

COMS 3372 Health Communication

Fall 2017

Class Time & Classroom: Online

Instructor: Dr. Cindy (Yixin) Chen

Email: cindychen@shsu.edu (email is the best way to reach me; please allow for **at least 24 hours** for a response; you would expect to receive comments on your reaction papers and grade in **1 to 2 weeks** after it is submitted.)

Phone: (936) 294-3164

Office: Dan Rather Com Building 324

Office Hours: Mon & Wed at 1:30 to 2:30pm or by email appointment (Although this is an online class, you are welcome to stop by or call my office during my office hours).

Teaching Assistant: Ms. Melanie Coe (mdc068@shsu.edu)

Course website: <https://shsu.blackboard.com/>

Textbooks:

Required: Wright, K. B., Sparks, L., & O'Hair, H. D. (2013). *Health communication in the 21st century* (2nd ed.). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

<https://www.amazon.com/Health-Communication-Century-Kevin-Wright/dp/0470672722>

Recommended (not required): American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

https://www.amazon.com/Publication-Manual-American-Psychological-Association/dp/1433805618/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1500568194&sr=1-1&keywords=publication+manual+of+the+american+psychological+association+6th+ed

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Course Description:

Welcome to the exciting, cutting-edge world of health communication, one of the largest and most important applied area of the communication discipline (see <http://www.natcom.org/interestgroups/#HCD>)! This course will survey the concepts, theories, research, and practice of communication in health contexts. Specifically, this class is divided to three units. In the **1st unit**, we will look at the history of health communication research and explore communicative processes about health within the contexts of patient-provider interactions and care-giving. In the **2nd unit**, we will examine the influences of social support, cultural differences, new technologies, and mass media on health communication processes. In the **3rd unit**, we will cover risk communication strategies, health campaign development and implementation, political issues surrounding health communication, and emerging trends of health communication.

In our ethnically diverse society, it is important to understand alternative approaches and beliefs concerning health and disease, if we are to communicate effectively about them. Further, the Joint Commission (formerly the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, JCAHO) (2002) states the importance of health communication by finding that 80 percent of medical errors are due to poor communication. So, now you know that you are studying an essential area of communication—one that can actually save lives!

Course Objectives:

Objective 1—Knowledge of the field: Students will be able to define health communication, articulate the history of health communication research, and explain the patient-provider communication process and the caregiving process and associated challenges; students will be able to identify various factors (e.g., social support, cultural differences, new technologies, mass media, policies) that may influence health communication processes and clarify those factors' potential impact.

Objective 2—Theory knowledge and application: Students will display comprehension of major health communication theories and know how to apply those theories to communicate effectively and appropriately in a variety of contexts including risk/crisis communication and health campaign development and implementation.

Objective 3—Research methods: Students will demonstrate understanding of methods in humanistic and social scientific paradigms and know how to use an appropriate method in examining research questions in health communication.

Objective 4—Higher order thinking: Students will demonstrate competence in logical and critical thinking when encountering a health-communication related issue in our society or in their personal/professional life.

CLASS POLICIES

1. It is **your** responsibility to read this syllabus carefully and keep all the due dates in mind. Please find all the due dates on the last page of this syllabus under “Weekly Schedules.”
2. All written submissions **should be carefully proofread** to reflect your high level of care and diligence.
3. All assignments/discussions/tests will be posted on Blackboard one week before their due dates. **Don't expect to work ahead.** I will not make assignments of Chapter One available until sometime on Sunday before class starts and the other assignments periodically after that.
4. Late assignments/discussions/tests will only receive **Half Credit**.

ASSIGNMENTS/TESTS/EVALUATIONS

Short Answer Questions (11 SAQs, **44% of grade**, each SAQ counts for **4 points**):

For each of the assigned chapters, you will be given four to eight short-answer questions. You can directly find answers from the textbook. However, try **NOT to use the exact words** from the textbook. Use your own words to summarize or paraphrase. Questions for each chapter will be put on the Blackboard for a whole week period. **This assignment is due by Midnight each Friday.** Please see the “Weekly Schedules” for specific due dates of each chapter.

Although this assignment is called “short” answers, your responses should be **comprehensive and accurate**. You are advised to finish reading the chapter before you answer the SAQs. Do not copy and paste from the textbook. You have to use your own words to summarize what you have learned from the textbook based on your understanding. **Please use a Word document to complete each of the SAQs and upload your file** under “ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION” on Blackboard.

Group Discussions (4 discussions, **20% of grade**, each Group Discussion counts for **5 points**):

There are four group discussion activities of class materials throughout the semester. The topics of each discussion activity will be posted on Blackboard under “*Group Discussions*” for a whole week period. In general, the discussions focus on analyzing and applying concepts or theories that relate to your personal experience. For each discussion, you will receive a maximum of 5 points.

You will be evaluated **on clarity of writing and the relevance of your examples**. You are expected to respond thoughtfully to other group members in relation to the course content. In order to receive full credit, **you are expected to post twice**: One initial response to the **topic of the discussion**, and one later reaction to a **group member’s post**. Please see the “Weekly Schedules” for specific due dates of each discussion.

Three Exams (36% of grade, each test counts for **12 points**):

Three tests are given throughout the semester. Each test will consist of 30 multiple-choice questions. You can work with notes, textbook, the Internet, and any electronic device, but you will be **limited to 30 minutes**. You can take each test **Only Once**.

