Comm 443: Health Communication
Fall, 2010

Monday and Wednesday, 10 am-11:50 am
Professors Susan H. Evans and Peter Clarke
Room ASC G34

Overview of the course.

The quality of people's physical and emotional well being and the delivery of health care depend on efficient and effective communication. This course will help you understand how communication—interpersonal, mass media, telecommunication, and built spaces—shapes the exchange of information, the formation of attitudes and beliefs, and people's health behavior. We welcome students from all majors.

We have designed readings, class sessions, and writing assignments to help you learn about:

I. The Social Context of Health Care: how doctor-patient communication influences the quality of care and patients' well being; ways people can mobilize family, friends, and the healthcare system more effectively to meet their medical needs.

II. Images of Health and Medicine in the Public Media: ways that news media cover health and medicine; the development and impact of dramatic entertainment series and movies; the roles of drama as a public educator; how health interests lobby the mass media to influence entertainment and news content.

III. Psychological Theories of Health Behavior: research about communication campaigns and applications to public health; some health campaigns aim to reduce risks of illness and avoidable accidents, while others help people cope with chronic conditions; health literacy; health campaigns in the Developing World.

IV. Case Studies of Health Interventions and Methods of Evaluation: examples will illustrate principles drawn from throughout the course by concentrating on two applications: a) reducing hunger and malnutrition in the U.S. while combating the epidemic of obesity and diabetes; and b) helping seniors (and others) plan the kind of critical care they want, if they lose the ability to communicate with medical providers.

V. Impact of the Internet and other Information Technologies on the Quality of Health Care: the strengths and liabilities of health websites; other uses of information technologies (ITs) in health care.

VI. How Built Spaces Shape Communication and People’s Health: we will explore two facets of this topic: a) ways that poor interior design of health facilities constrains communication and undermines health; and b) how your personal environment—rooms, buildings, and urban landscapes—affect your health and well being.
Course materials.

You should purchase two paperback books and a COURSE PACK; the latter is available from the instructors at cost. The books are available at the bookstore or from Internet vendors:


Study questions.

We will distribute a list of study questions that should help guide you through the reading material for each class session. These questions will be posted on Blackboard, which you access via the following website: http://blackboard.usc.edu. These questions will not cover all of the lecture material, however. The study questions will be very helpful in preparing for the in-class quizzes. You can find the study questions under the heading “Content.” Keep in mind that approximately half of the questions on the quizzes are based on lectures.

Assignments.

You will write eight short papers, take part in an in-class group project, and complete two in-class quizzes. Brief explanations for each of the writing assignments are contained in the syllabus. We will distribute more detailed instructions in class. Writing assignments will be posted on Blackboard under the heading “Assignments.”

E-mail communication.

You should check your USC e-mail regularly, because that is the e-mail address that Blackboard and your instructors use when distributing messages about the class.

Evaluation of your work.

Work is due on the indicated dates. Late writing assignments will be eligible for half credit only. In-class quizzes will only be administered on the dates shown in the syllabus. You will need a documented medical situation in order to petition to make alternative arrangements for taking a quiz. In addition, you must communicate with instructors prior to a scheduled quiz that medical circumstances make it impossible for you to attend class that day. There is no final exam during exam week. The last day of class is December 1.
Attendance policy.

Class attendance is vital, providing exposure to lecture materials, videos, and discussions prompted by students’ interests. Attendance will be taken. Each student is allowed two absences. After two absences, each missed class will result in the reduction of one point.

Components of your grade are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Point value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 8</td>
<td>Writing assignment #1: Analysis of medical consultation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 13</td>
<td>In-class quiz #1</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 20</td>
<td>Writing assignment #2: Journalism analysis</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 27</td>
<td>Writing assignment #3: “Nurse Jackie” analysis</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>October 11</td>
<td>In-class project</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>October 18</td>
<td>Writing assignment #4: Advertising analysis</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>October 25</td>
<td>In-class quiz #2</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>November 10</td>
<td>Writing assignment #5: Focus Group analysis</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>November 15</td>
<td>Writing assignment #6: Nutrition and message tailoring study questions</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 22</td>
<td>Writing assignment #7: Web-site analysis</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>Writing and photo assignment #8: Design of medical environments and my environment and health</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>100 pts.</td>
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We do not grade on a curve, so you are not competing with your classmates. Instead, you will gain by working together and sharing ideas and readings. Nonetheless, we expect papers and exams to be your own work. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and will be referred to the University's processes for hearings and discipline.
Here is how we will assign grades:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>78-89</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>66-77</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>54-65</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>0-53</td>
<td>F</td>
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Academic Integrity Statement.

We are committed to upholding the University's Academic Integrity code as detailed in the SCampus Guide. It is the policy of the Annenberg School and the Health Promotion Program to report all violations of the code. Any serious violation or pattern of violations of the Academic Integrity Code will result in the student's expulsion from the Communication and Health Promotion major or minor.

ADA Compliance Statement.

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the instructors as early in the semester as possible, no later than Sept. 2. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Last day of class.

Our last session together will be on December 1. Writing assignment #8 is due on December 1, in class. There will be no final during exam week.

Office hours and other administrative issues:

Contact with faculty:

Susan Evans: 323-442-2613 or shevans@usc.edu; office hours: Monday: noon-1 pm; ASC 324G.
Peter Clarke: 213-740-0940 or chmc@usc.edu; office hours: Monday: noon-1 pm; ASC 324G.
Week-by-Week Topics, Readings, and Assignments

**August 23:** Introduction: What is health communication and why does it matter? The social gradient in health and wellness. Flaws in U.S. health care that prompt needs for improved communication.

