

## COMM 4736: Interpersonal Health Communication

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**LECTURE:** Tuesday 1:50-3:40 PM, 395 Watts Hall

### COURSE INSTRUCTOR

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*Office Hours:* Thursday 1:45-3:45 PM & by appointment

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide a survey of health communication research and theory within the context of interpersonal communication. We will explore topics including patient-health provider communication, health-related communication in families and personal relationships, social support and caregiving, culture and health disparities, as well as interpersonal health campaigns. As a hybrid course, you will explore these topics independently via online lectures, readings and media, as well as through in-depth class discussion. Assignments in this course will not only assess your understanding of key concepts and theories, but require you to reflect upon your own experiences and apply them to your personal and/or professional lives.

**By the end of this semester, you should be able to:**

1. Articulate major models of patient-provider communication and why good communication matters across a variety of healthcare settings.
2. Describe the impact of language, culture and health disparities on patient-provider communication, as well as strategies for increasing provider cultural competency.
3. Discuss how personal and family relationships influence individual health behaviors and communication.
4. Explain the concept of caregiving and communication strategies for addressing caregiver burden.
5. State the purpose of a health communication campaign or intervention, and discuss communication strategies that utilize interpersonal channels of communication to influence behavior change.

### HYBRID COURSE INTRODUCTION

A hybrid course allows a certain amount of flexibility and control on the part of the student. In this case, we will meet only once a week for in-class discussion and you will view lectures and other media, take quizzes, and complete other assignments on your own. This type of schedule is appealing to most students, but you should beware: this course is ***NOT*** an easy one. You will be expected to complete all assigned readings, viewings, lecture notes, and quizzes prior to each class session. Additionally, you should set aside a minimum of 7 hours each week to adequately prepare for the assignments and in-class discussions on Tuesdays.

**This class is a collaborative learning effort.** If have taken a class with me in the past, you know that discussion is an integral part of our classroom time. If you do not desire to contribute to the learning of your peers, or your

own learning, I encourage you to reconsider the decision to take this course. Conversely, I encourage all of you to make the most of this class, as your devotion to and enthusiasm for this class will radically shape what you and your peers get from our time together.

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

### Online Course Work

To reinforce the absolute necessity for you to prepare for each class discussion, and to assess your knowledge of course material, you will be asked to complete several small learning activities each week. *Please note that a “week” in this class starts immediately after class and goes until the next class discussion. Each week’s assignments and activities will posted in its’ own tab in Carmen.* Learning activities will take the form of a quiz, short written response or reflection, discussion questions or experiential exercises. **Please note: learning activities take the place of formal exams, so they count for a large % of the points in this class.** As noted on the syllabus, you are assigned 30 online modules, so you can count on each being 10-20 points each.

Online course work may include:

*Online Quizzes.* You can expect a quiz every week. Quizzes will cover the assigned materials for a particular week and include course readings, lectures and online media. Quizzes will be posted immediately following class and will close 10 minutes before the next scheduled class. You may use your notes and other materials, but please note that you will have only a limited amount of time to complete a quiz. It is unlikely you will get a high score on the quiz if you don’t do assigned work in advance. You can expect to be quizzed over *anything* from the course content for that particular week (online lectures, readings, videos, etc.), except course discussions. THERE WILL BE NO MAKEUPS OFFERED FOR MISSED QUIZZES.

*Discussion Questions.* In preparation for class discussions you may be asked to provide a list of thoughtful questions for discussion based on something you are assigned to read or watch for the week. Discussion questions will be posted in the Carmen discussion board.

*Experiential Exercises.* These exercises provide an opportunity for you to apply or reflect upon main topics and issues in the course, based on your own experiences. The exercises will vary. For example, one week I might ask you to complete an online assignment and write about your score and how that reflects what we’ve discussed in class. Another week I might ask you to talk to your family members about a health topic and report back on what you found. These reflections are meant to be insightful rather than regurgitate information, so brevity and conciseness are necessary. However, I will still ask you to demonstrate your understanding of course concepts and material.

