

**Seminar in Interdisciplinary Health Communication
MEJO/HBEH 825, SPRING 2024**

Meeting time & location	In-person meetings, Tuesdays, 9:30am – 12:15pm Curtis Media Center 303 Should the need arise to hold sessions remotely, we will use Zoom
Instructor & contact info	Dr. Maria Leonora (Nori) Comello (she/her/hers) comello@email.unc.edu (Best way to reach me) (919) 928-2440 cell
Office hours & location	In office (Carroll 359) or on Zoom Tuesdays, 1-2pm, or by arrangement

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 on Canvas.

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/KY 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.

HONOR CODE

I expect that all students will conduct themselves within the guidelines of the University honor system (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Associate Dean for Graduate Studies Dr. Lucinda Austin, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities. Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or email ars@unc.edu.

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. At the Hussman School, we are fortunate to have Carolyn Ebeling as the CAPS embedded counselor in-house. Carolyn offers a warm and non-judgmental space for undergraduate and graduate students to explore their thoughts and feelings. Email them at cebeling@email.unc.edu to get connected. You may also explore resources at the CAPS website (<https://caps.unc.edu/>) or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more. Also visit the Heels Care Network for additional mental-health and self-care resources: <https://care.unc.edu/>.

TITLE IX

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/>. Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator (titleixcoordinator@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and

Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at <https://safe.unc.edu/>.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University's Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied. If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at safe.unc.edu) or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office, or online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve; I appreciate any suggestions. More broadly, our school has adopted diversity and inclusion [mission and vision statements](#) with accompanying goals. These complement the university non-discrimination policy described above, as well as [broader university goals](#) for diversity. 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.

ABSENCES

If you need to be absent, please let me know in advance, and be sure to send your reflections by the start of class so we can include your thoughts in class discussion.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **Reflection and participation:** There will be multiple opportunities to participate in class discussion. First, we will share reflections on readings at the start of class. I will provide prompts: an example might be to reflect on something of value you took from the readings, a question or point of confusion about any of the readings, and how any of the readings relate to your life, your topic, or past readings. These reflections will be done individually or in small groups. Second, I plan on building in group work after lectures so we can practice applying some of the concepts from readings/lectures. Throughout these and other activities, I expect everyone to engage in respectful discussion. Regular and on-time attendance is important as well.
- **Discussion leading:** Each student will be expected to take a turn at leading discussion during one week in the semester. Please choose a topic that aligns with your research/professional goals; a sign-up sheet will be posted on Canvas. When you are discussion leader, it does NOT mean that you will be responsible for all class activities that week (I will continue to give an overview and context for assigned readings during our online sessions). However, you will be expected to contribute to our greater understanding by providing additional perspective and opportunity for discussion. On your assigned week:

- Read assigned materials thoroughly.
 - Choose a scholarly article that aligns with the theme for the week. The article must be theory-based and must present a study (i.e., with data, using qualitative or quantitative methods). It should provide a valuable angle or counterpoint to the week's readings. I would love for you to be excited about the article! ☒
 - Write a brief written summary/critique of the article.
 - During class time, tell us about your article. Pose discussion questions (include these in your written summary).
 - Detailed instructions for all of these components will be posted on Canvas under Assignments.
- Three ideas: – Suggest three potential ideas for topics you want to study and why each is important to you and your field. The assignment instructions on Canvas will provide specific prompts you should address. I will provide guidance on selecting a topic as needed.
 - First draft: This assignment is an opportunity to develop your literature review that will serve as the basis for your final project. If you are writing a research proposal, it should include hypotheses and RQs.
 - Article critique: 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 the opportunity to sign up for one of the days. On that day, you will submit on Canvas 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). 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 Canvas.
 - Final paper and presentation: Rewrite your first draft based on the comments and suggestions that I made on the first draft. Then, write the methods section for the study or project. 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. The paper should be 8-10 pages (or fewer, if that's the norm in your field) and single-spaced. You will also present your work in class in a style similar to (but more engaging than ☒) a typical academic conference presentation. Instructions for both the paper and presentation will be provided on Canvas.

GRADING

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 can 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!” when reviewing the body of work.*
- P = Your very best work. These students read and critically engage with all materials. They can 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 can 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:*

- H signifies work that is exceptional in terms of conceptual soundness, depth of analysis, or significance of contribution – again, a “wow!” assessment. Needless to say, work earning an H must also meet content and formatting requirements as explained in instructions, have few errors, and be submitted on time. (For the final paper, an H would be comparable to readiness to submit as a full paper to conference or journal as is or with just a few minor tweaks.)
- P signifies work that meets content and formatting requirements, is well written, has few errors, and is submitted on time. (For the final paper, a P would be comparable to readiness to submit to conference or journal with revising beyond a few minor tweaks but not a complete overhaul.)
- L indicates work that shows little understanding of the material and has substantial errors. (For the final paper: would need a complete overhaul to be submitted.)

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

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

For individual assignments, I will also provide written feedback, typically in the form of comments (sometimes extensive) added directly to your paper using the comment feature in Word.

Spring 2024 Course Schedule – tentative schedule – subject to change

This schedule represents a good faith effort to outline our work over the course of the semester. However, because of unpredictable factors, I reserve the right to make changes to any aspect of this syllabus, including the timeline and assignments. I will alert you of any changes in readings, assignments, due dates, etc., over the course of the semester. Thank you for your flexibility!

