

**Comm 443: Communicating Better Health: What Works and Why (4 units)
Spring, 2020**

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

Course description.

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, digital, 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. Healthcare Provider and Family Communication: flaws in healthcare that doom many people to sub-optimal treatment; 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. Psychological Theories of Health Behavior and Document Design: research about communication campaigns and applications to public health; health literacy; document and platform design.

III. Digital Technologies and Quality of Health Care: the strengths and liabilities of health websites; uses of social media, mobile devices, and other information technologies (ITs) in health care.

IV. 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--affects your health and well-being.

V. 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 that incorporate health issues; the roles of drama as a public educator; how health interests lobby the mass media to influence entertainment and news content; health campaigns in the developing world.

VI. 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.

Learning objectives.

These are skills you will have acquired by the end of the course. All are abilities that improve your chances of leading a healthier life, or are valued by future, potential employers, or both. By the end of Comm 443, you will be able:

- To analyze doctor-patient communication, verbal and non-verbal, and use the course's inventory of questions about medical concerns to prepare yourself, family, or friends for effective consultations with physicians.
- To recognize the presence or absence of different kinds of social support for personal health, and to know how to seek essential support when it fails to appear spontaneously.
- To apply psychological theories about the effectiveness of persuasive strategies, including fear appeals and the use of humor, to understand why some advertisements and public campaigns on behalf of better health work while others fall flat.
- To analyze the print and digital materials of a health organization for effectiveness in conveying the organization's messages and in changing behavior.
- To analyze features of wearable health monitoring devices and appraise their effectiveness.
- To visually document and explain features of the built environment (exterior and interior spaces) that have consequences for good or for poor health.
- To analyze health-related stories in the news and health themes incorporated in dramatic entertainments (whatever the media--print, TV, web-based, etc.), in order to identify distortions or omissions that mislead the public.
- To observe and analyze a focus group discussing a health-related topic, and apply the insights gained to design media and messages about that topic.
- To understand the complexities of communication involved in end-of-life decision-making.

Course materials.

You should purchase one paperback book and two COURSE PACKS. The COURSE PACKS are available from the instructors at cost. The book is available at the bookstore or from Internet vendors:

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

Assignments.

You will submit six short reports, take part in an in-class group project, submit a longer paper (12-15 pages) analyzing the print and digital media of a health organization, and complete a take-home final. Topics, assignments, and point allocations are listed below. We will distribute detailed instructions for each assignment. Assignments will be posted on Blackboard (<http://blackboard.usc.edu>) under the heading "Assignments."

For the longer paper, you will choose a health organization and analyze its use of four types of media aimed at the clients or publics that the organization serves. These media, or platforms are: 1) print: brochures, magazine ads, billboards, and posters; 2) video: TV spots, web videos, and instructional supports; 3) audio: podcasts or radio advertisements; and 4) digital tools: websites, apps, decision support aids, social media, and other distributed and mobile technologies. Your analyses will focus on how understandable the use of each platform is, and on how well each platform evokes human motivations to pay attention and respond in intended ways.

Your analyses will incorporate the research literature dealing with communication processes and effects--including document or platform design, health literacy, and persuasive messaging.

Examples of health organizations include: hospitals or other in-patient care facilities, pharmaceutical firms, disease associations (for example, the American Cancer Society), medical device manufacturers, insurers, and government agencies that focus on health.

Submitted assignments will be graded, and the grades will be available in the online Blackboard grade center. Normally, papers are graded and returned within a week of submission.

Assignment Submission Policy.

Work is due on the indicated dates. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructors, late assignments will be eligible for half credit only

Components of your grade and due dates are as follows:

Due Date	Assignment	Point value and percentage of grade
January 29	Analysis of a medical consultation	12
February 24	In-class group project	5
March 2	Analysis of direct-to-consumer advertisements	10
March 9	Analysis of a wearable device	9
March 23	Analysis of personal space	9
April 1	“Nurse Jackie” analysis	8
April 22	Focus group analysis	10
April 29	Analysis of a health organization’s communication media	22
May 6	Final: Take-home exam	15
Total		100 points

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. The general Blackboard website is: <http://blackboard.usc.edu>. The HELP link on Blackboard is: http://help.blackboard.com/en-us/Learn/9.1_2014_04/Student.

Office hours and communication.

Contact with faculty:

Susan Evans: 323-442-2613 or shevens@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.

The instructors will be available via email, and will respond as soon as possible, normally within 24 hours.

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.

Grading.

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 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>
90-100	A
78-89	B
66-77	C
54-65	D
0-53	F

The instructors may assign a plus or a minus based on class participation as determined by how much students speak in class. You can become eligible for a plus by asking questions and by expressing observations about readings, in-class materials, lectures, and topics of the course.

Other Student Services and Helpful Resources.

The USC Writing Center is available to help students improve their critical thinking and writing skills. It offers free materials and online resources at <https://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter>.

