

**COMM 304: Health Communication**  
**Fall 2014**  
**Dr. Gary L. Kreps**  
**George Mason University**

**TEXTBOOK:**

Kreps, G.L. (Ed.). (2014). *Readings in health communication*.  
(Available online and on reserve).

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This advanced survey course will provide a broad overview and deep exploration into the evolving body of relevant health communication research, theory, and practice, examining the powerful influences of communication on the delivery of care and the promotion of health. The course will take an action research perspective to the study of health communication, where our overarching educational goal will be to learn how to use strategic health communication to enhance health outcomes and reduce health disparities, locally and globally.

The course will examine multiple levels of communication (intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organizational, and societal communication), key human and mediated channels of communication, as well as new digital information technologies. We will examine how strategically designed and culturally sensitive communication programs, practices, and policies can be used to enhance health outcomes. Class members will develop the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of health communication programs, design appropriate health communication interventions, and to use communication effectively to improve health outcomes for themselves and for others.

The course begins with an overview of the study of health communication. We will explore accumulated research evidence about the influences of communication on health outcomes, both positive and negative influences. We will examine the central role of relevant health information in directing important decisions about health care and health promotion. Consumer-provider health communication will be highlighted as the primary channel for the delivery of care, exploring the challenges to effective consumer-provider health communication. We will examine the influences of health literacy on the achievement of health goals, particularly as problems with health literacy can lead to serious disparities in health outcomes.

Communication strategies for reducing health disparities for different vulnerable and at-risk populations will be explored. The role of communication in health promotion will be examined, including the development, implementation, and evaluation of health education, health promotion campaigns, and health information technology programs. We will also work together on designing and implementing health communication research and intervention projects to enhance health outcomes for specific audiences.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

### **Topic Paper Assignment (15%)**

Each student will write one topic paper, a short popular article prepared for a broad audience. The article should be around 500 words in length (that is approximately 2 printed double-spaced pages). It should be prepared like a short newspaper or magazine feature article about a current health issue, application topic, controversy, or solution to a problem that is related to communication. (No references or footnotes).

Each paper should clearly explain the relevance of the issue chosen concerning health or public welfare, provide new insights into the unique nature of the issues covered, and suggest specific implications/recommendations concerning the issues covered for different key groups (such as health care consumers, parents, public health officials, health care providers, marketers, government officials, educators, etc.). The papers should be topical, relevant, interesting, and engaging, as well as accessible (readable) for a broad audience! You will probably have to do some background research, interview people involved in the issues covered, collect relevant quotes, and even take photos to use with the article. Each paper author will also be expected to provide in-class expert analysis/discussion leadership concerning the topic paper.

**The topic papers are not due on a specific date, but you should clear your topics with me early in the semester. You will exchange revised drafts with me of your topic paper via email until it is of publishable quality. Since you may need to prepare several drafts of the topic paper, the earlier in the semester you send me your first draft of the paper, the better.**

(The best papers may be selected for publication online by our major media partner, United Press International, and the student author will

receive a UPI byline! That would look nice on your resume!). Please clear your topics with me, submit your draft articles to me via email (gkreps@gmu.edu). I will review the papers, suggest revisions, and once you accept the revisions, I will encourage you to submit the papers to United Press International for possible publication! Check out the UPI website: <http://next.upi.com/> and take a look at their health story archives for examples of articles published by other students: [http://www.upi.com/Health\\_News/2013/](http://www.upi.com/Health_News/2013/)

### **Review Paper Assignment (45%)**

Each student will be assigned three of the course readings to review and to write a short (2 or 3 pages) reaction paper about. The reaction papers should have two sections: 1) Summary of the key points of the reading (in your own words) and 2) Analysis of the contributions of the reading and implications for health communication research and practice. **The reaction papers are due to me via email (gkreps@gmu.edu) no later than the Sunday before our Wednesday class meeting when the readings will be discussed.** I will provide feedback to you to help guide your leading a class discussion of the reading.

