

Health and Social Justice COMM 390/394-701

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COURSE POLICIES

Prerequisites

COMM 390: Junior standing and a grade of C or better in COMM 100 or 101 or 260.

COMM 394: Junior standing and a grade of C or better in COMM 100 or 101 or 102.

Course Description

The pandemic has reinforced and exacerbated disparities affecting members of marginalized populations, who experience a high morbidity and mortality burden, while being most at risk of being without a job, living in poverty, going without food, and being victims of violence. Health Communication and Social Justice guides thinking and action on how health, and communication about it, is connected to all aspects of individuals' lives, community, and the environment, especially with regard to promoting health as a social justice issue.

Instructor Communication

During the semester, I can be reached via email from the My Classes platform. I am also available with an appointment via Zoom for a meeting during office hours.

Course Meetings

COMM 390/394-701 is a fully online course. All course material, meetings, and activities will be completed online per syllabus schedule and policies.

Learning Objectives

COMM 394/390-701 seeks to guide student's gaze toward the foundational relationship between the myriad complex and intersecting issues that comprise social justice concerns and its relationship with health. In current contexts, these range from race, to environment, to our lived neighborhoods, workplaces, media, gender and sexuality, brand activism, and food insecurity. In our semester, we will take an in-depth look at these issues in our local, national, and global community to understand the relationship of social justice principles of comprising equity, access, participation, diversity, and human rights with our health.

Grounded in real-life, current, and enduring social justice concerns, in the course students will identify and explore the persistence of inequalities and the presence of social, economic, and cultural structures that are responsible for the U.S. having one of the worst health outcomes in the world among the developed nations.

Through current, dynamically evolving readings, a range of media such as videos and documentaries, and engagement with present-day challenges, the successful student will be able to:

- Understand the relationship of social justice with health
- Demonstrate critical knowledge of the interconnectedness of health with multiple and intersecting social, cultural, structural, political, governance, and economical factors
- Demonstrate in applied contexts how social determinants of health shapes health outcomes
- Communicate how the social determinants of health approach can inform initiatives to improve health equity

- Engage in a semester-long sustained critique of a current context of health inequity and its intersectionality with social, economic, or cultural factors through the semester
- Demonstrate through a public communication forum (e.g., blogs) how a social justice approach informs health meaning making and action
- Recognize and communicate how action, participation, inclusion, and collaboration can help in designing impactful initiatives for those most impacted by social and racial injustices
- Employ a systematic approach to foster accountability and develop leadership in addressing health inequities

Required Textbook:

There is no required textbook for the course. The course will employ readings from scholarly sources and websites. These are provided below. In addition, supplemental material in the form of videos, documentaries, and other media will be provided in the modules under the reading content section for the purpose of illustrating the real life and lived experiences of the social justice and health equity issues.

Course Readings

Course readings come from primary research sources and websites as indicated on the syllabus and will be accessed via the URLs provided below. The scholarly readings will lead to the SU library databases, where you will enter the SU login information to access the reading via the permalink given here.

1. MODULE 1: SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH (SDoH)

- Social Determinants of Health, Healthy People 2030 [URL: <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health>]
- Social Determinants of Health, CDC [URL: <https://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/index.htm>]

2. MODULE 2: HEALTH DISPARITIES, HEALTH INEQUALITIES, AND HEALTH EQUITY

- Disparities in health & health care: Five key questions and answers [URL: <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/issue-brief/disparities-in-health-and-health-care-five-key-questions-and-answers/#:~:text=1.-,What%20are%20health%20and%20health%20care%20disparities%3F,one%20group%20relative%20to%20another.>]
- Health and social justice [URL: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4006198/>]

3. MODULE 3: RACE AND HEALTH EQUITY

Estrada-Portales, I.M. (2020). Drylongso. Racism, health inequity, and a denial of pandemic proportions. *Journal of Communication in Healthcare*, 13, 151–153. Permalink:

<http://proxy-su.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=146599495&site=ehost-live>

4. MODULE 4: HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Riley, M. (1993). Indigenous resources in a Ghanaian town: Potential for health education.

