



Public Health Communications

Summer 2024 Syllabus

The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus at any time

Course Information

Public Health Communications (COMH 6320) is a course that is fully online.

Course description

This course is designed to familiarize students with the history and current applications of health communication theory and strategies to public health practice and research. This course examines how to structure, develop and evaluate social marketing, media advocacy, risk communication and advocacy skills for change. In addition, systematic qualitative data collection processes such as interviewing skills, participant observation and focus groups will be developed. Emphasis is placed on critical thinking skills to help students analyze and utilize these skills in research and practice.

Instructor Information

Dr. Jessica Alvarado (Escareno), PhD, MPH	Jessica.escareno@uttyler.edu
Room 243, Building H: Office Hours by appointment	903-877-7397

Course Objectives

As a result of this course, you will gain skills in utilizing theories and models in health promotion and behavior change. Additionally, you will hear from content experts and explore relevant examples to apply the content learned throughout the course.

CEPH Competencies	Assignment	Assessment
Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors.	Quiz	Students will be tested on different communication strategies.
Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation.	Project	Students will create a social media campaign with a short paper and video presentation describing their campaign.
Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content.	Discussion Board	Students will discuss cultural competence while evaluating communication campaigns in a discussion board.

Course Materials



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Public Health Communication: Critical Tools and Strategies First Edition by Claudia Parvanta (Author), David E. Nelson (Author), Richard N. Harner (Author). ISBN: 978-1284065947

Additional required readings will be provided on the learning management system.

Course Assessment/Assignments

Quizzes: Throughout the semester, I will post 5 quizzes to be completed within a week.

Discussion boards: For this class, discussion boards will be used to review the course content.

Midterm & Final Exam: Midterm exam will cover chapters 1-9 and final exam will cover chapters 10-17.

Project 1: Empowering Health Communication: A Social Media Campaign Project

Overview: The "Empowering Health Communication" project aims to equip graduate students with the knowledge and skills necessary to design effective public health communication campaigns using social media platforms. Students will select a public health issue of their choice and develop a comprehensive campaign addressing the issue. Through this project, students will gain practical experience in identifying target audiences, understanding audience perceptions and values, developing strategies based on audience insights, and selecting appropriate channels for dissemination. By engaging in the "Empowering Health Communication" project, graduate students will develop valuable skills in health promotion, audience engagement, and social media marketing while making a meaningful contribution to public health awareness and behavior change efforts.

Extra credit: Throughout the semester, opportunities for extra credit will be given. Be on the lookout for posts on your modules.

Grading Scale

Assignment	% Of Grade
Discussion Boards	10%
Quizzes	10%
Midterm	30%
Final Exam	30%
Project	20%

Class Policies

Late Assignments: All course assignments must be submitted no later than the due date unless prior arrangements are made, and a new due date is established. If a student submits an assignment after the due date without having made arrangements, a minimum of 5 points, (based on an assignment grading scale of 100 points), will be deducted for each week, or part thereof, that the assignment is late. Students with documented evidence of an emergency which prevented prior communication with the mentor may present documentation for consideration.

Attendance: Regular or punctual attendance is expected. If a student misses a class, the student is responsible for obtaining any information distributed during those times. Make-ups are possible only under certain instances. Arrangements for any make-ups should be discussed directly with the instructor for that day's class.



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Participation: Attendance and participation in class is important. Students will be frequently asked to review concepts and online presentations prior to the scheduled class, so that class time can be used for hands-on activities and work on assignments.

Academic Honesty: Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

Cheating: Dishonesty of any kind involving examinations, assignments, alteration of records, wrongful possession of examinations, and unpermitted submission of duplicate papers for multiple classes or unauthorized use of keys to examinations is considered cheating. Cheating includes but is not limited to:

- Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class.
- Falsifying or inventing any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise.
- Helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Materials, even ideas, borrowed from others necessitate full and complete acknowledgment of the original authors. Offering the work of another as one's own is plagiarism and is unacceptable in the academic community. A lack of adequate recognition constitutes plagiarism, whether it utilizes a few sentences, whole paragraphs, articles, books, audio-visual materials, or even the writing of a fellow student. In addition, the presentation of material gathered, assembled or formatted by others as one's own is also plagiarism. Because the university takes such misconduct very seriously, the student is urged to carefully read university policies on Misconduct in Research and Other Scholarly Activity 05.00.

Examples of plagiarism are:

- Submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another.
- Submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source.
- Incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please refer to the [academic catalog](#) for further information and reference.

