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**CMST 4112 Health Communication**

Communication Studies 4112

TTh 10:30-11:50

237 Coates Hall

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Instructor: Dr. Loretta L. Pecchioni

Office: 136B Coates Hall

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 9:30 – 10:00 a.m., 12:00 – 12:30 p.m., and by appointment

Phone: 578-6724 or call the department office 578-4172

E-mail: lpecch1@lsu.edu

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Required Text: du Pre, A. (2016). *Communicating about health: Current issues and perspectives, 5th edition.* New York: Oxford University Press.

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**Course Objectives**

Think of this course as a capstone experience in which you have the opportunity to combine your skills, knowledge, and experience regarding communication to an applied setting that cuts across the range of communicative situations. Drawing on those abilities, this class provides you with a foundation of health-related terms and concepts in order to apply effective communication skills and to critique various aspects of communication practices in formal and informal health care settings.

The course objectives are to provide students with an:

1. overview of current research and issues related to communication in health care contexts

2. opportunity to apply their communicative knowledge to pragmatic problems in the health care industry, ranging from intra- and interpersonal to mass mediated situations

3. opportunity to examine their own role in health care encounters

4. opportunity to enhance group collaboration skills

5. opportunity to enhance critical thinking skills

**Course Grading**

Students will be evaluated on both individual and group performance in the class; including exams, reflection papers, individual exercises, and group exercises. Details for each of these areas are provided after the schedule of classes. Grades will be based on the University’s plus/minus system with a possible total of 500 points. Track your points on Moodle so that you know where you stand in earning the points needed to gain the grade you desire.

Grade minimum points needed Grade minimum points needed

A+ 485 C+ 385

A 465 C 365

A- 450 C- 350

B+ 435 D+ 335

B 415 D 315

B- 400 D- 300

*Exams (2 at 75 points each) 150 total points*

*“Rolling” Final 125 points*

*Reflection Papers (10 at 10 points each) 100 total*

*Individual Exercises (5 at 10 points each) 50 points*

*Group Presentation 50 points*

*BA Program Assessment 25 points*

***Total 500 points***

**Course Schedule**

**Date Topic/Assignment**

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January 11 introduction, review syllabus, general housekeeping

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January 16 Course overview and structure, arc of the semester

January 18 Chapter 1: Introduction

*Health in the news exercise preparation -- look for news articles/stories and submit link by 5:00 p.m. next Wednesday*

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January 23 Chapter 2: The Landscape for Health Communication

January 25 health in the news – discussion of items sent by class members

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January 30 Chapter 7: Cultural Conceptions of Health and Illness

February 1 Chapter 11: Health Images in the Media

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February 6 *Health images exercise*

February 8 Guest Lecturer: Chris Vincent

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February 13 Mardi Gras break – no class

February 15 *Health in popular culture exercise*

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February 20 Chapter 6: Diversity and Health Care and

Culture and Health Communication summary and synthesis

February 22 **Exam 1 – chapters 1, 2, 7, 11, and 6**

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February 27 Overview of Caregiving Issues and

Chapter 3: Patient-Caregiver Communication

*“rolling” final question 1 response due*

March 1 Chapter 5: Caregiver Perspectives

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March 6 Chapter 4: Patient Perspectives

March 8 Guest Lecturer: Patrick McElearney

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March 13 Chapter 8: Social Support, Family Caregiving, and End of Life

March 15 Chapter 8: Social Support, Family Caregiving, and End of Life (continued)

*“rolling” final question 2 response due*

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March 20 *family caregiving case study*

March 22 Chapter 9: eHealth, mHealth, and Telemedicine

Organizing and group work day for eHealth exercise

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March 27 Spring Break – no class

March 29Spring Break – no class

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April 3 group work day for eHealth exercise

*“rolling” final question 3 response due*

April 5 *eHealth presentations*

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April 10 *eHealth presentations*

April 12 **Exam 2 – chapters 3, 4, 5, 8, and 9**

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April 17 Health Care Organizations, Public Health and Careers in the Health Field

Chapter 10: Health Care Administration, Human Resources, Marketing, and PR

April 19 Chapter 12: Public Health and Crisis Communication

ca*reer exercise due*

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April 24 Graduate student presentations

April 26 summarize semester and review for final

*Last day to turn in program assessment paper*

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May 4 **Final**

Friday 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

**Course Assignments**

***Exams****. Purpose.* The exams will test the knowledge you have gained in each section of the course and will help you to stay current with the assigned readings and topics discussed in class. *Format.* The two exams will consist of multiple choice questions and short answer questions. The multiple choice questions (worth 2 points each) will cover basic concepts in the text. The short answer questions (worth 5 points each) will primarily be drawn from the questions at the end of each chapter. Because of the number of potential concepts and questions in each chapter as well as additional material covered in class, the study guide posted on Moodle will help you focus on the issues I find most important. Coverage for each exam is noted in the class schedule.

***Final.*** *Purpose.* The comprehensive final is designed to allow you to demonstrate your ability to analyze and synthesize communicative processes in relation to the course material. *Format.* The comprehensive final is all essay questions. Because students often find it challenging to know what criteria I apply for evaluating these types of responses, we will have a “rolling” portion to the final. That is, 3 questions that will count as part of the final will be due at intermittent points during the semester (see the course schedule). Essentially, this portion of the final is take home. I will post the question on Moodle 1 week before it is due. After submission, I will provide you with a grade and feedback so that you will be able to better hone your responses across the course of the semester. The standard portion of the final will occur during our regularly scheduled final exam time. I will provide you with a set of potential questions the week before the final so that you have time to consider strategies for responding to these questions. All of these questions will focus on analysis, that is, application of the knowledge and/or critique of the choices made in the identified examples.