Howard Journal of Communications, 4, 249–264. Permalink: <http://proxy-su.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=16280386&site=ehost-live>

5. MODULE 5: HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- Health equity and climate change [URL: https://www.apha.org/-/media/files/pdf/topics/climate/guide_section2.ashx?la=en&hash=4D979B9630484AB24BDBA0C6B1D99BE42053E293]
 - Health impacts of climate change [URL: https://www.apha.org/-/media/files/pdf/topics/climate/guide_section4.ashx?la=en&hash=118F4FD2E4719EF51A76C0B0865BAEF57BEB7EDB]
- 6. MODULE 6: HEALTH AND MEDIA**
Media: The future of public health in the 21st century [URL: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK221224/>]
 - 7. MODULE 7: COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**
 - Schiavo, R. (2016). The importance of community-based communication for health and social change. *Journal of Communication in Healthcare*, 9, 1–3. Permalink: <http://proxy-su.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=118862142&site=ehost-live>
 - Schiavo, R. (2020). Advocacy, community engagement, and cross-sectoral collaborations as key strategies during COVID-19 response and beyond: New directions for a new decade. *Journal of Communication in Healthcare*, 13, 1–5. Permalink: <http://proxy-su.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=144282931&site=ehost-live>
 - 8. MODULE 9: WOMEN'S HEALTH ACTIVISM**
 - Zoller, H. (2010). Communicating women's health activism: A social justice agenda. *Women & Language*, 33, 73–79. Permalink: <http://proxy-su.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=57315501&site=ehost-live>
 - Zoller, H. (2016). Women's health activism targeting corporate health risks: Women's voices for the Earth. *Women & Language*, 39, 97–119. Permalink: <http://proxy-su.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=120565639&site=ehost-live>
 - 9. MODULE 10: HEALTH & SOCIAL JUSTICE**
Assignment handout
 - 10. MODULE 11: HEALTH LITERACY AND HEALTH INFORMATION DISPARITIES**
Krishna, A. (2017). Motivation with misinformation: Conceptualizing lacuna individuals as knowledge-deficient, issue-negative activists. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 29, 176–193. URL: Permalink: <http://proxy-su.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=125393942&site=ehost-live>
 - 11. MODULE 12: BRAND ACTIVISM AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**
Zoller, H.M. (2017). Health activism targeting corporations: A critical health communication perspective. *Health Communication*, 32, 219–229. Permalink: <http://proxy-su.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=120040476&site=ehost-live>
 - 12. MODULE 13: FOOD AS SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Greenberg, M., Greenberg, G., & Mazza, L. (2010). Food pantries, poverty and social justice. American Journal of Public Health, 100, 2021–2022. URL: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2951938/>

ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW

The readings provide a framework for thought while media such as documentaries, videos, and related media provided in the reading content area of the module provides an applied context to the issues. The assignments are designed to engage the student in critical thought, discussion, and presentation of ideas in a practical and interactive manner. The assignments are described in brief below. More detail as needed will be provided at appropriate points of the semester.

Blogs [45%]: Students will write a blog comprising a thought reflection of the module’s readings as applied to a current and ongoing social justice and health equity issue they choose to examine through the semester. The blog will be on a platform of your choice (WordPress, Weebly, Wix, Google, etc.). Although the blog is written in a conversational style for web reading, it will be an informed explication of the social justice and health equity issue, complete with online research done independently. The blogs are assessed on the basis of their credibility, relevance, incisiveness, appealing writing quality, and solid research, presented well.

Discussion Posts [45%]: Based on the module’s content, including videos, documentaries, podcasts, and associated media provided under the module, students will write a discussion post in response to a thought prompt given by the instructor. The discussion posts are assessed on the basis of the creativity and application of students’ learning to a range of applied examples. Students will share their responses and engage with their classmates in a variety of formats. The engagement supports interactive building of ideas and is assessed on the basis of meaning exchange and quality of critical engagement.

Health & Social Justice Report and Reflections [10%]:

- **Health & Social Justice Report:** A summary final report presenting the state of health disparities, equity, and social justice concerns with a health issue (e.g., cardiovascular health or chronic disease) employing a social determinant of health (SDoH) framework (e.g., race, education). The report showcases the student’s semester-long engagement.
- **Reflections:** Completed during finals week, Reflections is a journal style response to a prompt. More information will be provided at the appropriate point of the semester.

