

Instructor Information:

Dr. Laura Beth Daws * ldaws@spsu.edu (**the best way to reach me!**) * educate.spsu.edu/ldaws
Twitter: @lbdaws * **Office phone:** 678-915-7208 (voice only) **Cell (voice/text & preferred phone number):** 678-250-DAWS (3297). *NOTE: this is a Google Voice number that I will respond to regularly on weekdays from 8 am-5 pm. Voicemails and texts received before/after that will be handled on the next business day.*

Office Hours: J318. Mondays & Wednesdays, 10-11; Tuesdays & Thursdays, 4:30-6. Available other times by appointment. *(Please come by anytime my door is open if you have questions, concerns or just to say “hi!” If you need advising or have a more serious issue for which you need my undivided attention, though, please schedule an appointment with me. That way, you get priority in my schedule!)*

Textbook: Mattson, M. & Hall, J. G. (2011). *Health as communication nexus: A service learning approach*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing.

Other readings: Additional readings may be assigned throughout the semester. You can expect to read additional book chapters, case studies, and articles from the Internet to supplement the textbook material. You will be given advance notice as to when these outside readings will be due.

Course Description as stated in the SPSU Catalog:

This course will focus on the essential role communication plays in health promotion and disease prevention. Strategies used to influence both individuals and communities when making health care decisions will be examined, and the students will become familiar with the communication processes used in managing individual and community health and health care programs. Specifically, theoretical frameworks and communication techniques will be examined that promote health. In addition, students will gain an understanding of health communication concepts, research, and practice. Topics discussed in this course include health literacy, physician to patient communication, effective public health messages and mass media campaigns, social support, self-disclosure, health education, and risk and emergency communication. **Course Prerequisite:** ENGL1102.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes:

- define health communication, and articulate a knowledge of the area’s history, importance, and context in the Communication literature
- explain the relationship between effective communication practices and health promotion
- understand the relationship between media and public health campaigns
- apply theoretical concepts to real-life health communication situations

- understand the importance of social support in a variety of health communication contexts
- explain health communication's relevance in the greater context of risk and crisis communication

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is expected each class period. Since this class meets once each week, missing one class period is the equivalent of missing an entire week in a typical class. If you must miss class due to an excused absence (illness with doctor's note, death in the immediate family with written verification, car accident with police report, etc.), you may turn in your work late with no penalty (see more details under "Late Work" below). Under no circumstances may you make up the in-class participation points. To accommodate for times when you may have an emergency that would prevent you from attending class, I will drop your lowest participation grade at the end of the semester. As a reward for those of you who have perfect attendance, you may keep ALL of those extra participation points you earned from not using your "free" absence week.

Late Work:

Don't say I didn't warn you: I'm a stickler for turning things in on time. **I do not accept late work**, except in the case of a documented excused absence (doctor's appointment with note, death in the family with written verification, car accident with accident report, etc.). If you have an excused absence, you may **email me your written work within 24 hours** as verification that you completed the assignment and then turn in a physical copy of the work **by the next class period**.

Written assignments are due at 6 pm. Assignments turned in after class has started will be subject to a 10% grade penalty. I do not accept assignments after the class period in which the assignment was due, except in cases of an excused absence. I do not accept emailed assignments, except in cases of an excused absence.

Classroom Policies/General Decorum Issues:

- Part of my job is to help you learn how to communicate in a variety of contexts. If you use email as a channel to send your message to me, then you should treat every email as a chance to practice professional written communication skills, and I expect you to adhere to standard conventions of grammar, spelling and language when writing emails to me and other instructors at SPSU. I will correct grammar, spelling and punctuation in your emails just like I would correct them in a written assignment. This is a class in communication, after all, and I'd hate to know you left my class thinking it was acceptable to contact potential employers, bosses, or other professionals with sloppy emails!
- Texting during class is rude and distracting; if you must communicate via cell phone during class hours, please walk out of the room to do so. Do not be surprised if I ask you to leave class after you've been caught texting in my class on more than one occasion.

- If you would like to use a laptop or iPad to take notes in this course, that's fine – as long as you disable your wireless connectivity so you won't be tempted to browse the Internet during class time or use the technological device to distract others. I reserve the right to ask you to cease use of electronic note taking devices if they become distracting to yourself or others.
- Class discussions should facilitate an open exchange of ideas. Debates should be healthy, and each individual should be respectful of others' opinions. Hate speech, or racist, sexist, ageist, or homophobic comments are not allowed.
- All written assignments must be printed on plain white 8.5" x 11" paper, using a computer/word processor and printer. Please **staple** all assignments that are two or more pages in length (do NOT dog-ear, fold corners, use paperclips or other binding methods). Unless I specify otherwise in class, hand-written assignments will not be accepted.
- **Plagiarism can result in failure of the course.** In this class, you are rewarded for correctly citing information, and severely punished for failing to credit where your ideas came from. If you are ever uncertain, ask me ahead of time.

ADA Procedures: Southern Polytechnic State University is committed to providing an educational environment that is accessible to all students. In accordance with this policy, students in need of accommodations due to a disability should contact the [Dean for Special Student Services](#) for verification and determination of reasonable accommodations as soon as possible after admission to the University, or at the beginning of each semester.

