

Seminar in Interdisciplinary Health Communication
MEJO/HBEH 825, Fall 2019

Class time & location:	Wednesdays, 9:30am – 12:15pm, Carroll Hall 340A
Instructor:	Dr. Maria Leonora (Nori) Comello comello@email.unc.edu (Best way to reach me) (919) 928-2440 cell Skype: nori.comello
Office location/hours:	Carroll Hall 359, Thursdays, 3:30-5pm and by appointment

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this graduate seminar, we will explore how communication can influence human behavior and public policy in ways that can improve health and well-being. It is designed to serve both students who are trained in communication who are interested in health issues, AND students focused on public health who wish to have a stronger background in health communication theory and methods.

The focus of the course will be on theory-based approaches to 1) understanding the influences on health behavior and 2) designing effective communication about health. We will take an ecological perspective that sees an individual living within interpersonal relationships, in communities, and in social, economic, and political systems that affect the possibility of healthy lives. Specific objectives are:

- To learn frameworks for analyzing the basic components of communication
- To identify theory-based principles and approaches applicable to health communication practice
- To study and critique the application of these principles in health communication campaigns and interventions
- To be familiar with research methods used in health communication research and practice
- To permit students to apply these principles in a major project of their choosing in their area of interest (see major project description below).

PREREQUISITES

Students should be comfortable reading scholarly journal articles in the behavioral sciences and thinking in terms of theory and methods.

REQUIRED READINGS

There is no text to purchase for this class. Each week, we will discuss 3-4 readings as listed in the course schedule. There is no cost to access any of these readings, and links to all are provided under “Resources” on our Sakai website.

RESEARCH PROJECT

The major assignment in this class is a proposal for a research project or professional project on a health communication topic. The main objectives are 1) to summarize the literature on the topic, with emphasis on the role of theory in that area, and 2) to propose a theory-based study or professional project that will address a gap in the research or an unmet need. The assignment will put to work many of the skills that you are learning in your graduate program, including: reviewing and synthesizing the literature, proposing innovative ideas in a field of study, and applying research methods to a proposed study. More details on the paper will be provided early in the semester. You will turn in the paper in stages, with a synopsis of ideas due early in the semester, a draft literature review due mid-semester, and the full research proposal due at the end of the semester.

You will also give an oral presentation of your research proposal with a PowerPoint presentation. The length will be

about 15 minutes, although this may vary based on how much time we have. This is meant to mimic the academic practice of presenting at a conference, and it also will allow you to share your proposal with the class. These presentations will take place toward the end of the semester. As we get closer to that time, more specific guidelines will be provided.

The topic for the paper should be one that will advance your research and professional interests. The basic requirement is a proposal; however, if you are a PhD student beyond your first year (or if you already have solid background in theory and methods), you are strongly encouraged to use the class as an opportunity to propose a study and to carry out as much of it as you can within the semester. You should then submit the paper to conference, and ideally later to journal. Communication conference deadlines that fall around the end of the semester are early November for ICA, early December for AEJMC Southeast Colloquium, mid-December for DC health communication conference (abstract only). In the spring, other possibilities are late March for National Communication Association, and early April for AEJMC. Alternative projects meeting special needs and interests of graduate students may also be proposed with my prior approval.

ABSENCES AND LATE WORK

The seminar format of this course requires full attendance and active participation by all students. The assigned readings should be read by the scheduled date. All students are expected to participate in the discussion/reflection activity for each set of readings. If you will be absent, please let me know and submit your reflections to me via email by start of class so we can include them in discussion. Late work is penalized unless permission for a deadline extension is obtained beforehand. If at any point you are confused about expectations or are getting lost in the course material, please set up a time to meet with me!

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let me know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the [Accessibility Resources & Service Office website](#), call 919/962-8300, or use NC Relay 711.

