

COM 409 Seminar in Health Communication Fall 2019

“We all require and want respect: man or woman, black or white, [poor or rich]. It’s our basic human right.” (Aretha Franklin)

Class: M 6:30-9:15 Fell 112

Instructors: Lance R. Lippert

Office Hours: MTWTR 2:00-3:00; T & TR 10:00-11:00; and by appointment

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Please contact me through ReggieNet mail unless it is an unrelated course question or an emergency. I will try to respond ASAP, but it may take me up to 24 hours to respond.

Course Web page: <https://reggienet.illinoisstate.edu>
<http://www.communication.ilstu.edu/>

Required texts and readings:

Du Pre, A. (2017). *Communicating about health: Current issues and perspectives (5th ed.)*. Oxford University Press.

*The text will be supplemented by book chapters, journal articles, and case studies in order to address issues such as health promotion, health narratives, healthcare teams, health literacy, and caregiving.

Course Description: Health communication is an area of study that encompasses theories, research, and application of symbolic processes by which individuals and communities deal with issues related to wellness and illness through beliefs, practices, and policies. This class is designed to be an overview of significant concepts and issues that have emerged in health communication scholarship and practice. This course explores health communication research and practice including the examination of the role of communication in health care delivery, health promotion and disease prevention, risk communication, as well as in promoting personal and psychosocial wellbeing. Although grounded in relevant communication and interdisciplinary theory, the goal of this course is to blend theory with practical application in various contexts and processes. The course cuts across multiple levels of communication, different communication channels, various contexts, and the use of diverse communication media and technologies.

Instructional Strategies: Course concepts and content will be explored through various instructional strategies including: (1) textbook and professional journal readings (reading list), (2) lectures, discussions, class activities, case studies, and interviews with relevant health communication professionals and consumers, (3) semester project which will apply relevant literature and theory to practical health communication contexts, and (4) assessment in the form of several short position papers, a mid-term exam, and a final exam.

Why This Course Is Important (to you and to the community): There is a growing awareness that communication not only affects but is inextricably intertwined with issues of health and medicine. This is true on a personal, intimate level in the way patients and caregivers interact in the examination and hospital room. It is also true on an organizational level in that policies and community relations affect the way that health care is provided and the way that people feel about the providers. It is also evident in media campaigns that seek to educate people about health. At every level, the importance of health communication is extraordinary, but so are the challenges.

People who understand communication are in an important place to help, and their services are increasingly in demand. Communication skills are important for professional caregivers, but that is not all. Health communication specialists work (a) in hospital education departments, teaching medical professionals to

communicate more effectively; (b) in public relations, marketing, and human resource departments; (c) in patient satisfaction and patient advocacy programs; (d) in health care administration; (e) in media organizations covering health issues; (f) in nonprofit organizations; and (g) in organizations that educate the public and support public policy and research.

Course Objectives: This seminar will prepare students to:

- Describe the role of communication in health and health care situations.
- Identify, describe, and apply communication theories (interpersonal, organizational, group, mass media, CMC) and health communication theories to help explain the delivery of health care and health care messages.
- Identify relevant elements of health literacy and advocacy issues.
- Analyze, describe, and critically evaluate positive and negative effects/consequences of messages in health communication campaigns, promotions, and social media.
- Research, analyze, and write about health communication issues.
- Identify and analyze issues (i. e., culture, technology, social norms) that influence care-giving interactions.
- Critically evaluate communication behaviors in health care relationships, health care groups, and health care organizations.
- Articulate how public health issues and health communication affect various populations in our local and global communities.