### **Term Paper Assignment (40%)**

Each student will prepare a research-based term paper for the class on a topic of interest related to e-health communication research and/or practice. The term paper should have the following sections: 1. Statement of the problem or issue addressed; 2. Review of the relevant literature (research and theory related to this topic); 3) Method used to conduct the study (including research design, research questions/hypotheses, instrumentation, and sampling strategy); 4) Results from the study (reported using appropriate analytic methods and data reduction tables/graphs); 5. Discussion of the implications from the study for research, theory, and practice, including limitations to the study and directions for future research. The term papers should use the latest APA style for citations and should normally be around 10-15 pages in length (typed, double-spaced, 12 point font). You can work with one to three other students on this research project and only one term paper should be submitted by each research team. **You will be presenting a summary of your research projects in class on our final class meeting.**

I will serve as a research advisor/consultant and will help you identify projects. Plan to submit applications to George Mason University's

Institutional Review Board for protection of human subjects (<http://oria.gmu.edu/irbnet/>) if your research will involve data collection from respondents. You should expect at least two weeks to get your study approved before you can collect data. Plan ahead so you don't run out of time!

### **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:**

#### **Week 1, Course and Class Introductions**

#### **Week 2, Intro to the Study of Health Communication**

1. Kreps, G.L. (2001). The evolution and advancement of health communication inquiry. In W.B. Gudykunst, Ed., *Communication Yearbook 24* (pp. 232-254). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
2. Kreps, G.L., Query, J.L., & Bonaguro, E.W. (2007). The interdisciplinary study of health communication and its relationship to communication science. In L. Lederman (Ed). *Beyond These Walls: Readings in Health Communication*, (pp. 2-13). London: Oxford University Press.
3. Hannawa, A.F., Kreps, G.L., Paek, H-J., Schulz, P., Smith, S., & Street, R.L. Jr. (in-press). Emerging issues and future directions of the field of health communication. *Health Communication*
4. Kreps, G.L. & Maibach, E.W. (2008). Transdisciplinary science: The nexus between communication and public health. *Journal of Communication, 58(4), December. 732-748.*
5. Bernhardt, J. (2004). Communication at the core of effective public health. *American Journal of Public Health, 94(12), 2061-2063.*

#### **Week 3, Communication and Health Outcomes**

6. Kreps, G.L., O'Hair, D. & Clowers Hart, M. (1994). The influence of human communication on health care outcomes. *American Behavioral Scientist, 38(2), 248-256.*
7. Kreps, G. L. (2003). The impact of communication on cancer risk, incidence, morbidity, mortality, and quality of life. *Health Communication, 15, 163-171.*

8. Kreps, G.L., & Chapelsky Massimilla, D. (2002). Cancer communications research and health outcomes: Review and challenge. *Communication Studies*, 53(4), 318-336.
9. Kreps, G.L. (2014). Relational health communication competence model. In T.L. Thompson, (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of Health Communication, Volume III* (pp. 1160-1161), Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
10. Kahana, E., & Kahana, B. (2007). Health care partnership model of doctor-patient communication in cancer prevention and care among the aged. In D. O'Hair, G.L. Kreps, & L. Sparks. (Eds.), *Handbook of Communication and Cancer Care* (pp. 37-54). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
11. Wright, K.B., Banas, J.A., Bessarabova, E., & Bernard, D.R. (2010). A communication competence approach to examining health care social support, stress, and job burnout. *Health Communication*, 25, 375-382.
12. Kreps, G.L. (2012). Translating health communication research into practice: The importance of implementing and sustaining evidence-based health communication interventions. *Atlantic Communication Journal*, 20, 5-15.

#### **Week 4, Providing Relevant Health Information**

13. Krist, A.H., et al., (2012). Interactive preventive health record to enhance delivery of recommended care: A randomized trial. *Annals of Family Medicine*, 10, 312-319.
14. Waitzkin, H. (1985). Information giving in medical care. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 26, 81-101.
15. Street, R. L. (1991). Information-giving in medical consultations: The influence of patients' communicative styles and personal characteristics. *Social Science & Medicine*, 32, 541-548.
16. Smith, C.E., Massey-Stokes, M., & Liebart, A. (2012). Health information needs of d/Deaf adolescent females: A call to action. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 157, 41-47.

