**Many thanks to Drs. Janice Krieger (Univ. of Florida), Nicole Egbert (Kent State Univ.) and our very own Jordan Soliz for their assistance in creating this syllabus.**

**Mission of Department of Communication Studies**

The mission of the faculty and students of the Department of Communication Studies is to examine human symbolic activity as it shapes and is shaped by relationships, institutions, technology, and culture. This work concerns the creation, analysis, and critique of messages ranging from face-to-face to digital media contexts. The department’s research and teaching devote particular attention to scholarly initiatives aimed at understanding and explaining the role of communication in (a) facilitating civic engagement, mediating public controversies, and organizing for social change, (b) constituting individual and family health, promoting healthy behaviors, and helping persons navigate relational challenges, and (c) creating, maintaining, and challenging personal, social, and community identity in a complex and diverse world.

**Course Description and Objectives**

This course will serve as an introduction to the foundational and contemporary issues of health communication. Health Communication is a broad field encompassing many contexts, including interpersonal, intergroup, computer-mediated communication (CMC), mass media, and rhetoric. Our course will focus on the first two, but I will give you a very brief intro to the other areas because they are still important in your holistic development as a scholar interested in health communication. Topics discussed will range from illness identity, coping, patient-provider communication, family influence, social support, community-based interventions, health disparities, as well as future directions for the subfield.

Some of these topics will interest you more than others. I ask that you engage with the material EVERY week to synthesize with your current research, challenge your current research or inspire you to lead your research in a new direction. Much of the learning in this class will be guided by me, but directed by you. Think of me as your coach: I will challenge you in your work, but you have to put in the work to accomplish your goals for this course. This is YOUR course; thus, you will be able to tailor assignments/discussions/projects to your interests and your theoretical/applied questions (e.g., rhetoric, public health, interdisciplinary).
As an instructor, I am at my best when we are all fully engaged as a class. To that end, I ask that all of us try our best to thoughtfully prepare all readings, all discussion points, and all assignments before class. Health Communication as a sub-discipline is focused on theory and application. Thus, all of your work should be guided by theory and have a “real-world” focus for “real-world” impact. If for some reason we are not discussing the theory(ies)/topics you would like to use in your projects, let me know and we can adjust the assignments for you. The goal of this course is to share our interests and build upon them by encouraging and constructively challenging each other (this includes me!). I firmly subscribe to the philosophy that Teaching is Learning!

**By the end of this course you will be able to:**

- To learn about the unique and overlapping contributions of health communication theory and research within the field of communication.
- To actively engage with and synthesize the reading material with your own research interests (i.e., asking theoretical and applied questions, developing and challenging your research, etc.).
- To communicate to health communication, intra-disciplinary and interdisciplinary audiences how your scholarly work relates to the field of health communication.
- To understand your unique contributions to the theoretical and applied research of health communication.
- To understand how your research fits within the extant interdisciplinary knowledge about your concepts/theories (e.g., social support).

**Expectations**

Your final grade will be based on: in-class participation/discussion, two short scholarly identity papers, theory project, a final research project, and 5 short reflection papers.

The grading breakdown is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Assignment</strong></th>
<th><strong>Points/Percentage</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning Reflective Statement</td>
<td>3 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Short Reflection Papers</td>
<td>20 points (4 points each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theory Presentation</td>
<td>20 points (4 points per section)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>30 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Reflective Statement</td>
<td>7 points</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 points</strong></td>
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Grades will be based on the following scale:

A= EXCELLENT. Greatly exceeds requirements. Shows outstanding levels of creativity, skill, initiative, and/or effort
B= GOOD. Exceeds requirements. Shows substantial creativity, skills, initiative, and/or effort
C= AVERAGE. Meets the requirements in every respect, but does not exceed requirements
D= BELOW AVERAGE. Meets some requirements, but deficient in others

**GRADING SCALE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>68-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
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</table>

**Assignment Description:** You will demonstrate proficiency of the above skills by:
(More in-depth description to follow)

1. Preparing a beginning-of-course reflective statement of how you imagine health communication fitting into your identity as a scholar (length: 0.5-1 page). **3 points**