Reaction Papers

There might be a couple of opportunities to earn extra credit by writing optional extra-credit reaction papers. An extra-credit paper could account for up to 4 points of extra credit added to your total points. Detailed instructions for extra-credit paper will be posted on Blackboard.

You will be asked to read a research article in the area of Health Communication and write a reaction paper. The article will be posted on Blackboard. You are expected to write a two-to-three-page (**1 inch margins, double space, Times New Roman font, size 12**) reaction paper related to the article. In your reaction paper, you should include 7 elements below:

- 1) Summarize the purpose(s) of the article.
- 2) Use a few sentences to summarize the research questions or hypotheses the author(s) have proposed.
- 3) What method(s) did the author use? Survey? Experiment? Interview?
- 4) What are the major findings of the article?
- 5) Describe any personal experiences that might be related to what was studied in the article.
- 6) Were any of the findings from the article surprising to you? If you were a researcher on the same topic, what questions would you ask differently? In other words, are there any questions you want to know, but were not asked in the article?
- 7) Any additional thoughts, feedback, or comments on the topic discussed in the article.

Please proofread your paper for any typos or grammar errors before you submit it online.

Please use a Word document to write your reaction paper and upload your file under “Choose the file you want to upload to Turnitin” on Blackboard.

GRADE SCALE

[Finals Grades Based on Total Points]

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
59 or lower	F

Always remember that you **EARN** a grade, and that you are not given a grade.

General Class Policies

A. Students are expected to assist in maintaining a course environment that is conducive to learning. All students and faculty are to be treated with courtesy and respect. I expect that an attitude that encourages freedom of discussion and intellectual inquiry will prevail. Therefore, behavior in this course that interferes with the potential for students to learn or my ability to adequately conduct the class is simply not acceptable. Students should read and adhere to all policies contained in the SHSU Student Handbook. Please see the link below for Student Guidelines:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/documents/2016-2018%20Student%20Guidelines.pdf>

B. Be open and receptive to new ideas--you will be exposed to a lot of them this semester. Questioning your assumptions is the basis of learning.

C. If you encounter any personal/family emergency, please inform me **at the earliest opportunity**, and I will try my best to accommodate your needs. Make-ups for assignments/discussions/tests will be allowed with no penalty only if the student can present **written evidence of a legitimate reason** for having missed the due date. Absent a legitimate, documented reason, late assignments/discussions/tests will either not be accepted or, at the discretion of the instructor, will be accepted with a penalty of **Half Credit**.

D. Plagiarism will result, at a minimum, in a zero for the assignment involved. Student work will be checked for plagiarism by any means available, including electronic plagiarism-detecting services. If students have ANY questions about what constitutes plagiarism, they should direct those questions to me, not other students.

E. If you have a documented disability that requires assistance, please contact the Chair of the Committee for Continuing Assistance for Disabled Students at 294-1720, provide me a copy of the documentation, and inform me of your special needs.

F. Your continued enrollment in this course indicates that you have accepted the conditions of this syllabus.

Note: You will find online a more detailed description of these policies at <http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>

Recommendation Letters

I write recommendation letters for students who have excellent performance in class. If you would like to request a recommendation letter from me for application for a(n) award/scholarship, internship, graduate program, or employment, you need to contact me at least **3 weeks before** the application deadline and provide the following information:

1. Post/link of the award/scholarship, internship, graduate program, or employment;
2. A copy of your resume;
3. A copy of your cover letter (if the application requires).

Weekly Schedules

Note: **Chapters 6 and 11 are NOT required.** Students are encouraged to read those 2 chapters themselves.

Week	Topics	Due Dates (by Midnight on Friday of each week)
Week 1 8/21-8/25	Syllabus	Carefully read your syllabus, and have your book ready. Introduce yourself to your group members by posting a self-introduction on Blackboard. Please find group member assignments (Groups 1, 2, 3, 4) on Blackboard.
Week 2 8/28-9/1	Chapter 1 and Rimal, R. N., & Lapinski, M. K. (2009). Why health communication is important in public health. <i>Bulletin of the World Health Organization</i> , 87(4), 247. http://doi.org/10.2471/BLT.08.056713	SAQs due 9/1
Week 3 9/4-9/8	Chapter 2	SAQs due 9/8
Week 4 9/11-9/15	Chapter 3	SAQs due 9/15 Group Discussion #1 due 9/15
Week 5 9/18-9/22		Test 1 (Chapters 1-3) due 9/22 Reaction Paper #1 due 9/22
Week 6 9/25-9/29	Chapter 4	SAQs due 9/29

Week 7 10/2-10/6	Chapter 5	SAQs due 10/6
Week 8 10/9-10/13	Chapter 7	SAQs due 10/13 Group Discussion #2 due 10/13
Week 9 10/16-10/20	Chapter 8	SAQs due 10/20
Week 10 10/23-10/27		Test 2 (Chapters 4, 5, 7, & 8) due 10/27 Reaction Paper #2 due 10/27
Week 11 10/30-11/3	Chapter 9	SAQs due 11/3
Week 12 11/6-11/10	Chapter 10	SAQs due 11/10 Group Discussion #3 due 11/10
Week 13 11/13-11/17	Chapter 12	SAQs due 11/17
Week 14 11/20-11/24	Chapter 13	SAQs due 11/24 Group Discussion #4 due 11/24
Week 15 11/27-12/1	Finals Week	Test 3 (Chapters 9, 10, 12 & 13) due by 12/1
Week 16 12/4-12/8	TBA	TBA