

HPCH 210
Health Communication Theory
[3 credits]- CRN 11713



Course Syllabus
Fall Semester, Academic Year: 2023-24
Last updated: Aug 29, 2023

Course Instructor

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Office hours: **exclusively by appointment**

Class time and location

Dates, times: **Tuesdays and Thursdays at 12:00-1:15 pm**
Classroom: **Van Dyck 203**

Course description

We are living in a country affected by many concomitant crises that affect our health and the environment: COVID-19, economic crisis, geopolitical unrest, and many other problems that directly or indirectly affect ourselves and our communities, such as lack of medications, food safety, mental health, but also in ways that are not apparent. Health communication and health promotion have become critical disciplines to help addressing these problems. **But what is health communication?**

In this course you will learn the main **theoretical frameworks** and **tools** applied in health communication. You will discover how these frameworks can be used **to analyze problems** and **diffuse health-related content** among various stakeholders in different contexts and settings. A relevant part of this course will discuss the use of **communication for health information dissemination and doctor-patient communication**, and the **politics of health care**. Through examples and realistic scenarios, you will learn health communication by doing health communication.

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Course learning objectives

There are 4 learning objectives for this course.

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

1. Discuss the social determinants of health and their impact on populations. (LO2.1)
2. Apply communication and health theories to help explain the delivery of health care. (LO2.5)
3. Analyze communication processes impacting service users and patient care. (LO2.6)
4. Analyze ethical considerations that arise in responding to public health issues.(LO7.1)

Required textbooks

Each week we will cover a topic that is discussed in the chapters of the following textbooks. It is your responsibility to **read the chapters before attending the in-person class session**; this is essential because this will enable you to participate in the class discussions, and consolidate your learning.

- Wright, K.B., Sparks, L., & O’Hair H.D. (2012). *Health Communication in the 21st Century* (2nd edition). Chichester, West Sussex England; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

The book can be purchased online on [Amazon](#), or [Wiley.com](#).

- Schiavo, R. (2013). *Health communication: From theory to practice*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. *A digital version of the book is available from ProQuest Ebook Central, accessible from AUB libraries ([e-book](#)).*

The instructor will upload copies of the materials that are not readily available in AUB’s Libraries on Moodle.

Format and modes of delivery

This course is delivered in-person live in a classroom setting (at least for the first month of the semester), which means that ALL reference materials and PowerPoint presentations of class lectures will be made available on **Moodle**, AUB’s learning management system, **as the course progresses**. The instructor will send course-related communications via **Moodle messages** or **forum posts**, so remember to check your inbox frequently not to miss any important information.

Some additional learning material (not covered or lightly covered in class) such as links to short YouTube segments on relevant topics will also be posted on Moodle.

Exceptionally, the class session may be delivered as a pre-recorded lecture, and made available asynchronously, for you to watch at your own time, before an upcoming live session. You will need to watch the pre-recorded lectures and additional learning material before coming to class, in order to engage in the Q&A sessions and class activities.

The in-person sessions (lectures or Q&A/Discussion/Application sessions) will take approximately **110 mins/week [2 credits]**. Home-work, preparing for classes, etc. should take up to **2-3 hours/week [1 credit]**.

Course requirements and student evaluations

You will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

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Criteria	Percent	Due date	Learning objectives
Participation in class activities	10%	Throughout	1-4
Assignment 1: Essay-Social determinants of a health problem-Individual	25%	Oct 14	1, 4
Assignment 2: Patient-provider observation-Individual	30%		1-4
Assignment 3: Content analysis/ Case Study-Group & individual	35%		2,3,4
Total	100%		

Participation in in-person class activities means engaging in discussions and demonstrating interest and inquisitiveness by asking relevant questions and actively listening to answers – *Not just attending the classroom meetings.*

Assignment 1: Essay (individual assignment: 25%). The purpose of this essay is to reflect on a public health issue and how different factors (social, political, and cultural) can affect and influence health communication and healthcare, using your knowledge about the Social determinants of health.