In other words, after taking this course, we will better understand how the health industry operates and what role we might play in it. The accomplish this we will develop the ability to:

- Describe the current landscape of health care
- Research about issues in personal and public health care communication contexts
- Knowledgeably discuss current issues in health care
- Differentiate among health, wellness, and illness
- Comprehend the dynamic between mental and physical health
- Analyze patient–caregiver communication
- Engage in informed dialogue about ethical issues in health communication
- Describe patients’ and caregivers’ perspectives
- Describe cultural viewpoints about health
- Identify and discuss the types of diversity among patients and caregivers
- Define the role of social support in maintaining health, wellness, and coping with illness
- Analyze the advantages and challenges of communicating about health via social media, mobile devices, computers, and other technology
- Analyze and describe organizational issues in health communication (leadership, public relations, marketing, human resources, crisis management, and so on)
- Identify media images about health and their influence on communication
- Comment knowledgeably on health crisis communication and health care reform options
- Identify the key steps in planning, implementing, and assessing health promotion campaigns

Course Requirements: Your grade for this course will depend on how many points you earn from each of the following:

Short Papers (100 points):

- Reflection Paper (25 pts.). Topics require a thoughtful analysis of the assigned issues. The papers are meant to be reflective of personal interest, knowledge, beliefs, relationships, and personal experiences. I am looking for clear and concise writing, sound analysis, and effective integration of course material and theory into the writings, and reasoned conclusions. The paper (3-5 pages) will be a personal health

narrative describing an experience, observation, or health care situation. Reflect on and write about a recent experience with health as a patient, customer, caregiver, friend, family member, loved-one, provider, or consumer. Tell a story that includes the situation, the participants, and outcomes. Only share what you feel comfortable sharing.

- **Interview Paper (25 pts.).** The interview paper is just that: A paper summarizing and analyzing an interview (conversation) with a health professional. What role does communication play in the health situation? You will be given more specific instructions later in the semester, but in the meantime, be thinking about this project while doing the readings and during our class discussion. The questions you will ask this person will be derived from the readings and class discussions. You may interview someone in your social network or may contact someone else. You'll turn in a 3-5 page synopsis and partial transcript of the interview. Interview papers will be discussed in class the day they are due.
- **Praxis Paper (50 pts.).** This short paper should relate to your area of interest. Apply your understanding of at least one prominent communication theory to application within a specific health context. We will talk about this in class. (3-5 pages).

Instructional Discussion (100 points): Over the semester, you (and partners) will be responsible for facilitating an instructional discussion about a subject or topic from one of the chapters (3-14). You will be responsible for providing an academic or nonacademic article dealing with the subject and relevant to the chapter. You will compose an outline of your presentation (with learning objectives) as well as a list of discussion questions to pose to your classmates during the class discussion. You will be responsible for 1) providing an article (one week prior to class), 2) creating discussion questions, and 3) present the material about the topic as we discuss the topic-including a structured learning activity or something engaging (instructional games, simulations, activities, or even some type of artifact that demonstrates application) that supplements the reading and discussion. I will provide a rubric for this activity. Make it relevant. It must be consistent the assigned chapter.

SMACC (Social Media Analytics Command Center) Talk (50 points):

This will involve a health-related information search to see how health communication organizations present and portray information and messages through social media. You will be expected to identify, analyze, and evaluate sources of information regarding certain health topics through the social media listening center or SMACC. Students will need to identify an organization or agency, track the information and communication, and interpret the results.

Semester Paper & IRB if necessary (200 points): The semester project dealing with some aspect of health communication needs to be determined within the first three weeks of the semester. You will need to propose a project topic and choose an option. The goal is to produce a product acceptable for convention presentation. Most journal and convention guidelines specify that papers should be no longer than 25 pages (excluding references, tables, etc.). On average, a 15 to 20-page paper is a reasonable length. Papers should be written using APA (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th Ed.; <http://www.stylewizard.com/>) guidelines as this is the style accepted by our discipline. Writing in a clear and concise manner is an ongoing, learning process that all of us constantly work to perfect. Hopeful this course will challenge us to become better writers and provide an opportunity to improve our writing styles. Feel free to consult with me on your papers prior to grading. You may select one of following options for the format of your final paper:

