



PubH 6074-001

Mass Communication and Public Health

Fall 2017

Credits: 3

Meeting Days: Tuesdays and Thursdays

Meeting Time: 11:50am-12:30pm

Meeting Place: 130 Murphy Hall

Instructor: Rebekah Nagler

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Fax:

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30pm-1:30pm

I. Course Description

This course is designed to provide an overview of theory and research that lies at the intersection of mass communication and public health. In this course we examine the potential impact of media content on public health outcomes, both as a product of individuals' everyday interaction with media and as a result of strategic use of media-based efforts to accomplish public health goals. Discussion will emphasize both planned and unplanned effects of mass media in a variety of health-related situations. Although our focus is on mass media, interpersonal, medical, and digital media sources will be considered as well.

Since course content lies at the intersection of mass communication and public health, it is cross-listed: it is both JOUR 5541 and PUBH 6074. The course therefore is open to a diverse student population—diversity that will undoubtedly enrich our class discussions—and the course is designed to accommodate a diverse set of interests and backgrounds. That said, there are some days when the pace and content of discussion may not be optimal for everyone in the classroom.

Students in CLA and other Colleges also should note that Mass Communication and Public Health is a 5000-level course. This means that it is open to both undergraduate and graduate students. Although assignments reflect that students in this course are at different stages of preparation, this is still a 5000-level course, which means the expectations are high and the material is challenging.

II. Course Prerequisites

To enroll in this course as an undergraduate student, you must have completed at least 60 credits. To be successful in this course, you need to have a basic understanding of concepts and approaches that are relevant for public health communication, or you need to be able to master those concepts and approaches on your own. Generally speaking, you must be familiar with empirical social science, which is the dominant paradigm in public health communication. A social scientific approach involves theories that are designed to explain particular questions by linking causal variables with outcome variables. Those theories are then tested in the field (e.g., by using them to inform health interventions) and, if necessary, further developed. The constant interplay between causal determinant theories and empirical testing implies a need for you to be able to think conceptually, understand research terminology, evaluate strengths and weaknesses in theory and research studies, and apply theory to real-world public health problems. This means that you do not need to know all existing theories, but you do need to be able to think theoretically. If you are concerned about whether this class is a good fit for you, please do not hesitate to speak with me.

III. Course Goals and Objectives

The learning objectives of this three-credit course are to advance your familiarity, comprehension, and application of a broad range of mass communication-related facts, concepts, and theories as they apply to public health. These rather abstract goals are reflected in six specific objectives:

- 1) You will recognize the transdisciplinary nature of mass communication and public health, and will identify the critical relationships between theoretical ideas from different disciplines, i.e., communication, public health, and psychology.
- 2) You will identify the complex interdependence of critical factors in mass communication of public health, i.e., factors related to audience, environment (e.g., competing and reinforcing media efforts), message, and the health issue at hand.
- 3) You will identify implications for the design of effective health communication interventions.
- 4) You will be able to analyze the effects of various media content on public beliefs about health issues.
- 5) You will be able to write about health communication issues in a compelling manner. This means that your writing carefully builds an argument that integrates theoretical notions about communication and health, and applies them to real-life issues.
- 6) Self-discovery: You will reflect on yourself as a scholar, a producer of media health information, and a consumer of media health messages. How do the approaches discussed in this course relate to your individual interests? What are the implications of the planned and unplanned effects of health media information for how you engage with the media?

IV. Methods of Instruction and Work Expectations

This course meets twice a week. Classes will include lecture, discussion, and in-class activities. Since this course is designed to be highly interactive, I ask that you please read the assigned materials before each meeting. As an upper-level undergraduate and graduate course, many readings are drawn from the published research literature. Because I want you to read each article carefully, I have intentionally kept the number of required reading assignments low (1-2 readings per class meeting). Class discussions will be far more useful and enjoyable if you read before class.

Ultimately, success in this course requires timely reading of course materials, consistent class attendance, and participation in class discussions. I do not have a formal attendance policy; however, my experience has been that it is very difficult to do well in this course if you do not engage with the readings and attend class regularly.

V. Course Text and Readings

All readings will be made available on Moodle via the library e-reserves. Additional readings may be made available during the course of the semester.

VI. Course Outline/Weekly Schedule

Assignments

This course will include three types of graduate assessment: 1) Moodle quizzes, 2) short-answer assignments, and 3) a final paper assignment.

