

COMM 4511/GPRL 6511

“Health Communication: Theory & Practice”

Course Outline

Spring, 2012 (distance version)

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Course Overview

COMM 4511/GPRL 6511 is designed to be an examination of health communication theory and practice at the level of public communication. Topics include an examination of health in Canadian society, health communication models, health communication campaign planning, evaluation of outcomes of social marketing and other approaches to behavior change and relevant ethical considerations.

Thus, the overall goals of this course are as follows:

- **Knowledge:** To enhance your knowledge of the theory & practice of public communication about health in a variety of contexts and its relationship to health outcomes and health care in Canada.
- **Attitude:** To enhance your development of an attitude of critical analysis about approaches to communicating about health.
- **Behavior:** To assist you to further develop your skills in strategic communication about health issues.

Prerequisites

The prerequisite for PBRL 4511 is COMM 3014 or science communication equivalent; the pre-requisite for GPRL 6511 is permission of the professor.

Course Objectives

By the end of COMM 4511/GPRL 6511, you should be able to:

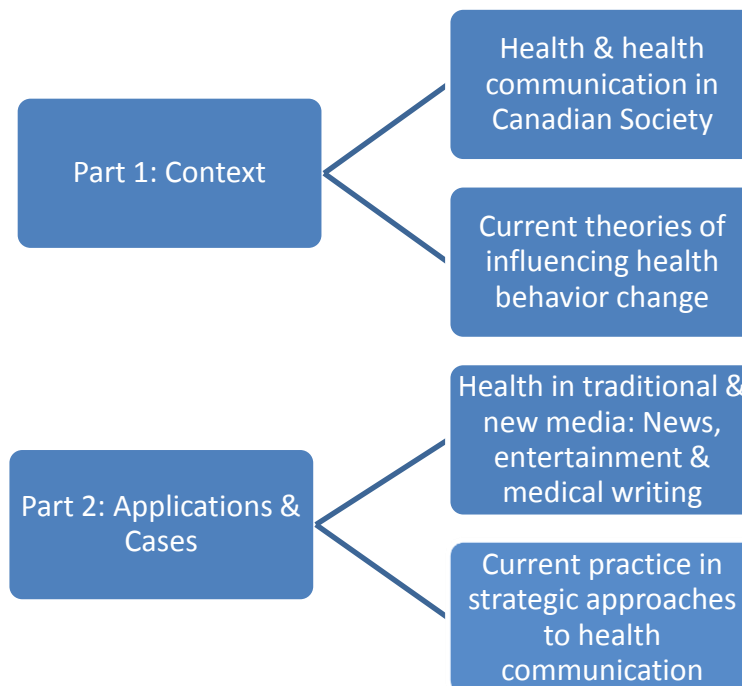
1. Analyze the meaning of personal health and health care in Canadian society.
2. Critically examine health communication campaigns.
3. Assess the extent to which mass media are influential in health behavior change.
4. Apply theoretical models of behavior change to strategy development in health communication.
5. Discuss ethics and accountability in decision-making about influencing health behavior.

In addition graduate students (6511) should be able to:

1. Synthesize the current scholarly literature supporting approaches to health communication.

Course Structure

This course is divided into four (4) online workshops. The workshops are structured as follows:



Assignments & Deadlines

Please refer to the document “Assignments & Deadlines” for a detailed description of assignments, instructions for completing and deadlines for submission. ***Please follow the submission instructions carefully*** so that all of your assignments arrive in the right online place at the time you intended!

MSVU Department of Communication Studies: Writing Competence Requirement

BASIC WRITING COMPETENCE IS A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR PASSING THIS COURSE

Since writing is an important part of our discipline, the Department of Communication Studies cannot allow its students to pass courses or graduate if they do not have the ability to write correct English. ***Consequently, writing competence is a requirement in all department courses, and it must be demonstrated in all classes.*** This means that students who fail more than one assignment in this course as a result of a lack of writing competence will not pass the course, regardless of the accumulation of points they achieve through team work, class participation, etc.

The department plays a significant role in developing student writing; however, it does not offer instruction in basic writing skills because these skills are beneath the academic level at which undergraduate (and especially graduate) courses occur. The faculty presumes that every student’s general education included a minimum of twelve years of writing-skills training, and therefore reasonably expects an English language competence in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and semantics. The responsibility to achieve that minimal standard lies with the student. Graduate students are held to a higher level of expectation.