- A **research summary** is an essay, incorporating an original way of summarizing, analyzing, and interpreting a body or topic area of research literature. Rather than being a mere descriptive survey, it goes beyond to develop insights and provide specific evaluations, which can be the basis for subsequent research. Research summaries for purposes of this class should contain a) a review of literature, b) evaluation of literature, c) issues for further inquiry and research directions, and d) practical and/or theoretical implications.
- A **research proposal** is the first step in the research process in which you (a) identify an idea, problem, question, or hypothesis, (b) describe the purpose of the study, (c) provide a rationale for the study

question(s), (d) define all key concepts/terms in the research question(s), (e) review previous research directly relevant to your study question, and (f) describe proposed methods, including participants, measurement instruments or procedures, location(s), time frame, and a rationale for your choices.

- Propose a **health communication skills intervention** specifying the target audience, the focal communication competencies, the communication context, strategies for skill building, and evaluation. Remember that skills interventions should be theoretically driven; therefore, behavior change and interpersonal theories should be used to rationalize choices. Course readings and additional readings must be used to justify the skills intervention, the selected context, and the skill building exercises.
- Analyze **popular culture entertainment** such as a primetime health drama or a movie about a health issue using course concepts and theories to explain themes, analyze and critique the work in terms of gender/culture/other, and draw conclusions about its contributions to public discourse on health.
- Analyze or propose a **health communication campaign** specifying how formative research, audience segmentation, message construction, media, strategy, and evaluation will be conducted/selected. This may be in the context of a worksite, state campaign, or national campaign. Remember that campaigns should be theoretically driven; therefore, behavior change theories should be used to explain choices. Course readings and additional readings must be used to justify choices. Sample copy of messages must be provided in the project.
- A **grant proposal** “refers to the process of elaborating, writing and proposing a request for a subsidy. The act of writing a grant application comes from a **nonprofit** whose purpose is to find a financing source... The purpose, in this case, is to deliver a social impact, generate a positive image or (for foundations) pursuing its own core business” [Optimty Wiki at <https://wiki.optimty.com/grant-proposal/>]. This option needs to adhere to specific grant guidelines and should contain a) introductory letter with summary & sufficient project rationale, b) review of relevant literature, c) necessary assessment, d) connection to grant’s goals, & e) general budget.
- The **case study** should consist of 1) case study viability relative to particular context, 2) literature review with appropriate theory and concept development, 3) the case study, 4) supporting material (including discussion questions, debriefing focus, and relevant information for contextualization of scenario), 5) summary, and 6) bibliography. Apply the case study to your area of interest. Content for cases can originate from personal experience, literature, and interviews.

Professional Points (50 points): Regular attendance and class participation is very important. Class sessions will incorporate discussions and some structured activities. **I will expect you to submit weekly discussion questions with talking prompts.** Class sessions will often move beyond the assigned readings to issue analysis, theory application, and communication skill development (**Scholar Chats, case studies, on-line discussion, discussion questions, and “conversations”**). You are responsible for reading the assigned material prior to class. You are expected to discuss the readings and your ideas informally each session. Because this course is a seminar, not a lecture class, your own involvement and active engagement are imperative. In order for our discussions to be productive you will need to (1) show knowledge of readings and have given thought to what you have read, (2) provide discussion points from each of the readings, (3) articulate your ideas clearly and argue effectively for your position, (4) contribute to a lively interchange of ideas, (5) synthesize ideas across various readings, (6) respond thoughtfully to the comments of others. Failure to contribute to class discussion, in a meaningful way, will negatively affect your participation grade. Physical presence is necessary, but not enough for participation.

Summary of Grading:

Short Papers	100 points
Semester Paper & presentation	200 points
Professional Points	50 points
Instructional Discussion	100 points
SMACC Talk	50 points
Total	500 points

The final letter grade for the course (and grades for the other assignments) will be based on a standard scale (90-100%=A; 80-89%=B; 70-79%=C; 60-69%=D; 0-59%=F)

NOTE: Failure to turn in any of the course requirements may result in failure of the course.

