

4/24/09: approved by CAS Academic Programs Committee, Maria Isabel Ayala, Chair
4/24/09: approved by CAS Dean's Office, Gregory Stevens, Asst Dean; Edelgard Wulfert, Dean

Date: March 31, 2009
To: CAS Academic Programs Committee
From: Anita Pomerantz and Annis Golden
Re: Proposal for establishing Health Communication as an area of concentration in M.A. program

The faculty met in September 2007 to consider whether or not it was desirable and feasible to support a concentration in health communication. There was unanimous support for including Health Communication as an additional concentration within our M.A. program. We did not put forward our proposal at that time as we were experiencing some faculty changes and wanted to make sure we could fully support the additional concentration. We have mapped out a long-term plan of graduate course offerings and concluded that we can offer a health communication concentration with no additional faculty because of the cross-subdisciplinary interests of key members of our current faculty. This is a resource-free proposal.

Desirability of health communication as M.A. area of concentration

A concentration of health communication within our MA program is desirable for the following reasons:

The demand is there. There are a surprising number of new graduate students whose principal interests lie in health communication. Furthermore, because it is a growing area of communication, we expect continued interest in this area by future students.

We have faculty whose primary interests lie in the area of health communication. We have externally funded projects in the area of health communication.

We have a doctoral program in the final stages of approval that identifies health communication as an area of study. It is an opportune time to identify courses that doctoral students pursuing this emphasis should or could take, and to create a corresponding track within our master's program.

Feasibility of instituting and sustaining health communication as an area of concentration

To support an area of concentration within our M.A. program, a student needs to complete 12 credits (4 courses) in that area, in addition to 6 credits of program core courses and 9 credits of supporting electives. We offer two courses in each substantive area per semester, with the core course in the substantive areas generally taught in the fall semester.

In keeping with the other areas of concentration, to maintain a concentration in the area of health communication, we would offer Introduction to Health Communication and a health communication elective in the fall semester and two health communication electives in the spring.

The following graduate courses would fulfill requirements in the Health Communication concentration:

Substantive Core

COM 560 Health Communication (also counts as an elective in Org. Comm. Track)

Note: Initially this course will be taught as a shared resource course with COM 460, pending approval. When we have sufficient number of graduate students taking the course, we expect to teach it without the shared resource with the undergraduate course.

Electives

COM 503 Message Design and Social Influence (also counts as an elective in Pol. Comm. Track)

COM 562 Communication in Healthcare Organizations (also counts as an elective in Org. Comm. Track and is taught as a shared resource course with COM 465)

COM 559 Communication Networks (also counts as an elective in Org. Comm. Track)

COM 655 Communication, Work and Org Life (also counts as an elective in Org. Comm. Track)

COM 675 Doctor-Patient Communication (also counts as an elective in Interpersonal/Intercultural track)

Because all of the courses count in more than one track of the program and/or in both our undergraduate and master's program, the proposed new track is resource neutral, and free from risk of under enrollment. The rotation of health communication elective courses would be determined by the availability of the faculty, the interests of the faculty, and demand from the students. Students in the Health Communication track also will have the opportunity, just like students in other tracks in our program, to seek out courses of interest in other departments at the University for two of their electives in the program (please see below in item #3). Courses that would complement the Health Communication track are offered in the School of Public Health, as well as the Sociology, Psychology, and Anthropology departments.

Proposed changes to the Graduate Bulletin

Current Description of Program in Graduate Bulletin

M.A. in Communication (33 credits, minimum)

1. Core requirements (6 credits): Com 502 and Com 525. All students must receive a grade of B- or better in these required courses. Students must enroll in Com 502 when first offered following matriculation, and must complete the core courses within their first 15 credits.
2. Area of concentration (12 credits): Political Communication: Com 520 and 9 additional credits as advised in political communication; Organizational Communication: Com 551 and 9 additional credits as advised in

organizational communication; Interpersonal interaction/cultural practices: Com 575 and 577 and 6 additional credits as advised in interpersonal interaction/cultural practices.

3. Supporting electives (9 credits): Courses in the Department of Communication or in other departments that have been approved as relevant to student's course of study. At least 3 of the 9 credits must be from within the Department of Communication.
4. Capstone project (6 credits): Complete either Guided Research Project (Com 697A and 697B) or Research Seminar/Practicum (Com 698) as advised.