GRADES

1. Blogs	45%
2. Discussion posts	45%
3. Health & Social Justice report & reflections	10%

Spring 2021 TENTATIVE SCHEDULE
 COMM 390/394-701: Health & Social Justice

Dates	Readings	Assignment(s)
Jan 25–Jan 31	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MODULE # 1</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Social Determinants of Health (SDoH)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social Determinants of Health, Healthy People 2030 2. Social Determinants of Health, CDC 	Discussion board
Feb 1–Feb 7	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MODULE # 2</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Health Disparities, Health Equity, and Social Justice</p> <p>Disparities in health & health care: Five key questions and answers Health and social justice</p>	Blog Discussion board
Feb 8–Feb 14	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MODULE # 3</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Race and Health Equity</p> <p>Estrada-Portales, I.M. (2020). Drylongso. Racism, health inequity, and a denial of pandemic proportions. <i>Journal of Communication in Healthcare</i>, 13, 151–153.</p>	Blog Discussion board
Feb 15–Feb 21	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MODULE # 4</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Health and Education</p> <p>Riley, M. (1993). Indigenous resources in a Ghanaian town: Potential for health education. <i>Howard Journal of Communications</i>, 4, 249–264.</p>	Blog Discussion board
Feb 22–Feb 28	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MODULE # 5</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Health and Climate Change</p> <p>Health equity and climate change Health impacts of climate change</p>	Blog Discussion board
Mar 1–Mar 7	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MODULE # 6</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Health and Media</p> <p>Media—The future of public health.</p>	Blog Discussion board
Mar 8–Mar 14	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MODULE # 7</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Communities and Social Justice</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schiavo, R. (2016). The importance of community-based communication for health and social change. <i>Journal of Communication in Healthcare</i>, 9, 1–3. 2. Schiavo, R. (2020). Advocacy, community engagement, and cross-sectoral collaborations as key strategies during COVID-19 response and beyond: New directions for a new decade. <i>Journal of Communication in Healthcare</i>, 13, 1–5. 	Blog Discussion board

Mar 15–Mar 21	<u>MODULE # 8</u> Feedback—2 (Mini-Break—Mar 15 & Mar 16)	
Mar 22–Mar 28	<u>MODULE # 9</u> Women’s Health Activism Zoller, H. (2010). Communicating women’s health activism: A social justice agenda. <i>Women & Language</i> , 33, 73–79. Zoller, H. (2016). Women’s health activism targeting corporate health risks: Women’s voices for the Earth. <i>Women & Language</i> , 39, 97–119.	Blog Discussion board
Mar 29–Apr 4	<u>MODULE # 10</u> Health and Social Justice Final Report of Health and Social Justice handout	
Apr 5–Apr 11	<u>MODULE # 11</u> Health Literacy and Health Information Disparities Krishna, A. (2017). Motivation with misinformation: Conceptualizing lacuna individuals as knowledge-deficient, issue-negative activists. <i>Journal of Public Relations Research</i> , 29, 176–193.	Blog Discussion board
Apr 12–Apr 18	<u>MODULE # 12</u> Brand Activism and Social Justice Zoller, H.M. (2017). Health activism targeting corporations: A critical health communication perspective. <i>Health Communication</i> , 32, 219–229.	Blog Discussion board
Apr 19–Apr 25	<u>MODULE # 13</u> Food as Social Justice Greenberg, M., Greenberg, G., & Mazza, L. (2010). Food pantries, poverty and social justice. <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> , 100, 2021–2022.	Blog Discussion board
Apr 26–May 2	<u>MODULE # 14</u> Feedback Optional meetings with instructor	
May 3–May 5 (*Note May 5 is a Wednesday)	<u>MODULE # 15</u> Health & Social Justice	Report of Health and Social Justice (WED, MAY 5, by midnight).
May 6–May 12	<u>FINALS WEEK</u> Reflections (e.g., on your SDoH)	

