**COMM 4015 – Health Literacy**

TR, 11:20 – 12:45

**Office Hours:**

**Purpose of the Course**

Health literacy has many definitions, but in this course, we will use the definition from the Institute of Medicine:

*The ability to understand health information and to use that information to make good decisions about your health and medical care” (nlm.nih.gov).*

In this course, we will study the development of health literacy as an area of concern in healthcare, including the affects of low health literacy in patient/provider interactions, public health campaigns, health education, healthcare reform, and health insurance. We will study the implications of health literacy for vulnerable populations, like the elderly, non-native English speakers, those with mental health challenges, and others. We will also study health literacy in the context of online health information.

**Course Objectives**

1. To understand the functions of basic literacy in health care and the impact of low health literacy
2. To understand the prevalence of low health literacy among various sub-populations in the US
3. To explore the impact of low health literacy on the health status vulnerable populations
4. To become acquainted with strategies to promote health literacy
5. To become acquainted with strategies to provide health information to a variety of populations

**Textbook**

*Advancing Health Literacy: A Framework for Understanding and Action*, by Christina Zarcadoolas, Andrew F. Pleasant, and David S. Greer. 2006, Jossey and Bass.

Additional readings and videos will be assigned.

**eCourseware**

We will use eCourseware for access to class documents (syllabus, calendar, assignment information, etc.) You will submit papers to the eCourseware dropbox. **However, we will NOT use eCourseware email.**

**Email**

You need to check your **UofM email** (not eCourseware email) at least once a day, as this is how I will send information to the class. When you email me, please follow these guidelines:

* Subject line: COMM 4015 with topic of your email
* Body of email: Be clear and concise. Write in complete sentences, with no texting language. Proofread your email. Write it as if you were corresponding with a potential employer.
* Signature: **Sign the email with your name**.

If you do not hear back from me within 1 day, please email me again. My intention is to respond quickly to everyone’s email, but sometimes I fail to keep track. Therefore, it is perfectly fine to email me again, and in fact, it is your responsibility to follow up on any email that you send me.

**Disabilities**

Please let me know if you have any special needs that I can help you with. If you are already registered with the Disabilities Resources for Students office, please let me know. For more information about resources and assistance, contact the DRS office at:

http://www.memphis.edu/drs/index.php

**Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism is a serious offense. Unfortunately, many students do not seem to understand what plagiarism is or how serious it is. The use of electronic sources makes plagiarism easy to commit. But it also makes it easy to detect.

The bottom line is that you cannot use any information, no matter where you find it, without attributing it to the source. If in doubt, cite! Keep in mind that you cite information for two reasons:

1. To credit the original authors
2. To guide your reader to further information

We will use the [APA Publication Manual, 6th edition](http://www.apastyle.org/)

You can also find good information and guidelines at [The Purdue OWL](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)

You are responsible for learning how to properly cite your material. I am providing you with various resources, along with a tutorial that you must complete. Once you have submitted the tutorial, **you are solely responsible for any plagiarism that you commit, intentionally or not**.

You must complete the tutorial at

<https://www.indiana.edu/~tedfrick/plagiarism/>

You must complete Sections 1 and 2. Print out the certificate and submit it to me by September 4. It is worth 10 points **IF** you submit it by then. If you hand it in late, you will not get any points. However, you must still complete it. I will not grade any of your work until I have your certificate. If I can’t grade your work, I will count it as late, meaning you won’t get credit for it.

Penalty for plagiarism:

First time: 0 on assignment; Initiate process to report to Office of Student Conduct

Second time: Failing course; Initiate 2nd process to report to Office of Student Conduct

Helpful links:

<http://www.memphis.edu/studentconduct/ai_resources.htm>

<http://www.memphis.edu/history/misconduct_plagiarism.htm>

<http://www.memphis.edu/history/turnitin.htm>

“Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.” (Office of Legal Counsel, October 17, 2005)

**Attendance**

I expect you to be in class. You can have 3 absences without penalty. After that, you will lose 5 points off your final grade for every class missed.

If you become seriously ill and need to miss an extended amount of class time, please be sure to let me know as soon as possible. We might be able to create a plan for you. But, if you miss several days of class in a row without letting me know why, you will still be penalized.

**Grading**

It is important to understand the meaning of your grades.

Grading formula for final grades:

A = 93 – 100

B = 83 – 92

C = 72 – 82

D = 65 - 71

An “A” on an assignment means:

* You have done **excellent** work.
* You have gone beyond the requirements of the assignment.
* Your work shows creativity and original thought.
* You have made effective connections between your outside sources, rather than simply “plugging it in.”
* Your work can be used as an example to other students.
* Your work is free of grammatical and spelling errors.
* By the end of the semester, an “A” means that your work is something that you would present to a potential employer.

A “B” means:

* Your work is **good**.
* You have met all the requirements of the assignment.
* You have shown more than a minimal effort in completing the assignment.
* You have used outside sources appropriately.
* Your work has a minimal number of grammatical and spelling errors (2 – 3 per page)

A “C” means:

* Your work is **average**.
* You have done only the minimum amount of work to meet the requirements of the assignment.
* You have not used information from your outside sources in any effective way; in other words, you have simply “plugged” the information into your work.
* Your work has several grammatical or spelling errors (4 – 5 per page).

A “D” means:

* Your work is **poor**.
* You did not meet the requirements of the assignment.
* Your work has several grammatical or spelling errors (5+ per page).
* Your work shows minimal or no commitment to engaging the material.

An “F” means:

* Your work is **unacceptable**.
* You put no effort into the assignment.
* You did not do the assignment.

These standards are guidelines; they are not an easily interpreted contract. I have provided them so that you understand that you won’t get an “A” on assignments or for the class simply by completing the assignment.

