

COMMUNICATION (COMM)

Courses and Descriptions

COMM 500 Communication Processes in Health 3 Credits

Interpersonal and nonverbal communication are the two areas of general communication studies that health communication draws from most heavily. These concepts affect relationships in healthcare, the ability to understand and process medical information, the efficacy of messages in relation to nonverbal indicators, and how bad news, another major concept in health communication, is received. This class will provide a comprehensive understanding of these concepts, how they are utilized in the field of health communication, and the ways in which the two areas intersect, all in the broader context of understanding health communication as a discipline.

COMM 501 Medical Concepts and Health Writing 3 Credits

Improving the way that health is communicated requires the ability to understand health information at the initial – and often complex – level. In particular, health communication aims to provide information to underserved populations, who may suffer from lack of education and poor health literacy. This class will provide students with a basic understanding of medical terminology and the ability to comprehend and explain scientific literature. Students will develop the skills needed to translate medical information for a wide range of audiences. Students will also be required to apply these concepts through the creation of multiple types of health writing assignments.

COMM 503 Crisis Communication 3 Credits

Crises can bring harm to an organization's brand and threaten its reputation. Knowing how to anticipate and plan for problems and challenges, and knowing how to manage a crisis if it does strike, are key factors in effective crisis communication. Students will develop theoretical knowledge of issues management and crisis communication and, through case studies and hands-on assignments, will learn to think strategically about importance of public opinion, the role of the media and social media in a crisis, how to develop effective crisis-related messages, and learn how to evaluate crisis responses.

COMM 504 Strategic Writing 3 Credits

This course will provide students with the tools to think and write strategically in today's dynamic, hyper-competitive, and ever-changing global marketplace. Students will gain competency in a number of areas including: creating a clear, concise, and compelling strategic outline, understanding the need to customize strategies and tactics for different stakeholders, and focusing on actionable intelligence and outcomes-based writing. These skills are particularly important for those in or aspiring to managerial/senior staff roles.

COMM 505 Health Communication Theory 3 Credits

Health communication is driven by a set of principles that guide the conceptualization, design, and implementation of new health guidelines and interventions. The ultimate goal of health communication is to increase health and satisfaction by encouraging healthier behaviors, medical compliance, and more efficient communication of medical information. This class is designed to give an overview of the major fields of study in health communication through examination of the major theoretical perspectives therein. Topics include the different areas of study in which health communication theories are based, how theory is used to support the initial design of research studies and interventions, and the situations in which the use of more than one theoretical approach is warranted.

COMM 507 Presentation Strategies 1.5 Credits

This course develops the ability to create presentations for targeted audiences. Students will gain competency in preparing purposeful messaging and incorporating visual presentation tools, with a goal of delivering impactful professional presentations that achieve results. The course will focus on developing the knowledge and skills to influence and inspire internal and external constituencies, which is a key part of communication practitioners' jobs.

COMM 510 Theory and Practice of Negotiations 3 Credits

This course provides students with the theory and skills required to be effective negotiators. Students will learn how to prepare for and participate in negotiations by applying various strategies and tactics. This course will be evenly split between theoretical lecture/discussion and practical application / skill development, including in-class simulations.

COMM 520 Social Media Planning 3 Credits

Social media has changed the way that organizations communicate with their various audiences blurring the lines of public relations, marketing and customer service. Communication professionals must be able to think strategically across all social media platforms to effectively define their brand, speak in an authentic voice and build relationships. Through case study analyses, best-practices research and hands-on assignments, students will learn how to strategically plan a social media campaign through research, content development and curation, and evaluation using meaningful metric analysis.

COMM 525 Visual Communication 1.5 Credits

This course introduces students to the theory and practice of visual communication design. Students will learn how to critique, evaluate, and edit visual communications with specific audiences in mind. Possible topics include the elements and principles of design, color theory, visual perception theories, typography, symbols, brand identity, logos, propaganda, and information design in both current and historical contexts. Readings and viewings of relevant films may be required components of the course. Assignments will afford students opportunities to analyze and critique visual communications for various professional environments.

