

CMST 4700: Health Communication

Tuesday/Thursday 10:30 – 11:45

Old Main 117

Professor: Dr. Timothy Curran

Email: tim.curran@usu.edu

Office: Lundberg 204 (to the left of Old Main if you are looking at it from the Quad).

Office Hours: Wednesday 9:30 – 11:20

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.

Course 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.

Topical Outline

The topical outline gives you a broad sense of what topics are covered in this class. These topics will likely not be covered in the same order in different semesters.

1. Introducing Health Communication
2. Culture
3. Patient-provider communication
4. Substance use
5. HIV & Sexual Risk
6. Health literacy
7. Mental health
8. Health disparities
9. Aging well and longevity
10. Health belief model and third party effect model
11. Mass media and health
12. Social media/entertainment and health

Syllabus Statement

The course syllabus is a *general plan* for the course; deviations may be necessary, and will be announced to the class. Any changes or deviations from the syllabus is at the discretion of the instructor and will be announced to the class.

Principle Course Assignments

The course schedule is approximate and may change at the discretion of the professor. Change will either be announced in class or posted on Canvas; thus, I advise regular class attendance and daily check-ins on Canvas to ensure you do not miss any announcement. Exam dates will not change. Topics considered on any given day may change if we fall behind or are ahead of schedule.

Below are the percentage values for each assignment in this class.

Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Health Disparities Assignment	50%
Quizzes	10%

Grading

Please keep a record of all grades received. Use the formula below to assess your work and grade in the course. Please keep all graded papers until you receive your final grade in the course. Grades are rounded to the nearest tenth. For example, an 89.89 is rounded to an 89.9 – making that a B+ in the course.

A = 93--100%	B+ = 88-89%	C+ = 78-79%	D+ = 68-69%	F = 0-59%
	B = 83-87%	C = 73-77%	D = 63-69%	
A- = 90-92%	B- = 80-82%	C- = 70-72%	D- = 60-62%	

- **Final Grades.** Your final grade is final. Adjustments will be made only in the case of a mathematical error. Applying subjective standards after the fact to bolster your grade is unfair to your classmates and therefore will not occur.

Assignment Details:

Exams

Exams are a combination of true/false, multiple choice, and short answer questions.

Make – Up Exams

After the first person to finish the exam has left, I will not allow any latecomers to take the exam. Make-ups are rarely given, and never for personal reasons. Make-ups are only allowed for the following:

1. Absence due to a university sanctioned activity where students have given the instructor a week's notice.
2. Absence due to an emergency which has been documented through their advisor or Student Affairs.
3. Absence due to an illness which has been verified in writing from your private physician. The note does not need details of the illness, but that the physician does not think you are well enough to attend class on the date of the exam. **An indication that you had an appointment at the health care center is not sufficient.**

Quizzes 10%

Reading quizzes will occur on Thursday. They are pop quizzes that are based solely on the readings for the week. Quizzes will occur in the beginning of class. You cannot make up a reading quiz in the case of an unexcused absence. If you are late and miss the quiz you can write your name on the quiz and earn 25%. You can use one page of handwritten notes only.

Health Disparity Assignment

The health disparities assignment is a semester long project that you will complete throughout the semester. Your job is to go to the website below, look through the health disparities reviewed, and pick one as your topic for the semester. You could also find a health disparity somewhere else – just run it by me before finalizing your topic.

https://www.cdc.gov/DisparitiesAnalytics/topic_table.html

The topic proposal will be a one page, double spaced paper explaining the topic you chose and why. The proposal will end with three citations of journal articles you've read on your topic and a 1-2 sentence overview of what you found interesting/useful from those articles. (5% of your grade).

The next part of the assignment is a 5-6 page literature review of your topic. In this 5-6 page paper, you will review at least 5 scholarly articles on your topic. A literature review should be organized by main ideas. That means – you DO NOT want to simply list 5 articles and write about them individually. Rather, it is your job to read the articles, and write a 5-6 page paper that synthesizes the main ideas/take away points from your topic. (20% of your grade).