***Reflection papers****. Purpose.* Health communication is inherently an applied area of study – we all are healthy and ill at various points in our lives and the health of our loved ones often impacts us in various ways. The reflection papers will offer you an opportunity to think about your own roles, experiences, attitudes, beliefs, etc. *Format.* Each Tuesday I will post one or two prompts on Moodle. You may select which one(s) you answer. Your response is due (either electronically or in hard copy) the next Tuesday before midnight. Each response should be 1-2 pages, typed, double-spaced. A total of 10 reflection papers will count toward your grade, so you may choose to skip several, to answer them early in the semester, or whatever strategy you choose. Feel free to answer more than 10 as the highest grades will be used in calculating your final course grade.

***Individual exercises.*** *Purpose.* The individual assignments will provide you with the opportunity to explore a range of communicative situations with regards to health and communication. *Format.* Different exercises will take different formats, with some requiring time outside of class and others being conducted during the identified class period. The in-class exercises listed below are indicated on the course schedule. Additional in-class opportunities may arise. My goal is to have at least seven opportunities for you to submit at least five exercises with the five best grades being used to calculate your overall course grade. Therefore, if you must miss class for one of the in-class exercises, you will have an opportunity to fill that gap with an additional exercise.

* ***Health in the News submission.*** *Purpose.* This exercise asks you to find an article or video about health in the news so that you begin to “see” how common this topic is across a wide range of media formats. We will view and discuss several of these submissions in class to see what is “out there” and what topics the class members found intriguing. *Format.* You will electronically submit the link to a relevant article or video. Grading will reflect whether you made the submission on time.
* ***Health Images.*** *Purpose.* This exercise is designed to help us to begin to see how popular culture reflects and shapes attitudes toward health and illness. *Format.* Each of you will identify a number of such images (i.e., advertisements or articles in various formats) and bring them to class so that you will be able to discuss them in small groups. This exercise will focus on still images or short articles. The groups will report to the whole class their responses. Grading will reflect your participation in group during the discussion period.
* ***Health in Popular Culture.*** *Purpose.* This exercise is designed to continue our examination of how popular culture reflects and shapes attitudes toward health and illness. *Format.* Each of you will identify a television show or movie that addresses a health-related situation. You will email your submission to me before class and I will compile our list so that you will be able to discuss them in small groups. The groups will report to the whole class their responses. Grading will reflect your participation in group during the discussion period.
* ***Family Caregiving Case Study.*** *Purpose.* This case study exercise provides you with an opportunity to explore various interpersonal communication theories and apply them to an on-going family care situation. *Format.* The case study will be posted on Moodle for review before our class meeting. In class, you will divide into small groups and examine a section of the case study in depth. Each group will report to the class as a whole how the lessons learned in this particular situation might be useful in other health-related situations. Grading will reflect your participation in group during the discussion period.
* ***Careers.*** *Purpose.* Students graduating with degrees in communication do not always understand their potential career options. The health field is one with growing job opportunities. This exercise will provide you with the chance to consider potential careers, or to eliminate some options. *Format.* Throughout the textbook, you will notice information about potential careers in the health care field. You will write a short paper identifying at least two careers you find intriguing and identify your knowledge, skills and abilities that seem relevant to each one. You may want to do a little research before deciding on which careers you want to include in your paper. Grading will reflect your engagement with the topic.
* ***Guest Lecturers.*** *Purpose.* Because health communication is such a broad topic, no one textbook is able to cover all the possible avenues. To help expose you to some of that variety, we will have guests visit class. *Format.* The day our guest visits, a sign-in sheet will be passed around. Your attendance and attention is all that is required for this activity.

***Group presentation.*** *Purpose.* This group presentation will give you the opportunity to “unpack” health messages and evaluate the credibility of different sources of health-related information. *Format.* You will select groups based on shared interests in the topic. The group will collect and evaluate information, then present to the class their findings. Grading will reflect your participation in the group (based on peer evaluations) and on your presentation to the class (based on audience evaluations).

* ***eHealth and Health Literacy.*** Many students report to me that because they are taking this class, they are asked by family members to help them search for information related to symptoms being experienced, a diagnosis that has been received, treatment options, etc. As a class we will select 5 or 6 topics and divide into groups – one for each topic. The group will search for information related to the topic and report to the class the range of sources, evaluations of source credibility, and concerns about access, readability, value of information, etc. Once the group has explored the topic, they will present their findings to the class. Each group will have 15-20 minutes for their presentation.

***BA Program Assessment.*** *Purpose.* The University and our accrediting organization require us to assess the effectiveness of our program. The Communication Studies Department has agreed to use a standard instrument to collect materials for that assessment. *Format.* The questions you need to answer are posted on Moodle. You should think about your answers and edit them before you submit them. You may focus on what you have learned in this course or pull together your learning across several courses. You may use the same responses in this course that you wrote for another course.

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**Deadlines**

If you know that you will be absent on the day that an assignment is due, you may hand the assignment in early or send it electronically by the deadline. If you fail to turn in an assignment on time because of an emergency, you will need to provide proof of that emergency in order to have the assignment accepted. Assignments handed in late will be penalized 10% for each late class period, except in documented cases of emergency. Late assignments will not be accepted more than 2 weeks after the initial deadline.

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**Reasonable Accommodation**

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: If you have a disability that impacts your work in this class and for which you may require accommodation, please see a Coordinator in the Office for Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall). After you receive your accommodations letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations as soon as possible.