



POPM*6530 Health Communication

Fall 2019

Section(s): C01

Department of Population Medicine

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 1.00 - September 06, 2019

1 Course Details

1.1 Calendar Description

This course introduces communication theory, best practices, and skills related to public health. Students will learn about the written, oral, and visual communication of health information for professional, peer, and lay audiences. Students will apply their knowledge by creating a portfolio of health communication materials.

Restrictions: MPH students. Instructor consent required.

1.2 Course Description

Communication is a core competency for effective public health practice. This graduate-level course introduces communication theory, best practices, and skills related to public health. Students will learn about the written, oral, and visual communication of health information for professional, peer, and lay audiences. Students will apply what they have learned through assessing existing health communication materials and creating their own portfolio of health communication materials.

1.3 Timetable

Timetable is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

1.4 Final Exam

Exam time and location is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

2 Instructional Support

Instructor: Melissa MacKay
Email: melissam@uoguelph.ca
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday by appointment

Lecture Day and Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10:00 – 11:20am
Lecture Location: LLC 1715

Graduate Teaching Assistant: Erin Rodenburg
Email: erodenbu@uoguelph.ca
Office Hours: By appointment

3 Learning Resources

3.1 Required Resources

Health Literacy in Canada: A Primer for Students (Textbook)

Hoffman-Goetz, L., Donelle, L. & Ahmed, R. (2014). Health Literacy in Canada: A Primer for Students. Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, Inc.

3.2 Other Resources

CourseLink

While lectures are delivered in-class, the CourseLink site will be used extensively throughout the course. Announcements, lectures notes, resources, readings, and assignments will be posted there. In addition, the discussion board will be open and active. Students are expected to visit the site often to obtain course materials and stay up to date.

Readings

A limited number of additional readings will be assigned throughout the course to complement the textbook and in-class instruction. Examples of these include:

Freimuth, V.S. & Quinn, S. (2004). The contributions of health communication to eliminating health disparities. *American Journal of Public Health*, 94, 205-2055.

Fishbein, M. & Cappella, J.N. (2006). The role of theory in developing effective health communications. *Journal of Communication*, 56, S1–S17.

Sandman, P.M. & Lanard, J. (2003) Risk Communication Recommendations for Infectious Disease Outbreaks. Prepared for the World Health Organization.

Covello, V.T. (2010). Best practices in public health risk and crisis communication. *Journal of Health Communication*, 8, S5-S8.

Houts, P.S., et al. (2006). The role of pictures in improving health communication: A review of research on attention, comprehension, recall, and adherence. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 61, 173-190.

Noar, S.M. (2006). A 10-year retrospective of research in health mass media campaigns: Where do we go from here? *Journal of Health Communication*, 11, 21-42.

Resources

Selected resources have been compiled to assist you with critiquing and creating health communication materials. Examples of these include:

CDC Gateway to Health Communication & Social Marketing Practice:
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/toolstemplates/>

US Department of Health and Human Services (2004). The Pink Book: Making Health Communication Programs Work. <http://www.cancer.gov/pinkbook>

4 Learning Outcomes

As reflected in the Public Health Agency of Canada's Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada (Category Six: Communication), upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Communicate effectively with peers, public health professionals, and lay audiences.
 2. Interpret information for professional audiences, non-professional audiences, and community audiences.
 3. Mobilize individuals and communities by using appropriate media, community resources, and social marketing techniques.
 4. Use current technology to communicate effectively.
In addition, this course will enable students to:
 5. Describe and utilize key health communication theories.
 6. Assess the readability of written health communication materials.
 7. Understand and articulate the importance of health literacy for health communication.
 8. Think critically about health reporting in the mass media.
 9. Interpret evidence from health and medical literature and package it for both professional and lay audiences.
 10. Understand how visual images influence the interpretation of health information.
 11. Apply health communication theories and best practices in the development of communication materials for a variety of audiences.
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5 Teaching and Learning Activities

Week	Agenda Topics	Assignments & Readings*

Sept 5	Introduction to Health Communication	Review course outline
Sept 10	Introduction to Health Communication Audiences for Health Communication	
Sept 11	Communicating with Lay Audiences Health Literacy & Plain Language	Chapters 1 & 2 (Health Literacy from a Canadian Perspective; What is Health Literacy?)
Sept 17	Why Study Health Communication Health Communication Theory	Chapters 3 & 4 (Population Measures of Literacy and Health Literacy; Health Literacy as a Social Determinant of Health)
Sept 19	Message Framing Risk Communication	Chapter 8 (Risk Communication and Health Literacy)
Sept 24	The "Other" Side of Health Communication	Documentary & Discussion
Sept 26	Visual Health Communication	Assignment 1 due (Communication Critique)
Oct 1	Verbal Communication	
Oct 3	Videos and Infographics	Guest Lecture- Shannon Brown Knowledge Mobilization Manager, University of Guelph
Oct 8	No Class. Fall Study Break Day.	

