

Health Communication
Comm 303, Spring 2019
T, TH 12:30-1:50, MCEWEN 202

Instructor: Dr. Toluwani Oloke

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Office Hours: T, TH 2:15 p.m.-2:50 p.m., and by appointment

Dept of Communication: 324 McEwen Hall, 673-3410

Course Goals & Description

Course Description and Outcomes: This course is designed as a broad overview of the fields of and theories used to investigate and understand science and health communication, and communication's effect on public understanding. The class will be useful for you if you plan to: do research or teaching in the science, technology or health communication fields; if you are interested in policy development, or the role of communication in promoting public health; prepare for a career working in science communication or consulting to businesses in the government, science, health or technology fields; work as a public information officer in a research, health or technology organization, nonprofit, or to become a better consumer of health and science information (meaning to assess the credibility, risks and benefits of that information), etc. For any of these purposes, it is vitally important that you understand: what's happening in the field and how the gap between access to health information and informed health decision making is widening as information consumers are struggling to understand, evaluate and find credible information; and how it is exacerbating the health disparities among some groups. So you must understand the barriers and opportunities.

Recommended Texts:

Wright, K.B., Sparks, H., & O'Hair, D.H. (2013). *Health communication in the 21st Century*(2nd ed.). Malden, MA: Wiley- Blackwell Publishing.

e-text: ISBN-10 1118339800; ISBN-13 9781118339800

print: ISBN-10 0470672722; ISBN-13 9780470672723

National Cancer Institute (NCI) The Pink Book – Making Health Communication Programs

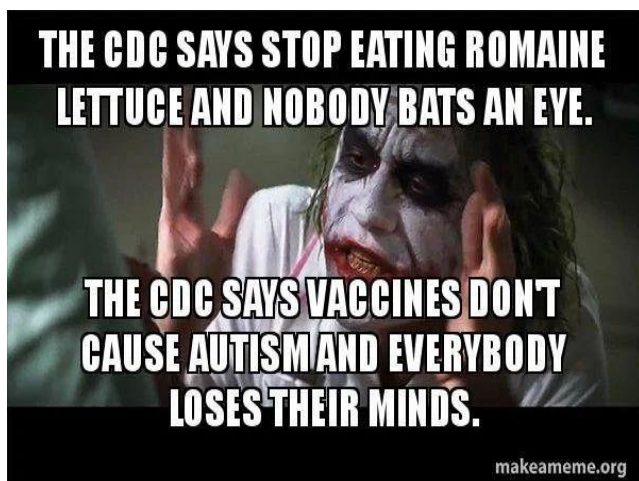
Work <http://www.cancer.gov/publications/health-communication/pink-book.pdf>

*This class strives to include multiple and diverse perspectives from a variety of stakeholders and interest groups to inform your appreciation for differing viewpoints in a global society.

Over the next few weeks we'll be reading the literature in this rather broad and unique field so that you will understand:

- How science and health are communicated through the gamut of traditional and emerging media, and how that communication impacts knowledge, attitudes and behavior
- The implications of messages conveyed through traditional, Internet and social media. In other words, how technology and social media have changed the face of science and health communication
- The challenges to communicating the uncertainty of science and health
- The “players” in the field: The nexus among scientists/health researchers, journalists, public information officers (in other words, science communicators) and audiences and the communication among them
- The “problem” of health literacy and how to engage various audiences
- The most common theories used to comprehend the issues in science and health communication
- Risk issues in communicating health
- The impact of science/health communication on policy; politics of science

- The issues that make science and health news today
- Controversies/ethical considerations in science/health
- Framing of science and health issues by communicators, scientists, policy makers;
- framing as a method of researching audience meaning of text and framing theory
- How to think strategically about the use of communication
- TV/film's influence on health and science
- The future for science/health communication



Many of the issues we will be discussing and debating won't have clear-cut answers or solutions, so class discussion is very important to raise the issues. It may be frustrating at times, but this is why you should know more about how difficult it is to communicate science and health information.

Because the list of possible important topics to cover in this class is endless, choices needed to be made to provide an overview of the field. Therefore, topics such as interpersonal communication in healthcare, the health care and insurance system, etc., that could be classes in themselves, will not be addressed in depth.

