COM 355.501: Health Communication
ONLINE Course
Spring 2019

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Teaching Hours: TR 9:30-10:45; online
Department: Languages, Culture and Communication
College: Liberal and Applied Arts

Course Description:
Overview of the field of health communication with attention to analysis and practice of health communication relationships and messages.

Text and Course Materials:
The text is available through the SFA bookstore (used copies as well) and on Amazon beginning at $48.08 new and through Kindle for $31.32 (last checked by professor).
*The textbook will be supplemented by readings posted on D2L.

Program Learning Outcomes:
(No program learning outcomes are directly assessed in this course at this time.)
Objective 1—Theory Knowledge: Students majoring in Communication Studies should display comprehension of major communication theories.
Objective 2—Theory Application: Students majoring in Communication Studies will apply the major theories in the field to communicate effectively in a variety of settings.
Objective 3—Research Methods: Students majoring in Communication Studies will be able to use and demonstrate understanding of appropriate methodology in critical, humanistic, or social scientific paradigms in examining research questions in communication.
Objective 4—Diversity and Freedom of Expression: Students majoring in Communication Studies will be able to recognize the central role of diversity and freedom of expression in a global community.
Objective 5—Constitutive Nature of Communication: Students majoring in Communication Studies will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the constitutive nature of communication, which includes forces that enable and constrain communication such as technology, ethics, and organizational life.
Objective 6—Higher Order Thinking: Students majoring in Communication Studies will be able to demonstrate oral and written competence in logical and critical thinking.

Student Learning Outcomes:
1. Understand how health is socially constructed.
2. Apply a narrative lens to the understanding, application, and critical evaluation of health communication.

3. Understand and critically evaluate the culture of medicine and the biomedical model in comparison to biopsychosocial and cultural models.

4. Understand and critically evaluate how technology, culture, and body politics (i.e. gendered bodies, stigma, etc…) affect such issues as doctor-patient relationships, health information seeking, social support, and health promotion.

5. Critically evaluate effective health promotion materials using theory as well as campaign development strategies.

6. Understand and apply communication competencies to interventions for healthcare providers and patients differently to promote collaborative care.

7. Understand and apply how health narratives function for teller and audience.

Course Requirements:
This course is comprised of quizzes/exams/tests, a health communication blog, discussion posts, and writing assignments in the Dropbox.

Quizzes/Exams/Tests: The four quizzes and two exams/tests are available on D2L as specified on the calendar.

- Quizzes – 100 points
- Exam/Test 1 – 100 points
- Exam/Test 2 – 100 points

TOTAL: 300 points

Health Communication Blog:

Project Description

The aim of this project is to incrementally apply health communication concepts/practices to a contemporary health issue determined by its interest/relevance to the student. For example, here are a list of contemporary health issues in terms of diseases: MRSA, Zika, flu, Legionnaires’ Disease, Type II Diabetes, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, etc… Or, a contemporary health issue such as patient portals or use of alternative medicine could be selected for the project. If a non-disease health issue is selected, blog entries may have to be slightly altered to complete assignment; so check with your instructor.

To complete this project, students will need to register for a free blog through a website like wordpress.com and familiarize oneself with the blogsite.

Consider the form and function of health blogging, but make sure that each blog post has multiple hyperlinks that work, uses credible sources cited in APA style, and includes course vocabulary. You may want to use more of a narrative style for posts, which is acceptable if the post fits the requirements. Additionally, each post should break down ideas into short well-worded paragraphs, use bulleting for lists, and use headings to help with readability.

Each blog entry has a separate set of instructions that will be explained below.

Blog Entries and Point Value

Blog Entry 1 Health Issue Overview: 50 points
Create a blog site including the cover page, an about page, and the first blog post introducing the health issue. First, the homepage of your blog should be visually appealing and clarify the health issue to be discussed in the blog. Second, an about page should introduce you as a blogger, the subject that you are blogging about, and what motivated you to blog about the subject. Finally, the first blog post should overview your health issue and use hyperlinks to link to other informational websites like professional associations, credible health organizations, and/or credible health articles.