2. Participating fully in class. **20 points**

3. Completing 5 reflections for 5 weeks of reading material. **20 points (4 points each)**
   a. Choose which 5 weeks during which you complete these assignments outside of your theory project week); however, please follow these guidelines (at least one in weeks 3-5; at least one in weeks 6-10; and at least one in weeks 11-16. You can choose when to do the 4th and 5th ones.
   b. 1-2 pages (double-spaced), 1-inch margins, 12-point font (APA style)
   c. Turned in through Blackboard dropbox by 11:59 pm the night before class.
   d. Thoughtfully relate and synthesize all of the readings from that week by answering the following questions:
      - In your opinion, what are the most compelling/unique theoretical and applied contributions from this body of work? Support your explanation with details from the readings.
      - What questions/concerns come to mind when considering these articles as a whole?
      - How might this body of work challenge/expand your own scholarly work?
      - If you could ask one of these scholars anything, what would you ask them?
4. Preparing a 2-part theory project (20 points). All students will choose their theory week on the first day. After the final theory presentation, all projects will be combined into a class PDF document of health comm theory that you can take with you after this class/use when YOU teach Health Comm! This project includes:
   a. **Part 1**: 30-minute class presentation that includes:
      - A 10-minute overview of an assigned theory used in health communication
      - A 15-20-minute class activity that deepens our understanding of (and memory for) this theory (i.e., current media representation, etc.)
   b. **Part 2**: Handout that includes:
      - The above information from Part 1 (in abbreviated or outline form)
      - Brief overview explaining how 2 scholars (one inside health comm; one outside comm discipline) are exploring this theory/concept within the last 5 years and the interesting contributions they are making
      - Promising direction(s) for this theory (based on your own interests)

5. Preparing a final project that is either (30 points):
   a. A research proposal involving a literature review and methods section for a future study
   b. Re-working or adding to an existing research study by including health communication literature/analysis/discussion (This must be a unique assignment; however, and may not have been previously submitted in another course, conference, or publication). In other words, you must use course material to substantially revise or create a current research study (e.g., secondary analysis, thesis, dissertation, past research projects that need substantial revision).
   c. Another project not listed here, but agreed to by me, that would meet the goals of this class as well as your scholarly goals.

6. Preparing an end-of-course reflective statement of how health communication fits (or does not fit) into your identity as a scholar (length: 0.5-1 page). This statement should show some intellectual growth from the beginning of class (even if you have discovered heath communication is not for you). You should be able to articulate your scholarly position within (or outside) the boundaries of health communication in combination with your other interests. **7 points**

**Timely Attendance and Participation**
In my courses, regular and on-time attendance, participation, and collaboration is key to quality of learning. I teach best when students are actively engaged, kind to each other, and try their best. Poor attendance (missing more than 2 days) will adversely affect your grades and performance in this course. I will take attendance each day; however, I will not give participation points for simply showing up to class. I will try my best to create activities and assignments that motivate you to learn and help you engage with me and your fellow students, though these will usually not be graded. I ask that you try your best to attend class, fully engage in readings and class discussions, and get to know me and at least 2 other classmates. To that end, after our group activity today, please write the name of at least 2 classmates (whom you do not know well) and their contact info (should you need to get notes, ask questions, etc.):
Course Policies

**Late Assignments:** Late assignments are generally not accepted. Exceptions are made on a case-by-case basis. If you are having trouble completing an assignment, please contact me as early as possible to see if we can extend the due date. These extensions are meant for situations beyond your control—accident, extended sickness, unexpected life development. Otherwise, overdue assignments will receive a grade deduction of 10% for each day late (calendar days, including weekends).

**Accommodations:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

**Grades:** Final grades are what you have earned. Therefore, extra credit will not be given at the end of the semester to boost your grade. You will have ample opportunity to increase your grade throughout the semester with assignment grades and participation. If at any time during the semester you would like to improve your grade, please seek guidance from me in advance of assignments.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism means intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own. This includes your own previous work. Plagiarism includes quoting or paraphrasing from other sources without acknowledging/citing the source of your information or presenting quoted material as your own words. You must be very clear about attribution of sources and you must know how to cite sources in a paper. Students who are unfamiliar with how to cite sources should purchase a style manual such as APA (American Psychological Association). Claiming lack of knowledge about standards for writing is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism committed. Come to a faculty member for help if you are at all unsure about any of these issues or seek help at the UNL Writing Assistance Center: 472-8803, Anderson Hall 129. I want to see you succeed in this course, and in your overall future, so please start assignments early and seek help when you need it.
Violations of academic integrity are very serious matters and will result in automatic failure of the class. It is the policy of the Department of Communication Studies to file a report with the Dean of Students for any infraction (no matter how minor it may seem). The work a student submits in a class is expected to be the student's own work and must be work completed for that particular class and assignment. Students wishing to build on an old project or work on a similar topic in two classes must discuss this with both professors. If starting with work done by a group, students must have permission of those group members to use that work.

