

COMX 425
Communication in Health Organizations
Fall, 2020 Meet in LA 201 T TH 9:30-10:50

Instructor: Dr. Joel Iverson

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 8:30-9:30 AM as well as a moderately open schedule to meet by appt. Another note on communication – I do not perpetually check email, but do so most workdays. I also consider answering an email question in class as a sufficient answer.

Course Description and Objectives

This course will provide students with an overview of key issues at the intersection of health communication and organizational communication by considering communication processes that occur in a number of distinct contexts including health care organizations and occupational safety. This course is designed to introduce students to theory, research, and contemporary concerns in the area of health communication. As a survey course, it will explore a wide range of topics – the emphasis will be on introducing students to the breadth of issues in health communication rather than delving into any particular issue in great depth. Thus, we will consider issues including patient-provider interaction, social support, construction of illness meanings, media representations of health, health care organizations, health campaigns, risk and crisis communication, technology, and health care policy. Students should consider the course requirements, subject matter, paper deadlines, etc., before making a decision to take the course this semester. It is especially important to consider the assignments described below.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Understand and apply concepts of health communication to a variety of health organizations.
2. Comprehend and appreciate divergent cultural approaches to health care.
3. Understand the role of communication in enacting health care at personal narrative, organizational, and institutional levels.
4. Be empowered to exert control over their health care decisions to ensure a voice in their health care decisions.
5. Analyze, create, and evaluate health campaigns.
6. Apply organizational communication theories to the multiplex of health care organizational settings from patient-provider interactions to health care teams to institutional policy to public health campaigns.

Only the Highest of Expectations

In this class we strive for educational excellence through an environment that is participative, informative, collaborative, and other important “ative” words that are consistent with pedagogical superiority. As a result we will all strive to achieve excellence, because the alternative is poor form.

Required Texts

Apker, J. (2012). *Communication in Health Organizations*. Polity Press.

A small book at a reasonable price.

Additionally, we will have some PDF readings that will be available on the Moodle

[Other Minor Things \(Like Grades\)](#)

Assignments:

Health in the News: These are short, one page analysis of a health issue in the news. You are required to provide a copy of the news item and a one page (full) analysis of the health issue. More details to follow.

Health Narrative: This is a short paper that where you analyze a health issue through the brief telling and reflection upon a story. This story can be personal, one you interact with or one you find through other means. More details to follow.

Major Project: You will construct a major group project in this class. You are asked (in a group) to choose a specific health-related topic, and develop a Group White Paper and a group presentation regarding one of the six key issues in health communication: Successful health care encounters, personal confidence and coping, effective communication in health care, organizational enactment of healthcare, mass media and health care. The group presentation will consider research, analysis, intended audience and the appropriate way in which systems theory is involved in the issue. The presentation will be made to the class. Grade will be based upon the portfolio, presentation and peer evaluation forms.

Celebrations of Knowledge: We will have two celebrations of knowledge that will reflect what you have learned and what you think. It will be a great combination of question styles including short answer and essay that will give you the opportunity to make an argument based on the materials.

Graduate Component: If you are taking this course for graduate credit we will be meeting independently at the beginning of the semester to discuss your additional requirements including 1. an outside literature review project or health promotion campaign complete with presentation to the rest of the class; 2. A set of additional readings related to your individual interests.

Points: Yes, I hope to make them and I know you do also:

Celebration #1	1,000 points
Celebration #2	1,000 points
Narrative	750 points
Final Project	1,000 points
Daily/Online	up to 250 points
Health in the news – 4 @ 100 points	
<i>Total</i>	<i>up to 4,400 points</i>
A	92.5% or higher
A-	90% to 92.499999999%
B+	87.5% to 89.999999999%
B	82.5% to 87.499999999%
B-	80% to 82.499999999%

C+	77.5% to 79.999999999%
C	72.5% to 77.499999999%
C-	70% to 72.499999999%
D	60% to 69.999999999%
F	59.999999999% or below

Other Other Stuff (Like Policies)

Attendance, Participation, and Preparation. It is expected that you will attend class every day and be an active participant in class discussion. It is also expected that you will complete the readings for the class before the class period. Because this is an honors class, I do not anticipate any problems with issues of attendance, participation, and preparation and have not assigned “points” to any of these behaviors. However, I would anticipate that performance in other aspects of the course will be correlated with issues of attendance, participation, and preparation.

MOODLE: I will post rough outlines of ideas on Moodle, however it is your responsibility to attend class to take notes from lecture and class discussion. If you miss class and want notes, you will have to rely on the kindness of a classmate. Moodle will only be used to post readings, grades, and for some basic notes.

PLAGIARISM/CHEATING: Plagiarism and any other unethical behavior will not be tolerated. You are expected to hold to the Code of Conduct.

LATE WORK: Celebrations of knowledge can only be made up due to university activities or illness serious enough to warrant a medical appointment. A makeup exam can be arranged with me within one week of the exam date. One make up time will be scheduled for all who need to make up the exam. This exam may differ in format to preserve examination integrity.

PRIVACY: An individual student’s grade is a private matter. When papers or other materials are returned to the students, other students do not have the right to ask, “What did you get?” An individual may offer personal information, but that is the individual’s choice. Please note as well that instructors are not able to discuss one person’s grade with another student, email grades, or give grades over the phone pursuant to the Buckley Amendment.

1. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University.
2. All students must be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321.
3. All celebrations of knowledge will be taken on the assigned date
4. Electronics: When you come into class, please, be sure your cell phone, fax, or any other electronic device is turned off as it may interfere with the navigation of this classroom. If your phone, etc. rings do not answer, just turn it off. If you are anticipating an emergency call, let me know prior to class and we will work that out.

SPECIAL NEEDS/SERVICES: The University provides academic resources to those who have specific needs. I am more than willing to assist with those programs. If you have questions or concerns, please see me.

Very tentative schedule since this is a retooling of the course. I will give notice of changes.

August 27	Introduction, Syllabus and other fun	
29	Overview of Health Comm	Reading and video
September 3	Intro to organizational communication	Videos and reading
5	Intro to systems theory	pp. 1-13
10	Models and Contexts	rest of chapter 1
12	Professions and Assimilation	Ch 2 to p. 62
17	Best Practices in Role Performance	Rest of Ch. 2 & reading
	Health in the News #1 Due Online	
19	Identity and Power	Chapter 3
24	Patient/Provider relationships	Reading and video
26	Narratives	Reading and podcast
October 1	Stress and Burnout	Chapter 4
3	Caregiving	Reading and Video
8	Celebration #1	
10	Narratives Due (Online)	
15,17	Leadership	Chapter 5
	Health in the News #2	
22,24	Healthcare Teams	Chapter 6
29	Big Project Assignment and How to Present a Presentation Presentation	
31	<i>Online</i> and teamwork	
	Health in the News #3	
November 5,7	Health Organizations Quality	Chapter 7
12,14	Culture and healthcare	Reading
19	Technology	Chapter 8
21	More Technology	Readings
	Research, Theories and Proof of Concept - Groups	
	Health in the News #4	
	Group Work & Review	
26	Celebration #2	
28	Thanksgiving – Celebrate Gluttony	
December 3,5	Portfolios Due	
	Presentations	
	Final Wednesday, December 11 at 10:10-12:10 Last Presentations	