COMM 531 Legal/Ethical Issues for Professional Communication 3 Credits

Provides students with the knowledge to understand and apply ethical guidelines and current laws and regulations relative to workplace communication, as well as the legal limits impacting professional communications. This knowledge is particularly important for those in or aspiring to managerial/senior staff roles.

COMM 545 Applied Research Methods in Communication 3 Credits

Develops the knowledge and skills to use various research methods and analysis techniques to provide critical information for, and assist with, business decisions. It will cover developing research tools, gathering and verifying information, analyzing, and reporting results. These skills are particularly important for those in or aspiring to managerial/senior staff roles.

COMM 551 Cultural Conceptions of Health and Illness 3 Credits

Culture affects every relationship dynamic, the way nonverbal communication is interpreted, how audiences are selected for health campaigns, the ability and willingness to use technology, and the way bad news is broken to individuals and families. In health communication, culture comprises both the general conceptions of what culture is – the characteristics of a particular social, ethnic, or age group – as well as other factors. This class will examine the specific variables of culture in this setting, how the variables are both unique and interconnected, and the wide-reaching impact culture has in health. The first half of the course explores the variables that culture includes. The latter part of the course takes these variables and demonstrates the roles they play in real-world health communication settings.

COMM 552 Communication in a Multicultural Workplace 1.5 Credits

Instructs in the use of diversity and cultural communication principles and strategies to effectively manage a culturally diverse workforce. This course will help organizational leaders understand how gender, ethnic, religious, and other differences affect the workplace, and how to effectively harness those differences towards maintaining a workplace that promotes good employee relations, and ultimately, good productivity for the organization.

COMM 553 Communication in a Global Market 1.5 Credits

Examines communication between and among businesses in a global context. The course presents communication as an essential pivot around which revolve the social and institutional relationships within and among nations. Hence, exploring global communication structures and tendencies is an important means to understanding social, cultural, economic and political impositions on global business. The emerging role of technologies of communication, such as social media, will be a particular focus of this course.

COMM 554 Effective Group Communication 1.5 Credits

Encompasses the study of individual and group behavior in the workplace. Emphasis is placed on individual behavior and group dynamics, application of current group theories, effective group communication, and effective leadership/followership skills. A comprehensive review of these processes, as well as others, will allow students to examine their role in groups as well as teams.

COMM 555 Organizational Culture & Storytelling 1.5 Credits

Organizational culture matters and, according to the research, it is the secret to the most successful organizations in the world. This course will define organizational culture, explore how culture is communicated through organizational mission and value statements, and provide insight into leveraging culture for organizational performance. Students will explore a variety of topics related to organizational culture including the role of the leader, its importance to recruiting and hiring, how to share culture through organizational practices and storytelling, and how to leverage culture to inspire change and innovation.

COMM 556 Special Topics in Communication 3 Credits**COMM 557 Special Topics in Communication 3 Credits****COMM 558 Health Communication Campaigns 3 Credits**

Campaigns are the primary tool used in health communication to disseminate messages and effect change. Campaigns can provide information on a specific issue or to a specific community, encourage preventative health behaviors, demonstrate behaviors (such as performing self-skin exams for skin cancer or the proper way to follow medication instructions), put forward suggestions for a healthy lifestyle, raise awareness, or offer support. At times, multiple messages may be present in one campaign. This class will examine the different types of health campaigns and the impact a health communication campaign can have. Students will learn how to analyze a health campaign through its full cycle. The class will also serve as a foundation for the capstone class of the Master's in Health Communication program.

