

**Comm 443: Communicating Health Messages and Medical Issues  
Fall, 2013**

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 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:

Cialdini, Robert B. Influence: Science and Practice, 5th Edition. Allyn and Bacon. 2009.

Clarke, P. and S. H. Evans, Surviving Modern Medicine: How to Get the Best from Doctors, Family, and Friends. Rutgers. 1998.

**Study questions.**

We will distribute a list of study questions that will 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."

**Assignments.**

You will submit eight short papers (2-3 pages), take part in an in-class group project, complete two in-class quizzes and a final. We will distribute detailed instructions for each assignment. 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 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.

**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:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Point value</b>
September 11	Assignment #1: Analysis of a medical consultation	10
September 16	In-class quiz #1	15
September 25	Assignment #2: "Nurse Jackie" analysis	6
October 7	Assignment #3: Journalism analysis	6
October 14	In-class project	4
October 21	Assignment #4: Advertising analysis	10
October 28	In-class quiz #2	15
November 13	Assignment #5: Focus group analysis	10
November 20	Assignment #6: Nutrition and message- tailoring study questions	6
November 25	Assignment #7: Web-site analysis	8
December 4	Assignment #8: Design of my environment and health	5
	Final Exam	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 pts.</b>

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:

<u>Points</u>	<u>Grade</u>
<b>90-100</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>78-89</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>66-77</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>54-65</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>0-53</b>	<b>F</b>

The instructors may assign a plus or a minus based on class participation.

### **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 August 31. 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.

### **Office hours and other administrative issues:**

Contact with faculty and teaching assistant:

Susan Evans: 323-442-2613 or [shevens@usc.edu](mailto:shevens@usc.edu); office hours: Monday: noon-1 pm; ASC 324G.  
Peter Clarke: 213-740-0940 or [chmc@usc.edu](mailto:chmc@usc.edu); office hours: Monday: noon-1 pm; ASC 324G.

## **Week-by-Week Topics, Readings, and Assignments**

**August 26:** Introduction: What is health communication and why does it matter? Flaws in U.S. health care that prompt needs for improved communication.

### **I. The Social Context of Healthcare**

**August 28:** Doctor-patient consultations and the quality of care

Readings: Surviving Modern Medicine: Introduction and Chapter 1

Groopman, J. 2007. How Doctors Think. Introduction and Epilogue. COURSE PACK.

Gawande, A. 2007. Better: A Surgeon's Notes on Performance. Afterword. COURSE PACK.

**September 2:** Labor Day; no class

**September 4:** Doctor-patient consultations and the quality of care (continued)

Readings: Groopman, J. 1997. "Kirk" from The Measure of Our Days: A Spiritual Exploration of Illness. COURSE PACK.

Schulman, K.A., et. al. 1999. "The effect of race and sex on physicians' recommendation for cardiac catheterization." Journal of the American Medical Association. COURSE PACK.

**September 9:** Social relations and people's well being

Readings: Surviving Modern Medicine: Chapter 3

**September 11:** Social relations and people's well being, continued

Readings: Surviving Modern Medicine: Chapter 4

**September 16:** In-class, Quiz #1

## **II. Images of Health and Medicine in the Public Media**

**September 18:** Depictions of medicine on dramatic television.

Readings: Diem, S. J., et. al. 1996. "Cardiopulmonary resuscitation on television: Miracles and misinformation." New England Journal of Medicine. COURSE PACK

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

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

**September 23:** Research about audiences and outcomes from entertainment; lobbying for access to dramatic TV

Readings: Brodie, M. et. al. 2001. "Communicating health information through the entertainment media." Health Affairs. COURSE PACK

The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. 2002. "The impact of TV's health content: A case study of ER viewers." COURSE PACK

Safe Surgery Checklist. COURSE PACK

**September 25:** Analysis of selected episodes of "Nurse Jackie."

Readings: You will view selected episodes of "Nurse Jackie" before the class session.

**September 30:** The press, health-hype, and public understanding about medical issues.

Readings. Shuchman, M. and Wilkes, M.S. 1997. "Medical scientists and health news reporting: A case of miscommunication." Annals of Internal Medicine. COURSE PACK

Pribble, J.M., et al. 2006. "Medical news for the public to use? What's on local TV news." American Journal of Managed Care. COURSE PACK

Schwitzer, B. 2003. "How the media left the evidence out in the cold." British Medical Journal. COURSE PACK

### **III. Psychological Theories of Health Behavior**

**October 2:** Theories of persuasion applied to health behavior

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

**October 7:** Theories of persuasion applied to health behavior, continued

Readings: Influence: Chapters 4 and 5

**October 9:** Theories of persuasion applied to health behavior, continued

Readings: Influence: Chapters 6, 7, and 8

Redelmeier, D. and Cialdini, R. 2002. "Problems for clinical judgement: Principles of influence in medical practice." Canadian Medical Association Journal. COURSE PACK