DIVERSITY

The School of Media and Journalism adopted [diversity and inclusion mission and vision statements](#) in Spring 2016 with accompanying goals. It complements the University policy on [Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination](#). In summary, UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The Dean of Students (Suite 1106, Student Academic Services Building, CB# 5100, 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5100 or [919] 966-4042) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies.

ACEJMC COMPETENCIES

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies. This course is particularly relevant to the following competencies:

- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information
- Think critically, creatively and independently
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work
- Contribute to knowledge appropriate to the communications professions in which they work
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work

The full list of competencies is available here: <http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>

ASSIGNMENTS (This is a preview only. Full instructions will be provided on Sakai.)

1. **Paper Synopsis: (10%)** This assignment is a one-page synopsis of the topic you plan to address in your final paper. See description of research project section above and instructions on Sakai.
2. **First draft (15%):** This assignment is an opportunity to get feedback on what you've accomplished around mid-semester. Write the front end of your proposal, including introduction, literature review, and hypotheses/research questions for a theory-based research study or professional project approved by me. For PhD students aiming for conference submission at the end of the semester, you should outline the methods section, including proposed study design, stimuli, measures, analysis plan, etc.
3. **Presentation of research project (10%):** This assignment is an opportunity to present in a conference-style format and to receive feedback on your work.
4. **Final paper (40%):** First, rewrite your draft based on the comments and suggestions that I made on the first draft. Second, write the methods section for the study or project. PhD students aiming for conference submission should include as much of the results and discussion as possible. A deadline is provided, but if you are submitting to a conference, consider turning in your paper early so you have time to receive feedback and incorporate it into your submission. This assignment should be roughly the length of a full paper (10 single-spaced pages).
5. **Article critique (15%):** You will select a scholarly article on a health comm topic that is helpful to your research/professional interests and that aligns with one of the class session themes. At the first class meeting, you will have opportunity to sign up for one of the days. On that day, you will submit on Sakai a written critique of the article you have chosen AND prepare a short presentation about the article to the class and lead discussion. The article must be theory-based and must present a study (i.e., with data) or critical review, similar to the articles we have been discussing in class. Your job is to summarize the article, discuss strengths and weaknesses, integrate the article with our readings for the day, and pose questions to the class to prompt discussion about the article/topic. The written critique should be no longer than two single-spaced pages. Detailed instructions for the written critique and presentation will be posted on Sakai.
6. **Reflection and participation (10%):** Prior to the start of each class in which readings are assigned, please draft a few points that cover 1) something of value you took from the readings, 2) a question or point of confusion about any of the readings, and 3) how any of the readings relate to your life, your topic, or past readings. We will begin each class by having each person talk about these points briefly (1-2 minutes per person) OR discussing them within a small group. Beyond these requirements, I expect everyone to engage in lively and respectful class discussion. If you need to be absent for professional or other reasons, don't forget to submit these in advance (see section on absences).

GRADES

Grades for overall course performance and most individual assignments will be based on the graduate scale (H, P, L, F). As applied to final course grades, interpretations are as follows:

- H = Your very best work. These students read and critically engage with all materials. They are able to apply concepts to practical and/or research-based contexts, suggest new directions, and significantly contribute to the body of scholarship in the area. Assignments are submitted on time and are well written and engaging. *Reserved for truly extraordinary work – I will actually say “wow!”*

- P = Your very best work. These students read and critically engage with all materials. They are able to apply concepts and suggest new directions in many instances. Assignments are submitted on time and are well written and engaging.
- L = Students read most of the material but do not often critically engage with it. They are able to apply concepts and suggest new directions in some instances.
- F = Students miss one or more classes without prior arrangement. They do not always read the material, and they fail to critically engage it.

Most individual assignments are also evaluated according to the H/P/L/F scale. *As applied to individual assignments*, a P signifies work that meets rubric requirements, is well written, and is submitted on time. An H signifies work that meets the above and is also exceptional in terms of depth of analysis or significance of contribution. In addition to this grade, I also provide (sometimes extensive) comments on your papers, typically using the reviewing function on Word.

