

# Comm 4737: Health Communication in Mass Mediated Contexts

T/R, 12:45 pm - 2:05 pm, Psychology 014

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<http://cogcommscience.com/>  
Lab Location: 3105 Derby Hall,  
Office Hours: R 9:00 am - 11:00 am and by appointment

*Enrollment in this course constitutes an agreement to this syllabus and the general course structure. Some aspects of the course may change as necessary.*

## **Course Description:**

This course provides an overview of theory and research related to the role of mass media in promoting advances in public health. We review theories of health behavior change and message effects, and discuss applications of these theories to media-based health campaigns. We also look at examples of health campaigns and the research evaluating their effectiveness. Throughout the course we examine the interplay among theory, research, and practice and discuss how theory informs practice and how research aids in theory construction and refinement.

## **Textbook:**

Required text: Cho, H. (Ed.). (2012). *Health Communication Message Design: Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**Additional Readings:** Supplementary readings are posted on Carmen (<https://carmen.osu.edu/>).

## **Course Objectives:**

At the completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand and be able to explain how the theories and methods of communication research can be used to improve health behaviors.
2. Understand the mechanisms through which media messages affect health behaviors.
3. Understand and apply theory and research findings in health communication to a practical health concern.

## **Grade Distribution:**

This class has 100 possible points. Exams and assignments are weighted as follows:

Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Quizzes	20%
Group Project Proposal	10%
Group Project Paper	20%
Group Project Presentation	10%

## Letter Grade Distribution:

You must attempt each assignment and exam in order to receive a grade. Your final grade will be determined based on the combined score of the course exams and assignments. The grading distribution is as follows:

$\geq 93.0$	A	73.0 - 76.9	C
90.0 - 92.9	A-	70.0 - 72.9	C-
87.0 - 89.9	B+	67.0 - 69.9	D+
83.0 - 86.9	B	60.0 - 66.9	D
80.0 - 82.9	B-	$\leq 59.9$	E
77.0 - 79.9	C+		

## Exams:

Bring a #2 pencil to each exam. The exam dates are noted on the course schedule (see below). Each exam will include multiple choice and true/false questions. The exams are cumulative in the sense that the course material builds on concepts from previous weeks. However, each exam will only focus on lecture and reading materials for the given time period. A study guide is not available, but the lecture slides for each week will be posted to Carmen.

## Quizzes:

There will be a total of 6 in-class quizzes based on the assigned readings. These quizzes cannot be made up outside of class. That is, you must be in class in order to earn these points. I will drop your lowest score providing you some cushion should you need to miss class on the day of an in-class quiz.

## Assignments:

This class requires that you complete two group assignments. Detailed instructions for each assignment (including a rubric) are posted to Carmen. Your grade on each assignment will be determined by the overall quality of your group's output. Each member of your group will receive the same grade, so it is important that you work together in order to earn the best grade possible. **Every member must contribute to the group assignments. Failure to participate in the group assignments will result in a zero grade for the non-participating individual.**

*Class Expectations:* To verify your enrollment and participation, you must complete the class expectations assignment in Carmen by Friday of the first week. Students who fail to complete this assignment will be dropped from the class. This is an INDIVIDUAL (and not group) assignment. In this assignment, please tell me in a paragraph what it is that you are looking forward to in this class, or hope to learn this semester. This helps me tailor the class to your interests.

*Group Project Proposal:* The proposal should explain the topic your group is working on, and why. In 1-2 pages, your proposal **must** explain: (1) the mass media-based public health campaign that you will analyze, (2) the content and format features of the health campaign messages, and (3) the health-related theoretical framework(s) that you will use to guide your analysis of the campaign.

*Group Paper:* Project groups must submit a final paper based on their proposal. The paper should be approximately 8-10 pages in length (not including the title page, abstract, and references) and written in APA format (includes title page and abstract). Your group's paper must include: (1) overview of the mass media health campaign (e.g., its goal, audience, channels), (2) content and

format features of the health campaign messages, (3) theoretical framework, (4) analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the campaign according to the health-related theoretical framework (5) possible ways to overcome the weaknesses and improve the campaign, and (6) references.