For the final part of the assignment you will revise your literature reviews and create a Public Service Announcement (PSA) that is meant to target a crucial population that can help change this problem (perhaps people in positions of power). Your project can help raise awareness about your topic and/or promote action to mitigate harmful behaviors that promote health disparities. You can't solve an entire issue in a 30 second PSA announcement. However, your work should be focused based in the knowledge you gain from your literature reviews. For example, if you find that African American men are less likely to receive fair health care, you could create a PSA targeted at physicians to help raise awareness about physician bias towards black men. **If you inadvertently blame the afflicted population you are going to have fundamental issues with the assignment.**

Your PSA can be a visual (e.g., a poster SERIES), videos (no more than 5 minutes), or audio recording meant for radio. Of course, if you have a different outlet you'd like to explore for this part of the project run it by me. The point of this is to be creative and send an effective message that can help address health disparities in the US.

The final part of the project also involves a 3-4 page paper. In this last section you will explain in the first paragraph why you chose your PSA medium AND WHO THE TARGET AUDIENCE IS. The remaining space is dedicated to linking your PSA to research. In other words, you need to make an argument that your PSA is appropriate and could be effective. How does your PSA

help people? What will it do? What action (if any) does it promote and why is that a good idea? Your argument will be based on the information you learned when researching your topic. (20%)

You will give a 7-8 minute presentation of your PSA at the end of the semester. The presentation should first review your health disparity (a shortened version of the lit review), then a demonstration and explanation of your PSA, followed by an explanation of why your PSA would be effective. (5% of your grade).

Attendance policy

Absences

Attendance will be taken at every class. Illness, personal or family emergencies, or university-sponsored activities constitute excused absences. However, in order to count as such, students must provide appropriate documentation to me in a timely manner (**meaning one week ahead of time for university sponsored activities and the class meeting after you return from an illness**).

In the case of illness, you must get a note from either your private physician or from the Student Health Center signed by a doctor or physician's assistant that says something to the effect: "In my opinion, this student should not be in classes today and/or tomorrow (specify the particular date[s] involved)." Typically, a private physician or clinician will write a note for an illness for one or two days. However, if your illness lingers, you will need to recheck with the private physician or clinician and request an additional note to document your absence. The note does not have to indicate the specifics of your illness, but that the physician or clinician does not think you are well enough to attend class. An indication that you had an appointment at the health center is NOT SUFFICIENT.

You have 2 unexcused absences before penalty on your final grade. You cannot make up any work for non-excused absences. For every absence after two, ½ a percent of your overall grade in the class is deducted at the end of the semester.

24/7 Rule

Students that wish to discuss grades on any assignment must wait 24 hours before raising the issue to your instructor. After 24 hours, you have 7 days to discuss the issue before it will no longer be considered for a grade appeal. For example, if you receive an exam grade on a Monday, you must wait a day until Tuesday and you have until the following Tuesday to contact me to discuss the grade. After 7 days the assignment will no longer be eligible for an appeal. Appointments may be scheduled via email, however discussions regarding grades will only be done in face-to-face interactions. You are expected to come to the discussion with concrete comments and/or concerns.

Respect and Etiquette

In-class: In this class we will discuss sensitive topics. Our goal is to have an open a comfortable classroom environment. Comments that are disrespectful will not be tolerated. Here are some things to remember:

- When another student is speaking, listen respectfully, without interrupting.

- Do not explain things to a peer unless a question is asked of you directly. Even if you are trying to be helpful, this can come across as condescending when you are not in a position of authority.
- If you take umbrage with an argument or point being made, feel free to express your concerns if you can do so professionally and respectfully. When/if you do so, focus on critiquing the idea (not individuals), and avoid using inflammatory language.
- When speaking, do so in a way that invites others to engage the topic. Put otherwise, keep your opinions dialectical, or open to response – perhaps by taking note of your tone or using I-language.
- Ask questions when you do not understand something, and don't assume you know what others are thinking or what motivates them (everyone has different fields of experience).
- Do not expect individuals to speak on behalf of their (perhaps perceived) gender, race, culture, class status, or sexuality. It is unfair to expect someone to be a “spokesperson.”
- Commit to learning, not debating.

Email: Professional communication is essential when constructing emails in this class and others. Please begin emails with by addressing me by “Tim,” have a clear body with proper grammar, and end with your name. This is a good model for all emails you send to instructors. You are responsible for making sure I receive all emails, therefore, I recommend sending yourself a carbon copy of all emails you send.

Cellphone/Computer Use: Computers can be used for notes only.

Late work:

Assignments must be turned in at the beginning of the class period that they are due or else they will receive 10% off the final grade each day the assignment is late including with the due date. An assignment will not be accepted after three days past the due date.