Although no formal points corresponding to the grades are issued, the WEIGHTS of each assignment in determining the final course grade are as follows:

Synopsis	10
First draft	15
Presentation	10
Final paper	40
Article critique	15
Reflection and participation	10
TOTAL	100

Week-by-Week Schedule (Subject to change)

- **This schedule represents a good faith effort to outline our work over the course of the semester. However, because our needs may change, the timeline and assignments are subject to change. I will alert you of any changes. Thank you for your flexibility.**
- **All items are to be submitted by the deadline under Assignments on Sakai unless otherwise noted. Use Word format.**

Wed., Aug. 21, 2019	Day one. Meet and greet, discuss course goals, go over syllabus, discuss research interests, etc. We will have a sign-up sheet for student-led discussions starting in Week 2.
Wed., Aug. 28, 2019	<p>Introduction to communicating about health. <i>What is the evidence regarding impact of communication interventions on health? To what extent have they been successful? What are key problems and opportunities? What is the role of theory in health communication research and practice?</i></p> <p>Cappella, J. N. (2006). Integrating message effects and behavior change theories: Organizing comments and unanswered questions. <i>Journal of Communication</i>, 56(s1), S265-S279.</p> <p>Hornik, R. (2002). Introduction: Public Health Communication: Making Sense of Contradictory Evidence. In <i>Public Health Communication Evidence for Behavior Change</i> (pp. 1-19). Mahwah, NJ: LAWRENCE ERLBAUM ASSOCIATES.</p> <p>Ruben, B. D. (2016). Communication Theory and Health Communication Practice: The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same. <i>Health Communication</i>, 31(1), 1-11.</p> <p>Suggested: Moran, M. B., Frank, L. B., Zhao, N., Gonzalez, C., Thainiyom, P., Murphy, S. T., & Ball-Rokeach, S. J. (2016). An argument for ecological research and intervention in health communication. <i>Journal of health communication</i>, 21(2), 135-138.</p>
Wed., Sep. 4, 2019	<p>Review of theories of behavior acquisition and change as they apply to communication and health behavior. <i>Theory of reasoned action/planned behavior, Integrative Model, social reaction model. How are these theories different from/similar to each other? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each?</i></p> <p>Fishbein, M., & Cappella, J. N. (2006). The role of theory in developing effective health communications. <i>Journal of Communication</i>, 56(s1), S1-S17.</p> <p>Gerrard, M., Gibbons, F. X., Houlihan, A. E., Stock, M. L., & Pomery, E. A. (2008). A dual-process approach to health risk decision making: The prototype willingness model. <i>Developmental review</i>, 28(1), 29-61.</p> <p>Evans, W. D., Wallace, J., & Snider, J. (2015). The 5-4-3-2-1 Go! Brand to Promote Nutrition and Physical Activity: A Case of Positive Behavior Change but Negative Change in Beliefs. <i>Journal of Health Communication</i>, 20(5), 512-520.</p> <p>Introduce message design tools from CDC</p>

