
COMMUNICATION IN HEALTH CARE CONTEXTS

Communication Studies 7914

Monday 3:30-6:20

153 Coates Hall

Instructor: Dr. Loretta L. Pecchioni
Office: 136B Coates Hall
Office Hours: by appointment
I will be on campus most Mondays by 3:00 and most Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from about 10:00 to 1:00 – just check with me to make sure I will be in my office (meetings, meetings, meetings)
Phone: 578-6724 or call the department office at 578-2172
E-mail: lpecch1@lsu.edu

Selected readings will be posted on Moodle – see course schedule for topics

Course Objectives

1. To expose students to theory and research regarding communication in health care contexts.
 2. To enhance students' ability to critically analyze bodies of research, especially in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of lines of research.
 3. To provide students with the opportunity to develop a project addressing health communication through a research project, a teaching project, or an organizational problem-solving project.
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Course Grading

Course grades will be based on individual contracts to be negotiated and finalized by the third week of class. Items to be included in assessment may include: performance during class discussions, leading a class session on your project, your oral and written reports on your project, a final exam, or other assessment methods of your choosing. The details should be laid out in your learning contract.

Course Assignments

Class Participation

One of the great joys of a good graduate seminar is learning from your colleagues, therefore, each class member is expected to contribute to scholarly discussions about the content area(s) assigned for each week. As you are reading the assigned materials, you should identify questions or issues that will help to generate discussion that assist each class member in developing an understanding of the content area as well as larger issues regarding research and theory in the field of communication. Please feel free to ask questions for clarification. Asking for clarification points out areas where we might not have shared meaning and can be very fruitful areas of discussion. Contribution to these discussions will not be graded solely on the number of times an individual speaks, but on the quality of their comments and the value such comments provide to further the discussion.

As graduate students, you are expected to attend each and every class meeting. Missing class will adversely affect your class discussion grade. If you know that you will be missing class because of a conference, interview, or other scheduled reason, just let me know. If an emergency should arise that precludes you from attending class, try to let me know. I do not need the details, just the notification. I understand that when emergencies arise it may be difficult to notify me before class.

Class Project

Each student is expected to conduct a project related to the content area of the class that also resonates with your career goals. Depending on the nature of your chosen project, the product will vary. If you intend to be a scholar studying health communication in some context, you may choose to conduct a standard research project. If you intend to be a scholar studying other aspects of communication, but anticipate you will likely be teaching a health communication class for undergraduates or want to weave health communication elements into another content area, you may choose to conduct research on a topic and develop a course assignment based on that research. If you intend to be a professional who is not an academic, you may choose to conduct research on a topic relevant to communication in the workplace and develop a training or intervention based on that research.

Standard research project. The goal is to have a convention-quality paper (about 25 pages) ready by the end of the semester. This project *must* be related to health communication in some meaningful way, and, therefore, must be approved by me. Feel free to talk with me about your project at any time (well, not in the middle of the night!).

For an individual project, each student will be responsible for developing a proposal for approval; conducting a literature review; collecting and analyzing data (using all those

terms broadly); and, writing up a final, convention-quality (not defined broadly!) paper. Groups of students may decide to work together on the research project. For group projects, the group may decide to divide the work up among its members in any manner found appropriate by the group members, but a synopsis of the division of labor should be provided to me. The proposal should be 3-5 pages outlining the questions that will be addressed and how you will go about answering those questions (methodology) as well as identifying relevant literature. I recommend that you include a proposed project timeline as well to help you stay on track to meet course deadlines.

Pedagogy project. The goal is to have teaching materials related to a lecture on the chosen topic and a class assignment to help students apply the concept/theory. You may also want to develop a few exam questions that cover your chosen content. This project *must* be related to health communication in some meaningful way, and, therefore, must be approved by me. Feel free to talk with me about your project at any time (well, not in the middle of the night!).

For the pedagogy project, each student will be responsible for developing a proposal for approval; conducting a literature review; developing a class activity; and, writing up a final paper explaining the activity. The proposal should be 3-5 pages outlining the questions that will be addressed and how you will go about answering those questions (methodology) as well as identifying relevant literature. We will talk in class about what I think that might look like for this kind of project. I recommend that you include a proposed project timeline as well to help you stay on track to meet course deadlines.

Workplace project. The goal is to have materials for a workshop or training intervention on the chosen topic, including reading materials and related activities. This project *must* be related to communication in a health care context in some meaningful way, and, therefore, must be approved by me. Feel free to talk with me about your project at any time (well, not in the middle of the night!).

For the workplace project, each student will be responsible for developing a proposal for approval; conducting a literature review; developing an appropriate activity; and, writing up a final paper explaining the activity. The proposal should be 3-5 pages outlining the questions that will be addressed and how you will go about answering those questions (methodology) as well as identifying relevant literature. We will talk in class about what I think that might look like for this kind of project. I recommend that you include a proposed project timeline as well to help you stay on track to meet course deadlines.

Class Leadership on Topic

In addition to completing your project, you will be sharing key readings that inform that project. Each of you will have about one hour in class to talk about your project and the supporting literature. For your class period, you will want to identify those key articles and get me a copy at least a week before your assigned day so that I can post files for everyone to read before you present in class. Your job is to not only talk about these

specific readings, but also to provide the larger context and issues being addressed in your project. The rest of the class should read the articles and come prepared to talk about the issues raised and identify connections to the broader context of health communication.

Project Presentation

Each individual or group will report on the findings of their project at the end of the semester. We will figure out how much time we are able to devote to each presentation. For example, if you conduct a standard research project, you might give a 10-12 minute conference-style presentation with time for questions and answers. If you develop a classroom or workplace project, you may give a 10-12 minute lecture and then we spend 20 minutes engaging in an activity that is then processed.

Final Exam (if you chose to take one)

The final exam will consist of a variety of essay questions testing your knowledge on several levels. Questions will be designed to tap into basic knowledge about the content area as well as your ability to analyze and synthesize various aspects of research and application of findings within the area. Questions will draw on the assigned readings, the class discussions, and the projects conducted for the class. I will post the final questions on-line at least two weeks before your responses are due if you select a take-home option. Turn in your responses any time before the final deadline noted in the course schedule. I prefer that you submit them electronically so that I may provide more thorough feedback. If you choose an in-house, timed (comprehensive exam-like exam) version, we will determine a time for that exam that works for everyone taking that version.

Reasonable Accommodation

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities.
