

Current Controversies in health and nutrition

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Syllabus

Health is a cumulative affair, reflecting our unique genetic predispositions seasoned with a progressive amalgam of life experiences. Information comes at us from all sides, and researchers often seem to shift on key issues, so how can we know what's best and who to trust? This four-week course will discuss underlying controversies that dot the current health landscape; the goal being to empower attendees to gain a solid grip on what's going on, and understand where their best interests are likely to reside.

Week 1 Science for sale: The use and abuse of the media as a communicator of science

- How health news gets to the press
- Understanding how studies are done and the impact of reductionist approaches
- The power of the pocketbook to set the agenda.
- Social media as the new wild card

Week 2: Health Fraud is not all it's quacked up to be

- Separating the science versus the spin
- How health "gurus" can blur the lines between sense and nonsense.
- Dietary supplements; if, and what to consider, and cautions to observe

Week 3: Demystifying underlying themes in the health issues we face:

- Weight, mobility issues, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and the ominous threat of cognitive decline.

Week 4: A full plate of diets: what's best, while understanding the rest.

- Mediterranean, vegetarian/vegan, ketogenic, paleo, the Mind diet, FODMAPS, various takes on fasting, and what dietary dialog could be complete without a discussion of gluten.

Optional FYI readings: My journalistic endeavors have appeared in a syndicated Q&A column that's been running for thirty years; to get a sense of my take on things, here's a link to recent columns <https://blonz.org/dcqxa>

Additional background: Supermarket Shopping Guide: <https://blonz.org/j4t2g>