

*MMC 6417 -- Seminar in
Mass Media and Health
Spring 2014*

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Office Hours:
Tuesday, Wednesday 1-3 p.m.,
& by appointment

Course Objectives

The primary purpose of this course is to introduce you to current knowledge related to the influences of mass media on individual and public health. In addition, the course content is intended to enhance your understanding of selected mass communication/health communication theories. Other courses available in the college and elsewhere on campus are devoted to traditional mass media health promotion campaigns designed to encourage individuals to adopt or maintain healthy behavior. To minimize overlap with these courses, this seminar instead focuses on other mechanisms through which the mass media may affect health, including the influence of health news coverage and health information online on individual health behavior and public health policy, the potential health effects of advertising and entertainment programming, and the alternative approach to health promotion known as media advocacy.

In addition to developing an understanding of a broad range of this literature, I expect each member of the class to become an expert in one sub-domain of the media/health interaction. Each student will select a topic, undertake a systematic review of the related literature, collect data when appropriate, present the results of this research to the class, and produce a paper suitable for submission to an academic conference or scholarly journal.

Texts

There is no required text for the course. However, I encourage you to track down a copy of *Mass Communication and Public Health: Complexities and Conflicts*, Charles Atkin & Larry Wallack (Eds.) It's a bit dated, which is why I no longer require it, but it still contains some useful ideas.

The vast majority of reading material for the class is available via the course e-learning site. However, it's also possible that during the course of the semester, I'll come across other interesting and relevant material, which I'll send to you via email. Please make sure that you

complete all assigned readings BEFORE the class during which they will be discussed. We have a lot of ground to cover in this course, so we move quickly.

Grading

Class participation: 25%

Come to class each day ready to be a full participant in the discussion of the week's readings. Read the articles carefully and integrate readings within and across topics. Ask intelligent and thoughtful questions and attempt to provide equally intelligent and thoughtful answers to the questions raised by your colleagues. **Submit discussion questions through the e-learning site discussion function by Tuesday afternoon at 1 p.m. each week.** Ideally, you'll submit these questions earlier so that we can begin discussing them online, but this also will enable me to incorporate some of the most interesting questions into the Wednesday class discussion.

Class presentation: 15%

You will lead the discussion for one topic during the semester. We'll have to work some people in during the middle part of the semester because there are too many students this semester for everyone to present at the end. Your presentation most likely will be on the topic of your research paper, though that is not required, and your paper need not be completed when you present. You will be responsible for selecting and assigning one reading to provide background on your topic for the rest of the class. Distribute this reading, along with one or two discussion questions, by the class meeting time the week before your presentation. Exactly how long you'll have for the presentation and class discussion will depend on how many students are enrolled. Lead the class discussion dealing with these readings and with other appropriate information related to your topic. Prepare an annotated bibliography of readings in this area and distribute it to your classmates.

Health research news coverage analysis: 15%

You will locate a relatively recent (within the past five years) biomedical or public health study that, in addition to being published in a medical or public health journal, also received news coverage through traditional mainstream media outlets (e.g. newspapers, consumer magazines, network TV news programs). You will write a 6- to 8-page analysis comparing the original study with the coverage it received in two or more mainstream news channels. (You'll receive more information about this assignment later.) We will discuss class members' findings during the section on news coverage of health.

Research paper -- Draft: 10%, Final: 35%

The paper can be a thorough review of the literature on a significant mass media/health topic, leading to a proposed agenda for research, or if you begin right away, you could collect pilot data for a simple study. If you choose to complete a literature review paper, the paper must reflect a thorough exploration of the important theories and research related to your chosen topic and should make a specific argument. *Note that an "agenda for research" does NOT mean a proposal for a specific study.* Rather, a research agenda paper essentially examines an area of literature, draws conclusions about what we already know, and then describes important questions in this area that researchers have yet to answer. You also may choose to complete a framing or content analysis, a focus group study or possibly even an experiment or survey,

particularly if your topic is related to work you've done for a previous class. (See note later, however, about not "recycling" your work for this class.) **The text of the paper will run 20-25 pages and should be of high enough quality to submit to an appropriate academic conference or scholarly journal.**

Note: If several of you choose to collect data for your paper, you may be able to assist each other with coding, data collection, etc., to increase your chances of getting a paper ready to submit.