**Blog Entry 2 Patient Education: 50 points**
Create a blog post to educate patients about the health issue. Consider the following: health issue causes, effects, socio-cultural factors, research, and treatments.

**Blog Entry 3 Health Information Seeking & Social Support: 75 points**
Create a blog post explaining how to seek credible health information online and how to both seek and provide the different dimensions of social support both online and face-to-face.

**Blog Entry 4 Health Communication Campaign: 75 points**
Create a blog post that follows either choice one or two.

*Choice 1:* Find and analyze an existing health communication campaign about the health issue. Explain the campaign in terms of target audience, target behavior, message strategy, media strategy, and other components of campaign development. Analyze the campaign’s effectiveness by using at least one theory (i.e. Transtheoretical Model, Extended Parallel Processing Model, etc…).

*Choice 2:* Develop a health communication campaign for the health issue. Explain how you will develop the campaign using each of the steps in campaign development. Be clear by labeling each step. Make certain to use at least one theory to develop the campaign delineating how the theory is applied using the vocabulary of the theory.

**Blog Entry 5 Health Risk/Crisis Communication: 75 points**
Considering health risk/crisis communication, create a blog post identifying risk messages about your health issue. In addition to considering concepts such as vulnerability and severity, discuss public outrage. Include at least one section explaining how existing risk communication could be enhanced.

**Blog Entry 6 Patient and Provider Health Communication Recommendations: 75 points**
Create a blog post that provides best practices for 1) patients and 2) providers regarding your health issue. This is an opportunity to integrate all that you have learned across the scope of health communication. Each best practice should be explained and supported sufficiently.

**Submitting Blog Entries**
Submit each blog link to a discussion post for that blog. Create a hyperlink by highlighting the URL and selecting hyperlink from the menu options in the textbox for the discussion post. You will need to view peers’ blog entries and comment on at least 2 peers.

**TOTAL: 400 points**

**Reflection Paper:**
The course reflection paper is at the end of the semester to permit students to take a variety of course concepts and make relevant applications of those concepts to current and/or future experiences (either personal or professional). Students will evaluate what they have learned about health communication from the text/readings, course-related assignments/activities, and course lectures/modules. No less than 4 concepts should be clearly identified within the paper with relevant citations to explain the concepts. After identifying concepts, students should reflect and personalize
what was learned to past/current/future health communication experiences. The
reflections/applications can have both personal and professional connections. At the culmination of
the paper, the student should conclude with lessons learned that will help him/her in the future. The
reflection paper should be formatted in APA style (including a title page, abstract, key words, page
numbers, and reference list), 4 complete pages in length, and submitted as a .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf
to the Dropbox. Prior to submitting to the D2L Dropbox, you should have the AARC Writing Desk
or online owl proof read your work by either submitting it online or in person. Grading will be
assessed:

15% APA style
25% Writing style (fluency, coherency, clarity, support, grammar, punctuation)
50% Content (use of 4 concepts, clarity in defining/explaining concepts, applications of
concepts, personalization of reflections, and lessons learned)

TOTAL: 100 points

Health Narrative Analysis Paper:
While most of us will not be health providers, in the sense of medical practitioners, we all
experience health, health risks, and illness either personally or in our interpersonal networks. This
written and oral assignment is about a particular health narrative and uses readings and course
content to analyze that narrative. It is recommended that you write out your narrative, and then, you
go through course content in the textbook, additional readings, and lecture materials to identify
concepts that you can relate to and expound upon as they are brought up in the narrative. There are
three major parts to this paper: 1) the written health narrative, 2) the analysis of the health
narrative using course content and readings (cite sources in APA style), and 3) the description
of best practices stemming from lessons learned that would enable you to better communicate
in the future. To ensure that the paper is well-written, check off to make sure you have done the
following: a) cover page in APA style followed by an abstract with key words, b) introductory
paragraph, c) health narrative section, d) analysis section with citations, e) best practices section, f)
concluding paragraph, and g) reference page (use at least 5 published sources from the class and/or
health communication journal articles). The paper will be 4-5 complete pages in length (not
counting the cover page, abstract page, or reference list), formatted in APA style, and address the
aforementioned sections. Prior to submitting your paper to the D2L Dropbox as a .doc, .docx, .rtf,
or .pdf, you should have the AARC Writing Desk or online owl proof read your work.