*Academic dishonesty* includes:
- Lazily/hastily taking notes and using someone else's language without citing it and/or using quotation marks.
- Handing in another's work or part of another's work as your own.
- Turning in one of your old papers for a current class.
- Turning in the same or similar past or current paper for two different classes.
- Presenting a group project as your work solely.
- Purchasing or otherwise obtaining research or papers written by another and turning that work in as your own.
- Using unauthorized notes or other study aids or otherwise obtaining another's answers for an examination also represents a breach of academic integrity.
- Sanctions are applied whether the violation was intentional or not. You must keep all your original data for projects (i.e. articles) and be prepared to present them to the professor when asked.

It is your responsibility as a student to familiarize yourself with and adhere to these guidelines in Section 4.2 of the Student Code of Conduct (see [http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/code/three.shtml](http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/code/three.shtml) for the university policies and descriptions of all academic dishonesty and [http://www.unl.edu/writing/avoiding-plagiarism](http://www.unl.edu/writing/avoiding-plagiarism) for helpful tips on avoiding plagiarism). It is my responsibility to report any cases of cheating or plagiarism to the administration. All assignments must be your own original work and must be prepared specifically for this course.

**Authorship:** All assignments for this class are to be authored by you (or in collaboration with other students). I will offer guidance for your papers (i.e., serve as a mentor), but need not be added as an author (unless students are using data owned by me). If you would like substantial help from me after the course (e.g., more than just editing, giving comments), then I can join the project as an author. Otherwise, I am happy to edit/comment/discuss your papers and ideas before, during, and after this course as a mentor only.
Tentative Course Schedule
*Indicates an article outside of interpersonal/intergroup health communication

Subject to Change throughout Semester

Week 1 (Aug. 23): Intro to health communication


Week 2 (Aug. 30): Overview of health communication and translational scholarship

Theory: Social Ecological Model (Bronfenbrenner, 2009); concept: Ecological approaches


Week 3 (Sept. 6): Patient Illness Identity

Theory: Communication Theory of Identity (Hecht); concept: illness identity


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**Week 4 (Sept. 13): Identity and Stigma**

**Theory: Social Identity Theory; concept: social identity**


Week 5 (Sept. 20): Uncertainty and Information Seeking

Theory: Communication and Uncertainty Management Theory; Concept: uncertainty management


Week 6 (Sept. 27): Self-disclosure and Social Support

Theory: Privacy Management Theory; concept: privacy management


http://doi.org/10.1080/10410230903265920


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**Week 7 (Oct. 4): Support and Coping Assistance**

**Theory/Approach: Enacted Social Support (Goldsmith); concept: social support**


Week 8 (Oct. 11): Clinician-Patient-Family Communication

**Theory: Communication Accommodation Theory; concept: patient-provider communication**


Week 9 (Oct. 18): UNL Fall Break... Enjoy!

Week 10 (Oct. 25): Health Literacy & Health Decision-Making

**Theory: Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985); Concept: shared decision-making**


**Week 11 (Nov. 1): Addressing Diversity in Interpersonal Health Communication & Community-Engagement Approaches**

**Theory/Approach: Cultural Grounding; concept: cultural competence**


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**Week 12 (Nov. 8): OUT-OF-CLASS WORK DAY**

**Week 13 (Nov. 15): Inter-professional/Organizational Health Communication**

**Theory: Normative Approach/Theory (Goldsmith); concept: multiple goals**


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**Week 14 (Nov. 22): OUT-OF-CLASS WORK DAY/HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**
**Week 15 (Nov. 29): Education and Prevention Efforts**

**Theory: Health Belief Model; Application: How others use this model outside of communication**


**Week 16 (Dec. 6): Other Considerations in Health Communication Interventions**

**Theory: Extended Parallel Processing Model (EPPM); Concept: Fear Appeals**


**Monday, December 12 at 11:59 pm (Final paper is due on Blackboard)!**