I assign minus grades so that students whose work is superior are recognized for their higher performance.

Final grades will be based on these standard break-points:

| | | |
|---------------------|--------------|------------------|
| A- = 90-93.5% | A = 93.6%+ | |
| B- = 80-83.5% | B = 83.6-87% | B+ = 87.1%-89.9% |
| C- = 70-73.5% | B = 73.6-77% | B+ = 77.1%-79.9% |
| D- = 60-63.5% | D = 63.6-67% | D+ = 67.1%-69.9% |
| E = 59.9% or lower. | | |

It is unlikely that the grades will be curved.

The following website provides a chart showing UF's policy regarding the grade points earned for each letter grade designation: <https://gradschool.ufl.edu/catalog/current-catalog/catalog-general-regulations.html#grades>

Academic Honesty

In accordance with UF policy, I'm including in this syllabus the definitions of the types of academic dishonesty that seem most likely to be potential problems for students in this class. If a situation ever arises in which you think something you're contemplating MIGHT constitute one of these types of academic dishonesty, ASK BEFORE YOU DO IT. Apologies after the fact will not resolve the problem for anyone.

Definitions

Misrepresentation: This means any act that is intended to deceive a teacher for academic advantage, including lying about the circumstances under which you collected data, turning in a paper you've previously submitted for another class, and failing to provide honest information when confronted with an allegation of academic dishonesty.

Fabrication: For this class, the primary concern would be making up data or falsifying your findings (e.g. claiming a hypothesis was supported when it was not, etc.)

Plagiarism: Any use of someone else's ideas or words in a way that presents those ideas or words as your own constitutes plagiarism, even if the ideas or words have not been published. This includes using word-for-word or only slightly altered segments of wording from someone else, regardless of who that individual is, without providing a citation that gives the original author credit. Obviously, submitting anyone else's work as your own constitutes plagiarism, but I also encourage you to look at the plagiarism guide provided by UF's Marston Science Library: <http://web.uflib.ufl.edu/msl/07b/studentplagiarism.html>

Plagiarism is one of the most serious crimes in academia AND in communication. It is YOUR responsibility to make certain you correctly cite other people's research and writing in your papers. Be especially careful about keeping track of the source of information you glean from Internet-based materials. It is all too easy to copy and paste sections of material from a website,

and later you may not remember exactly which information represents your notes or paraphrases of what you read and what is a verbatim copy. Unintended plagiarism is still plagiarism, and all plagiarism will be treated as intentional because I cannot know what you meant to do. It is acceptable, of course, to include verbatim materials from other people's works, but when you do, you must either include such material in quotation marks or set it off from the rest of the paper by indenting and single spacing.

The plagiarism avoidance guide our graduate faculty has approved will be provided on the e-learning site. If you read through that guide and still aren't certain what's acceptable, ASK ME! Do not assume that any other student or professor can tell you what will be acceptable in my class. Asking questions ahead of time is encouraged and comes with no penalties – but there ARE serious penalties for failing to credit someone else's work properly because you didn't ask questions.

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY: You are free at ANY point to ask me for guidance about how to credit others' work properly – even if you need to ask about something as you're handing the paper to me. Submitting your papers through the Sakai site also will allow you to check the papers through Turnitin.com. Therefore, if you include improperly credited material in any of your work, **you will fail the class**. Not just the assignment – **the whole class**. If I find you have plagiarized, I will submit an academic dishonesty report to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and the Student Judicial Affairs office. As you know from the Academic Honesty document you've all been required to sign, this can result in your being dismissed from the program.

