

Course Title: Health Communications/Risk Communication

Course Number: HEBS 0678J

Course Location: *School of Public Health, 683 Hoes Lane West, Piscataway, NJ*

Course Date & Time: *Tuesday 6:00 – 8:00 pm*

Course Instructor: ***M. Jane Lewis, DrPH., Associate Professor***
SPH Building, Room 309
lewismj@sph.rutgers.edu (***Preferred and best way to contact***)
Phone: (732) 235-4915 Fax: (732) 235-4004

Office Hours: *By Appointment Only*

Course Assistant: **Jennah Sontag, Ph.D., Postdoctoral Fellow**
js2486@sph.rutgers.edu

Office Hours: *By Appointment Only*

Mary Ganss, HEBS Admin Assistant –
ganssme@sph.rutgers.edu

Required Course Text: Nelson DE, Hesse BW and Croyle RT. (2009) Making Data Talk: Communicating Public Health Data to the Public, Policy Makers, and the Press. Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press.

Other readings as assigned (to be found on moodle).

Assigned readings are listed in the course schedule and should be done prior to the lecture; this section lists major resources

Course Description: The purpose of this class is to familiarize students with health communication and special issues relating to the communication of health risk information.

Selected Concentration Competencies Addressed: Each Concentration identifies competencies for each degree offered. This course will reinforce the following competencies for the MPH for the Department of Social and Behavioral Health Sciences:

- Assess and delineate health education and promotion needs of diverse populations using a variety of techniques;
- Design, implement, conduct and evaluate programs in diverse settings based upon social, psychological, and educational theories utilized in health education and promotion programming;
- Develop and critique health education materials, methods and programs;
- Conduct behavioral science research

- Please visit the Concentration webpages on the School of Public Health's website at sph.rutgers.edu for additional competencies addressed by this course for other degrees and departments.

Course Objectives: By the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Define and discuss issues related to health communication;
- Describe how the media communicates risk-related information;
- Recognize and discuss media triggers and factors influencing media coverage;
- Discuss the needs and biases of journalists and how to interact effectively with them
- Discuss the principles of risk perception and perceptual biases and how they influence understanding of health and health behavior;
- Discuss the principles of risk communication and factors to consider when communicating health risk;
- Discuss issues related to communicating data and other findings of health and science research to the public
- Discuss social media options and their application to communicating health related information.
- Describe content analysis methodology and conduct a content analysis of media messages of their choice
- Discuss media advocacy
- Discuss the health content and possible effects on health of entertainment television
- Discuss advertising practices and the influence of advertising

Course Requirements and Grading:

Expectations

- Reading assignments should be completed prior to class meetings
- Regular attendance is encouraged and attendance will be considered when assigning the class participation grade.
- This course will adhere to all policies and procedures delineated in Rutgers-School of Public Health Student Handbook. "Failure to read the Student Handbook does not excuse a student from the requirements and regulations as described herein."

Lateness: All work is due on the date assigned, and assignments turned in after the due dates are considered late. Unless we have come to an arrangement at least one week before the assigned due date (or later, if it's a bona fide crisis), your grade will be lowered for each day written work is late.

Writing: Written communication is an important tool of health education and behavioral science. Proofread your written assignments for typos and spelling and grammatical errors and correct these. Students who do not do so will see this reflected in their grades.

References: References should be in APA style. See <http://www.apastyle.org>

Topics, goals and objectives: Choice of health issues for projects must be in line with *Healthy People 2020*.

Moodle: The syllabus, details of assignments, class readings not from assigned books or available on the internet will be on Moodle for download unless otherwise distributed. Students are responsible for checking the site for details on assignments and downloading readings. In general, assignments should be submitted via PDF to Moodle by the date and time noted on the syllabus. In the case of group projects, only one team member needs to submit the report on Moodle, but be sure to include the names of all team members in the document so that everyone on the team is given credit.

Required at-home SPH's new 2-hour class system involves 2 hours of in person classtime each session and at least 30 minutes of at-home work through Moodle.

Participation in in-person class and Moodle discussions and completion of assignments detailed below as required.

Class participation: Class participation will be based on attendance and participation during classes (to include examples and discussion of health news) and evidence of participation in each class' Moodle at-home section, to include commenting on others' work and participating in online discussions, as assigned.

Health News: Throughout the semester, the class will examine health-related information to which people are exposed through the media, including news and entertainment as well as advertising. Students will be assigned a specific week for which they are to bring examples and begin the discussion of these. When it is not your week, you are expected to contribute to the discussions (to be reflected in class participation grades).