**Assignments**

All assignments are to be uploaded to the dropbox by midnight on the due date.

1. Topic paper, 2 pages, Due **Sept. 11,** 10 points
2. Literacy analysis paper, 4-5 pages, Due **Oct. 2,** 25 points
3. Rewrite plan, 4-5 pages, Due **Oct. 23**, 25 points
4. Interview project in three parts
   1. Part 1: Interview plan, 1 page, follow template provided, due **Oct. 7**, 10 points
   2. Part 2: Interview notes, 2 – 3 pages, due **Oct. 21**, 10 points
   3. Part 3: Interview paper, due **Nov. 6**, 30 points
5. Annotated bibliography (10 items), Due **Nov. 13**, 50 points
6. Paper and project Due **Dec. 9**, Paper, 100 points; Project, 50 points

**Additional Work**

At the beginning of every class, one student will be responsible for a 3-5 minute report on a current health issue and the health literacy needs surrounding it. I will do the first one, starting on September 2. See Current Story Assignment List in eCourseware to find your date.

**Class Meeting Schedule**

**Week 1, Intro**

August 26 and 28

Preface, Chapter 1, Issues

Introduction to health literacy, definitions, topics of interest

Berkman, Davis, & McCormack, *Health Literacy: What Is It?*

Short presentations by grad students about their interests and plans

**Week 2, History**

Sept. 2 and 4

Chapter 2, History

Pages 1-10 in *Health Literacy Action Plan*, on eCourseware

Nutbeam, *The Evolving Concept of Health Literacy*, on eCourseware – Grad students will present the article.

**Everyone: Be ready to talk about your topic in class**

**Week 3, Definitions**

Sept. 9 and 11

Chapter 3, Definitions

*Popular Health Literacy Definitions*

**DUE Sept. 11: Assignment 1, description of topic**

**Week 4, Writing**

Sept. 16 and 18

Chapter 4, Writing

Section on Style (Young’s MA thesis)

*Plain Style* (link on eCourseware)

*Mind, Metaphor and Health* (on eCourseware)

**On the 18th -- Literacy analysis workshop. You must bring your materials to class.**

**Week 5, Guidelines and Evaluation**

Sept. 23 and 25

Chapter 14, Guidelines

Chapter 13, Program evaluation (in that order)

**On the 25th, we’ll have group work for half the class period to work on literacy analyses.**

**On the 25th – Interview Workshop**

**Week 6, Mass Media; Information on the Internet**

Sept. 30 and Oct. 2

Chapters 5, Traditional mass media

Discussion of ebola coverage. Readings TBA

Chapter 6, Health information on the Internet

McInnes & Haglund, *Readability Of Online Health Information: Implications For Health Literacy*

Laz & Berenson, *Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Internet Use*

Grad students: Presentation of a commercial, ad, or print article relating health information

**DUE Oct. 2: Assignment 2, Literacy analysis**

**Week 7, Mental Health Literacy – move to week 11.**

Oct. 7 and 9

Mental health literacy

Swami, *Mental Health Literacy: Public Knowledge and Beliefs about Mental Disorders*

Mendenhall, *Mental Health Literacy: Social Work’s Role in Improving Public Mental Health*

Grad students: each of you will lead the discussion on one article:

*Social Network's Healing Power Is Borne Out in Poorer Nations*

*Racial Disparities Found in Pinpointing Mental Illness*

*Patients' Diversity Is Often Discounted*

Suicide Prevention, Readings TBA

**On the 9th – Rewriting Workshop**

**DUE, Oct. 7: Assignment 4A, Interview plan**

**Week 8, Infant Mortality**

Oct. 14 –Fall Break

Oct. 16

Chapter 7, Infant Mortality

Watch *Babyland*

**Week 9, Anthrax and Crisis Communication**

Oct. 21 and 23

Chapter 8, Anthrax

Freimuth, *Order out of Chaos: The Self-Organization of Communication Following the Anthrax Attacks*

Crisis communication

**On the 23rd – Bibliography Workshop**

**DUE Oct. 21: Assignment 4B, Interview Notes**

**DUE Oct. 23: Assignment 3, Rewrite Plan**

**Week 10, Genomics**

Oct. 28 and 30

Chapter 9, Genomics

Newcomb, et al., *Conversations With Children About DNA and Genes Using an Original Children’s Book*

Kaphingst, et al., *Testing Communication Strategies to Convey Genomic Concepts Using Virtual Reality Technology*

Stewart, *The Influence of News Frames and Science Background on Attributions about Embryo and Adult Stem Cell Research: Frames as Heuristic/ Biasing Cues*

**Week 11, Civic Literacy and Smoking Cessation CHANGE in week 11 – Mental health literacy**

Nov. 4 and 6

Chapter 10, Civic Literacy, Smoking Cessation

**DUE Nov, 6: Assignment 4C, Interview Paper**

**Week 12, Cultural Literacy and HIV/AIDS**

Nov. 11 and 13

Chapter 11, Cultural Literacy, Changing Face of HIV/AIDS

**DUE Nov, 13, Assignment 5, Annotated Bibliography**

**Week 13, Cultural Literacy and Diabetes**

Nov. 18 and 20

Chapter 12, Cultural Literacy, Diabetes and Native Americans

Photovoice

**Week 14, Patient’s Perspective**

Nov. 25

*Jordan, et al., Conceptualizing Health Literacy from the Patient’s Perspective*

*Osborne, In Other Words . . . Adding a Dose of Humor*

Nov. 27 – Thanksgiving

**Week 15, Future Plans**

Dec. 2

Pages 13 – 48, *National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy*. Look in folder for week 2 for document

Due December 9: Final paper and project

Exam Period: Dec. 11, 8 am. Graduate Student Presentation and sharing of projects