All final written assignment submissions will be filtered through UniCheck and a final report will be generated in Canvas. Assignments can be checked prior to final submission provided in the "Final Draft Submission" option available before each final submission. Click here for the [UniCheck student guide](#).

Adding/Dropping: The official deadline for adding and dropping courses is published in the academic calendar and Graduate Bulletin. However, students are strongly encouraged to meet with their graduate advisor or the Program Coordinator prior to adding/dropping courses. Movement into and out of classes after the 4th class day requires approval of the Program Director. Students can drop until mid-semester without a WP or WF. Drops after mid-semester require approval of the Dean. Each student is responsible for their own enrollment status with the university.



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Disability Accommodations: UTHSCT abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which mandate reasonable accommodations be provided for students with documented disabilities. If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so that I can provide or facilitate provision of accommodations you may need. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the Student Services Office (located on the UT Tyler Campus). You may call 903-566-7079 for more information.

Technology Support: Information about The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler Help Desk, minimum technology requirements, campus Wi-Fi networks is available on the [Technical Support page](https://www.uthct.edu/technical-support). <https://www.uthct.edu/technical-support>

New Student Orientation: Congratulations on being admitted as a student to The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler (UTHSCT)! We welcome you and want to provide you an orientation to our campus. We provide this [online orientation](#) so that students who are working or are too busy to travel here for an orientation will still be familiar with our campus culture.



CEPH Competencies

Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health

1. Apply epidemiological methods to settings and situations in public health practice.
2. Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context.
3. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming, and software, as appropriate.
4. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy, or practice.

Public Health and Health Care Systems

5. Compare the organization, structure, and function of health care, public health, and regulatory systems across national and international settings.
6. Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities, and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community and systemic levels.

Planning & Management to Promote Health

7. Assess population needs, assets, and capacities that affect communities' health.
8. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design, implementation, or critique of public health policies or programs.
9. Design a population-based policy, program, project, or intervention.
10. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management.
11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs.

Policy in Public Health

12. Discuss the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence.
13. Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes.
14. Advocate for political, social, or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations .
15. Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity

Leadership

16. Apply leadership and/or management principles to address a relevant issue.
17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges.



<i>Communication</i>
<p>18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors.</p> <p>19. Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation.</p> <p>20. Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content.</p>

<i>Interprofessional and/or Intersectoral Practice</i>
<p>21. Integrate perspectives from other sectors and/or professions to promote and advance population health.</p>

<i>Systems Thinking</i>
<p>22. Apply a systems thinking tool to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than standard narrative.</p>

UT Tyler MPH Program Competencies
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize community assessment and analysis tools to address factors that contribute to disparities in rural populations. Develop a risk assessment and management plan relevant to PH programs and services. Develop strategies for obtaining resources for PH programs, projects, and services. Evaluate major environmental laws and their effects on environmental factors in health. Examine occupation as a social determinant of health

Week/Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
Part 1: Health Promotion Program Foundations			
1: 5/15	Introduction to Public Health Communication Population Health: A Primer	Chapters 1 & 2 Additional Readings:	Quiz 1



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2: 5/22	A Public Health Communication Planning Framework	Chapter 3 Additional Readings:	Discussion Board 1
3: 5/29	How to Communicate about Data Understanding and Reporting the Science	Chapter 4 & 5 Additional Readings:	Quiz 2
4: 6/5	Communicating for Policy and Advocacy	Chapter 6 Additional Readings:	Discussion Board 2
5: 6/12	Health Literacy and Clear Health Communication	Chapters 7 Additional Readings:	Quiz 3
6: 6/19	Behavior Change Communication: Theories, Models, and Practice Strategies Formative Research	Chapter 8 & 9 Additional Readings:	Discussion board 3
7: 6/26-6/30	Midterm Exam		
8: 7/3	Media Vehicles, Platforms, and Channels	Chapter 10 Additional Readings:	Quiz 4
9: 7/10	Implementing a Communication Intervention	Chapters 11 Additional Readings:	Discussion board 4
10: 7/17	Evaluating a Health Communication Program	Chapter 12 Additional Readings:	Quiz 5
11: 7/24	Clinician-Patient Communication The Role of Communication in Cancer Prevention and Care	Chapter 13 & 14 Additional Readings:	Discussion board 5



12: 7/31	Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication Health Communication in Resource-Poor Counties	Chapters 15 & 16 Additional Readings:	Project Due
13: 8/7-8/11	Final Exam		
14: 8/13	Grades are Due		