Reading Commentaries: In order to demonstrate familiarity with the material and help guide the discussion, each student will submit double-spaced written commentary on readings in PDF form via Moodle no later than noon on the day of class. Readings for which commentaries are required will be noted on the syllabus. Unless noted, commentaries should cover all assigned readings for that week. *Commentaries should provide your observations and reflections on the readings rather than summarize them. Describe points that you found interesting, surprising, or perplexing in the readings and why.* Give an example of how these would apply to understanding of public health communications and/or public health issues. I need to see that you understand the concepts, so do not use examples from the readings or summarize them. These papers are informal and you do not need to formally cite work, instead if you refer to another reading, name the author.

Commentaries are due in PDF form by noon on the day of class.

Midterm exam: There will be an in-class midterm examination covering all of the material covered up to that point.

Review of Content Analysis Published Research (group assignment): In order to provide the class with multiple examples of content analysis studies to inform your final project, groups

will be assigned one content analysis research article that they will be responsible for describing to the class in a 10 minute PowerPoint presentation. The presentation should summarize and comment on the methodology and findings of the study, based on points from the Babbe reading and specific requirements listed below. Topics to be covered include: the subject of the article's research and what was analyzed (e.g., newspaper clippings on a particular topic, pharmaceutical advertising in particular magazines), the unit of analysis (e.g., whole magazines, individual ads), whether sampling was used and how the sample was selected, how data were collected, examples of codes utilized (and whether both manifest and latent content was coded), results, any other interesting points.

Final Project: Content Analysis Project - detailed assignment to be distributed

Assignments and Points

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Reading commentaries	20
Midterm	40
Content analysis Article Pres.	5
Content Analysis Project	25
Class participation	10

Class Sessions

Jan 16 Introductions, Course Overview

For next week: Drs Lewis and Sontag bring examples of health–related news/entertainment for discussion.

Jan 23 Introduction to Health Comm and Content Analysis

Drs Lewis and Sontag show health-related news/entertainment for discussion

- Nelson, et al, Making Data Talk. Chapters 1 and 2.
- Babbe E. The Basics of Social Research, 3rd. edition. (2005). Belmont Ca. Thomason Wadsworth., pp 328-339.

Jan 30 More Health Communication

Readings due:

- Finnegan JR and Viswanath K. Communication Theory and Health Behavior Change, pp 361-388 in Glanz, et al, Health Behavior and Health Education: Theory, Research and Practice.

Assignment: Reading commentary 1 - Prepare a **reading commentary** on the health communication readings (including Nelson, chapter 2 and today's assigned readings) today's readings due next week.

Feb 6 Health in the News

Group 1 presents health-related news or media examples

Readings due:

- Frost K, Frank E and Maibach E. Relative risk in the news media: A quantification of misrepresentation. 1997) American Journal of Public Health 87(5):842-845.
- Moyer A, Greener S, Beauvais J and Salovey P. Accuracy of health research reported in the popular press: Breast cancer and mammography. Health Communication 7(2): 147-161, 1995
- Overdosing on Health Risks. (1997, May 4). The New York Times/Magazine, p 44-46

For next week: Group 2 presents health-related news or media examples.

Assignment due: Reading commentary 1 (email PDF to Dr. Lewis by noon)

Feb 13 Communicating Public Health Data and Risk/Perceptual Biases

Group 2 presents health-related news or media examples.

Readings due:

- Nelson, et.al Making Data Talk. Chapters 3 Overcoming General Audience Tendencies and Biases to Enhance Lay Understanding of Data, pp 73-110.
- Jeffrey RW. Risk Behaviors and Health: Contrasting Individual and Population Perspectives.(1989) American Psychologist 44(9):1194-1196
- Weinstein ND. What does it mean to understand a risk: Evaluating Risk Comprehension (1999). Journal of the National Cancer Institute Monograph

Assignment due: Reading commentary 2 (email PDF to Dr. Lewis by noon)

For Feb 27: Group 3 presents health-related news or media examples

Feb 20 Crisis Communication - On Your Own

Readings due:

- <http://www.nwcp.org/training/opportunities/online-courses/emergency-risk-communication-for-public-health-professionals>
- Nelson, et. al., Making Data Talk Chap 6 Communicating Data in Acute Public Health Situations. pp 218 – 254.