Proposed New Description of Program in Graduate Bulletin (addition in bold below)

M.A. in Communication (33 credits, minimum)

1. Core requirements (6 credits): Com 502 and Com 525. All students must receive a grade of B- or better in these required courses. Students must enroll in Com 502 when first offered following matriculation, and must complete the core courses within their first 15 credits.
2. Area of concentration (12 credits): Political Communication: Com 520 and 9 additional credits as advised in political communication; Organizational Communication: Com 551 and 9 additional credits as advised in organizational communication; Interpersonal interaction/cultural practices: Com 575 and 577 and 6 additional credits as advised in interpersonal interaction/cultural practices; **Health Communication: Com 560 and 9 additional credits as advised in health communication.**
3. Supporting electives (9 credits): Courses in the Department of Communication or in other departments that have been approved as relevant to student's course of study. At least 3 of the 9 credits must be from within the Department of Communication.
4. Capstone project (6 credits): Complete either Guided Research Project (Com 697A and 697B) or Research Seminar/Practicum (Com 698) as advised.

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|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| University at Albany – State University of New York | | | |
| College of Arts and Sciences | Course Action Form | Proposal No. | 09-061A |
| Please mark all that apply: | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | New Course | Revision of: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Number |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Cross-Listing | | <input type="checkbox"/> Description |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Shared-Resources Course w/COM 560 | | <input type="checkbox"/> Prerequisites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Deactivate / Activate Course (boldface & underline as) | | <input type="checkbox"/> Title |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Credits |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): _____ |
| Department: | Communication | To be effective (semester/year): | Fall 2009 |
| Course Number | Current: 340 | New: 460 | Credits: 3 |
| Course Title: Health Communication | | | |
| Course Description to appear in Bulletin: | | | |
| Students explore the role of communication in the delivery and receipt of health care, especially with respect to physician-patient encounters, organizations in the health care system, and the design and execution of health care campaigns. | | | |
| Prerequisites statement to be appended to description in Bulletin: | | | |
| | | | |
| If S/U is to be designated as the only grading system in the course, check here: <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| This course is (will be) cross listed with (i.e., CAS ###): _____ | | | |
| This course (will be) a shared-resources course with (i.e., CAS ###): COM 560 | | | |
| Explanation of proposal: | | | |
| We are building the area of health communication on the graduate and undergraduate levels and want to offer this course to both undergraduate and graduate students to ensure enrollment thresholds are met. | | | |
| Other departments or schools which offer similar or related courses and which have certified that this proposal does not overlap their offering: | | | |
| | | | |
| Chair of Proposing Department (TYPE NAME/SIGN) | | | Date |
| Teresa M. Harrison | | | 3/31/09 |
| Approved by Chair(s) of | Date | Dean of College (PRINT NAME/SIGN) | Date |
| | | Gregory Stevens | 4/24/09 |
| Chair of Academic Programs | Date | Dean of Graduate (Undergraduate) | Date |
| Maria Isbabel Ayala | 4/24/09 | | |

| | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| University at Albany – State University of New York | | | |
| College of Arts and Sciences | Course Action Form | Proposal No. | 09-061B |
| Please mark all that apply: | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | New Course | Revision of: | <input type="checkbox"/> Number |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Cross-Listing | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Title |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Shared-Resources Course w/COM 460 | | <input type="checkbox"/> Credits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Deactivate / Activate Course (boldface & underline as) | | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): _____ |
| Department: | Communication | To be effective (semester/year): | Fall 2009 |
| Course Number | Current: COM 560 | New: | Credits: 3 |
| Course Title: Health Communication (formerly Introduction to Health Communication) | | | |
| Course Description to appear in Bulletin: Students explore the role of communication in the delivery and receipt of health care, especially with respect to physician-patient encounters, organizations in the health care system, and the design and execution of health care campaigns. | | | |
| Prerequisites statement to be appended to description in Bulletin: | | | |
| If S/U is to be designated as the only grading system in the course, check here: <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| This course is (will be) cross listed with (i.e., CAS ###): _____ | | | |
| This course (will be) a shared-resources course with (i.e., CAS ###): COM 460 | | | |
| Explanation of proposal: We are building the area of health communication on the graduate and undergraduate levels and want to offer this course to both undergraduate and graduate students to ensure enrollment thresholds are met. | | | |
| Other departments or schools which offer similar or related courses and which have certified that this proposal does not overlap their offering: | | | |
| Chair of Proposing Department (TYPE NAME/SIGN) | | | Date |
| Teresa M. Harrison | | | 3/31/09 |
| Approved by Chair(s) of | Date | Dean of College (PRINT NAME/SIGN) | Date |
| | | Gregory Stevens | 4/24/09 |
| Chair of Academic Programs | Date | Dean of Graduate (Undergraduate) | Date |
| Maria Isbabel Ayala | 4/24/09 | | |

COM 460/560 Health Communication

Fall 2009

Dr. Annis Golden
Office: SS 327
Phone: 442-4879

Class time/location: TTh 11:45-1:05 SS116
Office hours: T 10:30-11:30 and by appointment
Email: agolden@albany.edu