### Course Papers & Projects

#### Health Practitioner Communication Paper

In this first paper you will be asked to describe an experience that you or someone else has had interacting and communicating with a health practitioner. You will be asked to describe the model of communication that best describes this experience and to discuss what should have been done differently to improve communication.

## Interpersonal Health Intervention Proposal

Social norms and interactions are an important predictor of healthy behavior; thus, more and more health campaigns have been developed that utilize interpersonal channels of communication. One example of this is the Surgeon General's Family Health History Initiative (<https://www.familyhealthware.com>), which includes a web-based tool that helps families collect and share family health information. For this assignment you will be responsible for the creation of a health intervention, on a topic of your choice, which utilizes interpersonal communication. **This proposal is NOT a research paper.** Instead, it will require you outline and visually illustrate your proposed intervention (for use in our roundtable). In your proposal, you will also be asked to discuss why you think your intervention will work, based on research and concepts discussed in class.

## Intervention Science Fair

Prior to turning in your final intervention proposal, you will be asked to share examples of your interpersonal health intervention with the class. You may do so by creating a short PPT to display on your laptop, a website mock-up, poster, or even paper copies of your proposed intervention. You will not be asked to put together a formal presentation. Instead, you will engage in small, interpersonal interactions with members of your class to share and get feedback your intervention. You will be graded on the progress you have made on developing your intervention, the quality of the materials you bring to class, your ability to explain the intervention and the course concepts that you draw on. You will be assessed by me, as well as peers in the class who will act as roaming evaluators.

## Discussion Participation

The only appropriate way to study a diverse and intricate topic like health communication is through dialogue. In our class discussions we will follow the Socratic Method (see Appendix). There will be 14 classes in which discussion may be expected of you. In order to allow everyone a chance to participate in the discussion, you will be required and graded on your participation during one half of each class session. Each session will include a short break, which will separate the first half and second half of the class. You will be notified which half of the class you will be graded on for participation when you arrive each class. You should ALWAYS prepare to participate in the discussion. For discussion participation, you will either receive a grade of (0) no participation, (4) some participation, or (7) high participation. You will receive two freebie points for coming the first day of class and sharing more about you and your interest in health communication.

## Attendance

**As a hybrid course with only one weekly class session, as well as a rapid-paced, discussion-driven course, it is incredibly difficult to make up for missed class time.** Likewise, your absence precludes contributions you might (and should) have made to the class, robbing not only you but your peers as well. You are expected to attend every class meeting. However, I understand that there are on occasion extenuating circumstances that cause a missed class. For that reason, you are allotted **one unexcused absence**. However, this only absolves you of any attendance points missed as a result of not being in class—discussion and quiz deadlines all remain in place. **Each absence beyond your ONE will result in a loss of 10 attendance points per class.**

In the event of a true personal or family emergency, I ask that you provide me with some type of proof (e.g., a doctor's note or obituary) and we will determine the best approach to make up points. Also, please drop me an email to let me know about these circumstances as soon as possible. The only other acceptable excuse for absence is University or Military service, in which you are also expected to provide proof of your excuse as soon as possible. For me to excuse an absence, I must receive proof within ONE week of your return to campus.

Attendance will be taken using Top Hat, so please be sure you have a device (smart phone, cell phone, tablet or laptop) with you in class each day. If you forget your device on a particular day, I can also record your attendance for you. During class you will be given an attendance code, which you will enter at tophat.com or you can text to 1-315-636-0905. It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to record your attendance every week. I will use the record in Top Hat as my record for attendance. Problems with the attendance record must be addressed within 7 days of taking attendance; otherwise, the attendance record in Top Hat will stand.

Finally, I will post this code at the beginning of class and keep it up for the first few minutes of class. To receive full credit for attendance you are expected to be ON TIME and to remain until the class is over. If you arrive late, you may miss the Top Hat Code for a particular day. Likewise, if you leave significantly early (due to work or other obligations) you risk being counted absent for that day.

### GRADING SCALE AND INFORMATION

The following is a list of assignments and the final grading criteria for this course. You may view your grade at any time on Carmen. Grades are calculated using Carmen (OSU Standard) and are not rounded up. At this time, grades are not curved. However, we may offer extra credit.

