COM 4700: Health Communication (Synchronous Online)  
Fall 2021

Professor: Sydney O’Shay  
Section: AW1, BW1, CW1, MW1, PW1, TW1, UW1, ZW1  
CRN: 53936, 55115-55116, 55118-55120, 58795, 60379

Email Address: Sydney.oshay@usu.edu  
Meeting Times: MW 1:30 pm – 2:45 pm

Office Hours: I will make myself available to meet via Zoom by appointment. Please email me to schedule an appointment.

Office: Lundberg 202* (to the left of Old Main if you are looking at it from the Quad).  
*My office is on the second floor of Lundberg and is only accessible by stairs. If this makes it difficult for you to meet with me for any reason, please ask to meet in an alternate location (no questions asked). To protect your privacy, you do not have to disclose a reason for this request. We will arrange to meet somewhere that is more accessible.

Course Description
This course is designed to enhance your knowledge of, and ability to critically analyze, communication in health contexts. We will discuss a variety of topics, theories, and types of communication (e.g., media & interpersonal relationships) that inform our understanding of health. The material covered in this course is based on theory and empirical data.

Learning Objectives
This course provides an in-depth examination of health communication from an academic and theory rich perspective.

1. Students will learn about major theories in communication and health research.
2. Students will examine the role of health communication in the media and interpersonal relationships.
3. Students will examine how communication influences individual health outcomes.
4. Students will complete a research project that applies course material.
5. Students will enhance their professional writing and speaking skills.

Learning objectives (LO) that correspond to a specific assignment or set of assignments are listed beside the assignment on this syllabus to signify the LOs these assignments meet for the course.

Syllabus Statement
The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary and will be announced to the class. Be sure to stay up to date on announcements for course changes.

Required Course Materials

Additional reading material, relevant links, and/or videos will be posted to Canvas over the course of the semester.

This course requires all-inclusive digital materials that are provided to you at a lower price than traditional printed materials. These materials are paid for through an “Auto Access Digital
Materials’ charge placed on your student account when you registered for the course. For more details, including dates, deadlines, and opt-out info, visit your student Auto Access Portal: https://portal.verba.io/usu/login

Assignments
Details for all assignments are available on Canvas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Assignments</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Article Presentation</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review Project</td>
<td>250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>650</strong></td>
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**Weekly Assignments (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO5):**
There are eight weekly assignments that are due each Sunday by the end of the day. These assignments will ask students to engage with and apply concepts and theories from the week’s readings and lectures (25 pts each; 200 pts total). Weekly assignments cover the following topics: syllabus quiz, patient uncertainty, health equity, patient narratives, doctor reviews, memorable health campaigns, eHealth, and risk and crisis communication. Details can be found on Canvas.

**Academic Article Presentation (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO5):**
For this assignment you will give a 4-6 minute presentation on one of the academic articles you are using as a source for your Literature Review Project. The article for this presentation should come from a communication journal (70 pts).

**Literature Review Project (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5):**
Students will research and identify a health issue that impacts a specific population and synthesize recent health communication research on this topic. This assignment will be completed in phases over the course of the entire semester and will include: a one-sheeter (25 pts), an annotated bibliography (50 pts), a literature review draft (75 pts), and a final literature review (100 pts).

**Participation (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO5):**
Students are expected to be present and engage in class. I realize participation takes different forms and will look different for each student.

**Grading**
Retain a record of all graded assignments until final grades are posted. Final grades will be determined based on the distribution below. The grade you earn is the grade that will be submitted as your final grade. There is no ‘wiggle room’ to bump your grade up. Asking me to adjust your grade is inappropriate except in the case of an error.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92%</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>83-87%</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82%</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>F</td>
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Withdrawal Policy, 'I' Grade Policy, and Dropping Courses
If a student does not attend a class during the first week of the term or by the second class meeting, whichever comes first, the instructor may submit a request to have the student dropped from the course. (This does not remove responsibility from the student to drop courses which they do not plan to attend.) Students who are dropped from courses will be notified by the Registrar's Office through their preferred e-mail account.

Students may drop courses without notation on the permanent record through the first 20 percent of the class. If a student drops a course following the first 20 percent of the class, a W will be permanently affixed to the student’s record (check General Catalog for exact dates).

Students with extenuating circumstances should refer to the policy regarding Complete Withdrawal from the University and the Incomplete (I) Grade policy in the General Catalog.

Late Work
You must complete all assignments by the assigned due date to earn credit. Late work will only be accepted if something beyond your control has made it impossible for you to submit your work on time. All requests for an extension should be emailed to 24 hours prior to the due date. All requests to submit late work due to extenuating circumstances should be emailed to me within 48 hours of a missed deadline. Requests after this time will be denied. If I decide to accept your late work, a grade penalty may be applied.