The USC Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity offers free online resources for time management, note taking, paper writing, and goal setting, which can be accessed at <http://kortschakcenter.usc.edu>.

The USC Library offers free research guides on 22 subjects at <http://libguides.usc.edu>.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**a. Academic Conduct***Plagiarism*

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

b. Support Systems

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

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. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for DSP and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

uscsa.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/additional-funding-resources>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

Breaking Bread Program [undergraduate students only]

<https://undergrad.usc.edu/faculty/bread/>

The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally “breaking bread” over a meal together and USC will pick up the tab! Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.

Week-by-Week Topics and Readings

Week 1:

January 13: Introduction: What is health communication and why does it matter? What are health disparities and other consequential shortcomings in U.S. healthcare? What are novel ways of narrowing health disparities (one way is shown in the clip from the television show “New Amsterdam”)?

Readings:

Browse videos at: <http://www.unnaturalcauses.org>.

I. Healthcare Provider and Family Communication

Week 1:

January 15: Doctor-patient communication: What can doctors do to make sure that patients remember important details of their medical appointment that are so commonly forgotten?

Readings:

Clarke, P. and Evans, S. 1989. Surviving Modern Medicine: Introduction and Chapter 1. COURSE PACK.

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

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

Week 2:

January 20: No class. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

January 22: Doctor-patient communication: What can patients do to make sure they understand and remember important details of the medical appointment?

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." J. of the Amer. Med. Assoc. COURSE PACK.

Week 3:

January 27: Social support and health: How important are friends and family for recovery from illness? How does one rally the right type of support?

Readings:

Clarke, P. and Evans, S. 1989. Surviving Modern Medicine: Chapter 3. COURSE PACK.

Week 3:

January 29: Caregiver support: What are the risks to people who provide sustained help to others who are sick?

Readings:

Clarke, P. and Evans, S. 1989. Surviving Modern Medicine: Chapter 4. COURSE PACK.

II. Psychological Theories of Health Behavior and Document Design

Week 4:

February 3: Health Literacy: What is health literacy? What does it mean for the design of patient materials, and for patient adherence to medical protocols?

Readings:

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

Week 4:

February 5: Document and platform design: Why do we read and understand so differently on paper and online, and why does this matter for health communication?

Readings:

Krug, S. 2014. Don't Make Me Think, Revisited: Chapters 1-3 and 13. COURSE PACK

Go to this link:

<https://creativemarket.com/blog/10-basic-elements-of-design>

Week 5:

February 10: Theories of persuasion applied to health behavior: What are some effective rules for creating health messages?

Readings:

Cialdini, R. 2009. Influence: Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4

Week 5:

February 12: Theories of persuasion applied to health behavior and fear appeals. Are fear appeals ever effective? What can make them so?

Readings:

Cialdini, R. 2009. Influence: Chapters 5, 6,7, and 8

Week 6:

February 17: No class: Presidents' Day.

February 19: Continue with theories of persuasion applied to health behavior and fear appeals: Are fear appeals ever effective? What can make them so?

Readings:

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

Simpson, J.K. 2017. "Appeal to fear in health care: appropriate or inappropriate?" Chiropractic and Manual Therapies. COURSE PACK

Week 7:

February 24: In-class project

Readings: None.

February 26: Meet with professors to discuss your analysis of a health organization's communication media (due April 29).

III. Digital Technologies and Quality of Health Care

Week 8:

March 2: Digital technologies and quality care: Are electronic health records better than paper-and-pen? How much improvement does the Internet bring in health information? How often do phone apps really improve care?

Readings:

Sweet, V. 2017. “Medicine without a Soul,” introduction to Slow Medicine. COURSE PACK

Fahy, E. et al. 2014. “Quality of patient health information on the Internet: reviewing a complex and evolving landscape.” Australian Medical Journal. COURSE PACK

Wattar, B. et al. 2016. “Online health information on obesity in pregnancy: a systematic review.” European Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Reproductive Biology. COURSE PACK

Week 8:

March 4: Digital technologies and quality care: Where are mobile digital technologies delivering on their promises? Encouraging examples.

Readings:

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

Huberty, J. et al. (2019) “Efficacy of the mindfulness meditation mobile app ‘Calm’ to reduce stress among college students: Randomized controlled trial. JMIR Mhealth Uhealth. (COURSE PACK).

Dunn, J., Runge, R., & Snyder, M. 2018. “Wearables and the medical revolution.” Personalized Medicine. (COURSE PACK).

IV. How Built Spaces Shape Communication and People's Health

Week 9:

March 9: Built spaces and health: How does the design of buildings and open spaces affect your personal 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

Kelleher, K., Reece, J., & Sandel, M. 2018. "The healthy neighborhood, healthy families initiative." Pediatrics. (COURSE PACK).

