Social relationships are a cornerstone of human health. For one, they help us accomplish our basic goals in life by providing us with all kinds of social support. However, they also provide us with important opportunities to exchange positive emotional experiences, in the form of love, affection, gratitude, humor and forgiveness. Research indicates that opportunities to communicate these experiences provide us with both objective and subjective health outcomes. The purpose of this course is to help you discover how human communication and interpersonal relationships intersect to affect our physical and psychological well-being. More broadly, this class is about how communication can make our lives happier, healthier, and more satisfying lives.

In this class, you will learn how to:

- Recognize and explain the main theoretical reasons why and how health relates to human interaction and relationships across the lifespan.
- Explain how specific types of communicative behaviors (disclosure, affection, gratitude expressions, etc.) relate to health and well-being outcomes.
- Interpret and synthesize research findings that help explain your own experiences of communication and well-being.

This course fulfills an elective requirement for the Interdisciplinary Gerontology Minor and the Global Public Health Minor. Please contact me if you would like more information about either of those opportunities.

**Required Readings**

Weekly readings, and a weekly schedule of those readings are available on the Moodle online course supplement, in the “syllabus” section.

Assignments*

Please see the Moodle course shell for assignment instructions.

Course Calendar

*Calendar is subject to change

WK 1
Topic: Health and Well-being: Why is Social Interaction Important to Human Health?

WK 2
Topic: Key terms and concepts for understanding research on health and communication

WK 3
Topics: An overview of the health benefits of social relationships; Overview of The Harvard Study of Adult Development

WK 4
Topic: Social support, comforting, and advice-giving

WK 5
Topic: Expressing gratitude, Compassion, and kindness

WK 6
Topic: Nostalgia

WK 7
Topic: Humor

WK 8
Topic: Affectionate communication

WK 9
Topic: Self-Disclosure

WK 10
Topic: The Role of Space and Design in Well-Being

WK 11
Topic: Emotional experience and expressions

WK 12
Topic: Aging well

WK 13
Topic: Love and attachment

WK 14
Topic: Forgiveness
WK 15
Topic: Public Policy and Social Well-being

Week 16 – Finals week (Presentations)