CMST 4700: Health Communication
Tuesday 9:00 – 10:15 and Online Component
Blended Online Broadcast

Professor: Dr. Timothy Curran (he/him/his)
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: by appointment

Course Description and Format
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.

A typical week will look like the following: We will have class on Tuesday via zoom. I will lecture about that week’s topic. By Thursday at 10:30 am, you will turn in a 2 page reading review on the readings for that week.

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.

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. Changes are likely to happen this semester. Make sure you are staying up to date on announcements.

Understanding Copyright and Recording a Broadcast Class
Recording class is a very serious offense. It is stealing intellectual property. It is also an invasion of privacy. You wouldn’t record a face-to-face conversation without someone’s consent – I expect the same respect in this format. The MINIMUM penalty for recording class content is failing the class. This also pertains to downloading or taking pictures of quizzes and exams that are administered online. Please understand the gravity of this offense, it is serious.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Disparities Assignment</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Reviews</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading
Please keep a record of all grades received. Use the formula below to assess your work and 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%  
B = 83-87%  
C+ = 78-79%  
C = 73-77%  
D+ = 68-69%  
D = 63-69%  
F = 0-59%  
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: 40%**
Exams are a combination of true/false, multiple choice, and short answer questions.

The exams will be on Canvas and you will have access to them during the class period of the test day. That means, it is your responsibility to have internet access on the day of the exam. **Computer troubles will not be an acceptable excuse for missing an exam.** Make sure you test out your internet before-hand, have a back-up plan in place, and designate a quiet, low distraction environment to take the exam.

**Make – Up Exams**
Make-ups are rarely given, and never for personal reasons. Make-ups are only allowed for the following:

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 take an exam. **An indication that you had an appointment at the health care center is not sufficient.**

**Reading Reviews: 20%**
Every week in which there are readings (bottom of the syllabus) you will read and do a 2 page review, linking the article to the book chapter. You will two things in the reviews: First, what are the common themes and overlapping ideas found in the readings overall? Where do you see
concepts from the book chapter in the article? Essentially, connect the book chapter to the article. Second, what are the most important concepts to get out of this week’s readings and WHY? Don’t just list the concepts. Explain why you find them important and what their significance is.

Remember this is a reading assignment. Your writing should reflect what you learn from the readings. If you are reviewing information from the lectures/class period you will not earn a high score. The papers are double spaced 12pt font TNR 1 inch margins.

Health Disparity Assignment 40%

*There is a prompt for each assignment on Canvas. Make sure to read each prompt before starting your respective assignment.*

The health disparities assignment is a semester long project that you will complete throughout the semester. Your job is to go to google scholar and look up health disparities. You can also research health disparities on the library website, or go to the CDC website and look through health disparities there. Review the topics, and pick one for your semester assignment. You could also find a health disparity somewhere else – just run it by me before finalizing your topic.

The topic proposal/annotative bibliography will be a 2 page document. The first pages is a double spaced paper explaining the topic you chose and why. The second page is an annotative bibliography with three citations of journal articles you’ve read on your topic and a paragraph overview of what you found interesting/useful from those articles. **Look on canvas for a detailed prompt.** (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 7 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. **Look on canvas for a detailed prompt.** (15% of your grade).

Next, you will pass in a advocacy program proposal. **Look on canvas for a detailed prompt.** (5% of your grade).

For the final part of the assignment you will revise your literature reviews and create an advocacy program that is meant to target a crucial population that can help change this problem (people in positions of power). Your project will advocate and promote action to mitigate harmful behaviors that promote health disparities. You can’t solve an entire issue in one program. 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 an advocacy platform targeted at physicians to help reduce physician bias towards black men. **If you inadvertently blame the afflicted population you are going to have fundamental issues with the assignment.**

The final part of the project also involves a 4 page paper. **Look on canvas for a detailed prompt.** (20%)
You will give 5 minute presentation of your program 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 advocacy plan, followed by an explanation of why it would be effective.

**Attendance policy**
I can’t imagine doing well in a class like this and not attending our meetings. Course updates will be given mostly on Zoom meetings. If you miss class, you are still responsible for the updates and materials discussed on that day.

**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:
- Be patient with Zoom. We are going to try different things to make the environment as close to face to face as possible. Some things won’t work as well as others. We’ll figure it all out together.
- 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.

**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**

**Course Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Major Assignment Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 19</td>
<td>Course Introduction and Intro to Health Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due by Jan 21</td>
<td><em>Read the syllabus very carefully</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 26</td>
<td>Health and Culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due by Jan 28</td>
<td><em>Post reading review 1</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2</td>
<td>Health Disparities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due by Feb 4</td>
<td><em>Post reading review 2</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 9</td>
<td>Health and the Body</td>
<td>Topic proposal for disparity paper due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due by Feb 11</td>
<td><em>Post reading review 3</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 16</td>
<td>Mass Media and Health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due by Feb 18</td>
<td><em>Post reading review 4</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 23</td>
<td>Entertainment &amp; Social Media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 25</td>
<td><em>Post reading review 5</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 2</td>
<td>Stigma and Health</td>
<td>Should have a draft of your papers by now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 4</td>
<td><em>Post reading review 6</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 9</td>
<td><strong>Exam 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 11</td>
<td><strong>Work on literature review</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 16</td>
<td>Aging Well and Gratitude</td>
<td>Lit review due to Dr. Curran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 18</td>
<td><em>Post reading review 7</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 23</td>
<td>Depression, Anxiety, and Stress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 25</td>
<td><em>Post reading review 8</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proposal for advocacy program due</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 30</td>
<td>HIV/Sexual Risk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td><em>Post reading review 9</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6</td>
<td>Patient-Provider Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 8</td>
<td><em>Post reading review 10</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 13</td>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>Work on advocacy program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 20</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 22</td>
<td>Work on final project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 27</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 29</td>
<td><em>Pass in final project</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final Paper Due.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Readings**

**Culture:**
- Chapter 20 of the Handbook of Health Communication

**Health disparities**
- Chapter 30 of the Handbook of Health Communication

**Health and the Body**
- No text book reading for this week

**Mass Media and Health**
- Chapter 13 of the Handbook of Health Communication
- 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

- Chapter 16 of the Handbook of Health Communication

Stigma:

- Chapter 29 of the Handbook of Health Communication

Kindness & Aging Well/Longevity

- Chapter 21 of the Handbook of Health Communication
- Chapter 29 of the Handbook of Health Communication

Depression, Anxiety, Stress

- Chapter 27 of the Handbook of Health Communication

HIV, Sexual Risk

- Chapter 24 of the Handbook of Health Communication

Patient-Provider

- Chapter 26 of the Handbook of Health Communication