Buttigieg, P. 2018. Book review of Eric Klineberg, *Palaces for the People*, New York Times Book Review.

Week 9:

March 11: Built spaces and health: Could the location of hand-washing sinks in patient rooms affect the rate of hospital-acquired infections, a leading cause of death and disability in the U.S.?

Readings:

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

Campbell, C. 2009. "Health outcomes driving new hospital design." New York Times. COURSE PACK

Access the websites for the Society for Environmental Graphic Design (segd.org) and The Center for Health Design (healthdesign.org). Study award winners in recent years to learn how interior amenities and wayfinding cues affect people's experiences with buildings.

Week 10:

March 16 and March 18: No class: Spring Break

Week 11:

March 23: Meet with Professors to discuss final paper due April 29.

Images of Health and Medicine in the Public Media

Week 11:

March 25: Depictions of medicine on TV and in the movies: How do you get accurate and helpful portrayals of health issues onto TV?

Readings:

Diem, S. J., et. al. 1996. "Cardiopulmonary resuscitation on television: Miracles and misinformation." New England J. 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.

Week 12:

March 30: Research about audiences and outcomes from entertainment: Are TV dramas about medicine just entertainment, or can they serve a more important function?

Readings:

Baer, N. 2015. "The circus comes to the emergency department." JAMA Internal Medicine. COURSE PACK

Wrong, T. and Baumgart, E. "Not a 'reality' show." J. of Clinical Ethics. 2013. COURSE PACK

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

Go to the Hollywood, Health and Society website (<https://hollywoodhealthandsociety.org/>) and browse the resources that are available to writers and producers.

Week 12:

April 1: Entertainment-Education: Can melodrama teach? What is the role of narrative in health education?

Readings:

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

Wang, H. & Singhal, A. 2016. "*East Los High*: Transmedia entertainment to promote the sexual and reproductive health of young Latina/o Americans." Amer. J. of Pub. Health. COURSE PACK

de Graaf, A. et al. 2016. "Characteristics of narrative interventions and health effects: A review of the content, form, and context of narratives in health-related narrative persuasion research." Rev. of Comm. Res. COURSE PACK

Week 13:

April 6: Journalism's coverage of health and medicine: What's the most overlooked flaw in news coverage about health and medicine?

Readings.

Schwitzer, G. 2014. "A guide to reading health care stories." JAMA Internal Medicine. COURSE PACK

Reichel, C. 2018. "Covering health research? Choose your studies (and words) wisely," Journalist's Resource, online at <https://journalistsresource.org/studies/society/news-media/health-research-misinformation-tips>.

Haber, N. et al. 2018. "Causal language and strength of inference in academic and media articles shared in social media (CLAIMS): A systematic review." PLoS ONE. COURSE PACK

Dumas-Mallet, E. et al. 2017. "Poor replication validity of biomedical association studies reported by newspapers," PLoS ONE. COURSE PACK

V. Case Studies of Health Interventions and Methods of Evaluation

Week 13:

April 8: Hunger and malnutrition. When you are chronically hungry, is any calorie a good calorie?

Readings:

Robinson, T.N. 2007. “Effects of fast food branding on young children’s taste preferences.” Arch. of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine. COURSE PACK

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

Evans, S. and Clarke, P. 2010. “Disseminating orphan innovations.” Stanford Social Innovation Review. COURSE PACK

Week 14:

April 13: Focus group research: What is a focus group and why is it an important tool for evaluating media materials?

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

Week 14:

April 15: Focus group viewing

Readings: None.

Week 15:

April 20: Message Tailoring: What is message tailoring, and what advantages does it have over other types of media designs?

Readings:

Evans, S. and Clarke, P. 2019. “Resolving design issues in developing a nutrition app: A case study using formative research.” Evaluation and Program Planning. COURSE PACK

Evans, S. et al. 2019. “A Consumer Health App Works Well. . . But, Diffusion Is Not So Easy.” Journal of Technology in Behavioral Science. COURSE PACK

View short demonstration of the app: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBmlMQ2QuEw>

Week 15:

April 22: Critical-care choices: Have you thought about the day when your parents might lose their capacity to make choices about their medical care? Do seniors shrink from thinking about their own mortality?

Readings:

Clarke, P. and Evans, S. 1989. Surviving Modern Medicine: Chapter 5. COURSE PACK.

Week 16:

April 27: Continue: Critical-care choices: Have you thought about the day when your parents might lose their capacity to make choices about their medical care? Do seniors shrink from thinking about their own mortality?

Week 16:

April 29: Community interventions: You'll learn about some unexpected heroes and heroines of better communication about health.

Readings:

Hauser, C. 2016. "A new front against domestic abuse: The hairstylist's chair." The New York Times. COURSE PACK.

Healy, M. 2018. "Take a little off the top: How visits to the barbershop helped reduce blood pressure in African American men." The Los Angeles Times. COURSE PACK.