*Group Presentation:* Group presentations will be held at the end of the semester. As with the paper, the presentation should cover (1) an overview of the mass media health campaign, (2) content and format features of the health campaign messages, (3) theoretical framework, (4) strengths and weaknesses of the campaign, and (5) how to improve the campaign. Presentations will be 20 minutes in length (including Q&A and discussion) and should be accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation. All students in the group should be involved in the presentation.

### **Extra Credit:**

*Participate in a Research Study:* Conducting scientific research is crucial to the mission and purpose of the School of Communication at The Ohio State University. You can earn 1 point of extra credit for each 0.5 hours of research participation (up to 4 points total) that you complete in School of Communication research studies. You must sign up for studies at: <https://osucomm.sona-systems.com/>. Be sure to read the detailed instructions on the SONA site. An alternative assignment is available if you do not wish to participate in a research study. Importantly, missing your research appointment or quickly clicking through surveys and giving researchers fake data will not earn participation credit. A non-research participation alternative is available if you wish to earn extra credit, but do not want to participate in a research study.

### **How to Succeed:**

*Show up:* My lectures may touch on some of the course readings, but most will focus on material that is not in the readings. It would be boring (and an insult to your intelligence) if you read a chapter only to hear me explain it to you again in lecture. You will be tested on material that is only covered in lecture.

*Do the readings:* Since my lectures will not focus on material not covered in the readings, it is critical that you do the class readings. The exams will include questions that are only discussed in the assigned reading.

*Don't fall behind:* We will cover a large amount of material this semester. You will quickly fall behind if you miss lectures or skip readings. Study as you go; do not try to cram before the exam.

*Take good notes:* Copying PowerPoint slides word-for-word is not effective! Just because you copied the definition of a key term does not necessarily mean that you understand this term. I will provide examples and context to help you understand the bigger picture. Jot these examples down and synthesize what these slides mean in your own words. To help, I will post my slides to Carmen after each lecture.

*Ask questions and participate:* This is an interactive class where you will learn from me, your peers, and by playing an active role in producing scientific knowledge. OSU students are smart and I know you have valuable insights to share with the class. You might not always agree with what I say. EXCELLENT! Speak up and voice your opinion. An honest and frank discussion of ideas is what makes science better (and fun)!

**Academic Integrity:**

All work must be the original work of the student and not turned in to any other course prior to this one. Cheating on exams is unacceptable and will result in: (1) a zero grade, and (2) a formal report to the School of Communication and the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

**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 3335-5-48.7). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>

**Accessibility accommodations for students with disabilities:**

Requesting Accommodations:

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know via email immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Student Life Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu); 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

**School of Communication Diversity Statement:**

The School of Communication at The Ohio State University embraces and maintains an environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, experiences, and people. Our commitment to diversity moves beyond mere tolerance to recognizing, understanding, and welcoming the contributions of diverse groups and the value group members possess as individuals. In our School, the faculty, students, and staff are dedicated to building a tradition of diversity with principles of equal opportunity, personal respect, and the intellectual interests of those who comprise diverse cultures.

**Title IX:**

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, [atitleix@osu.edu](mailto:atitleix@osu.edu)

**Student Academic Services:**

Arts and Sciences Advising and Academic Services website provides support for student academic success. Information on advising issues such as tutoring, transfer credits, academic standing, and contact information for Arts and Sciences advisors can be obtained through this website. The site is: <http://advising.osu.edu/welcome.shtml>

**Student Services:**

The Student Service Center assists with financial aid matters, tuition and fee payments. Please see their site at: <http://ssc.osu.edu>

**Policy on Selling Course Materials:**

Course materials may *never* be sold or shared outside of the class. The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

**Policy on Late Assignments or Missed Exams:**

Each assignment will require a combination of in-class and out-of-class collaboration with your group partners. Assignments build on each other and it is crucial that you have these assignments completed by the due date. Accordingly, assignments turned in after the due date will receive a zero grade. Failure to complete one assignment will also result in a failure to complete future assignments. Therefore, you must complete all assignments, even if you do not turn in all assignments for class credit.