COMM 559 Communicating Crises in Health 3 Credits

In the health setting, multiple events can be considered a crisis: the outbreak of a disease, contamination of food, a natural disaster, and more. The response to a crisis can have a significant, long-lasting impact on the organization's reputation. The development of a crisis plan, which sets forth guidelines for an organization's response to a crisis and involves multiple steps, can be completed before any events occur and can significantly affect the way an organization handles a crisis. This class explores the types of crises that occur in health communication, the factors involved in a crisis, the development of a crisis plan, and the effects of a crisis on an organization.

COMM 560 Communication Issues for Leaders 3 Credits

Focuses on analysis of contemporary issues that highlight the necessity of effective communication for those in a leadership position. Through analysis and discussion of historical and current challenges faced by organizations, students will learn to recognize how effective leaders apply successful communication strategies. Case studies will also explore the effect that poor communication choices have had on organizations. Emphasis will be placed on discussion, research, and presentation.

COMM 561 Business of Media 3 Credits

This course will take you behind the scenes in the media industry to investigate how its economic structure affects the content we see and the composition of audiences. We will explore tensions between traditional and emerging media as they compete to retain existing customers and acquire new ones. You'll learn to critically analyze how concepts such as profits, politics, ownership, data-gathering and agenda setting relate to media. Students will learn some fundamental business concepts, which will enable them to communicate about business decisions and engage in important debates about the future of media. Students completing this course will understand the economics (and economies) of media and thus be better prepared to become leaders in media organizations whether by way of a career in media sales, marketing, advertising, public relations, journalism, creative design, production, broadcasting, etc.

COMM 563 Digital Media Communication 3 Credits

Looks at the digital technologies that make up the new world of digital convergence. The course will examine the effects of digital media convergence on social life, ethics, industry, and local and global communities through a variety of theories and paradigms. This course will also help students develop necessary digital media production skills and use them critically to solve media development problems.

COMM 564 Communication and Diversity in the Workplace 3 Credits

The culture of work, like society, is multicultural. More than ever, today's organizational leaders, including CEOs, managers and supervisors, must understand how to use diversity and cultural communication principles and strategies to effectively nurture and promote a culturally diverse workforce. This course helps organizational leaders understand how gender, ethnic, religious, and other social and cultural differences affect the workplace, and how to effectively harness those differences towards maintaining a workplace that promotes good employee relationship, and ultimately, good productivity for the organization.

COMM 565 Rel Comm: Interpersl, Group, Intercultr 3 Credits

Introduces students to seminal and contemporary research in the area of relational communication. Broken down into three modules, the curriculum will be divided among the topics of Interpersonal Communication, Group Communication, and Intercultural Communication. In the first, emphasis will be placed upon theories of human communication, verbal and nonverbal communication, gender, and conflict. The second module will explore various elements of group communication, including leadership and followership, roles, status, power and problem solving and decision making. The third module will introduce students to the study of intercultural communication, with its focus on the relationship between culture and communication.

COMM 590 Independent Research and Study 3 Credits

Independent Research and Study allows students in good academic standing to investigate topics of interest under faculty supervision.

COMM 599 Capstone Seminar 3 Credits

As the final course in the curriculum, students will use concepts, theories and practices from previous courses as they contemplate complex issues. As a comprehensive assessment of student learning, a committee will ask students to respond to questions related to course material. This course will culminate with several research-based position papers on topics related to individual student interests. This course should be taken in a student's final semester. Minimum required GPA of 3.0; permission of instructor required.

COMM 600 Capstone: Implementing a Health Communication Campaign 3 Credits

The ability to implement, evaluate, revise and successfully launch a campaign is a critical skill for all individuals who work in health communication. Campaigns are the primary tool used by health communicators to initiate change in a community, although their implementation will not always be a fluid, one-step process. This class will require students to select a local health campaign and evaluate the campaign from start to finish. Students will complete the Master's program in Health Communication with a complete proposal for a health communication campaign and the skills needed to analyze an existing campaign from beginning to end.

COMM 690 Research and Creative Expressi 1-4 Credits