Course Assignments	%	Points
Online Learning Activities	45%	450
Health Practitioner Communication Paper	15%	150
Interpersonal Intervention Proposal	15%	150
Intervention Science Fair	5%	50
Discussion Participation	10%	100
Attendance	10%	100
<b>TOTAL POINTS FOR COURSE</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,000</b>

Final Grade	Percentage
A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D+	67-69%
D	60-66%
E	< 60%

### REQUIRED TEXTS/READINGS

Fadiman (1997). *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York.

There are also required readings or viewing materials for each class period, which will be posted or linked to on Carmen. Additional readings also may be assigned throughout the semester. I may also provide supplementary

texts, should you be interested in any particular subject or case study and wish to read further. You will not be required to read any supplementary texts—they will be provided simply for your benefit.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Attendance**

Attendance and participation are mandatory. You must come to class every week and you must be ready to participate actively in class discussion and activities. Attendance will be taken using the TopHat system, through which students are required to check-in using a personal device. Students are responsible for their own check-in, and any attendance or technology issues with the TopHat system should be addressed as soon as possible.

### **Technology Use**

As a hybrid course, technology will be required for a majority of the course. During class meetings, technology is allowed, with discretion. Between the digital nature of our readings and the interactivity of a hybrid course, I understand the value of having computer access in the classroom. That said, I reserve the right to institute a technology policy if usage becomes problematic or distracting. You should especially be cautious about using technology during the discussion part of the class, for anything other than referring your readings/notes, as this may negatively affect your participation grade.

### **Assignment Due Dates**

Assignments are due at the designated time (in-person or via the Carmen drop box, depending on the assignment) and late work will not be accepted. If you do not turn an assignment in on time, you will receive zero points for the assignment. I will make exceptions for university-excused absences or other unavoidable circumstances (e.g., deaths, personal/family illness and emergencies) with a written verification, but I ask that you inform me of these situations in advance or no later than the assignment due date.

### **Carmen/E-mail**

**THIS IS A HYBRID COUSE—regular use of Carmen and e-mail is REQUIRED.** Readings, lectures, and viewings will all be posted on Carmen, along with grades and other course information and assignments. It is your responsibility to check Carmen regularly for announcements and updates. You also are responsible for all information that is sent to your OSU email account regarding the course, and you should check this information regularly. E-mail is the easiest and quickest way to get in touch with your instructor, and I will do my best to respond in 24 hours during the week. However, before emailing me, please be sure to check the syllabus to make sure that your question is not answered there.

### **Classroom Environment**

Even though we will only meet once a week in class, I expect you to work hard, to keep up with assigned readings, and to produce high-quality, well-written work. Simply turning in an assignment does not ensure a high grade. Additionally, I expect you to be prepared for class discussion and to participate fully. This is an *analytic* course: participation, discussion, and reflection are necessary for understanding as well as high grades.

We will seek to create a classroom climate where students feel comfortable participating in class activities and sharing their thoughts and opinions.

### Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (<http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>).

### Reasonable Accommodation

Students with disabilities will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. You may also contact the Office for Disability Services located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

### CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

**Please note that all ONLINE modules for a given week MUST be completed on Monday by 11:59 PM**, which means that a “week” in this class actually starts the day after class (on Wednesday) the week before and goes until class time that week. This means that for class on Tuesday 1/26 you must have the online modules completed by 11:59 on Monday, 1/25. The one exception is SECOND week; due to the MLK holiday you will have until Tuesday class time to complete the online modules.