#### **Week 5, Seeking Relevant Health Information**

17. Koch-Weser, S., et al. (2010). The Internet as a health information source: Findings from the 2007 Health Information National Trends Survey and implications for health communication. *Journal of Health Communication*, 15, 279-293.
18. Smith, D. (2011). Health consumer's use and trust of health information sources. *Journal of Communication in Healthcare*, 4, 200-210.
19. Oh, K.M., Kreps, G.L., Jun, J. & Ramsey, L. (2011). Cancer information seeking and awareness of cancer information sources among Korean Americans. *Journal of Cancer Education*, 26, 355-364.

#### **Week 6, Consumer-Provider Health Communication**

20. Krupat, E., & Irish, J.T. (2007). Cancer patients as active participants in their care. In D. O'Hair, G.L. Kreps, & L. Sparks. (Eds.), *Handbook of Communication and Cancer Care* (pp. 324-342). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
21. Arora, N. K. (2003). Interacting with cancer patients: The significance of physicians' communication behavior. *Social Science and Medicine*, 57, 291-308.
22. Finney Rutten, L. J., Augustson, E., & Wanke, K. (2006). Factors associated with patients' perceptions of health care providers' communication behavior. *Journal of Health Communication*, 11, 135-146.
23. Roter, D. L., Larson, S., Sands, D. Z., Ford, D. E., & Houston, T. (2008). Can e-mail messages between patients and physicians be patient-centered? *Health Communication*, 23, 80-86.
24. Sparks, L., et al., (2007). A Patient-centered approach to breaking bad news: Communication guidelines for health care providers. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 35, 177-196.

#### **Week 7, Adapting to Cultural and Health Literacy Factors**

25. Parker, R. M., & Gazmararian, J. A. (2003). Health literacy: Essential for health communication. *Journal of Health Communication, 8*, 116-118.
26. Parker, R., & Kreps, G.L. (2005). Library outreach: Overcoming health literacy challenges. *Journal of the Medical Library Association, 93(4)*, 78-82.
27. Kagawa-Singer, M., & Kassim-Lakha, S. (2003). A strategy to reduce cross-cultural miscommunication and increase the likelihood of improving health outcomes. *Academic Medicine, 78*, 577-587.
28. Kreps, G.L. (2012). Engaging health communication. In T.J Socha and M.J. Pitts. (Eds.). *The positive side of interpersonal communication* (pp. 249-258). New York: Routledge.

### **Week 8, Communication and Health Disparities**

29. Freimuth, V.S., & Quinn, S.C. (2004). The contributions of health communication to eliminating health disparities. *American Journal of Public Health, 94*, 2053-2055.
30. Cegala, D.J., & Post, D.M. (2006). On addressing racial and ethnic health disparities: The potential role of patient communication skills interventions. *American Behavioral Scientist, 49(6)*, 853-867.
31. Kreps, G. L. (2006). Communication and racial inequities in health care. *American Behavioral Scientist, 49*, 760-774.
32. Kreps, G.L., & Sivaram, R. (2008). The central role of strategic health communication in enhancing breast cancer outcomes across the continuum of care in limited-resource countries. *Cancer, 113(S8)*, 2331-2337.
33. Ballard-Reisch, D. (2010). Muted groups in health communication policy and practice: The case of older adults in rural and frontier areas. *Women and Language, 33*, 87-93.

### **Week 9, Communicating with At-Risk Populations**

34. Mayer, D.K., Terrin, N.C., Menon, U., Kreps, G.L., McCance, K., Parsons, S.K., & Mooney, K.H. (2007). Health behaviors in cancer survivors. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 34, 643-652.
35. Back, A. L., Arnold, R. N., Baile, W. F., Tulsky, J. A., & Fryer-Edwards, K. (2005). Approaching difficult communication tasks in oncology. *CA: Cancer Journal for Clinicians*, 55, 164-177.
36. Lannamann, J.W., Harris, L.M., Bakos, A.D., & Baker, K.J. (2008). Ending the end of life communication impasse: A dialogic intervention. In L. Sparks, D., O'Hair, & G.L. Kreps., (Eds.) *Cancer communication and aging* (pp. 293-317). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
37. Bylund, C.L., et al. (2010). Improving clinical communication and promoting health through concordance-based patient education. *Communication Education*, 59, 294-311.