Course Policies and Requirements:

Preparation & Participation. By definition, a graduate seminar requires extensive preparation and participation from all participants. You are obligated to be prepared for intelligent class discussion. The quality of this seminar depends ultimately upon the willingness of each participant to constructively and creatively engage the materials, issues, and discussions. Do the assigned readings. Take time prior to class to reflect upon your assignments and your participation. If something is unclear, particularly interesting, or you have some insight, make a note of it and bring it to class.

Professional Courtesy. As this is a graduate seminar, I feel it is unnecessary to emphasize issues such as respect for the class (attendance, turning assignments in on time, etc.) and the members of the seminar (respecting others' opinions, being respectful to those who are speaking, and working together in a spirit of cooperation rather than competition). I do, however, want to be clear about my expectations. I believe graduate school is an experience designed to bring professional individuals together to increase and expand knowledge. Thus, I will expect your behaviors and attitudes towards this course to reflect professional courtesy. If I believe a student is not meeting my expectations (e.g., excessive absences, inadequate work, disrespect for others, etc.), I will notify you immediately and a decision will be made concerning your need to drop the course.

Deadlines. All assignments must be completed on schedule and must be handed in when due. No make-ups or extensions will be permitted unless the student contacts the instructor **prior** to the due date and has a verifiable excuse. One letter grade will be deducted for each day that any assignment is late.

Academic Misconduct: Academic dishonesty involves cheating or plagiarizing. All University Policies concerning academic misconduct will be upheld in this course. Refer to the I.S.U. Code of Conduct at Community Rights and Responsibilities (<http://www.deanofstudents.ilstu.edu/downloads/crr/code-of-student-conduct.pdf>). Of particular concern in a course with written assignments is the issue of plagiarism.

Webster (1989) defines plagiarism as "the appropriations or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work" (p. 1100). In other words, plagiarism is stealing. You must cite your sources accurately and consistently in both your oral and written assignments. I will not tolerate such misconduct, and it may result in a failing grade. Please remember 1) You cannot simply copy material from a source (including classmates) and present it as your own original material, 2) You cannot download a paper from any sort of online outlet and present it as original work, and 3) You cannot hand in a paper for my class that you wrote for another class.

Special Needs: According to the Americans with Disability Act (Title 7), students with special physical or academic needs are invited to notify Student Access and Accommodation Services (SAAS) or the instructor during the first week of class so that any necessary accommodations can be made promptly. If you have, special needs (medical, hearing, learning, etc.) please let me know. I will do my best to assist you. In addition, "Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, **(voice)**, 438-8620 **(TTY)**, or visit the website at StudentAccess.illinoisstate.edu."

Tentative Class Schedule Fall 2019

Week	Module	Readings (additional readings and case studies will be added)
Week #1-3 WK #3 <u>No Class-LD</u> Monday, Sept. 2	Part I Establishing a context for health communication Part II The roles of patients and professional caregivers DUE: Reflection Paper-8.26.19 DUE: Project Paragraph-9.2.19	Chapter 1 Chapter 2 Chapter 3 Chapter 4 Chapter 5
Week #4-7	Part III Social & cultural issues START Instructional Discussion DUE: Praxis Paper-9.16.19	Chapter 6 Chapter 7
Week #8-11	Part IV Coping and health resources SMACC Activity Part V Communication in health organizations	Chapter 8 Chapter 9 Chapter 10
Week #12-15 <u>NCA</u> November 14-17 <u>No Class-TG</u> November 25-29	Part VI Media, public policy, and health promotion DUE: Interview Paper-12.12.19	Chapter 11 Chapter 12 Chapter 13 Chapter 14
Week #16	Work time	
Finals Week December 9-13	Final Exam-TBA	