In Case Of Emergency, Weather Crises, Impending Apocalypse, Zombie Attacks, etc.

If you haven't done so already, please sign up for Hornet Alert by going to www.spsu.edu/hornetalert. This is SPSU's way of communicating with you in the event of a crisis/emergency that impacts campus (such as class cancellations due to weather). If I have to miss class unexpectedly (it RARELY happens), I will alert you via Vista – so it's not a bad idea to check in there before class starts. Oh, and in case of a zombie apocalypse... aim for their heads.

Grades:

Detailed grading rubrics will be provided before assignments are due.

Total Points: 700. Grade Scale: 630-700 points: A. 560-629 points: B. 490-559 points: C. 420-489 points: D. 419 and below: F.

Participation – 50 points. Participation points will be determined not only by your presence in class, but by the frequency and quality of your in-class comments. This class will be largely discussion-based, so your input will be required.

Exams – 200 (2 at 100 points each). There will be 2 exams in this class, each worth 125 points. You can expect multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer/essay questions on each. One exam will take place near mid-term, and the other will take place during the final exam period.

Applied Theory Response paper – 100 points. To better engage with central concepts of health communication, patient-provider communication and health presentations in the media, you will write a brief (4-5 pages, double-spaced) analysis paper. This will be your reaction to a particular experience you've had or texts you've viewed or read in which you apply concepts we've discussed in class as well as your own creativity and perspective. Analysis papers should have two sections: 1) Summary and 2) Analysis. In the summary section, highlight the experience or text you are analyzing in brief, to give the reader a context for what you are writing about. Then, in the analysis section, discuss what you think is going on in the experience or text in terms of some concept or concepts in health communication. You must incorporate at least three sources in each paper (they may be course readings or outside sources), and sources must be cited in APA style, 6th ed.

Illness Report Presentation – 100 points. To more fully understand the concept of illness experience, an important topic in health communication and a vital topic as a healthcare consumer and/or professional, each of you will be randomly assigned to a particular illness (i.e., breast cancer, diabetes, etc.) and will be asked to research it, possibly looking into its physical symptoms and its emotional, social, and psychological impact. You might consider the daily experiences of this illness, and everyday stressors that may come about as a result, including during interactions with healthcare providers. You will be asked to turn in a typed outline and reference list (APA 6th edition) that demonstrates the sources you consulted in researching your illness, and you'll be asked to present your findings to the class. Please use at least five different sources. Three of these sources may be web-based, if you wish, but the websites must be credible.

Health News Assignment – 100 points. You will choose a health research piece published in a peer-reviewed journal and then turn it into a media piece. The media piece you choose to create may be catered to your chosen career field; for instance, if you're interested in professional writing, you may write a news piece for print or web-based media, and if you're interested in visual design, you could create an ad for the medication or treatment studied, or for the organization or university that published the original research piece. This is something you can put into your portfolio and allows for practice of essential communication skills, including understanding and analyzing information, synthesizing information, and writing/translating information into consumable media for various publics.

Health Message—150 points. You will learn about health campaigns and health behavior and communication theory in this course. To better understand application of these concepts, you and a partner will design a health behavior/communication theory-based health message to encourage a healthy behavior or discourage an unhealthy behavior. This will be a pamphlet, poster, simple text, website, video or something of the kind that you will briefly present in class during a "mini-conference." Your message will be a piece you may keep in a portfolio for your future job search in communication and/or health-related fields. In addition to your message, you will turn in an outline to describe your health area of interest, the rationale for the health message (i.e., Why do we need to target this behavior?), the theories you are using and how

they are implemented in the message, why you think this message will work with the particular behavior of interest, and a list of sources (APA style, 6th ed.). You will also present your message on the last class day.

Tentative Class Schedule

Date	Reading (complete before class)	Due In Class
August 21	Syllabus, Introductions, Assignments, Rationale	
August 28	Chapter 1: Introducing Health as Communication Nexus	
September 4	Chapter 2: Health Comm and Ethics	Illness Report Presentation
September 11	Chapter 3: Health Comm Theories <i>Guest Speaker: Dr. Rosalie Shemanski Aldrich – Indiana University East</i>	
September 18	Chapter 4: Patient Interaction	
September 25	Chapter 5: Health Care Provider Interaction	Applied Theory Response Paper Due
October 2	Chapter 6: Social Support; chapter from <i>The Fragile Community</i>	
October 9	Select chapters from the <i>Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</i>	Exam 1 taken in class (Chapters 1-6, additional readings)
October 16	Chapter 7: Health Campaign Theories	Topic proposal for health message project due
October 23	Chapter 8: Health Campaign Practice <i>Guest Speaker: Ms. Anne Willis, Director of Survivorship, George Washington University Cancer Institute</i>	Health News Assignment Due
October 30	Chapter 10: Entertainment & Education	
November 6	Chapter 9: Risk & Crisis Communication <i>Guest Speaker: Dr. Alyssa Millner, King College – Knoxville, TN</i>	Bibliography for Health Message Project Due
November 13	Chapter 11: Health Comm & Media	Draft Outlines for Projects Due
November 20	Chapter 12: e-Health	
November 27	Final Project Presentations/ review for final exam	Health Message Projects Due
TBA		Final Exam: Chapters 7-12

The final exam will take place during the university's official final exam date/time, TBA.