#### **Week 10, Community-Based Health Communication Interventions**

38. Kelley, R., Hannans, A., Kreps, G.L., & Johnson, K. (2012). The Community Liaison Program: A health education pilot program to increase minority awareness of HIV and acceptance of HIV vaccine trials. *Health Education Research*, 27(4), 746-754.
39. Geist-Martin, P., & Bell, K.K. (2009). "Open your heart first of all": Perspectives of holistic providers in Costa Rica about communication in the provision of care. *Health Communication*, 24, 631-646.
40. Maibach, E.W., Abrams, L.C., & Marosits, M. (2007). Communication and marketing as tools to cultivate the public's health: A proposed "people and places" framework. *BMC Public Health*, 7(88), 1-34.
41. Papa, M. J., Singhal, A., Law, S., Pant, S., Sood, S., Rogers, E. M., & Shefner-Rogers, C. L. (2000). Entertainment-education and social change: An analysis of parasocial interaction, social learning collective efficacy and paradoxical communication. *Journal of Communication*, 50(4), 31-55.
42. LeFebvre, R. C., & Flora, J. A. (1988). Social marketing and public health intervention. *Health Education Quarterly*, 15(3), 299-315.



### **Week 11, Health Communication Campaigns**

43. Noar, S.M., Harrington, N.G., & Helme, D.W. (2010). The contributions of health communication research to campaign practice. *Health Communication, 25*, 593-594
44. Hornik, R.C., & Ramirez, A.S. (2006). Racial/ethnic disparities and segmentation in communication campaigns. *American Behavioral Scientist, 49(6)*, 868-884.
45. Southwell, B., & Yzer, M. (2007). The Roles of Interpersonal Communication in Mass Media Campaigns. In C.S. Beck (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook 31*, 420-462.
46. Cho, H., & Salmon, C.T. (2007). Unintended effects of health communication campaigns. *Journal of Communication, 57*, 293-317.

### **Week 12, E-Health Communication**

47. Neuhauser, L., & Kreps, G.L. (2003). Rethinking communication in the E-health era. *Journal of Health Psychology, 8*, 7-23.
48. Neuhauser, L., & Kreps, G.L. (2010). Ehealth communication and behavior change: Promise and performance. *Social Semiotics, 20(1)*, 7-24.
49. Noar, S. M., Harrington, N. G., & Aldrich, R. S. (2009). The role of message tailoring in the development of persuasive health communication messages. In C.S. Beck (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook 33*, pp. 73-133.
50. Kreuter, M.W., Lukwago, S.N., Bucholtz, D.C., Clark, E.M., & Sanders-Thompson, V. (2003). Achieving cultural appropriateness in health promotion programs: Targeted and tailored approaches. *Health Education and Behavior, 30*, 133-146.

### **Week 13, Communicating Health Risks**

51. Covello, V. T. (2003). Best practices in public health risk and crisis communication. *Journal of Health Communication, 8*, 5-8.

52. Croyle, R. T., & Lerman, C. (1999). Risk communication in genetic testing for cancer susceptibility. *Journal of the National Cancer Institute Monographs*, 25, 59–66.
53. Vanderford, M. L. (2003). Communication lessons learned in the emergency operations center during CDC's anthrax response: A commentary. *Journal of Health Communication*, 8, 11-12.

**Week 14, Systemic Health Communication Interventions (\*Term Papers are Due)**

54. Frey, L. R., Adelman, M. B., & Query, J. L., Jr. (1996). Communication practices in the social construction of health in an AIDS residence. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 1, 383-397.
55. Rittenour, C.E., & Booth-Butterfield, M. (2006). College students' sexual health: Investigating the role of per Communication. *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*, 7, 57–65.
56. Fisher, C.L. (2010). Coping with breast cancer across adulthood: Emotional support communication in the mother-daughter bond. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 38, 386-411.
57. Lederman, L.C. (2010). The impact of health communication on the culture of college drinking. *Health Communication*, 25, 603-604.

**Week 15, Wrapping Up and Term Paper Presentations**