Week		
1	ONLINE MODULES DUE: 1/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>
	CLASS TOPICS: 1/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class Overview</li> <li>What is Interpersonal Health Communication?</li> </ul>
2	ONLINE MODULES DUE: 1/19 (1:55 PM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health in America (M1)</li> <li>Patient/Physician Communication Pt. 1: Biomedical and Biopsychosocial Models (M2)</li> <li>Communication in the Emergency Room (M3)</li> </ul>
	CLASS TOPICS: 1/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion on Health in America</li> <li>Why does good communication matter?</li> </ul>
3	ONLINE MODULES DUE: 1/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patient/Provider Communication Pt. 2: Patient-Centered Models of Communication (M4)</li> </ul>
	CLASS TOPICS: 1/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditional vs Patient-Centered Communication</li> <li>What does a patient-centered model look like in practice?</li> </ul>

4	ONLINE MODULES DUE: 2/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared Decision-Making (M5)</li> <li>• Breaking Bad News (M6)</li> </ul>
	CLASS TOPICS: 2/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does shared decision-making look like? Is shared decision-making a realistic goal for patients and health care providers?</li> <li>• Why breaking bad news effectively matters.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Discussion of Health Practitioner Paper</a></li> </ul>
5	ONLINE MODULES DUE: 2/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Competency in Health Care (M7)</li> <li>• Translators &amp; Translation (M8)</li> <li>• Introduction: <i>"The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down"</i> (M9) *The reading load is heavy this week, so BE sure to start early.</li> </ul>
	CLASS TOPICS: 2/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion Part 1: <i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down</i>. Due to the nature of this book we will touch on topics of cultural competency and translation issues during our discussion.</li> </ul>
6	ONLINE MODULES DUE: 2/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical Ethics &amp; Informed Consent (M10)</li> <li>• The Case of Henrietta Lacks (M11)</li> <li>• The Legacy of Tuskegee (M12)</li> <li>• Continuation: <i>"The Spirit Catches You....."</i> (M13)</li> </ul>
	CLASS TOPICS: 2/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Root causes of medical mistrust and its' implications for health care communication and medical research.</li> <li>• Discussion Part 2: <i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down</i></li> </ul>
7	ONLINE MODULES DUE: 2/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is health literacy? (M14)</li> <li>• Movement Towards a More Activated Patient (M15)</li> </ul>
	CLASS TOPICS: 2/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does health literacy impact health communication?</li> <li>• How active a patient are you? What can be done to get patients more involved in their health and healthcare?</li> <li>• How might health literacy impact patient activation?</li> <li>• * <a href="#">Paper 1 due</a></li> </ul>
8	ONLINE MODULES DUE: 2/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is a health communication intervention? (M16)</li> <li>• HC interventions that use IP Channels (M17)</li> <li>• Community Health Workers &amp; Patient Navigators (M18)</li> </ul>
	CLASS TOPICS: 3/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of Interpersonal Health Interventions</li> <li>• <i>Please bring an electronic copy of an interpersonal health intervention that you find online to class. Please bring a phone or laptop to share with me/others in the class.</i></li> <li>• <a href="#">Discussion of Health Intervention Proposal</a></li> </ul>
9	ONLINE MODULES DUE: 3/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Support (M19)</li> <li>• Illness Identity (M20)</li> </ul>

	CLASS TOPICS: 3/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do our social circles matter to our health?</li> <li>• How do social networks facilitate/prevent healthy behavior?</li> <li>• How does our identity as “well” or “ill” impact communication and interactions within social networks and with care providers?</li> </ul>
	3/15 SPRING BREAK	
10	ONLINE MODULES DUE: 3/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpersonal Caregiving (M21)</li> <li>• Communication &amp; Caregiver Burden (M22)</li> </ul>
	CLASS TOPICS: 3/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion on Caregiving</li> </ul>
11	ONLINE MODULES DUE: 3/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families and Health: Part 1 (M23)</li> <li>• Families and Failure to Communicate (M24)</li> </ul>
	CLASS TOPICS: 3/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does your family shape your health beliefs and behaviors? The impact of families on health.</li> <li>• How might we harness the power of family for health?</li> </ul>
12	ONLINE MODULES DUE: 4/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your Family Health History (M25)</li> <li>• The Impact of Genetic Testing on Families (M26)</li> </ul>
	CLASS TOPICS: 4/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does your family communication about health?</li> <li>• Communication in the Age of Personalized Medicine</li> <li>• <i>Intervention Science Fair</i></li> </ul>
13	ONLINE MODULES DUE : 4/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Relationships and Health: An Overview (M27)</li> <li>• Romantic Partners and Health (M28)</li> <li>• Pets &amp; Health (M29)</li> </ul>
	CLASS TOPICS: 4/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact of personal relationships on health: The role of friends, romantic partners &amp; health</li> </ul>
14	ONLINE MODULES DUE: 4/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues of Death and Dying (M30)</li> </ul>
	CLASS 4/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues at the end of life that call for good communication.</li> <li>• Course Reflections</li> <li>• <i>Final Paper Due</i></li> </ul>
FINAL		<i>There is no final exam in this course.</i>