In doing so, this course also addresses the following **Department of Communication Learning Goals**, which state that *Students will demonstrate the ability to be:* (1. *Inclusive:* understand, evaluate, and communicate creatively—within and across technically and culturally diverse groups—in ways that responsibly confirm the value of all members. (2. *Analytical:* evaluate and creatively consider communication locally, globally, and historically through perspectives relevant to their specific major. (3. *Engaged:* extend and apply skills and knowledge to create community connections beyond the university that foster professional, civic, and developmental engagement. (4. *Ethical:* understand and apply ethical principles to the practice of communication in research, interactions, and creative processes in diverse social, cultural, and professional spheres. (5. *Problem Solving:* develop and implement creative, knowledge-based solutions across a variety of communication contexts within and beyond the university. (6. *Proficient:* forge connections between the skills and knowledge acquired in their communication major with their lives, careers, and education beyond the baccalaureate.

Department of Communication Philosophy

Communication does not exist outside of relationships. With this in mind, the faculty of the SUNY Fredonia Department of Communication believe that all communicators, whether in the classroom, on the air, or within created works, have a responsibility to themselves and their audience.

The faculty believe that it is our responsibility to provide perspective and structure as students make choices about their work, and consequently, about themselves and who they are as adults and scholars. We encourage students to make the effort to consider the consequences of their choices for themselves, for others, and for those relationships.

The faculty encourages projects and behaviors that are undertaken with thoughtful respect and consideration for others. We support and encourage work that is both ethical and enriching to the students' community and to personal and professional relationships.

All students should review the **Department of Communication Ethical and Professional Standards** at <http://www.fredonia.edu/departement/communication/standards.asp>

Instructor Philosophy/Availability

This is a rigorous and discussion-intensive course; you will be exposed to issues, perspectives, and theoretical concepts that will demand a high level of effort and engagement. I will conduct each class and our interactions with these expectations. **If at any time during this semester, you feel that my expectations are unclear, have difficulty meeting any of the above requirements, or have any course-related concerns, please talk with me – preferably *before* it becomes an issue (for assignments, *prior to* any due date) – so that we can discuss a solution. I make an effort to always be accessible both in and out of the classroom, and am always willing to discuss any issues related to your learning.**

This course is designed around a lecture/discussion/experiential learning format – meaning it's a discussion-intensive class. Additionally, the course uses a number of learning formats in addition to discussions: student presentations, interactive group exercises, a debate, scholarly articles, film, videos, websites and guest speakers. And it is expected that you will have done a careful, critical reading of all assigned articles (and any new science or health developments that occur during the semester) for each week and will be ready to participate in class discussion; in other words, class discussions are the core of the course. The design of the course is so that you will explore the issues. So, I'll come prepared for class, so you should too.

For each week, the most relevant readings will be assigned, and many are pretty intellectually challenging. However, I encourage you to step outside of these readings and acquaint yourself with the rapidly growing body of literature on health communication. Another valuable resource is your classmates, and hopefully, you'll be developing supportive relationships as we work through the issues in the field.

Note: If you see an article, TV show, blog, website, etc. that you think would be of interest to other students in class, I encourage you to share it with us!

Course, Department, & University Policies

ADA Statement Reasonable accommodations are available to students with documented disabilities at Fredonia. Students who may require instructional and/or examination accommodations should contact the office of Disability Support Services for Students (DSS), located on the 4th Floor of the Reed Library (716-673-3270 or disability.services@fredonia.edu). The DSS coordinator will review documentation and determine accommodations on a case-by-case basis. DSS will notify me with an accommodation letter which verifies that you have registered with that office and which describes any accommodations approved for you. After you have met with the DSS coordinator, please contact me so that we can discuss any needed accommodations.

Make up Policy/Assignment Deadlines Quizzes, in-class assignments, reading summaries, etc. cannot be made up; all work is due on the designated day – this *includes* absences for weddings, vacations/trips, doctor visits, interviews, business/work, etc. Notifying me in advance is advised but does not constitute an “excused absence.” In the case of *emergencies or extreme personal difficulty* (none of the above reasons qualify), some assignments may be made up *with documentation* (copy of hospital bill, funeral notice, etc.); see me. I am happy to provide **feedback on drafts** of assignments; to allow time in my schedule to do so, such requests must be submitted—with the *100% completed* draft—one week prior to the assignment due date. **Late assignments** will be penalized 5% for each day late and will not be accepted more than one week late.

Written work: Your research should come from journal articles or books written by scholars or professionals who are experts in their fields, substantive news articles that are reliable sources of information on events and issues of public concern, and/or non-bias websites. All work must be written in APA style, which includes having 1” margins, double spaced, page numbers, stapled, and typed in 12 point Times New Roman font. Also, refer to the American Psychological Association website (<http://www.apastyle.org>) and Purdue Owl (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>) for the most current rules for APA style.