<p>Wed., Sep. 11, 2019</p>	<p>Paper synopsis due</p> <p>Review of theories of information processing and message effects, as applied to health issues. <i>ELM, narrative, gain/loss framing, etc. How can these models be used in creating more effective communication-based interventions? What are the strengths and limitations of each?</i></p> <p>Briñol, P. & Petty, R.E. (2006). Fundamental processes leading to attitude change: Implications for cancer prevention communications. <i>Journal of Communication, 56</i>, S81-S96. (ELM)</p> <p>Dill-Shackleford, K. E., Green, M. C., Scharrer, E., Wetterer, C., & Shackleford, L. E. (2015). Setting the Stage for Social Change: Using Live Theater to Dispel Myths About Intimate Partner Violence. <i>Journal of Health Communication, 20</i>(8), 969–976. (narrative)</p> <p>Harrington, N. G., & Kerr, A. M. (2017). Rethinking Risk: Prospect Theory Application in Health Message Framing Research. <i>Health Communication, 32</i>(2), 131–141. (gain/loss)</p>
<p>Wed., Sep. 18, 2019</p>	<p>Understanding the campaign development process (Part 1). Audience segmentation and formative research. <i>What are key principles in the communication intervention development process? What is ideal? What are real-world limitations? How can we adapt the ideal to real-world problems?</i></p> <p>Rice & Atkin, Chapter 4. Atkin, C.K., & Freimuth, V.S. Formative evaluation research in campaign design (pp. 53-68). [Read just to pg. 59]</p> <p>Dervin, B., & Foreman-Wernet, L. (2012). Sense-making methodology as an approach to understanding and designing for campaign audiences. <i>Public communication campaigns, 147-162.</i></p> <p>Hennink-Kaminski, H. J., Willoughby, J. F., & McMahan, D. (2014). Join the Conquest: Developing a campaign to increase participation in clinical research in North Carolina. <i>Science Communication, 36</i>(1), 30-55.</p>
<p>Wed., Sep. 25, 2019</p>	<p>Understanding the campaign development process (Part 2). Message testing, channel selection, and evaluation. <i>Same questions as for last class, applied to these topics.</i></p> <p>Rice & Atkin, Chapter 4. Atkin, C.K., & Freimuth, V.S. Formative evaluation research in campaign design (pp. 53-68). [Read pgs. 60-67]</p> <p>Berkowitz, J. M., Huhman, M., Heitzler, C. D., Potter, L. D., Nolin, M. J., & Banspach, S. W. (2008). Overview of formative, process, and outcome evaluation methods used in the VERB™ campaign. <i>American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 34</i>(6), S222-S229.</p> <p>Felt, L. J., Durá, L., & Singhal, A. (2014). Cultural beacons in health communication: Leveraging overlooked indicators and grassroots wisdoms. <i>Health Communication: Strategies for Developing Global Health Programs, 334-351.</i></p> <p>Suggested:</p> <p>Slater, M.D. (2006). Specification and misspecification of theoretical foundations and evaluation logic models for health communication campaigns. <i>Health Communication. 20</i>(2), 149–157.</p>

<p>Wed., Oct. 2, 2019</p>	<p>GUEST SPEAKER: LAURA MARSHALL</p> <p>Effects of media content on health behavior (Part 1 - news). <i>How strong is the evidence for effects of news and other popular media on health outcomes? What do we need to understand about possible mechanisms for effects? How can media be used strategically to promote health?</i></p> <p>Walsh-Childers, K. (2017). Reporting on Health for Better or Worse: News Media Effects on Knowledge, Beliefs and Behaviors. In <i>Mass Media and Health</i> (pp. 350-385). New York, NY: Routledge.</p> <p>Southwell, B. G., Niederdeppe, J., Cappella, J. N., Gaysynsky, A., Kelley, D. E., Oh, A., ... & Chou, W. Y. S. (2019). Misinformation as a Misunderstood Challenge to Public Health. <i>American Journal of Preventive Medicine</i>.</p> <p>Marshall, L. H., & Comello, M. L. (2019). Stymied by a wealth of health information: how viewing conflicting information online diminishes cancer screening. <i>Journal of Communication in Healthcare</i>, 12(1), 4-12.</p>
<p>Wed., Oct. 9, 2019</p>	<p>GUEST SPEAKER: DIANE FRANCIS (TENTATIVE)</p> <p>Effects of media content on health behavior (Part 2 – entertainment/advertising). <i>Same questions as last time.</i></p> <p>Walsh-Childers, K. (2017). The Impact of Media Violence. In <i>Mass Media and Health</i> (pp. 309-349). New York, NY: Routledge.</p> <p>Francis, D. B. (2018). Young black men’s information seeking following celebrity depression disclosure: Implications for mental health communication. <i>Journal of health communication</i>, 23(7), 687-694.</p> <p>Snyder, L., Fleming-Milici, F., Slater, M.D., Sun, H. Strizhakova, Y. (2006). Effects of alcohol advertising exposure on youth drinking. <i>Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine</i>, 160, 18-24.</p>
<p>Wed., Oct. 16, 2019 Open/workshop day (day before fall break)</p>	
<p>Wed., Oct. 23, 2019</p>	<p>First draft due</p> <p>Cultural issues in behavior change efforts in the US and abroad. <i>What do you see as the primary challenges? In what way are the approaches described adequate or inadequate? Do you see other ways to address these issues?</i></p> <p>Aihihenbuwa, C. (1995). Health and culture: Beyond the Western paradigm (pp. 47-62). Thousand Oaks: Sage.</p> <p>Estrada, E., Ramirez, A. S., Gamboa, S., & Amezola de herrera, P. (2018). Development of a Participatory Health Communication Intervention: An Ecological Approach to Reducing Rural Information Inequality and Health Disparities. <i>Journal of health communication</i>, 23(8), 773-782.</p> <p>Gollust, S. E., & Cappella, J. N. (2014). Understanding public resistance to messages about health disparities. <i>Journal of Health Communication</i>, 19(4), 493-510.</p>