## Appendix A

### Socratic Methods

***"The unexamined life is not worth living."***

**-Socrates**

#### Background

The Socratic method of teaching is based on Socrates' theory that it is more important to enable students to think for themselves than to merely fill their heads with "right" answers. Therefore, he regularly engaged his pupils in dialogues by responding to their questions with questions, instead of answers. This process encourages divergent thinking rather than convergent.

After reading or viewing the assigned materials, you should prepare open-ended questions and notes on the topic. Then we will discuss these questions through a dialogue with each other in class. Dialogue is exploratory and involves the suspension of biases and prejudices. Debate is a transfer of information designed to win an argument and bring closure. Make sure you don't fall into the trap of a debate—there is no right or wrong, just ideas backed by information.

Participants in a Socratic Seminar respond to one another with respect by carefully listening instead of interrupting. Students are encouraged to "paraphrase" essential elements of another's ideas before responding, either in support of or in disagreement.

#### Guidelines for Participants in a Socratic Seminar

1. Refer to the material(s) when needed during the discussion. This is not a test of memory. You are not "learning a subject"; your goal is to understand the ideas, issues, and values reflected in the readings and viewings.
2. It is OK to "pass" until you find the right moment to contribute—we will not go around in a line. Jump in when you have an idea.
3. ***Do not participate if you are not prepared.*** A seminar should not be a BS session.
4. Do not stay confused; ask for clarification.
5. Stick to the point under discussion; make notes about ideas you want to come back to.
6. Listen carefully.
7. Speak up so that all can hear you.
8. Talk to each other, not just to the instructor.
9. Discuss ideas rather than each other's opinions.
10. **You are responsible for the seminar, even if you don't know it or admit it.**

#### Expectations of Participants in a Socratic Seminar

*When I am evaluating your Socratic Seminar participation, I ask the following questions about participants. Did they....*

Come to class prepared?  
 Appear to have read/watched the assigned materials?  
 Speak loudly and clearly?  
 Cite reasons and evidence for their statements based on course material?  
 Use the assigned readings or media to find support?  
 Listen to others respectfully?  
 Stick with the subject?  
 Talk to each other, not just to the instructor?  
 Paraphrase accurately?  
 Ask for help to clear up confusion?  
 Support each other?  
 Avoid hostile exchanges?  
 Question others in a civil manner?

### Discussion Assessment Criteria

<b>High Participation (7 points)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant offers solid analysis, without prompting</li> <li>• Participant, through their comments, demonstrates a deep knowledge of the text and the question</li> <li>• Participant has come to the seminar prepared, with notes</li> <li>• Participant, through their comments, shows that they are actively listening to other participants</li> <li>• Participant offers clarification and follow-up that extends conversation</li> <li>• Participant's remarks often refer back to specific parts of the assigned readings or media.</li> </ul>
<b>Some Participation (4 points)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant offers some analysis, but needs prompting from instructor</li> <li>• Participant demonstrates a general knowledge of the text and questions</li> <li>• Participant is less prepared, with few notes</li> <li>• Participant is actively listening to others, but does not offer clarification and/or follow-up to others' comments</li> <li>• Participant relies more upon their opinion, and less on the readings or materials to drive their comments</li> </ul>
<b>No Participation (0 points)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant offers little or no commentary</li> <li>• Participant comes to the seminar ill-prepared with little understanding of the assignment or questions</li> <li>• Participant does not listen to others, offers no commentary to further the discussion</li> <li>• Participant distracts the group by interrupting other speakers or by offering off topic questions and comments.</li> <li>• Participant ignores the discussion and its participants</li> </ul>