Academic honesty & the University 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.

Reasonable Accommodation Policy

If you have a disability, I strongly encourage you to contact the Disability Resource Center and myself so that the classroom environment can be made conducive to your learning style.

“Responsible Employee” Status

Day	Topic	Major Assignment Info
Aug. 28	Course Introduction	
Aug. 30	Intro to Health Communication	
Sept. 4	Culture	
Sept 6	Culture	

Sept 11	Health Disparities	
Sept. 13	Health Disparities	
Sept. 18	Health and the Body	Topic proposal for disparity paper due
Sept. 20	Health and the Body	
Sept. 25	Mass Media and Health	
Sept. 27	Mass Media and Health	
Oct. 2	Entertainment & Social Media	
Oct. 4	Entertainment & Social Media	
Oct. 9	Stigma and Health	1 st Draft of lit review due to peer
Oct. 11	Stigma and Health	
Oct. 16	WRITING WORKSHOP	
Oct. 18	EXAM 1	
Oct. 23	Kindness, Gratitude, Compassion	Lit review due to Dr. Curran
Oct. 25	Kindness, Gratitude, Compassion	
Oct. 30	Depression, Anxiety, and Stress	
Nov. 1	Depression, Anxiety, and Stress	
Nov. 6	HIV/Sexual Risk	
Nov. 8	HIV/Sexual Risk	
Nov 13	Patient-Provider Communication	
Nov 15	Patient-Provider Communication	
Nov. 20	Aging Well	
Nov. 22	No Class	
Nov. 27	Aging Well	Peer draft of final paper due.
Nov. 29	Presentations	
Dec 4	Presentations	
Dec 6	Presentations	Final Paper Due.
Final Exam	Tuesday, Dec 11. At 9:30 am	

Readings

Culture:

Dutta, M. (2007). Communicating about culture and health: Theorizing culture-centered and cultural sensitivity approaches. *Communication Theory*, 17, 304-328.

Health disparities

***Niederdeppe, J., Bigman, C. A., Gonzales, A. L., & Gollust, S. E. (2013). Communication about health disparities in the mass media. *Journal of Communication*, 63(1), 8-30. doi:10.1111/jcom.12003

Health and the Body

***Arroyo, A., Segrin, C., & Harwood, J. (2014). Appearance-Related Communication Mediates the Link Between Self-Objectification and Health and Well-Being Outcomes. *Human Communication Research*, 40(4), 463-482. doi:10.1111/hcre.12036

Mass Media and Health

Henson, Simon Chapman, Lachlan McLeod, Natalie Johnson, Kevin McGeechan, Ian Hickie
More us than them: positive depictions of mental illness on Australian television news.

Health and Entertainment/Social Media

Igartua, J., & Vega Casanova, J. (2016). Identification with characters, elaboration, and counterarguing in entertainment-education interventions through audiovisual fiction. *Journal of Health Communication*, 21(3), 293-300. doi:10.1080/10810730.2015.1064494

Stigma:

Rice, R. E., Wu, Z., Li, L., Detels, R., & Rotheram, Borus, M. J. (2012). Reducing STD/HIV Stigmatizing Attitudes Through Community Popular Opinion Leaders in Chinese Markets. *Human Communication Research*, 38(4), 379-405.

Kindness:

***Kindness reduces avoidance goals in socially anxious individuals Jennifer L. Trew, Lynn E. Alden.

Depression, Anxiety, Stress

***Fernander, A., Moorman, G., & Azuoru, M. (2010). Race-related stress and smoking among pregnant African-American women. *Acta Obstetrica Et Gynecologica Scandinavica*, 89(4), 558-564. doi:10.3109/00016340903508676

HIV, Sexual Risk

Curran et al. (2016). Sexual Risk Among African American Women: Psychological Factors and the Mediating Role of Social Skills

Patient-Provider

Song, L., Hamilton, J. B., & Moore, A. D. (2012). Patient-healthcare provider communication: Perspectives of African American cancer patients. *Health Psychology*, 31(5), 539-547. doi:10.1037/a0025334

Aging Well/Longevity

***Fowler, C., Gasiorek, J., & Giles, H. (2015). The Role of Communication in Aging Well: Introducing the Communicative Ecology Model of Successful Aging. *Communication Monographs*, 82(4), 431-457. doi:10.1080/03637751.2015.1024701