The 4 Moodle quizzes will include multiple-choice, true/false, matching, and/or fill-in-the-blank questions. The primary goal of the quizzes is to assess your understanding of relevant theories, concepts, and processes. Quizzes will include material that we discussed in class; although reflecting on the assigned readings will contribute to your learning, only central ideas from the readings—which we also cover in class—will be fair game. The quizzes are not intended to be cumulative; rather, they are designed to help you keep up with course material as we move through the semester. Each quiz will be available online for one week (please see the course outline for specific due dates). For each of the 4 quizzes, you can earn up to 20 points. Additional information will be discussed during class.

There will be 2 short-answer assignments, one toward the start of the semester and one toward the end. These serve a similar purpose to the quizzes, but they afford you greater opportunity to develop your responses, demonstrate your knowledge, and apply the ideas we've discussed during class. Each assignment will be available online for one week (please see the course outline for specific due dates). For each of the 2 assignments, you can earn up to 20 points. Additional information will be discussed during class.

The final paper will be a longer written assignment (~10 pages, double-spaced). You will be asked to create a campaign strategy to address a public health issue of your choosing. Theories discussed in class should guide your campaign strategy, and you should provide the rationale for the design choices you make (e.g., selection of target population, media channel(s), and type(s) of message). It also will be important to consider how the broader information environment could amplify or dampen the effects of your campaign. More detailed information on the final paper assignment will be distributed and discussed during class. You will be asked to submit a ~1-page proposal for your final paper, and I encourage you to come meet with me individually to discuss your idea. The final paper is due through the Moodle site by Sunday, December 17 at 12:00pm noon.

Course outline

Please note that the course schedule and/or assigned readings may change. I will be sure to give you advance notice of any changes.

Meeting	Topic(s)	Reading(s)	Assignment due
1	Tuesday, September 5	Introduction	
I. Foundational theories: Societal-level explanations for media effects on health			
2	Thursday, September 7	Agenda setting, framing, and priming	First, read Finnegan & Viswanath, 2008, pp. 375-376 ONLY; then read Jarlenski &

Barry, 2013

3 Tuesday, September 12 Cultivation First, read Finnegan & Viswanath, 2008, pp. 377-378 ONLY; then read Niederdeppe et al., 2010

4 Thursday, September 14 Knowledge gap hypothesis and communication inequalities* First, read Finnegan & Viswanath, 2008, pp. 371-375 ONLY; then read Viswanath et al., 2012

II. Foundational theories: Individual-level explanations for media effects on health

5 Tuesday, September 19 Alternative models of behavior change Hornik, 1991

6 Thursday, September 21 Behavior change theories: Core constructs Rosenstock et al., 1988; DiClemente et al., 1991 *Submit Assignment 1 by 11:15am*

7 Tuesday, September 26 Behavior change theories: Core constructs, continued Fishbein & Yzer, 2003

8 Thursday, September 28 Putting it all together: The Integrative Model of Behavioral Prediction Fishbein & Yzer, 2003

9 Tuesday, October 3 Information processing theories: The importance of audience O'Keefe, 2013

10 Thursday, October 5 Information processing theories: The importance of audience, continued Stephenson & Southwell, 2006 *Submit Quiz 1 by 11:15am*

11 Tuesday, October 10 Barriers to health information processing Jensen, 2012; Fagerlin et al., 2011

12 Thursday, October 12 A word about resistance to persuasion Liberman & Chaiken, 1992

III. Planned uses of communication for health

13 Tuesday, October 17 Health communication campaigns: Design Atkin & Rice, 2013

14 Thursday, October 19 Health communication campaigns: Design, continued Hornik, 2002; Wakefield et al., 2010 *Submit Quiz 2 by 11:15am*

15 Tuesday, October 24 Health communication campaigns: Evaluation Hornik & Yanovitzky, 2003

16 Thursday, October 26 Health communication campaigns: Evaluation, continued Southwell & Yzer, 2007, pp. 432-442 ONLY; Cho & Salmon,

2007

17	Tuesday, October 31	Entertainment education: International and domestic efforts	Hether et al., 2008	
18	Thursday, November 2	Point-of-sale communication: Product packaging and labeling	Noar et al., 2016; Roberto et al., 2016	<i>Submit Quiz 3 by 11:15am</i>
19	Tuesday, November 7	Community-based communication interventions*	Thompson et al., 2016	

