to analysing cross-scalar processes of planetary disturbances and ramifications for social-ecological systems and (more-than-) human flourishing—from the globe to the body. Students become familiar with planetary boundaries already breached, such as climate change and biodiversity loss, and others in precarious states (e.g., air pollution, ocean degradation). They examine demographic, social-political, and spatial determinants of health, from eco-anxiety to infectious disease outbreaks related to environmentally-induced displacement. Lastly, the course explores place-based health solutions to foster resilient lives among all inhabitants of our planet.

PHW5102 Methodologies for Planetary Health

This course introduces students to the conceptual, methodological, and epistemological tools necessary for studying planetary (ill)health. Drawing on human geography, environmental sciences, feminist and decolonial scholarship, and environmental humanities, the course explores how to investigate the impacts of climate change, pollution, biodiversity loss, and displacement on human and more-than-human well-being and flourishing. Students critically examine quantitative, qualitative, spatial, participatory, and creative approaches to planetary health, and the ethics and politics of knowledge production. Through seminars and labs, they learn to design integrative, cross-scalar research that bridges global disturbances with embodied, place-based experiences and health solutions.

PHW5103 Policy and Planning for a Healthy Planet

Health policy is evolving rapidly around the world, arising from increasing mobilities between places, interconnections across sectors, and burgeoning environmentally induced ill-health across society. This course offers a comprehensive and critical exploration of the intersections of health, environment, and policymaking. Students will engage with key principles, theories, and methods underpinning health(care) policymaking, while also examining real-world examples of innovation, management, and governance challenges. Students will be equipped with the conceptual foundations and analytical skills to navigate complex health policy debates relevant to planetary health and contribute to evidence-informed policy development across sectors (e.g. housing, transport, and environmental regulation).

PHW5104 Global Health Futures

This course focuses on the entanglements of planetary health and experimental futures. It interrogates the place of the human subject among other living and non-living actors in dominant framings of planetary health and flourishing, examining how healthy futures are imagined, experimented with and contested. More specifically, the course challenges students to rethink how the worlds we inhabit can be made more liveable, inclusive, just and equitable, in contexts populated by a variety of human and artificial intelligences.

Elective courses

PHW5201 Feeding the Planet: Regimes, Landscapes and Bodies

This course will focus on questions of who eats what, where and why. This will entail a critical examination of food as a multifaceted object that is both influenced by and influences culture, politics, the environment, economics, and health. Food consumption is an intensely social and cultural phenomenon and has been deeply shaped by political and economic forces. Food is also an environmental phenomenon, historically affected by the regional occurrence of plants and animals, and still driven mainly by the accessible food environment. What we choose to put on our plates is the direct outcome of a complex set of interactions, from the individual scale to the global, that have serious implications for both population and environmental health.

PHW5202 Wellbeing and Place

This course explores conceptual and analytical approaches to understanding the social and cultural processes and practices through which wellbeing is constituted with space/place. It examines the relationships between wellbeing and space across diverse topics, including but not limited to socio-spatial inequalities, vulnerability and exclusion, therapeutic landscapes, healthy cities, mental health, multispeciesism, and digital cultures. The course challenges students to think critically about contemporary understandings of wellbeing and to assess how these shape policy development and everyday practices of living and being well.

PHW5203 Restoring Ecosystems, Health and the Environment

Ecological restoration involves actively assisting the recovery of (elements of) ecosystems that are crucial for processes and functions that support human wellbeing. Goals include conserving biodiversity, enhancing ecosystem services, mitigating climate change impacts, and building resilience against future environmental stressors. This course will focus on tropical ecosystem ecology; environment drivers of the distribution of species and ecological communities; ecosystem functions and services; species interactions; ecological succession; and monitoring of restoration projects to determine project success.

PHW5204 Digitalisation, Decarbonization & Planetary Health

The course aims to examine the political economy of Industry 4.0-5.0 and its potential impacts on planetary health, with a specific focus on the trilemma of achieving digitalisation, electrification, and decarbonisation in ‘smart cities’. The wide-range datafication of (non-)routine tasks combined with the electrified powertrains of mobility devices allows urban planners to establish futuristic ‘smart cities’. How may these technological advancements facilitate our net zero goal? Various case studies around the world are used to illustrate how digitalisation, electrification, and decarbonisation could reshape the existing dynamics on socio-economic determinants of health and thus leading to various impacts on health equity.