

Health Communication

Interdisciplinary Concentration in Health Communication

Program Planner

Health communication is an area of theory, research and practice related to understanding and influencing the interdependence of communication and health-related beliefs, behaviors and outcomes. Health communication combines both scholarship and practice. It embraces not only traditional scholarship, emphasizing theory and data collection; it also includes the use of research for broad “therapeutic” goals, using knowledge about message formation and communication to alleviate suffering or reduce risky behavior.

Messages functioning to influence health may not be intended to do so (e.g., popular culture messages may outweigh messages designed for “planned” health communication). A popular culture that imbeds demeaning “messages” regarding the treatment of women may influence far more viewers than deliberately designed messages or Public Service Announcements “planned” to increase respect for women’s rights or the dignity of women. Health communication acknowledges the influence of both planned and popularly imbedded healthy or unhealthy messages.

Humans are actors, not just acted upon; influencers, not just “targets.” A health communication perspective acknowledges that humans are not simply “receptacles,” available to receive “hypodermic needles” of information “injected” directly into human cognition and motivation. Rather, members of particular audiences or audience segments employ media for specific “uses and gratifications.” Some use media primarily for news, others for entertainment, still others for learning about new experiences and places.

In addition, audience members in turn have choices about whether to discuss what they access with others. A health communication perspective views audience members not simply as “targets” of information, but rather as “communicators” as well, part of a potential chain of “influencers.” Humans act on meanings (interpretations), not just observed “content.” A “fear” appeal may lead to cynicism and relinquishing hope, a conviction that little can be done to reduce risk. But it may also be “interpreted” not as inevitable victimization but rather as a “danger” that can be addressed and reduced through reasonable precautions.

Effective health communication takes into account variations not only in message content, but also in the confidence and skill levels of audiences exposed to that content. Varied audience education levels may also lead to different interpretations of consequences of healthy behavior.

Faculty Sponsor

John C. Pollock (Communication Studies)

Curriculum

Core Course

Required: Select one course

- COM 403/Social Marketing: Public* Communication Campaigns
- COM 310/Theories of Persuasion*

Arts and Humanities

Two courses freely selected

English

- JPW 370/Topics in Journalism: The Business of Science*
- LIT 313/Gay and Lesbian Literature*
- LIT 315/Men and Masculinity: Literary Perspectives*

Women's and Gender Studies

- WGS 210/Women and Health: Power, Politics and Change*
- WGS 220/Gender and Popular Culture*
- WGS 250/Politics of Sexuality*
- WGS 320/Men and Masculinities*
- WGS 341/Gay and Lesbian Literature*

Philosophy

- PHL 335/Bioethics (Prerequisite: One course each in philosophy and biology, or permission of instructor)
- NUR 300/Contemporary Legal Challenges in Health Care*

Mathematics and Natural Science

*One course from **each** of the categories listed below*

Quantitative Reasoning

- Any course in Statistics approved for Liberal Learning.

Biology

- Any Laboratory course in Biology approved for Liberal Learning.

Social Sciences

Two courses freely selected

Communication Studies

- COM 310/Theories in Persuasion*
- COM 345/New Media and Health Communication*
- COM 403/Health Communication Campaigns*
- COM 390/Communication Research Methods*

Psychology

- PSY 212/Biopsychology
- PSY 214/Cognitive Psychology
- PSY 340/Health Psychology (Prerequisite: PSY 101)
- PSY 338/Sport & Exercise Psychology (Prerequisite: PSY 101)
- PSY 342/Clinical Pharmacology (Prerequisites: PSY 101)

- PSY 343/ Behavioral Pharmacology of Drugs of Abuse (Prerequisites: PSY 101, PSY 212)

Sociology

- SOC 345/ SOC 345/Inequality, Pollution and the Environment*
- SOC 370/Culture, Health & Illness (Prerequisite: SOC 101 or HON 216)
- SOC 372/Introduction to Comparative Public Health (Prerequisite: SOC 101 or HON 216)
- ANT 240/Epidemiology*
- ANT 373/US Public Health and Social Policy*

History

- HIS 395/History of Western Sexuality*
- HIS 396/A Gendered History of Food*
- HIS 397/Gay and Lesbian History*

Comments on Required and Recommended Courses

- This concentration requires a minimum of seven different courses. Although some courses may be listed in more than one department or program, no course is to “count” more than once. Six courses distributed among the three sectors of Arts & Humanities, Math & Science, and Social Sciences.
- Students who follow the recommended distribution of courses (two in Arts and Humanities; two in Quantitative Reasoning and Science; two in History and Social; plus one core course) will complete their breadth distribution in Liberal Learning.
- Students who choose not to follow the recommended distribution, may in consultation with faculty sponsors, choose to take a maximum of four courses from the same broad sector. However, they will have to complete their breadth distribution by taking additional courses for distribution outside this interdisciplinary concentration (which in some cases may be taken as part of the major requirements).

** Courses marked with an asterisk (*) have no prerequisites*



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APPLICATION FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY CONCENTRATION

Last Name: First Name: MI: PAWS ID:
Phone: TCNJ E-Mail: _____ Major

Please indicate the following:

- Adding New Concentration Changing Concentration

Interdisciplinary Concentration:

Emphasis (if any):

Expected Graduation Term:

Student Signature

Date

Signature of Concentration Sponsor

Date

Signature of Major Advisor

Date

Please note: College policy requires that applications for interdisciplinary concentrations must be submitted at least TWO SEMESTERS before graduation.

No more than two courses taken as part of a major, nor more than one course taken as a part of a minor, may also be counted toward a student's interdisciplinary concentration.

Interdisciplinary Concentration Codes: