

New York City College of Technology

Humanities Department

Instructor's Name:

Contact Email:

Office Hours:

Course: COM 2403 Health Communication

Semester:

Meeting days and times:

3 credit hours

PATHWAYS: Individual and Society | Writing Intensive (WI)

Course Prerequisite: ENG 1101 OR COM 1330 or higher

Health Communication

Course Description

The study and practice of communication as it relates to health professionals and patient outcomes. Topics include provider-patient interaction, team communication, and the diffusion of health information through public health campaigns. Students learn the basics of clear, purposeful and compassionate communication across multiple channels, to reduce errors and provide better health care delivery.

The minimum technological requirements for fully online sections of this course are a working camera and microphone. Students are expected to turn on cameras and microphones at their instructor's request.

This class meets synchronously using Zoom. Broadband internet and computer necessary. Attending class on a smartphone or tablet is discouraged. During each class, you need to appear live, onscreen, to receive full participation credit. Familiarity with the use of Brightspace, City Tech email, Microsoft Office, and Zoom is required.

Technology Support

Academic Technologies and Online Learning ([Atol](#)) contact details:

General Phone: (718)254-8565

Website: <https://www.citytech.cuny.edu/atol/>

Standard Textbook

Athena du Pré & Barbara Cook Overton. *Communicating About Health*, 6th Ed. ISBN13: 9780190924362

Other required reading materials and videos posted on the course Brightspace site (Bb) by the instructor and students of this course.

Introducing Health Communication

Health communication refers to human interactions that influence health and wellness outcomes. It is concerned with how healthcare providers interact with their patients, as well as health promotion campaigns in

the media. This class co-creates a definition for health communication, drawing on humanistic, social-scientific and medical approaches.

Topics we cover

- Structural and social determinants of health from a communication perspective
- Health education, health literacy and inequities
- Cultural and linguistic influences on health
- Communication in medical environments
- Health promotion and health marketing
- Health in the media
- Simulating medical scenarios
- Implications of healthcare information and communication technologies

Course Objectives

- To communicate across different communication modalities (face-to-face, electronic, etc.)
- To identify structural factors that foster and inhibit communication in health contexts
- To consider the politics of representation in health media
- To practice communicating through campaigns to promote public health
- To simulate conversations about health and wellness
- To use participation-observation and media analysis to become keen observers and listeners
- To write in the “first person” to welcome our own experiences
- To consider the needs of persons with varying levels of English literacy
- To address an on-going national healthcare crisis

Description of Assignments

Quizzes

Students complete 14 open book quizzes on Brightspace. Each has 20-25 T/F and multiple-choice questions. You can do each quiz three times (your highest score will be used). There is no time limit once you begin the quiz, but each one has a deadline as stated on the syllabus and Brightspace. You may wish to read ahead and take quizzes before they are assigned.

Writing Prompts and Sharing

At the start of class, a writing prompt appears onscreen with ten minutes to write an answer. Your response is “stream of consciousness”—meaning, spontaneous and impressionistic. You are encouraged to share personal experiences but remember your right to privacy as well. If you do not feel comfortable sharing personal details, there are other forms of writing the instructor can suggest. After, volunteers share what they wrote with the class. Others are encouraged to relate their own experiences to what was shared. You are awarded full credit for each prompt completed (no letter grade).

Online Discussion Boards

There are seven Discussion Board Forums on Brightspace. You respond to the instructor’s prompt in each “forum” by creating your own “thread.” At the end of your thread, pose a question to readers to spark

discussion. In addition, you will read threads posted by others and *reply* to at least three. For full credit, each thread needs to be 225 words, minimum. Each reply needs to be at least three complete sentences. Users can post links to news stories, videos and other websites. The Discussion Board is “asynchronous,” meaning, you can log in, post and reply any time, but please note due dates for each.

Participation

A significant portion of your grade depends on your active participation and how you conduct yourself in the class. Classroom participation applies to online behavior as well as in-person classroom behavior. This requirement consists of the following components: (a) active and timely participation during virtual or in-person class discussions (b) active and timely participation during virtual or in-person group work or peer feedback (c) punctual submission of graded assignments, including those assigned to an online platform or presented orally during a virtual lesson (d) the quality of your written and spoken assignments (e) the quality of online self-presentation including appropriate attire, seating, lighting, and background (f) overall classroom interactions and communication ethics.

Final Presentations

Work on Final Presentations begin early in the term, and they are presented during the last 3 weeks. Final presentation is evaluated by classmates and Instructor. Please choose only one of the three choices below:

1. *Health in the News*: Find recent news articles related to a health issue that interests you, relevant to the subject matter of Health Communication. Conduct research on the topic and prepare a presentation that clearly summarizes the issue and presents your critical assessment. Presentation should include a succinct summary of issue, reference to the news stories and course material, and a critique or evaluative response.
2. *Observation Report of a Healthcare Setting*: Involves an (at-least) one-hour observation, note-taking and write-up of a healthcare setting. Using a participant-observation approach requires immersing yourself in a setting, paying close attention to what is happening, taking notes and asking questions. Your presentation should include vivid details of your observation and interaction and an explanation of how you connect the observation report to the course material. Note that outside research is still required.
3. *Design a Health Campaign*: This assignment gives you the chance to design a strategic intervention for health issue. For COMD and PTW students, this is an opportunity to use your design and writing skills to make a print ad, fact sheet, press release, audio or video spot, or social media campaign. Your media work (slides, audio-visual recording, poster, etc.) must be accompanied by a rationale where you explain your methodology and how the evidence base (i.e., what we know about what works) supports your approach.

Final Presentation Requirements:

- Detailed, typed sentence outline (AKA manuscript) with in-text citations and References section.
- Requires outside research and citing 3 to 5 sources ONLY.
- Structured presentation with distinct Introduction, Body and Conclusion (and required sub-parts).
- Visual aids must feature high resolution images, with very little text on slides.

- Polished, 8 -10 minute in-class presentation, delivered extemporaneously (not entirely read off script).
- Presentation is followed by a short question/answer period (about 5 minutes).

NOTE: All Final Presentations with copy/pasted/plagiarized text will automatically be assigned a grade of F. No exceptions.

DRAFT of sentence outline with References and slides is due early in the semester.

REVISED sentence outline and slides due before your Final Presentation date.

Peer Evaluations:

Following Final Presentations, students complete thorough peer evaluations. Evaluators consider the speaker's content, delivery, and visual aids. The evaluation requires detailed comments showing that you listened closely, as well as constructive criticism that may help the speaker improve. This assignment takes place in the last three weeks, only.

Grading and Weight of Assignments

Quizzes	10%
Writing Prompt and sharing	10%
Online Discussion Boards	10%
Manuscript (First Draft)	10%
REVISED Manuscript	10%
Slides	10%
Oral Presentation	10%
Peer Evaluations	10%
Simulations and Impromptus	10%
<u>Class Participation</u>	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE

Week 1	
Title	Welcome to Health Communication
Activities	Roll call, syllabus overview and introduction to Brightspace site
Reading for next class	Chapter (Intro) & Chapter 2 (Landscape of Health Communication)
Homework assigned	Chapter 1 & 2 Quizzes; Discussion Board "About Me"
Homework due	N/A
Week 2	
Title	Intro to Health Com
Topics	Biomedical and biopsychosocial model; Social determinants of health
Reading for next class	Ch. 3 (Patient-Caregiver Communication) Ch. 4 (Patient Perspectives)
Homework assigned	Chapter 3 & 4 Quizzes; Discussion Board "Communicating Empathy"

Homework due	Chapter 1 & 2 Quizzes; Discussion Board “About Me” due
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Week 3	
Title	Assigning Final Presentations (choose presentation order)
Topics	Sentence outlines; structure; sources and citing; verbal and nonverbal delivery
Reading for next class	Chapters 5 (Caregiver Perspectives)
Homework assigned	Sentence outlines; slides; Chapter 5 Quiz; Discussion Board “Medical Errors”
Homework due	Chapter 3 & 4 Quizzes; Discussion Board “Communicating Empathy” due

Week 4	
Title	Patient/Provider Communication (and simulations)
Topics	Stages of change; motivational interviewing
Reading for next class	Chapter 6 (Diversity and Health Care)
Homework assigned	Chapter 6 Quiz; Work on Sentence outline; Disc. Board “Racism & Health”
Homework due	Chapter 5 Quiz; Discussion Board “Medical Errors” due

Week 5	
Title	Equity and Literacy
Reading for next class	Chapter 7 (Cultural Conceptions of Health and Illness)
Homework assigned	Chapter 7 Quiz; Discussion Board “Health & Safety at Work” Keep working on outline and slides
Homework due	Chapter 6 Quiz; Discussion Board “Racism & Health” due

Week 6	
Title	Culture & Diversity
Topics	Cultural competency; cultural dimensions; cultural sensitivity
Reading for next class	Chapter 8 (Social Support, Family Caregiving & End of Life)
Homework assigned	Chapter 8 quiz; Discussion Board “Evaluating Webpage or App”
Homework due	Chapter 7 Quiz; Discussion Board “Health & Safety at Work” due

Week 7	
Title	Health Outside of Healthcare
Topics	Social support; Making sense of illness, injury, death and healing
Reading for next class	Chapter 9 (eHealth, mHealth & Telehealth)
Homework assigned	Chapter 9 Quiz; Discussion Board “DTC Advertising”
Homework due	Chapter 8 quiz; Discussion Board “Evaluating Webpage or App” due Sentence outline + slides due for first group of speakers

Week 8	
Title	Theories of Health Com
Reading for next class	Chapter 10 (Healthcare Admin, Human Resources, Marketing and PR)
Homework assigned	Chapter 10 Quiz;
Homework due	Chapter 9 Quiz; Discussion Board “DTC Advertising” due

	Sentence outline + slides due for second group of speakers
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Week 9	
Title	Social Support
Reading for next class	Chapter 11 (Health Images in the Media)
Homework assigned	Chapter 11 Quiz; Discussion Board
Homework due	Chapter 10 Quiz; Sentence outline + slides due for third group of speakers

Week 10	
Title	eHealth, mHealth and Telehealth
Topics	Information literacy; digital divide
Reading for next class	Chapter 12 (Public Health and Crisis Communication)
Homework assigned	Chapter 12 Quiz; Practice presentation
Homework due	Chapter 11 Quiz

Week 11	
Title	Health & the Media
Topics	Media literacy; communication theory
Reading for next class	Chapter 13 (Planning Health Promotion Campaigns)
Homework assigned	Chapter 13 Quiz; Revise sentence outline and practice Final Presentation
Homework due	Chapter 12 Quiz

Week 12	
Title	Health Campaigns & Risk/Crisis Communication
Topics	Public health; communicating health risks
Reading for next class	Chapter 14 (Designing and Implementing Health Campaigns)
Homework assigned	Chapter 14 Quiz; Revise sentence outline and practice Final Presentation
Homework due	Chapter 13 Quiz; Practice presentation

Week 13	
Activities	Final Presentations
Due	Peer evaluations; For speakers, REVISED Sentence outline and slides due Chapter 14 Quiz

Week 14	
Activities	Final Presentations
Due	Peer evaluations; For speakers, REVISED Sentence outline and slides due

Week 15	
Activities	Final Presentations
Due	Peer evaluations; For speakers, REVISED Sentence outline and slides due

CLASS POLICIES

Humanities Department Policy on Absences/Lateness

It is the conviction of the Humanities department that a student who is not in a class for any reason is not receiving the benefit of the education being provided. Missed class time includes not just absences but also lateness, early departures, and time outside the classroom taken by students during class meeting periods. Missed time impacts any portion of the final grade overtly allocated to participation and/or any grades awarded for activities that relate to presence in class.

School of Arts and Sciences Attendance Statement

When students miss class, they do not receive the full benefit of their education. Missing class includes absence, lateness, early departure and stepping out for prolonged periods during the session. Students must attend class consistently and on time: Failure to do so will negatively affect the final grade and could lead to an 'F' in the course.

Plagiarism and NYCCT Academic Integrity Policy:

"Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion." (See pp. 73-76 in the student handbook). The following are some examples of plagiarism:

- Copy/pasting words without putting in quotes and citing in-text as (Author, year) or ("Title" year)
- Reading copy/pasted text without telling the audience those are not your words
- Not saying the name of the source aloud while speaking ("According to the CDC...")
- Presenting another person's ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging the source
- Using ANY information without acknowledging the source (unless it's common knowledge)

Speech assignments must be paraphrased into your own language and properly cited.

Make-Up Policies

Because of scheduling difficulties for in-class assignments, quizzes, and presentations, make-up work is only possible in the case of documented medical emergencies.

Accessibility Statement

City Tech is committed to supporting the educational goals of enrolled students with disabilities in the areas of enrollment, academic advisement, tutoring, assistive technologies and testing accommodations. If you have or think you may have a disability, you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments as provided under applicable federal, state and city laws. You may also request services for temporary conditions or medical issues under certain circumstances. If you have questions about your eligibility or would like to seek accommodation services or academic adjustments, you can leave a voicemail at 718 260 5143, send an email to Accessibility@citytech.cuny.edu or visit the Center's website at <http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/accessibility/> for more information.

Humanities Department Commitment to Student Diversity

The Humanities Department complies with the college wide nondiscrimination policy and seeks to foster a safe and inclusive learning environment that celebrates diversity in its many forms and enhances our students' ability to be informed, global citizens. Through our example, we demonstrate an appreciation of the rich diversity of world cultures and the unique forms of expression that make us human.

Communication Discipline-Specific Policies & Guidelines for Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

Analytical and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course and the Communication discipline; therefore, all written and oral assignments must be prepared by the student. The instructor may allow for the limited use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI). Students will learn both when and how these tools may be used, and when and how to provide attribution. Generative AI can produce inaccurate or biased information, based on limited knowledge or citing fake references, and resulting in copyright and confidentiality infringement. Therefore, you will be held accountable for work that includes

- Incorrect, fake, and fabricated sources, or information misattributed to sources
- AI-generated work presented as original work (including essays, research papers, speech outlines, discussion boards, PowerPoints, etc.)
- Any AI generated text copied/pasted without attribution.
- Assessments, quizzes, and exams completed using AI
- AI generated imagery or multimedia without acknowledgement and citation of AI platform as creator
- AI-generated misinformation, including incorrect, biased, misinformed, or misleading claims

Any use of generative AI tools as described above will be treated as academic dishonesty and/or plagiarism and will be reported to the College Academic Integrity Committee. While understanding *how* and *when* to use generative AI tools may be emerging as a professional job skill, ethics still matter and being careful not to spread misinformation is foremost. Developing strong ethics and a sense of responsibility in this area will prepare you for graduation and a competitive workplace. If you allow AI to think for you, then you may not be able to do the kind of thinking that leads to success.

COURSE INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES/ASSESSMENT METHODS

PATHWAYS LEARNING OUTCOMES (INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY)	ASSESSMENT METHODS
Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.	Discussion board requires linking to editorials expressing different viewpoints; final assignments require library research
Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.	Content analysis assignment and ethnography assignment require critical analysis of evidence and identification of frames and biases using frame analysis techniques
Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.	Manuscript and oral presentation require arguments supported with evidence from observational details (ethnography), specific textual examples (content analysis) and scholarly literature of behavior change (health campaign)
Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the relationship between the individual and	Through introduction of research methods during final assignment selection, students recognize Health Communication as an interdisciplinary practice grounded in Communication Studies with insights from behavioral

society, including, but not limited to, anthropology, communications, cultural studies, history, journalism, philosophy, political science, psychology, public affairs, religion, and sociology.	psychology, public health and other fields. Quizzes and Discussion Board prompts require the identification of ideas from various disciplines.
Examine how an individual's place in society affects experiences, values, or choices.	Lectures identify social, behavioral, cultural and socioeconomic predictors of health outcomes, while writing prompts in the first person (and resulting discussions) enlist students to identify communication problems in health care based on their own encounters <i>as</i> providers or <i>with</i> providers.
Articulate ethical uses of data and other information resources to respond to problems and questions.	Because health is at stake, evidence is mandatory when students make claims about health. They are required to conduct research, determine credible sources, and provide evidence to support their claims. They are evaluated on the care which they take in correctly citing information sources, in-text, in a References section and aloud when speaking.

Updated 5/2025 by David Lee