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## **CMST 4112 Health Communication**

Communication Studies 4112

T/TH 11:30-12:50 pm

127 Coates Hall

*Communication-Intensive*

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Instructor: Dr. Raquel Polanco

Office: 124B Prescott Hall

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 10:00-12:00pm; Tuesday, Thursday 3:30-4:30 pm or by appointment

E-mail: rpolan2@lsu.edu

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Required Text: Various texts and audio files posted on course Moodle page

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### **Course Objectives**

The overall purpose of this course is to understand how our communication practices shape and produce our understanding of health in a variety of communicative and cultural contexts. Think of this course as a capstone experience in which you have the opportunity to combine your skills, knowledge, and experience regarding communication to an applied setting that cuts across the range of communicative situations. Drawing on those abilities, this class provides you with a foundation of health-related terms and concepts in order to apply effective communication skills and to critique various aspects of communication practices in formal and informal health care settings.

The course objectives are to provide students with an:

1. overview of current research and issues related to communication in health care contexts
2. understanding of how health is shaped by culturally specific communicative practices
3. opportunity to apply their communicative knowledge to pragmatic problems in the health care industry, ranging from intra- and interpersonal to mass mediated situations
4. opportunity to examine their own role in health care encounters
5. opportunity to enhance group collaboration skills
6. opportunity to enhance critical thinking skills
7. opportunity to produce original work that draws on their range of knowledge and skills

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## Attendance Policy

## Course Grading

Students will be evaluated on both individual and group performance in the class. Individual work will consist of exams, short paper exercises, and the individual assessments related to the group project. Group work will relate to the development and presentation of ethnographic research of a health-related issue in a local community. Details for each of these areas are provided after the schedule of classes. Grades will be based on the standard 10-point scale out of a possible 1000 points: A > 900 points, B > 800, C > 700, D > 510, F < 510.

<b>6 Quizzes (Best 5)</b>	[20 points each]	100 points
Group Lead Reading Discussion		50 points
<b>2 Exams</b>	[100 points each]	200 points
<b>2 Papers</b>		
Health Narrative Analysis Paper		100 points
Public Discourse Analysis Paper		100 points
<b>In-class participation</b>		100 points
<b>Community Health Group Project</b>		350 points
Final Group Presentation	[150 points]	
Individual Portion	[200 points]	

**Total: 1000 points**

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## COURSE POLICIES

**Attendance & Participation:** To communicate is to do. Much like a dance or sport class, this is a practice-based course so your attendance at each class meeting is required. Your class participation grade will be determined based on in-class discussion, exercises, and analysis of course readings and artifacts throughout the semester. I will take attendance every day at the start of class. You are granted 3 no-questions-asked absences (this includes illness, car trouble, family emergencies, funerals, vacations, hangovers etc.) after which you will lose 20 points off of your final grade for each absence (so 4 absences result in a 20-point deduction, 5 a 40-point deduction and so on). For every absence you do not use you will receive 10 pts on your final exam. So if you have perfect attendance you will receive 30 pts on your final exam in the course. **I reserve the right to revoke this opportunity if it becomes a source of contention.** If I have to mediate every individual absence, I will revoke the policy. You are either present in class or you are not.

**Contacting your instructor:** The best way to reach me outside of class is via email. Please keep in mind that this is my place of business and be respectful of my time. Like many of you, I check my email often but please do not expect me to respond to you in a text-message like fashion. During the work week I will respond to you within 24 hours. While I will usually respond over the weekend, I do not guarantee it. Please note: my email and office hours are not to be used in lieu of attending class or paying attention to lectures and instructions. I have over 120 students. ***If I respond to your email a prewritten form***

*message*, that is my friendly way of saying, “You should know the answer to that question. I either made it clear in class or I feel like it is your responsibility to figure out the the answer for yourself.” If you receive such an email, feel free to stop by my office or approach me in person for clarification.

**Technology Policy:** The goal of all course policies is to help create a successful course experience for you. This includes your ability to learn course material and to do so in a supportive classroom environment. As such, use of technology is prohibited to devices that aid in student learning. There are few public spaces left where we are safe to experiment, try things out, and make mistakes without fear of being immortalized forever on the internet. You will be asked to consider topics you may not have thought much about before. Thus, you may likely say something that, upon further reflection, you might not say again. Thus, **students are also not allowed to record other students in the course unless given explicit authorized permission.**

- Laptop computers and similar devices used for note-taking as a learning aid are permitted in class (This does not include cell phones). However, I require that all students using such devices sit in the first two rows and I reserve the right to ban such equipment if I feel it becomes a distraction. You should also have paper and a writing utensil for each class period. ***There will be no laptops or other electronic devices permitted on days in which students are giving presentations.***
- All other technology (smart phones, etc.) are NOT permitted for use during class unless I give you permission.
- Unauthorized cell phone use during class may result in disqualification for the attendance bonus points and a substantial reduction in overall course participation points (up to 20 points) with an increasing reduction in points for each use thereafter. This class is 80 minutes. If you cannot put your phone away and be present for that time, this is not the course for you.
- In case of emergencies requiring cell phone access during the class session, you should notify me before class begins and attempt to sit near the entrance to the classroom.

