



COMM 103: HEALTH COMMUNICATION

Proposer:
Name:

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Effective Term:

Fall 2026

Does this course use a CA Common Course Number

No

Credit Status:

Credit - Degree Applicable

Subject:

COMM - Communication

Course Number:

103

Discipline:

| And/Or | (| Discipline |) |
|--------|---|-----------------------|---|
| | | Communication Studies | |

Catalog Title

Health Communication

COS Course Description

Health Communication examines the social, cultural, and behavioral dimensions of communication in health contexts. Using communication and social science theories, students examine how culture, identity, and social systems shape health beliefs and behaviors in interpersonal, organizational, and mass media settings. Topics include provider–patient communication, cultural differences, how communication affects health outcomes, and the social construction of health through media and public discourse. Through case studies and applied analysis, students learn how communication influences health outcomes and the way societies understand wellness, illness, and care.

Method of Instruction:

Distance Education

Lecture and/or Discussion

Course Units/Hours:
Course Units Minimum:

3

Lecture Hours Minimum (week)

3

Total Contact Hours Minimum (semester)

52.5

Total Outside Hours Minimum (semester)

105

Total Student Learning Minimum Hours (semester)

157.5

Repeatability:

No

**Open Entry/Exit:**

No

Field Trips:

Not Required

Grade Mode:

Standard Letter

TOP Code:

150600 - Speech Communication

SAM Code:

E - Non-Occupational

Course Content**COS Methods of Evaluation:**

Essay quizzes or exams
 Multiple choice tests
 Short answer quizzes or exams
 Written essays or extended papers

COS Course Topics:

| COS Course Topics | |
|-------------------|--|
| 1 | Theoretical frameworks of health communication (interpersonal, organizational, mass media) |
| 2 | Communication between healthcare providers and clients, including institutional interactions |
| 3 | Cultural, ethnic, gender, age, and socioeconomic influences on health communication and outcomes |
| 4 | Media and public-health campaigns: Message design, persuasion, audience reception, evaluation |
| 5 | Public policy, institutions and health systems: How communication shapes and is shaped by healthcare systems |
| 6 | Health disparities, diversity, and the impact of communication practices on marginalized populations |
| 7 | Mass media, digital media and health information: Misinformation, crisis communication, health literacy |
| 8 | Research methods and analysis in health communication studies: Case studies, quantitative/qualitative approaches |

COS Course Objectives:

| COS Course Objectives | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1 | Explain how interpersonal, organization, and mass communication function among health providers, family caregivers, patients, and the public, and analyze how these perspectives intersect within social systems. |
| 2 | Examine the role of communication in maintaining health, shaping beliefs about illness and wellness, and influencing coping and decision-making. |
| 3 | Analyze disparities in health communication experienced by women, minorities, and non-western cultures, and evaluate how cultural and structural factors affect access and outcomes. |
| 4 | Apply communication and social-science theories to real-world health communication challenges in interpersonal, organizational, and media contexts. |
| 5 | Compare and contrast models of healthcare to understand how institutional structures and communication practices mutually shape one another. |
| 6 | Evaluate narrative and identity processes through which individuals and communities make sense of illness, wellness, and healing. |
| 7 | Assess and design approaches for translating research into practice, including community-based participatory research, education, documentaries, and health campaigns, with attention to social impact and ethical communication. |

Course Outcomes:

| Course Outcomes | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Analyze how communication processes influence health beliefs, behaviors, and outcomes at the interpersonal, organizational, and societal levels. |
| 2 | Apply communication and social-sciences theories to interpret real-world health communication issues, including public health campaigns and media portrayals. |
| 3 | Evaluate how culture, gender, and structural inequalities shape access to and effectiveness of health communication. |
| 4 | Critically assess ethical considerations and social consequences of health messages across diverse contexts, including mass media and healthcare institutions. |
| 5 | Demonstrate the ability to synthesize theory, research, and social analysis in developing informed, culturally aware approaches to health communication challenges. |

Assignments:

| Assignment Type: | Details |
|------------------|--|
| Reading | Students read a set of short articles or excerpts from health communication case studies found in the textbook (e.g. patient narratives, media coverage, or public health campaign analyses). After reading, students will write a brief reflection identifying how cultural values, gender norms, or institutional power structures influence communication about illness or wellness. |
| Writing | Students will select a public health campaign (e.g., COVID-19 vaccination, mental health awareness, or anti-smoking efforts) and apply a social-science or communication theory (such as Social Cognitive Theory or the Health Belief Model) to evaluate its design, message framing, and social impact. Papers should address how social identities and systemic factors influence both message creation and audience interpretation. |
| Homework | In small groups, students create a visual or written analysis of how health information flows through a specific context (e.g., hospitals, community clinics, social media). They identify key communicators, audiences, and barriers and discuss how societal factors (like economics, culture, and access) shape that communication flow. |

Representative Texts, Manuals, and/or OER that is equivalent, Other Support Materials:

Texts used by individual institutions and even individual sections will vary. The list of representative texts must include at least one text with a publication date within five (5) years of the course outline approval date.

COS Textbooks or other support materials

| Resource Type: | Details |
|----------------|--|
| Books | Harrington, N. G., & Record, R. A. (2024). Health Communication: Research and Practice for a Diverse and Changing World, 2nd edition, Published by Routledge, ISBN 9781032100470 |
| | Lewis, B., (2014), Health Communication: A Media and Cultural Studies Approach, Bloomsbury Publishing, ISBN 9780230298323. |

Transferable to CSU

Yes - Approved

This course will also be proposed for UC transfer.

Yes

Other Degree Attributes

Degree Applicable
Not a Basic Skills Course

Distance Learning Addendum

COMM 103 - DLA - Fall 2025.pdf

Banner Title:

Health Communication



Course Control Number:

CCC000604420

Equity Review

Select elements of the COR that were reviewed for equity. Must select at least one:

Assignments

Description