Health communication is such a broad field that there is little consensus about a definition or perspective guiding the discipline. This broad and diverse field includes medical encounters, everyday communication about health, advertising, news, public health campaigns, community outreach, public policy, and international programs. This course will address these types of health communication by covering just a few of the theories and applied efforts that have been studied and documented. For each type of health communication addressed in this course, contextual factors that influence theory and practice will be incorporated in discussions and some readings. These factors include but are not limited to race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, culture, and gender. Students are encouraged to critique readings according to these contextual factors.

Objectives
The overall goal of the course is to increase students’ understanding of the different forms and effects of health communication in theoretical domains and applied settings. Specific objectives for the course include the following:

• To increase awareness about the different forms that health communication and related research can take;
• To increase understanding of the current theoretical streams in health communication;
• To learn how to apply theory to real world health communication problems and opportunities; and
• For doctoral students, complete a conference-quality paper that addresses a current problem or issue in health communication.

Required Books

Additional articles and book chapters will be distributed in class.

*This syllabus and the schedule of classes/assignments are subject to change.
**Grading**

Students will be evaluated in this course based on the following:

- **Participation**: 10%  
- **Reflexive Journal**: 10%  
- **Team Campaign**: 40%  
- **Final Paper**: 40%

I reserve the right to give an essay exam during the semester and add its score to students’ evaluation of the course if it seems the majority of students are not keeping up with the readings and/or not discussing them during class.

Grading will be on a 1000-point system, so the following grades will be given for the following total points at end of the semester:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>967 – 1000</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>934 – 966</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900 – 933</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>867 – 899</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>834 – 866</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800 – 833</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>767 – 799</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>734 – 766</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>700 – 733</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>667 – 699</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>634 – 666</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>below 600</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participation**

The participation component of the grade will include in-class discussions and exercises. To enhance in-class discussions, please come to each class prepared with two questions you have about each of the readings. Occasionally, I may ask you to turn these questions in to me during class. If it becomes apparent that students are not doing the readings and not participating, I reserve the right to make the questions an on-going requirement and add them to the participation grade for the course.

Participation also includes “show and tell” presentations. Each student has the opportunity to bring in to class examples of health communication. The example might be campaign materials, newsletters, videos. I plan on bringing to each class examples of health communication in practice and I hope that students do the same.

**Reflexive Journal**

Students are expected to keep a journal during the semester that pertains to the course readings and discussions. Effective researchers and teachers are reflexive about their role in their studies and in their communication. They consider the impact of their own health and their own experiences with health communication. Denying the personal in how we come to understand health communication blocks our ability to relate to patient and audience reactions. Therefore, every two weeks, students will turn in to me their reflections on how the readings and discussions from class pertain to their lives, careers, studies, etc. Specifically, students will write about their personal experiences with health communication. The journals need to be typed so that I can read them. They will NOT be graded for the opinions expressed therein; students will not be judged or evaluated according to any journal content. Each entry must be a minimum of two pages double-spaced typed.

**Team Campaign**

Teams of students each will research, prepare, and present a campaign plan for a “real world” client. Details to be shared later.
Final Paper
The final paper for this class is a research paper or a professional report that analyzes a case or health communication issue. It is required for Ph.D. students to complete a conference-quality paper that is ready for submission to a research conference of the students’ choosing. On the cover page of the paper, indicate which conference and deadline date for submissions. I will read paper as a reviewer would and give feedback accordingly. For master’s students and other students in the course, the paper is expected to be comprehensive and professional quality. Masters students may opt to do a conference paper.

Given the varying nature of topic and field, there is no minimum page length—it will depend on the research, the thesis of the paper, and the amount of literature in the topic area. However, maximum page length is 30 pages excluding references and tables. Format for papers is APA (5th edition). The paper will be evaluated on format along with writing, content, rigor, comprehensiveness, and research quality. Some examples of topics for final papers:
- Rhetorical analysis of news, campaign, or other health communication effort;
- Qualitative study on perceptions of health communication effort;
- Comprehensive literature review in sub-area with supporting thesis or argument;
- Case study of campaign or health project.