**Disabilities:** The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitations Act of 1973 states: “If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a coordinator in the Office of Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations can be arranged.” After you receive the accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.

## **Tentative Course Schedule**

**Please Note:** This course schedule is subject to change. A more detailed and reliable schedule of course events, assignments, and activities for each section is provided on the course Moodle page. *If there is a discrepancy between information listed below and the Moodle page, rely on the Moodle page.*

### **Week 1:**

**TH Jan. 10th:** Welcome to Health Communication

### **Week 2:**

**T Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>:**

The Culture Centered Approach to Health Communication

**TH Jan 17th:**

The Culture Centered Approach Continued

Have Listened to: The Unbroken Brain Interview

### **Week 3:**

**T Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Have read: *Warren and Fassett: Communication as Public Advocacy* (\*\*pp. 39-59)

Reading Group Assignments

**TH Jan 24**

Sharing Health Narratives

Quiz 1: The CCA Lecture; Warren and Fassett; The Unbroken Brain

### **Week 4:**

**T Jan 29:**

Have Read: *du Pre: Chapter 1: Introduction*

Group 1 Lead Discussion

Sharing Health Narratives

**TH Jan 31<sup>st</sup>**

Have Listened to: *More is Less*

Sharing Health Narratives

**Week 5:**

**T Feb 5th**

Have Read: Dutta: *Chapter 2: The Culture Centered Approach to Health Communication*  
Group 2 Lead Discussion

**TH Feb 7<sup>th</sup>**

Sharing Health Narratives

**Week 6:**

**T Feb 12<sup>th</sup>**

Have Read: Dutta: *Chapter 4: Culture, Identity, and Health*  
Group 3 Lead Discussion  
Sharing Health Narratives

**TH Feb 14**

Explanation of Narrative Analysis Paper  
Patient Caregiver Communication

**Week 7:**

**T Feb 19**

Have Read: du Pre Chapter 4: Patient Perspectives  
Group 4 Lead Discussion  
Quiz 3

**TH Feb 21**

Patient Perspectives Continued

**Week 8:**

**T Feb 26**

Have read: du Pre Chapter 5: Caregiver Perspectives  
Group 5 Lead Discussion  
Exam Review

**TH Feb 28**

MIDTERM EXAM

**Week 9:**

**T Mar. 5**

*HAPPY MARDI GRAS! NO CLASS!*

**TH Mar. 7**

Introduction to Group Project

**Narrative Analysis Paper Due**

**Week 10:**

**T Mar. 12**

Have Read du Pre *Chapter 8: Social Support, Family Caregiving, and End of Life*

**TH Mar. 14**

Family, Social Support, Continued

Have Listened to: *The Loneliness Epidemic*

**Week 11:**

**T Mar. 19<sup>th</sup>**

Quiz 4

Group Work Time

Have Listened to: *The Longest Shortest Time*

**TH Mar. 21<sup>st</sup>**

Group Work Time

Have Read: du Pre: *Chapter 11: Health Images in the Media*

Explanation of Discourse Analysis Paper

**Week 12:**

**T Mar. 26<sup>th</sup>**

Project Proposal Presentations

**TH Mar 28<sup>th</sup>**

Project Proposal Presentations

Have read: du Pre: *Chapter 12: Public Health and Crisis Communication*

**Week 13:**

**T Apr. 2**

Quiz 5

Interviewing Workshop

Due via email by midnight: Interview Questions

**TH Apr. 4th**

Fieldwork Day: No In-Class Meeting

**Week 14:**

**T Apr 9**

Have Read: du Pre: *Chapter 13: Planning Health Promotion Campaigns*

Group Work Day

**TH Apr 11th**

Group Workday

Quiz 6

Discourse Analysis Paper Due

**Week 15:**

**T Apr. 16<sup>th</sup>**

Spring Break! No Class!

**TH Apr 18th**

Spring Break! No Class!

**Week 16:**

**T Apr. 23**

Individual Group Meetings

**TH Apr 25<sup>th</sup>**

Individual Group Meetings

**Week 17: Final Exams Week**

**FINAL GROUP PRESENTATIONS**