Feb 27 Risk Communication

Readings due:

- Sandman P. The Language of Risk, pp. 11-26 in West BM, Lewis MJ, Greenberg MR, Sachsman DB and Rogers RM. The Reporter's Environmental Handbook, 3rd Edition. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003
- Tbd

Assignment due: Reading Commentary 3 on Crisis Communication training and readings (PDF due to Moodle at noon)

March 6 Communicating Public Health Data

Group 3 presents health-related news or media examples

Readings due:

- Nelson, et.al. Making Data Talk. Chapter 4 Presenting Data, pp. 120-159
- Assignment due:* Reading Commentary 3 (email PDF to Dr. Lewis by noon)

Assignment Distributed: Journal articles concerning content analysis and detailed assignment outlining information required for reports by each group of journal article methods and results (March 20).

March 13 Spring Break

March 20 Content Analysis, TBD

Reading due:

- REVIEW: Babbe E. The Basics of Social Research, 3rd. edition. (2005). Belmont Ca. Thomason Wadsworth., pp 328-339.
- *Assignment Due:* Groups present details of their reviews of assigned content analysis articles

March 27 MIDTERM EXAM

April 3 Advertising

Reading due: Kilbourne, J. Deadly Persuasion. 33- 75, 108 – 127

Content Analysis – coding guides reviewed

April 10 Health Communication Practice
Guest Speaker: Suzanne Miro, MPH, MCHES,
Health Communication Specialist
NJ Department of Health

April 17 Social Media, TBD

Guest Speaker: Leslie M. Kantor, PhD, MPH
Vice President, Education, Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Readings due:

- Jones K, Eathington P, Baldwin K and Sipsma H. The impact of health education transmitted via social media or text messaging on adolescent and young adult risky sexual behavior: A systematic review of the literature. Sex Transm Dis 2014 July; 41(7)413-9.
- The Health Communicator's Social Media Toolkit CDC health marketing http://www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/Tools/guidelines/pdf/SocialMediaToolkit_BM.pdf

April 24 Content Analysis Project Class Presentations

May 1 TBD

Learning Management System: Moodle will be used extensively throughout the semester for course syllabus, assignments, announcements, communication and/or other course-related activities. It is the student's responsibility to familiarize themselves with Moodle and check it regularly. If you have difficulties accessing Moodle, please inform the instructor and Moodle Support (moodlehelp@ca.rutgers.edu). Moodle is accessible at moodle.rutgers.edu.

School of Public Health Honor Code: The School of Public Health Honor Code is found in the student bulletin (sph.rutgers.edu/academics/catalog/index.html). Each student bears a fundamental responsibility for maintaining academic integrity and intellectual honesty in his or her graduate work. For example, all students are expected to observe the generally accepted principles of scholarly work, to submit their own rather than another's work, to refrain from falsifying data, and to refrain from receiving and/or giving aid on examinations or other assigned work requiring independent effort. In submitting written material, the writer takes full responsibility for the work as a whole and implies that, except as properly noted by use of quotation marks, footnotes, etc., both the ideas and the works used are his or her own. In addition to maintaining personal academic integrity, each student is expected to contribute to the academic integrity of the school community by not facilitating inappropriate use of her/his own work by others and by reporting acts of academic dishonesty by others to an appropriate school authority. It should be clearly understood that plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and can lead to sanctions up to and including separation from the Rutgers School of Public Health.

Students with Disabilities: Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student must Apply for Services by first completing a Registration Form with the Rutgers Office of Disability Services (ODS) at ods.rutgers.edu. The student will also be required to participate in an ODS intake interview and provide documentation. If reasonable accommodations are granted, ODS will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations which should be shared with your instructors as early in your courses as possible.

Graduate Student Computer Policy: Students are required to possess a personal laptop, no older than approximately two years, that must meet minimum requirements which may be found online at: sph.rutgers.edu/student_life/computer_requirements.html

Policy Concerning Use of Recording Devices and Other Electronic Communications Systems: When personally owned communication/recording devices are used by students to record lectures and/or classroom lessons, such use must be authorized by the faculty member or instructor who must give either oral or written permission prior to the start of the semester and identify restrictions, if any, on the use of mobile communications or recording devices.

Withdrawal/Refund Schedule: Students who stop attending their course(s) without processing an [Add/Drop Course](#) form will receive a failing grade. Furthermore, students dropping to zero credits for the semester are considered withdrawn and must submit a completed [Leave of Absence](#) form from the School of Public Health's Office of Student Affairs. The School of Public Health refunds tuition only. Administrative and technology fees are non-refundable. You may find the Withdrawal/Refund Schedule on the School of Public Health website at: sph.rutgers.edu/academics/registration/school_calendars.html