Attendance & Punctuality policy Regular attendance and punctuality are expected for all class meetings. If you have a scheduling dilemma that makes punctuality difficult, you should reconsider your registration. We will both begin and end classes on time every meeting. Repeatedly arriving after class begins will reduce your attendance grade. Three late arrivals or departures equal an absence. Arriving over 10 minutes late or leaving early is considered an absence. **If you miss class**, it is your responsibility to *contact another student* regarding lecture material, notes, assignments, etc. *In any class, in contacting instructors about absences, have the common sense not to ask if you did or if you will "miss anything 'important'."* Everything is important!!

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism Compliance with strict standards of academic honesty is expected. Academic misconduct/plagiarism will not be tolerated and may be grounds for failure of the course, and suspension or dismissal from the University. Note that **plagiarism** is the failure to correctly cite/reference ANY words OR ideas that are not ORIGINALLY yours. You should *always* reference the sources of your information. Plagiarism also includes the using of others' (or sharing your own) essays, quizzes, etc., *and* the use of pre-written, purchased, or downloaded materials. *If you do not understand how to cite others' work in your own writing, schedule an appointment with me;* I always am very happy to discuss referencing and learning-related topics with you. Additionally, any **material written for another course** may not be used in this course (or vice versa) without specific permission of both course instructors.

Class Environment Your continued enrollment in this course indicates your agreement that all discussions and interactions will be conducted with thought, maturity, and respect for others' rights to differing values and views. Discussion of differing beliefs is encouraged, and will be conducted in a manner that maintains a climate conducive to the thinking and learning of all members of the class. Students are encouraged to exercise personal responsibility and self-discipline, and engage in the rigors of discovery and scholarship.

Sustainability Policy In keeping with SUNY Fredonia's Green Initiatives to use resources more thoughtfully, you are encouraged you to be mindful about paper (and other resource) usage. Please use double-sided printing for all hard copies of course work. Moreover, you're encouraged to print selectively from our course E-reserves, share/reuse with classmates, and recycle all E-reserve and other materials that cannot be passed on to future students.

Cell Phone Policy Phones must be TURNED OFF and PUT AWAY in bag or backpack during class. Research shows that the mere presence of a cell phone distracts and reduces the ability to focus; a phone that is out during class will automatically result in a loss of participation points, and may be confiscated for the remainder of the class or the semester. I retain the right to answer any incoming calls or texts. If you are expecting an emergency call or text, let me know in advance.

Laptop Policy Research shows that laptops are a distraction in the classroom. Other than for occasional class assignments, laptops will generally only be allowed in order to accommodate documented special needs (ADA accommodations), or well-supported requests.

Study time The Communication Department enforces rigorous academic standards, which maintain the high quality and success of our graduates. Students should expect to devote a minimum of 3 hours of study/preparation time for each in-class/credit hour.

Email communication Emails written to any faculty or staff, or to any community member as a representative of SUNY Fredonia, should use standard professional formatting. This includes a clear subject heading, a courteous greeting, proper spelling and grammar, respectful content, and an identifying "signature." *Pro tip: never start a professional email with "Hey".*

Recording Class Material Students may not take photographic, video, or audio recordings of any course material without express permission of the instructor. Any permission granted will be for one-time only and does not extend to other class meetings or materials. Any materials recorded with permission may be used only for the personal study purposes of the individual to whom permission was granted, and may not be shared with other individuals or entities for any purpose.

Course Requirements & Assignments

1. You have ample opportunity to do your work thoroughly throughout the semester and to work with me if you are having difficulties; **extra credit** assignments are not given.

2. Log onto the **class ONCOURSE** site for copies of the syllabus, schedule, course assignment guidelines and other course-related materials or information, to submit assignments and communicate with group members, and to keep track of your grades. If you have any difficulty logging into OnCourse, contact the ITS Service Center, W203 Thompson, 673-3407.
NOTE 1: You MUST double-check ONCOURSE drop boxes to ensure that your assignment was successfully submitted by the due date/time. Failing to verify that your document is attached means that, *if* it is accepted at a later date, it will be late and will lose points.
NOTE 2: You will typically **receive some written feedback** on assignments, not just number grades. To access comments, go the drop box where the assignment was submitted. **DO NOT submit PDF.**
3. SUNY requires you to keep track of your **Fredonia.edu email accounts** so you receive both university-wide notices and individual emails regarding class-related information. Failure to read *Fredonia.edu* emails does not exempt you from the content of any messages. **Starfish Statement:** We Care About your Success! This course is part of a Fredonia initiative that utilizes the Starfish Student Success Network. It is designed to promote student success through coordination and communication between students, instructors, and support staff. Throughout the semester, you may receive emails regarding your attendance, course grades, or academic performance. To benefit, it is important that you check your Fredonia email regularly and take recommended actions. You may be contacted directly by an Academic Advisor or Campus Support Professional.
4. The content of presentations, videos, and guest speakers' talks is considered assigned material for which you are responsible. You must be in attendance for all of these.
5. We cannot discuss every concept from **assigned material** in class. *You are still responsible* for: the readings' content in assignments and tests; for asking questions about any material that you would like to clarify or that you believe relates to a concept we are discussing. Questions, concerns, and comments related to any of the course readings, materials, or assignments are always welcome.

