

SYLLABUS: INTERPERSONAL ISSUES IN HEALTH COMMUNICATION

Professor: Deborah Socha McGee, Ph.D.

Office Hours: Mon 1-2

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Note: In addition to being a Visiting Associate Professor in the Department of Communication, I also am Director of the Speaking Lab. As a result, I have two offices, the one above and one in the Center for Student Learning in Addlestone Library. The office hours above are times I am in my Dept. of Comm. office. However, you may feel free to visit me in the Speaking Lab. As soon as the lab schedule is determined, I will make it available to you.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Most readings for the course will be available through WebCT. A few readings will require you to search for them via an online database.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Each of us engages in a variety of interpersonal health communication daily. One type of interpersonal health communication involves our discussions with various health care providers, such as physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, dentists, chiropractors, massage therapists, sports trainers, etc. Our culture provides very few roles models for interacting with health professionals; we rarely see people being patients. We will explore provider-patient communication in some detail as we explore how that communication influences health outcomes and patient satisfaction. Even if we don't visit a health professional, we talk to people about different symptoms we may be experiencing, diet, exercise, remedies we have tried, people we know who have or have had various illnesses, etc. The latter topics are types of social support that often have a strong influence on how we "construct" health and illness, hence how we manage our health decisions.

Conscientious study during this semester will provide you with a better understanding of how the following may influence health, decisions about health, and health care delivery:

1. the medical model(s) being used by the participants;
2. the historical evolution of health care philosophies and practices;
3. interpersonal communication between and among patients, professional and familial caregivers, peers, family, and friends;
4. a person's cultural position (e.g., ethnicity, class, education, etc.); and
5. the availability and nature of a person's support system, including computer-mediated support systems.

In addition, after this class you should be able to DO the following:

1. explain a philosophy of health care that is different from your own;
2. use interviews to explain and map a person's social support network;
3. use at least two health communication theories to analyze a medical case study;
4. explain informed consent; and
5. write an advance directive for care.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Midterm	200	910-1000 = A
Final	200	890-909 = B+
Intercultural Health Care Interview	100	800-889 = B
Social Support Journal/Analysis	300	785-799 = C+
Or Case Study		700-784 = C
Contributions to Learning Community	200	600-699 = D
	<hr/> 1000	below 600 = F

***Failure to follow instructions on any assignment
will result in a minimum 10% grade reduction per infraction on that assignment.***

Exams. Your knowledge of vocabulary and understanding of course concepts, as well as your ability to apply course concepts, will be assessed through a midterm and a final exam. The exam will consist of multiple choice, matching, listing, and/or short-answer questions. Exams will cover material only in readings or only in lecture, as well as material appearing in both. If you have questions or are confused about some aspect of the assigned readings, it is your responsibility to raise those concerns in class!

Intercultural Interview. Your ability to understand and explain a health philosophy/model that is different from your own will be assessed through your written report of an interview that you will conduct with someone who identifies themselves as having a health philosophy/model that is different from your own. Specific guidance will be given in class.

You will choose one of the following for your course project:

1. **Social Support Journal and Analysis.** Over the course of the term, each of you should keep a journal of interactions you have that concern health topics. Your goal is to identify and map your social support network.
2. **Case Study.** Each student will write a 6-8 page paper that analyzes a medical case study. Students will be expected to use at least two course theories and three additional academic journal articles published since 2000 in analyzing the case study. The case studies will be presented as we cover specific topics.

Contributions to the Learning Community. This course is designed as a seminar course, which means that much of our learning will occur through course discussion and exercises. Students will be expected to attend class **and** participate in class discussion and activities. Participation in some activities will require out-of-class preparation. You are expected to come to class having read the readings and prepared for any discussion. If discussion is weak due to a lack of attention to the readings, I reserve the right to administer unannounced quizzes as part of this grade.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

1. **Attendance.** Attendance is required and will be taken daily. If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to let me know that you are present. Two late arrivals (after class has begun) will be counted as an absence. You will have two “free” absence on non-presentation days. If you are absent for any reason after the first two, twenty (20) points will be deducted from your final grade for each additional absence. I recognize no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. However, if you have a documented extended health or family emergency, I will consider your case on its merits. You know when our class meets; therefore, you should not schedule airplane flights, routine medical appointments, etc., during class time. Please consult with me if you are member of a university organization that requires more than three class days of travel. Attendance is **REQUIRED** on every presentation day. For each presentation day you are absent your final grade will be lowered 50 points.

2. **Late Work.** All assignments are due at the **beginning** of class and you must submit work in person. If you are tardy for class on a due date, your work will be penalized. Late work will be accepted; however, regardless of the reason for the delay, late work will be penalized 5% for every 24 hours, or portion thereof, that it is late. If your absence is foreseeable, you should submit work early. Daily work will not be made up.

3. **Academic Integrity.** All speeches and written work in this course should be the individual work of the student who submits it, unless I have indicated otherwise. Close adherence to the content or arrangement of someone else’s work must be accompanied by a clear acknowledgment of the source. Severe disciplinary action will be taken against any student found to have cheated and/or committed plagiarism. Penalties will range from a zero on the assignment/exam to course failure and notification of administrative authorities.

4. **Special Accommodations.** If, due to some disabling condition, you require special arrangements in order to meet some course requirements, please let me know by January 14 so that we can make any adjustments that may be necessary. Verification of your condition will be required.

5. Classroom Courtesy. During classroom discussion, all persons are welcome to express relevant opinions and ideas. If you disagree with an opinion or idea, you may express that. However, I will ask that you focus your comments on the opinion or idea, not on the individual holding the opinion or idea. Behavior that attempts to silence another will not be tolerated and will reduce your learning environment grade.

6. Cell Phones, Beepers, etc. To avoid class disruption, you should put your cell phone, and all other “noisemakers,” in the “off” position prior to the start of class. Unless arranged with me in advance, you should NEVER answer your cell phone in class. Failure to follow this policy will result in a reduction of your Learning Community grade. All technological devices should be off and stowed during exams.

A Daily Schedule of readings and due dates will be posted early next week.

Please note that the final exam is Saturday, April 29. You should not plan to leave campus prior to this exam! I will not allow an early exam unless the reason is cleared through the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. This is a C of C policy!

Topic Calendar

Feb. 7	Social Support Theory Read: Burleson & MacGeorge: Supportive Comm
Feb 9	Social Support Theory, contd.
Feb. 14	Social Support and Risk-taking Read: Condoms Drinking
Feb. 16	Uncertainty Management Read: Social Sppt and HIV
Feb. 21	Support Groups Read: Cancer
Feb 23-Mar. 2	Social Support Presentations Social Support Projects due by beginning of class, March 2!!! Midterm Review
Mar. 5-12	Spring Break—Have fun, be healthy!
Mar. 14	Midterm Review Informed Consent
Mar. 16	Midterm Exam
Mar. 21	Advance Directives for Care
Mar. 23	Provider-Patient Communication overview
Mar. 28	Intercultural Issues in Provider-Patient Comm
Mar. 30	The Medical Interview
Apr. 4	Therapeutic communication
Apr. 6	“The Doctor”

Apr. 11	Humor and Medicine
Apr. 13	Patient Adherence
Apr. 18	Patient Participation
Apr. 20	Catch up and review for final