Assignment 2: Patient-provider observation (individual assignment: 30%). The purpose of this assignment is to reflect on a real-life interaction between yourself (patient) and a healthcare provider to identify noteworthy communication patterns and issues. This assignment involves a 25-30 min observation, note-taking, and write-up of a report on a communication interaction between the student and a healthcare provider. The interaction could be a visit to the Family Medicine department, or a specialized clinic, a pharmacy. The event may have happened in the past and it must be memorable for the student (you) to write about it. Alternatively, you may be provided with a You tube segment of a patient -provider interaction and asked to reflect on the communication process through the lens of theories and models of provider-patient communication that you have learned in the course.

Assignment 3: Content analysis (individual 5% and group 30%). The purpose of this assignment is to conduct a content analysis of news or social media covering a selected health related topic. You will have to interpret and discuss your findings using a theoretical health communication lens.

Alternatively, you may be provided with a case -study that you will analyze using a theoretical health communication lens.

Detailed information on each assignment will be provided at least one week before the due date. All assignments will be posted on Moodle.

Course etiquette

✓ **Class participation and dealing with uncertainties**

Whether we meet face-to-face or virtually, we need to:



Be ready for the class session, make sure you are on time and ready for the session at **least 5 minutes** in advance. This means that you should consider the potential for commonly occurring UNEXPECTED obstacles on your way to class, such as heavy traffic, roads flooded by rainwater, etc.



Use your communication skills to express your engagement in class activities: **show** your non-verbal reactions to the content provided and to the communication of your instructors and other students attending the class.



Engage actively, by participating in the discussions, asking questions, and contributing actively to classroom activities (you will be graded on these) whether synchronously or asynchronously when required (at your own pace).



Avoid distractions while attending a session, by silencing your phones and leaving them out of sight, not checking your emails, closing open browsers. It is a matter of respect for the instructor and for other colleagues who want to follow the session.

AUB/FHS policies

✓ **Be Vaccinated**



An important public health strategy that has allowed us to safely return on campus was getting the COVID-19 vaccine. Please contact the Vaccination Working Group (vaxwg@aub.edu.lb) for completion of vaccination requirements WHEREVER APPLICABLE. For any other concerns, visit the campaign [webpage](#) or email the Vaccination Working Group. AUB policies regarding mask-wearing and social distancing will be strictly abided by inside the

classroom **as required by updates**.

✓ **Attendance**

Attendance will be taken and recorded. You need to be ready and attend classes **on time**; if you cannot attend a class, you should notify the instructor beforehand. **If you miss more than one-fifth of the sessions of any course in the first ten weeks of the semester you may be dropped from the course.**

✓ **Academic Integrity**

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Review [the Student Code of Conduct](#) in your handbook and familiarize yourself with definitions and penalties. If you are in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, ask your instructor because it is your responsibility to know. The American University of Beirut has a strict anti-cheating policy. Penalties include failing marks on the assignment in question, suspension or expulsion from university and a permanent mention of the disciplinary action in your records.

✓ **Non-Discrimination – Title IX – AUB**

AUB is committed to facilitating a campus free of all forms of discrimination including sex/gender-based harassment prohibited by Title IX. The University's non-discrimination policy

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applies to, and protects, all students, faculty, and staff. If you think you have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual misconduct, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. If you speak to a faculty or staff member about an issue such as harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, the information will be kept as private as possible, however, faculty and designated staff are required to bring it to the attention of the University's Title IX Coordinator. Faculty can refer you to fully confidential resources, and you can find information and contacts at www.aub.edu.lb/titleix. **To report an incident**, contact the University's Title IX Coordinator Ms. Mitra Tauk at 01-350000 ext. 2514, or titleix@aub.edu.lb. An anonymous report may be submitted online via EthicsPoint at www.aub.ethicspoint.com.