NOTES: - *Detailed **requirements** for all **assignments** will be posted in OnCourse. *It is your responsibility to read and fulfill all assignments' guidelines as noted on the assignment description and/or as discussed in class.*

- **Due dates** may not be discussed in class; you should track them on the Course Schedule.
- **ALL group assignment grades** will be influenced by peer evaluations.

Student Resources

- Counseling Center 673-3424 <http://www.fredonia.edu/counseling/>
 - **sexual assault; alcohol/substance abuse; anxiety, grief, depression, suicidal thoughts;** other
- LoGrasso Health Center 673-3131, 673-3132 <http://www.fredonia.edu/healthcenter/>
 - birth control; immunizations; various health and medical issues
- Learning Center 673-3550, Carnahan-Jackson Ctr, 4th floor Reed Library <http://www.fredonia.edu/tlc/>
 - tutoring, supplemental instruction; language and/or disability support services; other
- University Police 673-3333, 2nd floor Gregory Hall, <http://www.fredonia.edu/upd/>
 - escort bus service; silent witness; bluelight program; other

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS EXPLAINED:

Final Project

Option A: Campaign Proposal Paper OR
 Option B: Research Paper

- a. For Campaign Proposal Option: You spent the semester reviewing others' campaigns and now you have a chance to develop your own health campaign. Your campaign must address a relevant health concern for

students, residents of Western New York, and/or the citizens of New York. You will complete a 6-8 page paper that uses theories, concepts, and strategies to design a health communication campaign for a topic of your choosing. Your proposal should include the following: detailed objectives/purpose for the campaign; target audience; a review of relevant literature on past campaigns that addressed the same or similar issues; the theoretical framework that will guide the development of your campaign; plans for message development, campaign implementation (including the media channel(s) you will use to deliver your campaign), and why you chose this channel; anticipated strengths and weaknesses.

- b. The final paper will concern the science or health topic of your choice. You will learn the theory and method of framing and framing analysis to complete this study. Early in the semester you will be asked to choose a science or health topic that has received substantial media coverage (controversial and high profile are your best bets), that has not been used previously as the basis of a framing analysis study. This is a wonderful opportunity to complete a sole- or co-authored study for submission to a conference and subsequent publication (previous semesters' students have been very successful with this). The paper can be completed either by yourself or with one or two others in class. This is your choice. But a team of three is the maximum number in a team.

Examples of framing paper topics conducted previously in this class:

Synthetic meat

Medical marijuana

Fibromyalgia

Florida springs water debate

GMOs

Talcum powder and cancer connection

Zika crisis

Ebola crisis

Body Image Perception and Health

Weight Loss Issues and Health

Weekly Readings/Discussion Questions:

For the weeks that we have assigned readings, you must identify at least two important thoughtful questions or discussion points synthesized **across** (not from just one assigned reading, and **not two from each – only two thoughtful questions per week**) the readings that can serve as class discussion items. These questions might be those you wouldn't want your classmates to miss, those that interest you or those about which you would like to hear the thoughts of your classmates. A good discussion question, in other words, might ask if there are common themes across readings, are there differences, those that clarify or add to the discussion, or thoughtful critiques of the readings. Please don't include questions that are not relevant to the readings for the week.

Communication Strategy Review :

In groups of 3-4, examine at least 7 advertisements for products or services from one cluster of media communication (a cluster may include, but it not limited to: news media, print advertisement, social media, radio/TV advertising, Internet ads). Then, prepare a 4-5 page paper that reviews a) common and unique approaches and strategies, b) hypotheses/assumptions being used, c) appropriateness for target audience(s), d) your reactions and assessment, and e) how these insights can be used or adapted for the range of health safety topics.

Health Risk Campaign Review:

You will locate and review an existing health campaign that is an example of either risk or crisis communication. Your 4-6 page essay should include a description of the campaign's objectives, its target audience, message strategy, and dissemination approach. Using content from the text, you should also assess the effectiveness of the campaign, summarizing its strengths and weaknesses in the areas considered above (e.g., targeting, message design, channel selection, evaluation, application of theory). In conducting your review, you will make use of available campaign materials (e.g., advertisements, website, press releases, etc.), empirical research articles describing and/or evaluating the campaign.