Grading of paper out of 100 points will be assessed: 15% APA style, 25% Writing Style (fluency,
coherency, storytelling, clarity, support, grammar, punctuation), and 50% Content (5 quality
citations, application of course terms, narrative, lessons learned or best practices).

TOTAL: 100 points

Discussion Posts within Modules:
During the course, you will complete three Discussing Posts that connect with content in the
specified module. Each discussion post should be clearly and thoroughly written, cite appropriate
content in APA style, use course vocabulary, and be proof read. For each discussion post, students
should reply with minimum 100 word responses to 3-5 classmates.

Discussion Post 1: Personal Introductions:
Introduce yourself to the class. In several paragraphs explain who you are, your
interests/hobbies, why you are taking COM 355, and what you hope to learn more about.

**Discussion Post 2 (50 points): Intima: A Discussion of Narrative Medicine**

The Intima is a medical humanities journal that features the study and practice of narrative medicine and uses traditional and creative means to express health narratives. The following assignment is designed for you to familiarize yourself with the website and its publications.

Instructions:

Using the Intima’s website, identify and read/view one of each of the following categories:

- Academic article
- Field notes
- Fiction
- Poetry
- Multi-media/Art
- Crossroads Blog

In a Discussion Post, list each viewed item by bulleted. Then, write 2 paragraphs describing how health, narrative, and narrative medicine was illustrated for you and at least one take away message. Within the two paragraphs, make references to the items viewed from each category. After proof reading and posting, make sure to reply to at least two peers.

**Discussion Post 3 (50 points): Health Entertainment Education**

Find a television program (or another form of entertainment) that either effectively or ineffectively educates its audience about a health issue. In your post, identify the program (or other form of entertainment), identify the health issue integrated into the storyline, and both explain and analyze how the writers and producers approach health entertainment education. Using a theory such as Narrative Transportation Theory (or another theory from the course), analyze how effective or ineffective you believe the program (or other form of entertainment) to be at educating the audience about the health issue.

If you have a clip of the program (or other form of entertainment), please provide a hyperlink for your peers to view it.

**TOTAL: 100 points**

**Grading Policy:**

Grades will be determined by the aforementioned categories. Students may earn up to 1000 points total. Point totals are final. No grades will be “bumped.” The following indicates which letter grades correspond to earned points:

- 1000 – 900 points A
- 899 – 800 points B
Make Up Work
No late work is acceptable. Deadlines for coursework are posted in advance, and it is the responsibility of each student to complete his/her work and submit it either early or on time. The University recognizes three types of documented excuses that may permit a student to make up work: 1) University Sponsored Event, 2) unavoidable emergency, and 3) personal illness. Your instructor will not hear or recognize oral excuses for missed course material. Your instructor is the exclusive decision maker on approving or denying an excused absence request in order to make up work in the class. Acceptable documentation includes: doctor/medical paperwork, written acknowledgement of participation in a university sponsored event, notification disseminated from the Judicial Office, and family emergency records. Acceptable documentation of an absence to make up coursework must be emailed to espradley@sfasu.edu within one week of the assignment’s due date. No exceptions will be made. Because this is an online course, make sure to take screen shots of any technical problems and email the screen shot and the assignment to the instructor at espradley@sfasu.edu immediately.

Academic Integrity (A-9.1)
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

Grade Withheld Policy (Semester Grades A-54)
http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/semester_grds.asp

II. Withheld Grades
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Students with Disabilities:
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room
325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Acceptable Student Behavior:
Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

*Unprofessional behavior includes but is not limited to talking while instructor/speaker is presenting, texting during presentations, sleeping during class, and using abusive, profane language/gestures.