Oct 10	Communicating with Scientific Audiences	
Oct 15	Communicating with Peers	
Oct 17	Communicating Public Health Research and Evidence-Informed Decision Making	Guest Lecture- Emily Clark Knowledge Broker, NCCMT
Oct 22	Mass Media & Health Information	Assignment 2 due (Communication Portfolio) Chapter 7 (Mass Media and Health Literacy)
Oct 24	Entertainment, Celebrity, & Health	
Oct 29	Social Media & Health Communication	Chapter 6 (Information Technology and Health Literacy)
Oct 31	Online Health Communication	
Nov 5	Marketing Yourself & Your Skills	Career Services Workshop (tentative)
Nov 7	Culture & Communication	Guest lecture Chapter 5 (Culture and Health Literacy)
Nov 12	Clinical Health Communication	Chapter 9 (Health Literacy in the Clinical Context)
Nov 14	Knowledge Translation	

Nov 19, 21, 26	Student Presentations	Assignment 3 due (Communication Portfolio, Nov 26) Assignment 4 due (Final Presentation, Nov 19-26)
Nov 28	Conclusion to Health Communication	Chapter 10 (Health Literacy Interventions in Canada)

*Additional readings corresponding to each lecture will be posted in courselink

6 Assessments

Evaluation for this course will see students complete assignments clustered in three groups around evaluating, creating, and sharing health communication materials:

Area	Assignment	Weight	Communication Skills & Audience
Evaluate	1. Communication Critiques Evaluating Existing Communication Materials (15%)	15%	Written, visual, verbal; general public audience
Create	2. Communication Portfolio Visual & Verbal Communication Materials (35%) 3. Communication Portfolio	75%	Written, visual, verbal; general public & professional audiences

	Written Communication Materials (40%)		
Share	4. Final Presentation Slides & Oral Presentation (10%)	10%	Written, verbal; professional & peer audiences

6.1 Marking Schemes & Distributions

Overview of Assignments

Students will be provided with separate instructions and details on each of the assignments for this course. A brief description of each of the assignments, and their weighting, is as follows:

1. Communication Critique (Assignment 1: 15%)

Students will read a written health information document geared to the general public. Using it, and the readings, they will complete the following: determine the readability (reading grade level) of the document using the SMOG formula; re-write the document at a more appropriate reading grade level; and analyze the document for the use of best practices in risk communication. In addition, a one-page reflection on the challenges of writing in clear language will be submitted. The focus of this assignment is on critiquing health communication material aimed at the general public.

1. Communication Portfolio (75%)

Students will create a variety of public health messages presented through different mediums. A communication portfolio will be developed containing health communication materials designed and created by the student from each

of the major health communication domains: written, visual, and oral. Students will also write brief critical reflections about the development of the materials and the rationale behind them. The focus of this assignment is on creating materials for the general public and professional/peer audiences. Importantly, it enables students to apply what they have learned during course lectures and readings.

Visual & Verbal Communication Materials (Assignment 2: 35%)

Example materials: speech/mini TED talk, radio PSA, media interview, photograph or photo essay, infographic, short video

Written Communication Materials (Assignment 3: 40%)

Example materials: journal article (commentary format), lay abstract, press release, newspaper article (op-ed), fact sheet, tweet, blog post, briefing note, speaking notes

1. Final Presentation (Assignment 4: 10%)

Near the end of scheduled classes, students will share select items from their communication portfolios through a brief oral presentation, class discussion, and slide deck. This presentation emphasizes communicating with peer audiences and provides students with an opportunity to showcase their hard work and creativity.

7 Course Statements

7.1 Other Policies and Useful Links

Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

In-Class Behaviour

Students are expected to come to lectures prepared for the class. Questions are encouraged at any time during a lecture provided that they do not interfere with the other students' ability to take in the material presented. Students are expected to treat each other with the utmost respect; disruptions to the class will not be permitted.

Course Evaluation

An opportunity will be provided for students to evaluate the course and the course instructor. This evaluation will be conducted online. Further information and instructions about this will be shared in class. Your time to complete these evaluations is appreciated as the results help to inform future teaching and content of the course.

Environmental Policy

We would like to minimize the use of paper in this course and therefore encourage you to hand in assignments electronically.

Counselling Services

Counselling Services offer individual counselling sessions to help support students as they work through the personal challenges that impair their ability to succeed at school and in other areas of their lives.

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/counselling/>

Student Health Services

Students Health Services offers a variety of health care services, including primary health care, a walk-in clinic, and on-site laboratory testing.

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/studenthealthservices/>

Health and Performance Centre

The Health and Performance Centre specializes in the diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of acute and chronic orthopaedic, musculoskeletal, sport, and activity related injuries. The Centre also provides a variety of health promotion services including fitness and nutrition expertise and professional bicycle fitting.

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/hpc/volunteer-health-and-performance-centre>

The Learning Commons

The Learning Commons brings together services that support students in their learning, writing, research, numeracy, and the use of technology. In addition, they provide expertise and resources for faculty, staff, and teaching assistants to support and enhance learning in their courses and across the curricula.

http://www.learningcommons.uoguelph.ca/guides/university_learning/

8 University Statements

8.1 Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

8.2 When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. The grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

8.3 Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The

deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate and diploma) except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

8.4 Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

8.5 Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance and not later than the 40th Class Day.

More information can be found on the SAS website

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

8.6 Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community—faculty, staff, and students—to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff, and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that encourages academic integrity. Students need to remain aware that

instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

8.7 Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work - including lectures - cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

8.8 Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs.

Academic Calendars

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>