IV. Unplanned uses of communication for health

20	Thursday, November 9	News media coverage of health: Analyzing content*	Nagler et al., 2016	<i>Submit final paper proposal by 11:15am</i>
21	Tuesday, November 14	News media coverage of health: Health news production (Guest speaker: Gary Schwitzer)	Schwitzer, 2014	
22	Thursday, November 16	News media coverage of health: Assessing effects	Nagler, 2014	<i>Submit Quiz 4 by 11:15am</i>
23	Tuesday, November 21	News media coverage of health: Assessing effects, continued	Nagler et al., 2015	
24	Thursday, November 23	<u>Thanksgiving – No class</u>		
25	Tuesday, November 28	Case study: Media coverage of celebrity health disclosures (Guest speaker: Dr. Susan LoRusso)	Noar et al., 2014	
26	Thursday, November 30	Case study: Media coverage of the Affordable Care Act (Guest speaker: Dr. Sarah Gollust)	Gollust et al., 2017	<i>Submit Assignment 2 by 11:15am</i>
27	Tuesday, December 5	Health content in entertainment media: The case of movie smoking	Morgenstern et al., 2013; www.smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu	

V. Beyond mass communication: Digital media and public health

28	Thursday, December 7	eHealth applications	Noar & Harrington, 2012	
29	Tuesday, December 12	<u>RHN available for questions – No class</u>		<i>Submit final paper on Sunday, December 17 by 12:00pm noon</i>

VII. Evaluation and Grading

Grading

The Moodle quizzes, short-answer assignments, and final paper will be weighted as follows:

- Moodle quizzes: 80 points (4 quizzes at 20 points each)
- Short-answer assignments: 40 points (2 assignments at 20 points each)
- Final paper: 80 points

Total possible points: 200 points

Late submissions and makeup policy

As mentioned above, the quizzes are take-home assignments. Because you will have 7 days to complete and submit each quiz, the expectation is that you will plan ahead and complete your work before the due date. Requests for quiz extensions will be considered only under extraordinary circumstances and require adequate documentation of excused absence.

There are progressive penalties for short-answer assignments and final papers that are submitted past the deadline. For assignments/papers submitted up to 24 hours past the deadline, your grade will be reduced by one full letter grade; for assignments/papers submitted 24 to 48 hours past the deadline, your grade will be reduced by two full letter grades; and so forth.

Grade changes will be made only when there is evidence of an error in grading and/or recording of a grade. All inquiries must be made within one week of when graded assignments are returned.

The University utilizes plus and minus grading on a 4.000 cumulative grade point scale in accordance with the following:

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|----|--|
| A | 4.000 - Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements |
| A- | 3.667 |
| B+ | 3.333 |
| B | 3.000 - Represents achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements |
| B- | 2.667 |
| C+ | 2.333 |
| C | 2.000 - Represents achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect |
| C- | 1.667 |
| D+ | 1.333 |
| D | 1.000 - Represents achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements |
| S | Represents achievement that is satisfactory, which is equivalent to a C- or better. |

For additional information, please refer to:

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/GRADINGTRANSCRIPTS.html>.

Course Evaluation

The SPH will collect student course evaluations electronically using a software system called CoursEval: www.sph.umn.edu/courseval. The system will send email notifications to students when they can access and complete their course evaluations. Students who complete their course evaluations promptly will be able to access their final grades just as soon as the faculty member renders the grade in SPHGrades: www.sph.umn.edu/grades. All students will have access to their final grades through OneStop two weeks after the last day of the semester regardless of whether they completed their course evaluation or not. Student feedback on course content and faculty teaching skills are an important means for improving our work. Please take the time to complete a course evaluation for each of the courses for which you are registered.

Incomplete Contracts

A grade of incomplete "I" shall be assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, due to extraordinary circumstances (e.g., documented illness or hospitalization, death in family, etc.), the student was prevented from completing the work of the course on time. The assignment of an "I" requires that a contract be initiated and completed by the student before the last official day of class, and signed by both the student and instructor. If an incomplete is deemed appropriate by the instructor, the student in consultation with the instructor, will specify the time and manner in which the student will complete course requirements. Extension for completion of the work will not exceed one year (or earlier if designated by the student's college). For more information and to initiate an incomplete contract, students should go to SPHGrades at: www.sph.umn.edu/grades.

University of Minnesota Uniform Grading and Transcript Policy

A link to the policy can be found at onestop.umn.edu.