<p>Wed., Oct. 30, 2019</p>	<p>Interpersonal communication</p> <p>Schiavo, R. (2013). Interpersonal communication (Chapter 4). In <i>Health communication : From theory to practice</i>.</p> <p>Abramowitz, S., McKune, S. L., Fallah, M., Monger, J., Tehoungue, K., & Omidian, P. A. (2017). The opposite of denial: Social learning at the onset of the Ebola emergency in Liberia. <i>Journal of health communication, 22</i>(sup1), 59-65.</p> <p>Way, D., & Tracy, S. J. (2012). Conceptualizing compassion as recognizing, relating and (re)acting: An ethnographic study of compassionate communication at hospice. <i>Communication Monographs, 79</i>, 292-315.</p>
<p>Wed., Nov. 6, 2019</p>	<p>Patient perspectives</p> <p>Each student will choose an essay from Health Comm’s Defining Moments collection of essays on experiences with illness (or from some other source) and report on it to the class. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/10410236.2018.1557468?needAccess=true</p> <p>Comello, M. L. G., Francis, D., Hursting, L., & Breaux, E. (accepted). Recreational video games as a value-supporting activity for cancer survivors. <i>Journal of Health Psychology</i>.</p> <p>Harter, L. (2009). Narratives as Dialogic, Contested, and Aesthetic Performances. <i>Journal of Applied Communication Research, 37</i>(2), 140–150.</p>
<p>Wed., Nov. 13, 2019</p>	<p>Case studies and failed campaigns</p> <p>Andersen, P. A., Buller, D. B., Walkosz, B. J., Scott, M. D., Beck, L., Liu, X., ... Cutter, G. (2017). A Randomized Trial of an Advanced Sun Safety Intervention for Vacationers at 41 North American Resorts. <i>Journal of Health Communication, 22</i>(12), 951–963.</p> <p>Hornik, R., Jacobsohn, L., Orwin, R., Piesse, A., & Kalton, G. (2008). Effects of the national youth anti-drug media campaign on youths. <i>American Journal of Public Health, 98</i>(12), 2229-2236.</p> <p>Cho, H., & Salmon, C. T. (2006). Unintended effects of health communication campaigns. <i>Journal of communication, 57</i>(2), 293-317.</p>
<p>Wed., Nov. 20, 2019</p>	<p>Students’ choice/workshop day</p>
<p>Wed., Nov. 27, 2019</p>	<p>NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING BREAK!</p>
<p>Wed., Dec. 4, 2019</p>	<p>Final presentations / wrap up</p>
	<p>Final papers due Dec 11</p> <p>HAPPY HOLIDAYS!</p>