I. The Social Context of Healthcare

**August 25:** Doctor-patient consultations and the quality of care

Readings: *Surviving Modern Medicine*: Introduction and Chapter 1


**August 30:** Doctor-patient consultations and the quality of care (continued)


**September 1:** Social relations and people's well being

Readings: *Surviving Modern Medicine*: Chapter 3

**September 6:** Labor Day; no class

**September 8:** Social relations and people's well being, continued

Readings: *Surviving Modern Medicine*: Chapter 4

**September 13:** In-class, Quiz #1
II. Images of Health and Medicine in the Public Media

September 15: The press, health-hype, and public understanding about medical issues.


September 20: Depictions of medicine on dramatic television.


Brink, S. 2006. Prime time to learn. Los Angeles Times. COURSE PACK

Re-read: Groopman, J. 1997. Selection from The Measure of our Days: A Spiritual Exploration of Illness. COURSE PACK.

September 22: Research about audiences and outcomes from entertainment; lobbying for access to dramatic TV


September 27: Analysis of selected episodes of, “Nurse Jackie.”

Readings: You will view selected episodes of, “Nurse Jackie” before the class session.

III. Psychological Theories of Health Behavior

September 29: Theories of persuasion applied to health behavior

Readings: Influence: Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, and 3

October 4: Theories of persuasion applied to health behavior, continued

Readings: Influence: Chapters 4 and 5

October 6: Theories of persuasion applied to health behavior, continued

Readings: Influence: Chapters 6, 7, and 8

October 11: In-class project

October 13: Health Literacy, Fear Appeals, and Message Framing


October 18: Social Learning and Stages of Change


October 20: Infotainment: Health promotion in the Third World


October 25: In-class, Quiz #2

IV. Case Studies of Health Interventions and Methods of Evaluation

October 27: Reducing hunger and malnutrition; preventing and managing obesity and diabetes


November 1: Focus group research


November 3: Observation and analysis of a focus group

Readings: None
November 8: Message Tailoring


November 10: Helping people make choices about critical care


November 15: Fundamentals of surveys

Readings: None

V. Impact of the Internet and Other ITs on the Quality of Health Care

November 17: Telecommunication interventions: Web-sites and telemedicine


VI. How Built Spaces Shape Communication and People’s Health

November 22: Your personal environment and health


November 24: No class.

November 29: The interior design of health facilities


Go online to karlsberger.com. Click on and skim sections about knowledge, services, and work. Also, access the website for the Society for Environmental Graphic Design, segd.org and healthdesign.org. Study award winners for recent years to learn how interior amenities and wayfinding cues affect people’s experiences with buildings.

December 1: Examples of three successful community-based interventions.

Readings: None

Papers, Exams, and In-Class Project

September 8: Writing assignment #1, Analysis of a medical consultation, due in class. You will administer a short questionnaire (that we provide) to a friend or family member who has recently consulted a physician. You will diagnose the communication skills of the patient you interview, assess the patient's social support network, and offer recommendations for improvement. You should include references to the readings. (Two pages, plus completed questionnaire: 10 points)

September 13: In-class quiz #1. Questions will be short-answer; closed-book, no notes. The quiz will cover readings and lecture material. (15 points)

September 20: Writing Assignment #2, Journalism analysis, due in class. You will analyze a news story we distribute by identifying omissions, possible misstatements, and failures to observe guidelines for responsible press coverage of medical practice and health. Course readings provide you with criteria of good coverage that you will apply to the story. (One page, 6 points)
September 27: Writing Assignment #3, Analysis of “Nurse Jackie,” due in class.
You will view selected episodes of “Nurse Jackie.” You will be asked to check on the factual accuracy of a number of medical issues portrayed in the show. (Two pages, 6 points)

October 11: In-class project.
Each student will be randomly assigned to a group. Each group will take a particular theoretical approach to a health issue and will prepare an advertising poster. All supplies for this project will be provided by the instructors. (4 points)

October 18: Writing assignment #4, Advertising analysis, due in class.
You will analyze advertisements in a newspaper or magazine that promote a prescription drug directly to consumers, using the framework that has been presented in Influence. (Two pages, plus sample advertisement, 10 points)

October 25: In-class quiz #2.
Questions will be short-answer; closed-book, no notes. The quiz will cover readings and lecture material. (15 points)

November 10: Writing Assignment #5, Focus group analysis, due in class.
In class, you will observe a videotaped focus group dealing with an issue in health communication. You will take detailed notes that record verbal and non-verbal participation. You will interpret your findings in order to advise the focus group's sponsor, and include references to the readings. (Three pages, plus notes, 10 points)

November 15: Writing Assignment #6, Nutrition and message tailoring study questions, due in class.
You will answer selected Study Questions from the materials on nutrition and message tailoring. (6 points)

November 22: Writing Assignment #7, Compare and contrast web-sites, due in class.
You will find two health-related web sites dealing with the same health issue. You will compare and contrast their content, design, and general helpfulness. (You will complete a grid that will be distributed, and include sample screens, 8 points)

December 1: Writing Assignment #8, Design of medical environments and my environment and health, due in class.
You will answer selected Study Questions from the materials on the interior design of health facilities. In photos and text (captions), you will depict and analyze features of the built environment that affect your physical health and sense of well being, positively and negatively. Ten photographs and explanatory text. (10 points)