Students are expected to attend class on all posted exam dates. Make-up exams are not allowed, except under the following circumstances: illness, death in the family, participation in an official University activity, or another documented emergency. In such circumstances, the student is required to provide official documentation for the emergency or conflict. In absence of such documentation, missed exams will result in a grade of zero points.

**Tentative Course Outline:**

The weekly coverage might change as it depends on the progress of the class.

Week	Content
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T Aug 21: Introduction &amp; Class Schedule</li> <li>• R Aug 23: Situating the Problem: Understanding the Opioid Epidemic</li> <li>• Reading: None</li> <li>• IMPORTANT: Class Expectations due Friday</li> </ul>
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T Aug 28: Media Effect on Health: Theoretical Foundations</li> <li>• R Aug 30: Media Effect on Health: Methodological Foundations</li> <li>• Reading: Cho, Ch. 1; Hornik &amp; Yanovitzky, 2003; Cappella, 2006; Hornik, 2002</li> </ul>
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T Sep 4: Integrative Model of Behavioral Prediction, Part 1</li> <li>• R Sep 6: Integrative Model of Behavioral Prediction, Part 2</li> <li>• Reading: Cho, Ch. 2</li> <li>• IMPORTANT: Form your group on Carmen</li> <li>• QUIZ 1 THURSDAY</li> </ul>
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T Sep 11: Activation Model of Information Exposure, Part 1</li> <li>• R Sep 13: Activation Model of Information Exposure, Part 2</li> <li>• Reading: Cho, Ch. 13</li> </ul>
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T Sep 18: Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion, Part 1</li> <li>• R Sep 20: Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion, Part 2</li> <li>• Reading: Petty et al., 2009</li> <li>• QUIZ 2 THURSDAY</li> </ul>

Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T Sep 25: Emotional Appeals, Part 1</li> <li>• R Sep 27: Emotional Appeals, Part 2</li> <li>• Reading: Cho, Ch. 3, 4</li> <li>• QUIZ 3 THURSDAY</li> </ul>
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T Oct 2: Review Session</li> <li>• R Oct 4: Exam 1</li> <li>• Reading: None, study for exam</li> </ul>
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T Oct 9: Paper Workshop</li> <li>• R Oct 11: No Class - Autumn Break</li> <li>• Reading: None, work on your proposal</li> <li>• IMPORTANT: Proposal due Tuesday</li> </ul>
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T Oct 16: Narriative, Part 1</li> <li>• R Oct 18: Narriative, Part 2</li> <li>• Reading: Cho, Ch. 6</li> <li>• QUIZ 4 THURSDAY</li> </ul>
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T Oct 23: Normative Appeals: Social Influence, Part 1</li> <li>• R Oct 25: Normative Appeals: Social Influence, Part 2</li> <li>• Reading: Cialdini, 2012</li> <li>• QUIZ 5 THURSDAY</li> </ul>
Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T Oct 30: Group Project Workshop</li> <li>• R Nov 1: Inoculation</li> <li>• Reading: Cho, Ch. 5</li> </ul>
Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T Nov 6: Health Literacy</li> <li>• R Nov 8: Group Project Workshop</li> <li>• Reading: Cho, Ch. 10</li> </ul>
Week 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T Nov 13: Message Targeting &amp; Tailoring, Part 1</li> <li>• R Nov 15: Message Targeting &amp; Tailoring, Part 2</li> <li>• Reading: Cho, Ch. 12</li> <li>• QUIZ 6 THURSDAY</li> </ul>
Week 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T Nov 20: Brains &amp; Health Campaigns</li> <li>• R Nov 22: No Class - Thanksgiving</li> <li>• Reading: Falk &amp; Scholz, 2018</li> </ul>
Week 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T Nov 27: Group Project Presentations</li> <li>• R Nov 29: Group Project Presentations</li> <li>• Reading: None</li> <li>• IMPORTANT: Upload a digital copy of your presentation to Carmen by Thursday</li> </ul>
Week 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T Dec 4: Review Session</li> <li>• T Dec 11: FINAL EXAM (2:00 - 3:45pm)</li> <li>• IMPORTANT: Group Paper Due Tuesday</li> </ul>