Grade Appeals on Assignments
In order to appeal a grade on an assignment, please follow these guidelines:

• Wait at least 24 hours before setting up an appointment and submitting your written grade appeal to ensure that you have time to carefully read and consider the feedback.
• After you have read my feedback, submit a typed, written appeal that identifies the specific issue in question, and explains reasons why you feel the grade should be changed. Please refer to any class materials that support your rationale for a change.
• The written appeal should be submitted at least 24 hours prior to the appointment.
• When you arrive for the scheduled appointment, bring in your graded copy of the item in question (e.g., feedback form, paper, etc.) and any additional evidence to support your claims, and be ready to present them.
• After meeting with you, I may wish to contemplate the matter. In any case, I will decide within two school days whether to change or uphold the grade.
• I will provide you with a written justification of my decision.
• We need to meet within one week (7 days) of the grade’s issue. Grade appeals will not be considered after seven days have passed.

Email Policy
Email is the best way to communicate with me. I maintain a 48-hour response time for emails on weekdays and will respond to emails received after 5pm on Friday within 48 hours of the next business day.

All emails should be sent from your USU email address and meet professional standards. They should include a greeting (Hi Dr. O'Shay; Dear Professor O'Shay, etc.) and a clear and concise overview of your issue/what you need. Emails should be signed with your name. This format is recommended for all professional communication with others via email.
**Student Conduct & Respect for Others**

Please keep the following in mind as we learn and grow together this semester:

- Students must respect the diversity of opinions and values that may be expressed in class, and the ensuing need for civil discussions. However, oppressive and hateful viewpoints will not be tolerated.
- Students must respect the race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual preference, and other cultural aspects of others’ identities. Hateful and oppressive language and ideas will not be tolerated. Such behavior will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct without hesitation.
- Students should not expect others to speak on behalf of their (perhaps perceived) gender, ethnicity/race, culture, class status, or sexuality. It is unfair to expect someone to be a “spokesperson” for an entire group of people, especially since these groups are not homogenous.

**Zoom Policy**

This class is delivered in a synchronous web broadcast format, meaning that we will hold live meetings via Zoom during each class period. During Zoom meetings, students will be expected to mute their microphone unless they are asking a question or contributing to a discussion.

These Zoom meetings will be recorded (by me) at times when students need COVID-related accommodations. You may mute yourself during these meetings if you would not like your image recorded. All recordings will be deleted at the end of the semester. Students may not save the recordings or post them outside of the Canvas course shell in efforts to protect the privacy of the participants. Students may not record their own copy of the course either. Violations of this policy will result in a failing grade for the course and will be reported to the university.

**COVID-19 Office Visit Policy**

If you choose to visit me in my office or another location on campus face-to-face this semester, I will encourage you to properly wear a face mask. If you feel ill or are exhibiting symptoms of Coronavirus/COVID-19, please email me to reschedule our meeting. I do not mind rescheduling. We will find a time to meet when you are feeling better, or we can meet via Zoom or telephone.

**COVID-19 Resources for Students**

Information about COVID-19 for students may be found here: https://www.usu.edu/covid-19/students/faq

**Academic Honesty & USU Honor Code**

Plagiarized work will receive an F for the assignment and may, depending on the severity of the infringement, receive a failing grade for the course and/or expulsion from the university. Refer to the university honesty/honor code for further policies pertinent to this class (https://usu.instructure.com/courses/172956/pages/honor-pledge?module_item_id=906106)

**Reasonable Accommodation Policy**

Students that are differently abled or have a documented disability should contact the Disability Resource Center (University Inn # 101, 435-797-2444, drc@usu.edu) so that we can work together to ensure your success in this course. I am unable to make accommodations until you make arrangements with the Disability Resource Center, so I strongly encourage you to take care of this
prior to the start of the semester or ASAP.  
(https://www.usu.edu/drc/student/accommodations/index)

**Mental Health**
Mental health is critically important for the success of USU students. As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. Utah State University provides free services for students to assist them with addressing these and other concerns. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus at Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS).

Students are also encouraged to download the “SafeUT App” to their smartphones. The SafeUT application is a 24/7 statewide crisis text and tip service that provides real-time crisis intervention to students through texting and a confidential tip program that can help anyone with emotional crises, bullying, relationship problems, mental health, or suicide related issues.

**Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibilities**
Academic freedom is the right to teach, study, discuss, investigate, discover, create, and publish freely. Academic freedom protects the rights of faculty members in teaching and of students in learning. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in teaching, research, and creative activities, subject to the limitations imposed by professional responsibility. USU Policy 403 further defines academic freedom and professional responsibilities.

University policies not listed in this syllabus are also expected to be followed in this course.