Week 1 Jan 16	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; first opportunity will be Week 3.
Week 2 Jan 23	<p>Introduction to communicating about health. <i>What is the evidence regarding the 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>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. FULL TEXT UNDER COURSE RESERVES ON CANVAS.</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. FULL TEXT</p> <p>Airhihenbuwa, C. O., Iwelunmor, J., Munodawafa, D., Ford, C. L., Oni, T., Agyemang, C., ... & Okosun, I. (2020). Peer reviewed: culture matters in communicating the global response to COVID-19. <i>Preventing Chronic Disease</i>, 17. FULL TEXT</p>
Week 3 Jan 30	<p>Three ideas paper due</p> <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. FULL TEXT</p> <p>Davies, E. L., & Todd, J. (2021). Drinking beyond intentions: The prototype willingness model and alcohol consumption. In <i>The Palgrave handbook of psychological perspectives on alcohol consumption</i> (pp. 51-76). Cham: Springer International Publishing. FULL TEXT</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. FULL TEXT</p> <p>Introduce message design tools from CDC</p>

<p>Week 4 Feb 6</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</i>, 56, S81-S96. (ELM) FULL TEXT</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</i>, 20(8), 969–976. (narrative) FULL TEXT</p> <p>Cooke-Jackson, A., & Rubinsky, V. (2023). Extending the roots of memorable messages: A comprehensive review and forecast of memorable message literature and theory. <i>Health Communication</i>, 38(12), 2676-2686. FULL TEXT</p>
<p>Week 5 Feb 13</p>	<p>UNC Wellness Day</p>
<p>Week 6 Feb 20</p>	<p>Understanding the campaign development process. Audience segmentation, formative research, message testing, channel selection, evaluation. <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>Atkin, C. K., & Freimuth, V. (2013). Ch. 4: Guidelines for formative evaluation research in campaign design. In <i>Public Communication Campaigns</i>, pgs. 53-68. FULL TEXT</p> <p>Dervin, B., & Foreman-Wernet, L. (2012). Ch. 10: Sense-making methodology as an approach to understanding and designing for campaign audiences. <i>Public Communication Campaigns</i>, pgs. 147-162. FULL TEXT</p> <p>An, J., Kwak, H., Qureshi, H. M., & Weber, I. (2021). Precision Public Health Campaign: Delivering persuasive messages to relevant segments through targeted advertisements on social media. <i>JMIR Formative Research</i>, 5(9), e22313. FULL TEXT</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</i>, 334-351. FULL TEXT UNDER COURSE RESERVES ON CANVAS.</p>

Week7 Feb 27	<p>GUEST SPEAKER:</p> <p>Effects of media content on health behavior. <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>Foss, K. A. (2021). Health and Media: The Impact of News and Entertainment. In <i>The Routledge Handbook of Health Communication</i> (pp. 277-289). Routledge. FULL TEXT</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>. FULL TEXT</p> <p>To, S. B., Gray, J., Jain, P., Porter, J. H., & Comello, M. L. G. (2023). Advocating, unlearning, tearing it all down? How BIPOC young adults with mental health concerns perceive and engage with the media. <i>Health communication</i>, 1-13. FULL TEXT</p>
Week 8 Mar 5	Individual consultations
Week 9 Mar 12	SPRING BREAK
Week 10 Mar 19	<p>First draft due</p> <p>Cultural issues in health 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>Airhihihenbuwa, C. (1995). Health, Healing, and Medicine as Cultural Constructs. In <i>Health and culture: Beyond the Western paradigm</i> (pp. 47-62). Thousand Oaks: Sage. FULL TEXT IN COURSE RESERVES SECTION ON CANVAS.</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. FULL TEXT</p> <p>Ramasubramanian, S., & Dutta, M. J. (2023). The CODE[^] SHIFT model: a data justice framework for collective impact and social transformation. <i>Human Communication Research</i>. FULL TEXT</p>
Week 11 Mar 26	<p>Interpersonal communication</p> <p>Aldrich, R. S., & Johnson, J. M. Q. (2021). Mental Health, Mental Illness, and Suicide. <i>The Routledge Handbook of Health Communication</i>, 63-76. FULL TEXT</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</i>, 22(sup1), 59-65. FULL TEXT</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</i>, 79, 292-315. FULL TEXT</p>

Week 12 Apr 2	<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., Francis, D. B., Hursting, L., Swarner, E., & Marshall, L. H. (2021). Values of cancer survivors and the supportive role of recreational video games. <i>Journal of Health Psychology</i>, 26(8), 1243-1257. FULL TEXT</p> <p>Discuss projects; informal peer feedback</p>
Week 13 Apr 9	<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</i>, 22(12), 951–963. FULL TEXT</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</i>, 98(12), 2229-2236. FULL TEXT</p> <p>Cho, H., & Salmon, C. T. (2006). Unintended effects of health communication campaigns. <i>Journal of Communication</i>, 57(2), 293-317. FULL TEXT</p>
Week 14 Apr 16	Students' choice
Week 15 Apr 23	Individual consultations
Week 16 Apr 30	Final presentations / wrap up
	<p>Final papers due May 8</p> <p>HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!</p>