The professor will not suspend this requirement by virtue of a student’s willingness to obtain remedial writing instruction. Public communication practice is writing intensive, and employers expect graduates to excel as writers, in comparison with the general public. Consequently the department requires the actual existence of writing skills, rather than the hope or the promise of these skills, as a condition for advancing students.

Intellectual Property Protection Statement

The lectures and materials provided to students in this course are the property of the professor or MSVU unless otherwise acknowledged. Class slides, podcasts, videos and any other materials provided may not be used for anything other than study purposes and may not be reproduced in any manner without permission. Materials may be downloaded from the class site and single copies made for personal academic use.

Course Reading

The course textbook is the following:

Schiavo, R. (2007). *Health communication: From theory to practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Additional required readings for graduate students (and a few for undergrads) are posted in the notes for each individual workshop. All readings are available in the MSVU online database. You'll note that no links are provided. This requires you to explore the database and related literature that may be useful for you in the completion of your assignments. Take advantage of this opportunity.

All posted readings are *recommended reading* for undergraduate students.

Workload

This is an intensive, work-laden course. It requires a considerable time commitment, similar to an on-campus course with the addition of the requirement for self-discipline. If you fall behind in meeting the weekly deadlines that the professor sets for you regarding reading, participation and assignment completion, it will be very difficult to catch up. Don't let this happen!

Student Responsibilities

- Complete your profile and upload a photo. The impersonal nature of distance courses is often mitigated by a modicum of interpersonal understanding that can be initiated by a bit of personal information much as you might provide in class during introductions.
- It is your responsibility to **check the site at least every two or three days**. New materials and updates are posted as we move along and it is up to you to ensure that you do not miss anything. Check the forums and all updates. You are subscribed to all forums: it is your responsibility to ensure that the email on your Moodle profile is the one that will actually reach you. Please note that the DLCE department is insisting on MSVU emails.
- All assignments have strict **deadlines** to which we will adhere unless you are in a coma. Deadlines are strictly enforced. Email submissions or submissions directed to an assignment centre on the web site are due at 11:55 pm Atlantic Time on the assigned day unless otherwise noted. The centre will not accept late papers. ***If you have prior permission, you can email a late paper directly to me.*** It is your responsibility to ensure that you know what time zone you are in and what time it is in the Atlantic zone. Late assignments will lose 20% per day. After five days the assignment is worth zero. Passing the course, however, requires ***the satisfactory completion of all assignments*** regardless of how late they are submitted. In other words, if you are five days late, simply forfeiting those marks and deciding not to submit at all will result in you failing the course.

- Especially for graduate students (but it wouldn't hurt undergrads to take note): You are expected to demonstrate a highly developed ability to work independently and be self-motivated. This is especially important in a distance course; failure to meet reading or work deadlines will seriously compromise your ability to achieve a reasonable grade.
- “University regulations on Plagiarism and Cheating will be strictly enforced. These regulations are posted on boards and are found in the university calendar.” I am well aware of the Web paper mills and I will seek out the source of any paper that looks fishy to me. “Correct use of language is one of the criteria included in the evaluation of written assignments.” [Source: MSVU Calendar]
- Adhere to the guidelines of the American Psychological Association for preparation of academic papers. The complete APA guide is always on reserve in the library or you can refer to the précis on the course web site. In addition, there are lots of other web sites that provide excellent explanations of the details of APA style. If you are a graduate student in particular, you should own a copy of it and treat it like your bible.

Research

Students who conduct research involving human participants must have their research reviewed in accordance with the *MSVU Policies and Procedures for Ethics Review of Research* before starting the research. Check with your course professor or Chair of the Department about proper procedure.

Resources

- **MSVU Grad Studies Calendar** <http://www.msvu.ca/calendar/graduate.asp>
- **MSVU Undergrad Calendar**
<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/programsdepartments/undergradprograms/default.aspx>
- **MSVU Library** <http://www.msvu.ca/library/>
- **MSVU Writing Resource Centre**
<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/studentervices/academicadvisingsupport/writingresourcecentre/default.aspx>
- **Distance Learning and Continuing Education** <http://www.msvu.ca/Distance/index.asp>
- **MSVU Student Services** http://www.msvu.ca/student_affairs/index.asp
- **Distance Learning Student guide**
<http://www.msvu.ca/site/media/msvu/Distance%20Student%20Guide%281%29.pdf>