Another no-no is recycling your own work for this class. Let's make the policy clear and simple: **You will NOT turn in for this class ANY work you previously have submitted to another instructor or that you plan to submit for any other class at UF or any other institution.** Writing your paper for this class on a topic you've worked on before may be acceptable, but discuss it with me IN ADVANCE. It's perfectly reasonable for you to draw on work you've already done for other classes. It's not reasonable for you to turn in the same paper or one that is substantially the same as work you've already used. If you're currently taking another course for which you must write a paper, and you want to write both papers – for this seminar and for the other class – on the same general topic, we'll need to work out an agreement acceptable to me **and** the other instructor before you proceed.

A Note about Office Hours: As much as humanly possible, I will be available during my office hours. However, because I advise more than 100 undergraduate students, my office hours fill up quickly. If you come by during office hours and I'm not in, look for a note -- I'm very likely to be back in five minutes or less. Your BEST chance of finding time to meet with me, however, is to make an appointment, even if it's for a time during my office hours. **Unless you have made an appointment in advance, please respect the fact that I need to attend to other tasks -- research, writing, advising, committee work, planning for class and grading papers -- during my non-office hours.** So please do not be offended if you drop by unexpectedly and I ask you to make an appointment or come back during office hours. If you make an appointment and then can't keep it, please call or email me as soon as possible to let me know. I have an answering machine on my office phone, and I've given you my home phone number, where there's also an answering machine.

After 8 p.m., please call my office number or email. Please speak clearly when leaving your telephone number!

Topic, Reading and Assignment

Schedule

IMPORTANT note about the readings: *It's not necessary that you read EVERY word of every article. If the article is a review, your purpose is to make sure you understand what the preponderance of research has shown, rather than to learn the details of any particular study. If the article is about a single study, focus your attention on how theory is (or is not) examined through the methods and, again, understand the key findings. All readings are available through the Sakai e-learning site for the course.*

Dates:

Jan. 8 Introduction – No readings

Jan. 15 **Overview**
Walsh-Childers & Brown: Effects of media on personal and public health

Jan. 22 **Media and the cultivation of illness and violence**

- Huesmann (2007). The impact of electronic media violence: Scientific theory and research
- Coyne et al. (2011). Media depictions of physical and relational aggression: connections with aggression in young adults' romantic relationships
- Anderson, et al. (2010). Violent video game effects on aggression, empathy, and prosocial behavior in Eastern and Western countries: A meta-analytic review
- Schor & Ford (2007). From tastes great to cool: Children's food marketing and the rise of the symbolic

Recommended, but not required

- Primack, et al. (2009) Associations between smoking and media literacy in college students
- Gutschoven & Van den Bulck (2005). Television viewing and age at smoking initiation: does a relationship exist between higher levels of television viewing and earlier onset of smoking?

Jan. 29 **More entertainment media portrayals & effects – Sex, sexuality, AIDS**

- Swami, et al. (2010). The attractive female body weight and female body dissatisfaction in 26 countries across 10 world regions: results of the international body project I.
- Braun-Courville & Rojas (2009). Exposure to sexually explicit web sites and adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviors.
- Bleakley, et al. (2011). A model of adolescents' seeking of sexual content in their media choices.
- Brown et al. (2006). Sexy media matter: Exposure to sexual content in music, movies, television and magazines predicts black and white adolescents' sexual behavior
- Steinberg & Monahan (2010). Adolescents' exposure to sexy media does not hasten the initiation of sexual intercourse

Recommended, but not required

- Martino et al. (2009) It's better on TV: Does television set teenagers up for regret following sexual initiation?
- Bleakley, et al. (2009) How sources of sexual information relate to adolescents' beliefs about sex

Jan. 29 or sooner: Turn in brief (1- to 2-page) prospectus describing paper/presentation topics. Printed copy – no electronic submission required.