VIII. Other Course Information and Policies

Grade Option Change (if applicable):

For full-semester courses, students may change their grade option, if applicable, through the second week of the semester. Grade option change deadlines for other terms (i.e. summer and half-semester courses) can be found at onestop.umn.edu.

Course Withdrawal:

Students should refer to the Refund and Drop/Add Deadlines for the particular term at onestop.umn.edu for information and deadlines for withdrawing from a course. As a courtesy, students should notify their instructor and, if applicable, advisor of their intent to withdraw.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course after the noted final deadline for a particular term must contact the School of Public Health Office of Admissions and Student Resources at sph-ssc@umn.edu for further information.

Student Conduct Code:

The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community.

As a student at the University you are expected adhere to Board of Regents Policy: *Student Conduct Code*.

To review the Student Conduct Code, please see:

http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf.

Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities."

Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom:

Using personal electronic devices in the classroom setting can hinder instruction and learning, not only for the student using the device but also for other students in the class. To this end, the University establishes the right of each faculty member to determine if and how personal electronic devices are allowed to be used in the classroom. For complete information, please reference:

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html>.

Scholastic Dishonesty:

You are expected to do your own academic work and cite sources as necessary. Failing to do so is scholastic dishonesty. Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis. (Student Conduct Code:

http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf) If it is determined that a student has cheated, he or she may be given an "F" or an "N" for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the University. For additional information, please see:

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/INSTRUCTORRESP.html>.

The Office for Community Standards has compiled a useful list of Frequently Asked Questions pertaining to scholastic dishonesty <https://communitystandards.umn.edu>. If you have additional questions, please clarify with your instructor for the course. Your instructor can respond to your specific questions regarding what would constitute scholastic dishonesty in the context of a particular class-e.g., whether collaboration on assignments is permitted, requirements and methods for citing sources, if electronic aids are permitted or prohibited during an exam.

Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences:

Students will not be penalized for absence during the semester due to unavoidable or legitimate circumstances. Such circumstances include verified illness, participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, bereavement, and religious observances. Such circumstances do not include voting in local, state, or national elections. For complete information, please see:

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/MAKEUPWORK.html>.

Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes and Course Materials:

Taking notes is a means of recording information but more importantly of personally absorbing and integrating the educational experience. However, broadly disseminating class notes beyond the classroom community or accepting compensation for taking and distributing classroom notes undermines instructor interests in their intellectual work product while not substantially furthering instructor and student interests in effective learning. Such actions violate shared norms and standards of the academic community. For additional information, please see: <http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html>.

Sexual Harassment:

"Sexual harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment in any University activity or program. Such behavior is not acceptable in the University setting. For additional information, please consult Board of Regents Policy:

<http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/SexHarassment.pdf>

Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action:

The University will provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, please consult Board of Regents Policy:

http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.pdf.

Disability Accommodations:

The University of Minnesota is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Resource Center Student Services is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact DRC at 612-626-1333 or drc@umn.edu to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

If you are registered with DS and have a current letter requesting reasonable accommodations, please contact your instructor as early in the semester as possible to discuss how the accommodations will be applied in the course.

For more information, please see the DS website, <https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/>.

Mental Health and Stress Management:

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website: <http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu>.

The Office of Student Affairs at the University of Minnesota:

The Office for Student Affairs provides services, programs, and facilities that advance student success, inspire students to make life-long positive contributions to society, promote an inclusive environment, and enrich the University of Minnesota community.

Units within the Office for Student Affairs include, the Aurora Center for Advocacy & Education, Boynton Health Service, Central Career Initiatives (CCE, CDes, CFANS), Leadership Education and Development – Undergraduate Programs (LEAD-UP), the Office for Fraternity and Sorority Life, the Office for Community Standards, the Office for Student Engagement, the Parent Program, Recreational Sports, Student and Community Relations, the Student Conflict Resolution Center, the Student Parent HELP Center, Student Unions & Activities, University Counseling & Consulting Services, and University Student Legal Service.

For more information, please see the Office of Student Affairs at <https://osa.umn.edu/>.

Academic Freedom and Responsibility: *for courses that do not involve students in research:*

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.*

** Language adapted from the American Association of University Professors "Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students".*

Student Academic Success Services (SASS): <http://www.sass.umn.edu>:

Students who wish to improve their academic performance may find assistance from Student Academic Support Services. While tutoring and advising are not offered, SASS provides resources such as individual consultations, workshops, and self-help materials.

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