



CTSC 5880

Health Communication Theory and Innovation

Faculty: Amenah A. Agunwamba, PhD

Credit: 1

Quarters: Spring

Prerequisites: None

Overview

The development of new channels and mediums for the delivery of health information has significantly changed the information environment. Advances in technology provide innovative ways for patients and communities to consume, exchange, and interact with health information from sources all over the world. With these developments, come challenges and opportunities for health care professionals to serve as leading information sources to promote health. This course is designed to give an overview of critical health communication topics and to provide key principals in effective communicating whether during clinical encounters or on national television.

The course will cover health communication functions, mechanisms, and methods to impact behavior change throughout populations, including patient-physician communication, mass media communication, health education and health literacy, and finally, technology and *e*Medicine. There will be a strong emphasis on the importance of theory and methods in developing health messages. The primary theories and methods used in this course will draw upon social epidemiological and population health approaches.

In the second part of this course, we will aim to apply communication strategies using research methods and messaging theory, and cover health journalism and media. In this section, students will post Opinion Editorials on a current health topic on the course blog. Additionally, students will produce a short video PSA on an important public health issue (such as educating communities on Ebola). These activities intend to give students the opportunity to apply effective communication strategies through written and oral platforms. Finally, students will develop a short proposal for a research based health communication intervention aimed at behavior change for a particular population (eg: *e*Health intervention, weight loss app, health website). Throughout the course, we will be reviewing the latest developments in health communication and discussing current events relevant to health communication.

Objectives

- Provide students with an overview of health communication topics
- Provide students with research methods related to health communication
- Implement communication and research skills

For specific dates and times this course is provided, please see the [quarterly detailed course schedule](#).

Evaluation

This course will evaluate students on class participation and three assignments. First, students will lead or co-lead a discussion based on a selected reading and submit their response to the reading. Second, students post an opinion editorial on the course blog and choose two editorials to comment on. Third, students will develop a proposal for a theory informed health communication intervention.

Students will be expected to spend approximately two to four hours per week on content from this 1-credit course.

Additional online modules related to this topic are available through the [Continuous Professional Development website](#).

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