**October 14:** In-class project

**October 16:** Health Literacy, Fear Appeals, and Message Framing

Readings: Hale, J. and J. Dillard. 1995. "Fear appeals in health promotion campaigns: Too much, too little, or just right?" Designing Health Messages. COURSE PACK

Rogers, E., Ratzen, S.C., and Payne, J.C. 2001. "Health literacy." American Behavioral Scientist. COURSE PACK

**October 21:** Social Learning and Stages of Change

Readings: Prochaska, J.O. et. al. 1992. "In search of how to change: Applications to addictive behaviors." American Psychologist. COURSE PACK

Bandura, A. 2004. "Health promotion and social cognitive means." Health Education and Behavior. COURSE PACK

**October 23:** Infotainment: Health promotion in the Third World

Readings: Singhal, A., et. al. 1999. Entertainment-education: A communication strategy for social change. Pages 1-23. COURSE PACK

Rosin, H. 2006. "Life Lessons: How soap operas can change the world." The New Yorker: June 5. COURSE PACK

Smith, D. 2002. "The theory heard 'round the world." Monitor on Psychology. COURSE PACK

**October 28:** In-class, Quiz #2

#### **IV. Case Studies of Health Interventions and Methods of Evaluation**

**October 30:** Reducing hunger and malnutrition; preventing and managing obesity and diabetes

Readings: Robinson, T.N. 2007. "Effects of fast food branding on young children's taste preferences." Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine. COURSE PACK

Sloane, D, et. al. 2003. "Improving the nutritional resource environment for healthy living through community-based participatory research." Journal of General Internal Medicine. COURSE PACK

Evans, S. and Clarke, P. 2010. "Disseminating Orphan Innovations." Stanford Social Innovation Review. COURSE PACK

**November 4:** Focus group research

Readings: Stewart, D. et. al. 1990. Focus Group: Theory and Practice. COURSE PACK

Evans, S. Clarke, P. and Koprowski, C. 2010. "Information Design to Promote Better Nutrition among Pantry Clients: Four Methods of Formative Evaluation." Public Health Nutrition. COURSE PACK

**November 6:** Observation and analysis of a focus group

Readings: None

**November 11:** Message Tailoring

Readings: Kreuter, M., et.al. 2000. Tailoring Health Messages: Customizing Communication with Computer Technology. Chapters 2 and 3. COURSE PACK

Clarke, P., Evans, S., and Hovy, E. 2011. "Indigenous Message Tailoring Increases Consumption of Fresh Vegetables by Low-Income Households." Health Communication. COURSE PACK



**November 13:** Helping people make choices about critical care

Readings: Surviving Modern Medicine, Chapter 5.

**November 18:** Fundamentals of surveys

Readings: None

## **V. Impact of the Internet and Other Information Technologies on the Quality of Health Care**

**November 20:** Telecommunication interventions: Web-sites and telemedicine

Readings: Berland, G. et. al. 2001. "Health information on the Internet: Accessibility, quality, and readability in English and Spanish." Journal of the American Medical Association. COURSE PACK

Brock, B. et. al. 2005. "Smoking cessation treatment on the Internet: Content, quality, and usability." Nicotine and Tobacco Research. COURSE PACK

Spurgeon, J. and Wright, J. 2010 "Computer-Assisted Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy." Current Psychiatry Reports. COURSE PACK

Prgomett, M. et. al. 2009. "The impact of mobile handheld technology on hospital physician's work practices and patient care: A systematic review." Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association. COURSE PACK

## **VI. How Built Spaces Shape Communication and People's Health**

**November 25:** Your personal environment and health

Readings: Anthes, E. 2009. "Building around the mind." Scientific American. COURSE PACK

Jarrett, C. 2006. "Is there a psychologist in the building?" The Psychologist. COURSE PACK

**November 27:** No class. Happy Thanksgiving.

**December 2:** The interior design of health facilities

Readings: Ulrich, R.S. 1984. "View through a window may influence recovery from surgery." Science. COURSE PACK

Ulrich, R. and Barach, P. 2006. "Designing Safe Healthcare Facilities—What are the data and where do we go from here?" COURSE PACK

Campbell, C. 2009. "Health Outcomes Driving new Hospital Design." New York Times. COURSE PACK

Go online to [karlsberger.com](http://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](http://segd.org) and [healthdesign.org](http://healthdesign.org). Study award winners for recent years to learn how interior amenities and wayfinding cues affect people's experiences with buildings.

**December 4:** Examples of three successful community-based interventions.

Readings: None