This course explores the role of communication in the delivery and receipt of health care, especially with respect to physician-patient encounters, organizations in the health care system, and the design and execution of health care campaigns. COM460/560 is a "shared resource" course. It can be taken as an upper level undergraduate course (counting for upper level credit in the Communication major) or as a graduate level course in the Communication Department's M.A. program (where it serves as the required core course for the Health Communication track, and as an elective in the Organizational Communication track). If you are taking this course for graduate credit, you will find additional weekly reading assignments (in the form of research articles) on Blackboard that are just for graduate students. In addition, graduate students in this course are required to complete an additional project, which takes the form of a literature review on a topic of their choosing. Further details on this project will be provided separately via Blackboard.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Success in this course will require that you be able to demonstrate your grasp of the course content in different contexts. Specifically, you will be asked to:

1. Define, explain, and discuss the concepts in health communication presented in this course (in both the readings and the lectures) in an examination context.
2. Apply theoretical concepts to the analysis of health communication situations and present the results of that analysis in the form of a short case study report.
3. Apply concepts from health communication theory to first-hand observations of a specific organization and present the results of that analysis in the form of a written report.
4. Independently, locate health communication research that bears on a particular question; and summarize and synthesize that research (graduate students only).

READINGS

Communicating About Health: Current Issues and Perspective (2nd edition). Athena du Pre. McGraw Hill. 2005.

Health Communication in Practice. Eileen Berlin Ray, Ed. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 2005.

Additional readings, mostly in the form of articles from the popular press, and occasionally texts produced as actual instances of health communication or articles will be provided over the course of the semester. These will be posted to Blackboard and announced in advance.

Graduate students should check Blackboard for weekly research readings.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

There are **four** types of tasks for which you will receive evaluations. They are listed below, along with the relative weight they contribute to your overall final grade in the course.

1. Quizzes (3): total = 35%

The quizzes will test your grasp of fundamental theoretical concepts developed in the course readings and lectures. Performing well on the quizzes will require that you keep up with the readings and take careful notes in class. The format of the quizzes will be short answer questions. Study guides will be provided in advance. Make-ups of missed quizzes are administered only when the absence meets the criteria specified in the Undergraduate Bulletin's Academic Regulations and the reason(s) can be documented. Quizzes are graded on a scale of 100 and converted to letter/4-point scale grades; then averaged together equally for 35% of your final course grade.

2. Case study reports (3): total = 30%

Three times during this course you will be asked to prepare a short report (500-750 words) in response to health communication case from your text. The due date will depend on your group assignment (A, B or C). Each report will require you to apply concepts covered in this course to a specific health communication situation. Specific questions will be provided with each case. These assignments are graded on a 4-point scale and averaged together equally for 30% of your final course grade. It is expected that you will take the lead in class discussion on the days you are submitting a case study report.

Finished case study reports should be submitted as carefully edited and spell-checked printed copy in standard manuscript format – twelve-point type, double-spaced lines, one-inch margins on all four sides. A page in this format is approximately 300 words. While Health Communication is not a "writing course" as such, you are expected to be able to write clearly, and to conform to basic standards of academic argumentation, style, and format. Late reports will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made (and there are compelling reasons involved). The only exceptions to the prior arrangements rule are those that meet the criteria for missed quizzes (see #1 above and the Undergraduate Bulletin's Academic Regulations).

3. Term project: 25%

This is a field work project that requires you to spend 10 hours (minimum) as a volunteer over the course of the semester in a health care or human services organization. (Please see me if you wish to explore an alternative observational site.) The project will involve gathering information about the organization from your vantage point as a participant-observer, analyzing that information, and writing it up. Further details on planning and executing this project will be distributed separately (including suggestions for field work sites).

4. Class attendance and participation: 10% (undergraduates only)

Your prompt arrival for class, consistent attendance, and regular participation form the basis for 10% of your grade in this course. Everyone begins the course with a 4.0 for attendance and participation and the possibility of two unexcused absences without penalty. More than two unexcused absences will result in lowering your attendance

grade by one point for each missed class. A pattern of late arrivals will also result in lowering your class attendance and participation grade. If you have more than 6 unexcused absences (at which point your class attendance and participation grade would be 0), your final course grade will be lower as a result. Note that your attendance grade has the potential to make a significant difference in your final course grade.

For graduate students, there is no separate grade for attendance and participation. I assume that as graduate students you will attend each session of the class and arrive promptly unless you have an emergency or a conflict of a professional nature (in which case, you'll need to let me know about this – ideally, before the fact, but if that's not possible, then as soon as possible afterwards). Repeated late arrivals and/or any unexcused absences will detract from your final course grade.

5. Literature review: 10% (graduates)

Graduate students will be asked to locate research literature on a topic of their choosing; and summarize, synthesize, and comment on that research. More details on this assignment will be distributed separately.