All Written Work
All written work must be typed, double spaced, printed in black ink, and be in 12-point type. Points will be deducted if these criteria are not met. In addition, errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling will hurt your grades (this is a communication course, and therefore, evaluation of written communication is considered in all course work). All written work will be graded on comprehensiveness of ideas, depth of analysis, rigor, spelling, grammar, punctuation, format, and whether all directions were followed accurately.

Policy on Late Assignments and Papers
Except for illness or family emergency, any student expecting to miss a course deadline must have my approval at least one week in advance. Students who miss a deadline due to illness or family emergency must notify me within 2 days of the deadline in question. Failure to abide by these policies will result in a score of 0 for the paper/assignment in question.

Honor Pledge
The University has a nationally recognized Honor Code, administered by the Student Honor Council. The Student Honor Council proposed and the University Senate approved an Honor Pledge. The University of Maryland Honor Pledge reads:

I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination.

Unless you are specifically advised to the contrary, the Pledge statement should be handwritten and signed on the front cover of all papers, projects, or other academic assignments submitted for evaluation in this course that is worth 20% or more. Students who fail to write and sign the Pledge will be asked to confer with me.

Academic Integrity
The university has approved a Code of Academic Integrity available in full on the web at http://www.inform.umd.edu/jpo/. In general, the Code prohibits students from cheating, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures.
**Students with Disabilities**

Students with special needs have a legal right to receive appropriate accommodations for this class. If you need special accommodations, please schedule a meeting with me by September 17 so that appropriate accommodations can be made in a timely fashion.

**Religious Observances**

The University of Maryland policy provides that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs; students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances. It is the student’s responsibility to inform me of any intended absences for religious observances at least one week in advance.

**Policy on Incompletes**

The grade of “Incomplete” is given only to a student whose work in a course has been qualitatively satisfactory, and when, because of illness or other circumstances beyond his/her control, he/she has been unable to complete some small portion of course work. In no case will “I” be recorded for students who have not completed major course assignments or the final research project.

**Class Schedule**

**INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH COMMUNICATION**

Jan. 31  Introductions; collaborative efforts; social constructionist perspective  
By 2/7:  Read Chs. 29, 2, 3

Feb. 7  What is theory in health communication  
By 2/14:  Read Chs. 8, 30; turn in journal entry

Feb. 14  Ethics in health communication  
Journal Entry Due  
By 2/21:  Read Chs. 4, 5, 6

**INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION**

Feb. 21  The medical encounter  
By 2/28: Read Chs. 7, 9, 14

Feb. 28  “Special” populations and non-medical communication  
By 3/7: Read Chs. 20, 21, 28; turn in journal entry

**MEDIATED COMMUNICATION**

Mar. 7  Public health campaigns  
Journal Entry Due  
By 3/14: Readings distributed in class

Mar. 14  News and advertising  
By 3/28: Read Ch. 25, 26; additional readings distributed in class
Mar. 21  SPRING BREAK

Mar. 28  Popular media and media advocacy
         Student case presentation
         By 4/4: Read Ch. 23, additional readings distributed; turn in journal entry

Apr. 4   Technology and the digital divide
         Student case presentation
         Journal Entry Due
         By 4/11: Read Chs. 10, 11, 12

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

Apr. 11  Community outreach and “marginalized” populations
         Student case presentation
         By 4/18: Readings distributed in class

Apr. 18  Diffusion of innovations and international programs
         Student case presentation
         By 4/25: Read Chs. 15, 16, 19; turn in journal entry

INSTUTIONAL AND GOVERNMENT ISSUES

Apr. 25  Health organizations and employee communication
         Student case presentation
         Journal Entry Due
         By 5/2: Read Chs. 18, 27

May 2    Public policy and health communication
         Student case presentation

May 9    Re-examining health communication for the future
         Student case presentation

May 16   Final Journal Entry Due
         Final Paper Due