Health Workshop/Informing the Public Promotional Materials:

In groups of 3-4, you will plan and design a hypothetical workshop that advises a designated audience on a health or safety issue. The audience must be comprised of an at-risk or marginalized population. The group should create a flyer that advertises the hypothetical workshop and then develop a brochure that will be distributed at the hypothetical workshop. Additionally, the group will submit a 3-5 page application essay that addresses topics discussed in Chapter 1, 5, 6, 8, 9, & 10 as they relate to the promotional materials.

Controversies in Science Debates:

“Public understanding and support of science and technology have never been more important, but also never more tenuous. Today they are embedded in an increasingly politicized environment where ethical, legal, and social implications are emerging at a rate that seems to be outpacing society's capacity to make sense of the science. The science of science communication will be essential to help guide new and more effective efforts at engaging productively across the science/society interface. “ (*Science*,2012)

It is important to learn the relevant theories and assumptions of communicating science and health. But that's not enough. To participate on an intellectual level and engage the public in debates about science/health, science/health communication, technology, policy, and the future, you must be able to understand the issues involved in science, health and technology. You know that science/health and technology are part of modern society, but sometimes values, attitudes and beliefs collide on some issues. So in this class you'll be debating a few controversial topics and issues within the broad topic area of science/health communication that you may encounter as a practitioner or researcher. These are important and complex areas about which many of you will be writing, researching and communicating. There are special challenges here for a science/health communicator.

- 1-First you will select a topic (suggestions listed on the next page), and teams will be assembled. Each side of the debate will have a minimum of two members for each topic. You will decide as a group which side members will take. Your team will also have a moderator who will serve as timekeeper and rule enforcer (probably me).
- 2-Your team will then obtain background information, pro or con (depending on your side). It's important here that even if you disagree with the side you have been assigned, you must argue for that side. This is an important exercise for you to learn the opposing perspectives on some issues that have ideological, ethical and other factors intervening. So be sure to know all of the stakeholders here and their perspectives and concerns.
- 3-Each side will have a total of 5 minutes to present its opening pro and con arguments/evidence/background to the class and to the opposing side. **DO NOT SHARE YOUR INFORMATION WITH THE OPPOSING SIDE AHEAD OF TIME!**
- 4-Each side will then be given the opportunity to ask questions to the opposing side for 5 minutes. Please be sure that each member has at least 2 questions to ask the opposing side. **DO NOT SHARE THESE QUESTIONS WITH THE OPPOSING SIDE AHEAD OF TIME!**
- 5-The final 5 minutes will be devoted to questions from the class.

Suggested topics (you may pose others as well):

1. Should marijuana be legalized nationally for medicinal purposes?
2. Should e-cigarettes be permitted? Regulated more or less?
3. Should cervical cancer vaccine (HPV) for school children be compulsory for young children?
4. Is it safe to consume genetically engineered foods?
5. Should the morning after pill be made available to girls at age 12?
6. Should physician assisted suicide (assisted dying) be allowed for end of life care?
7. End of life care – should care, medicines, treatment be rationed for those who are elderly?
8. Should antibiotics be used in livestock production?

Grading Policies

Health campaign/promotional advert review 10%		Discussion Board Questions	15%
Special Debate presentations	10%	Final Health campaign Proposal Paper	30%
Health/Risk Comm Review	10%	Attendance	5%
Health Workshop	15%	Participation	5%

Total

100%

In accordance with SUNY Fredonia guidelines, overall **grading/evaluation standards** are as follows:

- A**(94+) **A-**(93-0): Superior performance and achievement: demonstrating *exceptional* synthesis of concepts and evidence of critical thinking, and *far exceeding* the basic requirements.
- B+**(89-7) **B**(86-4) **B-**(83-0): Very Good performance, substantial achievement: demonstrating effectual effort in engaging concepts and *exceeding* the basic requirements
- C+**(79-7) **C**(76-4) **C-**(73-0): Fair or standard performance and achievement: demonstrating enough effort for *meeting* the basic requirements.
- D+**(69-7) **D**(66-4) **D-**(63-0): Passing yet substandard performance, minimal achievement: demonstrating *marginal* effort and *not meeting* all of the basic requirements.

NOTE: THE SCHEDULE WILL BE UPDATED AS NEEDED DURING THE COURSE OF THE SEMESTER.