STUDENT CONDUCT/ACADEMIC HONESTY

The University's published code of student conduct (see Academic Regulations in the Undergraduate Bulletin) prohibits cheating, plagiarism, or disruption of class. Penalties can range from failing grades on exams or written assignments, to a failing grade for the course, and/or referral of the case to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies for disciplinary action (which could result in probation, suspension or even dismissal from the University). The minimum penalty for plagiarism is failure of the assignment in question without possibility of makeup; particular circumstances will be assessed to determine whether further action is warranted. You are encouraged to complete the Library's online tutorial on how to avoid plagiarism if you have not already.

CLASSROOM CIVILITY

It is expected that you will show respect for yourself, your fellow students, and your instructor by observing the following guidelines:

be seated when class begins at 11:45 a.m. – late arrivals are distracting to everyone (and four of late arrivals will be considered equivalent to one unexcused absence; also announcements regarding upcoming assignments and/or changes to the schedule will be announced at the beginning of class, so if you are late, you will miss these.

remain in your seat until class ends.

refrain from conversing with classmates unless part of a more general class discussion.

turn off your cell phone or pager before class begins.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION

If you are entitled to special accommodation for exams, please present your documentation at least two weeks before the first quiz so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Note that the class schedule is subject to change, depending upon how quickly we move through the material. If there is a change in the schedule, you will be notified in class, usually at the beginning of the class period. Note further that you are responsible for meeting the assignment due dates given in this syllabus, so be sure to consult the

syllabus frequently to be sure you have due dates correctly in mind. Reading and writing assignments are listed on *the date of the session that they are due to be completed*. And graduate students, remember to check Blackboard for weekly research reading assignments not listed below.

Tues – Sept 1: Welcome! Introductions and course overview

Thurs – Sept 3: Introduction to health communication cont'd. Read duPre Chpts 1 & 2; Ray -Introduction

Part 1: Health communication in interpersonal contexts

Tues – Sept 8: Patient-provider communication. Read duPre Chpt 3; Chpt 1 in Ray book (Cegala)

Thurs – Sept 10: Patient-provider communication cont'd. Read duPre Chpt 4; Chpt 2 in Ray book (Thompson & Gillotti)

Tues – Sept 15: Patient-provider communication cont'd. Read duPre Chpt 5; Chpt 3 in Ray book (Babrow & Dinn)

Thurs – Sept 17: Decision making. Read Chpt 6 in Ray book (Bylund & Imes); Chpt 7 in Ray book (O'Hair, Thompson & Sparks)

Tues – Sept 22: Social support. Read duPre Chpt 7

Thurs – Sept 24: Diversity and health disparities. Read duPre Chpts 6 & 7; Read Chpt 22 in Ray book (Angelelli & Geist-Martin)

Tues – Sept 29: Quiz 1

Communication among healthcare organization members. Read duPre Chpt 9; Read Chpt 20 in Ray book (Apker)

Part 2: Health communication in organizational contexts

Thurs – Oct 1: Communication among healthcare organization members cont'd. Read Chpt 23 in Ray book (Murphy, Eisenberg, Sutcliffe & Schenkel), and Chpt 24 (Lammers, Lindholm & Hazeu)

Tues – Oct 6: Interacting with healthcare organizations (the patient & family perspective). Read Chpt 10 in Ray book (Silk), and Chpt 16 (Mills)

Thurs – Oct 8: Interacting with healthcare organizations (the patient & family perspective) cont'd. Read Chpt 10 in Ray book (Silk), and Chpt 16 (Mills)

Tues – Oct 13: Culture, diversity, and healthcare organizations. Read duPre Chpt 9, and see Blackboard.

Thurs – Oct 15: Culture, diversity, and healthcare organizations cont'd. See Blackboard for reading.

Tues – Oct 20: : Interacting with healthcare organizations (the patient & family perspective) cont'd. Read Chpt 15 in Ray book (Parrott & Weiner), and Chpt 25 (duPre)

Thurs – Oct 22: Quiz 2

Part 3: Health communication in mediated contexts

Tues – Oct 27: Health images in the media. Read duPre Chpt 11; Read Chpt 5 in Ray book (Cline & Young)

Thurs – Oct 29: Health campaigns. Read duPre Chpts 12 & 13

Tues – Nov 3: Health campaigns cont'd. Read Chpt 27 in Ray book (Beck) and Chpt 28 (Witte)

Thurs – Nov 5: Health campaigns cont'd. See Blackboard for reading.

Tues – Nov 10: Health information technology. Read Chpt 29 in Ray book (Kreps).

Thurs – Nov 12: See Blackboard for online discussion, which takes the place of class meeting.

Tues – Nov 17: Health information technology cont'd. See Blackboard for reading.

Thurs – Nov 19: Quiz 3

Tues – Nov 24: Class members' debriefing on field projects

Thurs – Nov 26: No class – Thanksgiving holiday

Tues – Dec 1: Class members' debriefing on field projects

Thurs – Dec 3: Class members' debriefing on field projects