✓ **Accessible Education Office (AEO)**

The Accessible Education Office (AEO) coordinates academic accommodations and services for all eligible AUB students with disabilities (such as ADHD, learning difficulties, mental health conditions, chronic or temporary medical conditions, and others). If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations at the department, faculty or university level, please contact AEO as soon as possible. Once you register with our office, we will assist you in receiving appropriate accommodations and will liaise with your instructors and any related entity to best support your needs. AEO is located in West Hall room 314, and can be reached by phone at 1-350000 ext. 3246 or by email: accessibility@aub.edu.lb. Information about our services can be found at: <https://www.aub.edu.lb/SAO/Pages/Accessible-Education.aspx>

Proposed course outline

Session Week/Date	Topic and activity	Reading	Course Objectives
Week 1	Introductory Week: Defining health communication		1,2
T, Aug 29	Intro to the course -PPT 0	Syllabus -	
Th, Aug 31	Lecture session: Introduction to Health communication theory -PPT 1 Discussion: What is Health communication to You?	Wright et al. (2012), Chapter 1	
Week 2	Health Communication Lexicon		1-4
T, Sep 5	Lecture session: Overview of Health communication key definitions and concepts	-Schiavo (2014), Glossary of Terms, p.523-538 -Health communication Reference materials (in Moodle, Week 1)	
Th, Sep 7	Discussion, Q&As, Application		
Week 3	The Social Determinants of Health		1
T, Sep 12	Lecture session: What are the Social Determinants of health	TBA	
Th, Sep 14	Discussion, Q&As, Application		
Week 4	Provider-patient communication		1-3
T, Sep 19	Lecture session: Provider-patient communication	Wright et al. (2012), Chapter 2 Schiavo (2014), Chapter 4	
Th, Sep 21	Discussion, Q&As, Application		

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Session Week/Date	Topic and activity	Reading	Course Objectives
Week 5	Caregiving & communication Social support and health		2,3
T, Sep 26	Lecture session: Caregiving & communication, and Social support and health	Wright et al. (2012), Chapter 3,4	
Th, Sep 28	Discussion, Q&As, Application		
Week 6	Culture & Diversity Issues in Health Care		1,4
T, Oct 3	Lecture session: Culture and diversity	Wright et al. (2012), Ch.5 Schiavo (2014), Ch.3	
Th, Oct 5	Discussion, Q&As, Application		
Week 7	Mass communication and Health		1,4
T, Oct 10	Lecture session: Mass communication and health	Wright et al. (2012), Ch.8	
Th, Oct 12	Discussion, Q&As, Application		
<i>Oct 13</i>	<i>Assignment 1 due</i>		
Week 8	Overview of special topics (I) -(i)Communication and Healthcare organizations -(ii)Interdisciplinary health care systems		1,3,4
T, Oct 17	Lecture session	(i)Wright et al. (2012), Ch.6 (ii)Wright et al. (2012), Ch.11	
Th, Oct 19	Discussion, Q&As, Application		
Week 9	Overview of special topics (II) - (iii)Risk and Crisis communication - (iv)Political issues and health communication		1,3,4
T, Oct 24	Lecture session	(iii)Wright et al. (2012), Ch. 9 (iv)Wright et al. (2012), Ch. 12	
Th, Oct 26	Discussion, Q&As, Application		
Week 10	New technologies & Health communication		1,4
T, Oct 31	Lecture session (Guest lecturer?)	Wright et al. (2012), Chapter 7	
Th, Nov 2	-Discussion, Q&As, Application (Guest lecturer?)		
<i>Nov 2</i>	<i>Assignment 2 due</i>		
Week 11	Health campaigns & community Health Initiatives		2,4

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T, Nov 7	Lecture session	Wright et al. (2012), Ch.10 Schiavo (2014), Chs. 5 & 9	
Th, Nov 9	Discussion, Q&As, Application		
Week 12	Selected health communication and health behavior theories and models (Persuasion, fear appeals, behavior change, health promotion) (I)		2
T, Nov 14	Lecture session	TBA	
Th, Oct 16	Discussion, Q&As, Application		
Week 13	Selected health communication and health behavior theories and models (Persuasion, fear appeals, behavior change, health promotion) (II)		2
T, Nov 21	Lecture session	TBA May be pre-recorded	
Th, Nov 23	Discussion, Q&As, Application		
Week 14	Final assignment workshop		1-4
T, Nov 28	-Hands on workshop on content analysis		
Th, Nov 30	- Hands on workshop on content analysis		
<i>Dec 4</i>	<i>Assignment 3 due</i>		