Feb. 5

Alcohol, drugs & cigarettes – advertising and other mixed messages

- Stern & Morr (2012). Portrayals of teen smoking, drinking, and drug use in recent popular movies
- American Academy of Pediatrics (2010). Policy statement--children, adolescents, substance abuse, and the media.
- Anderson, et al. (2009) Impact of alcohol advertising and media exposure on adolescent alcohol use: a systematic review of longitudinal studies.

Recommended, but not required

- Smith & Foxcroft (2009). The effect of alcohol advertising, marketing and portrayal on drinking behaviour in young people: systematic review of prospective cohort studies
- Austin, Chen & Grube: How does alcohol advertising influence underage drinking? The role of desirability, identification and skepticism
- Wakefield, et al.: Effect of televised, tobacco company-funded smoking prevention advertising on youth smoking-related beliefs, intentions, and behavior.

Feb. 5: Submit citation and abstract of biomedical/public health research article for news coverage analysis, with citations for at least two mainstream media stories about the study

Feb. 12

DTC/OTC drug advertising

- Frosch et al (2010) A decade of controversy: balancing policy with evidence in the regulation of prescription drug advertising
- Bell, et al. (2010): Do antidepressant advertisements educate consumers and promote communication between patients with depression and their physicians?
- Faerber & Kreling (2011). Now you see it. Now you don't: Fair balance and adequate provision in advertisements for drugs before and after the switch from prescription to over-the-counter
- DeLorme, Huh, Reid, & An. (2010). The state of public research on over-the-counter drug advertising.

Feb. 19

News coverage of health: What's covered, how & why

- Woloshin, Schwartz & Kramer: (2009). Promoting healthy skepticism in the news: Helping journalists get it right
- Wallington, et al. (2010) Antecedents to agenda setting and framing in health news: An examination of priority, angle, source, and resource usage from a national survey of U.S. health reporters and editors
- Viswanath, et al. (2008). Occupational practices and the making of health news: A national survey of U.S. health and medical science journalists
- Jensen, et al. (2011). Making sense of cancer news coverage trends: A comparison of three comprehensive content analyses

Recommended, but not required

- Wallington, et al. (2010). Challenges in covering health disparities in local news media
- Cooper et al.: (2001) An expectancy-value analysis of viewer interest in television prevention news stories.

Feb. 19: Submit health research news coverage analysis paper & be prepared to discuss in class

Feb. 26

News coverage and effects on individuals

- Stryker, Moriarty & Jensen (2008). Effects of newspaper coverage on public knowledge about modifiable cancer risks
- Niederdeppe, et al. (2010). Does local television news coverage cultivate fatalistic beliefs about cancer prevention?
- Clegg Smith, et al. (2008). Relation between newspaper coverage of tobacco issues and smoking attitudes and behaviour among American teens

March 1-9

Spring Break – Enjoy!

March 12

News coverage and effects on public health policy

- Blake, et al. (2010). The role of tobacco-specific media exposure, knowledge, and smoking status on selected attitudes toward tobacco control
- Coleman, Thorson & Wilkins (2011). Testing the effect of framing and sourcing in health news stories

- Yanovitzky (2002). Effects of news coverage on policy attention and action

- March 19 **Media advocacy – a different approach to health promotion**
- Rock, et al. (2011). A media advocacy intervention linking health disparities and food insecurity
 - Harwood et al. (2005). Media advocacy & underage drinking policies
 - Stead, Hastings & Eadie (2002). The challenge of evaluating complex interventions
 - Niederdeppe et al. (2007). Media advocacy, tobacco control policy change and teen smoking in Florida

Recommended, but not required

- Jernigan (2011). Framing a public health debate over alcohol advertising: the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2002-2008

March 19 or sooner: Submit first draft of research paper, with complete bibliography.

- March 26 **Health information and the Internet**
- Ye (2010). Correlates of consumer trust in online health information
 - Miller & Bell (2011). Online health information seeking: The influence of age, information trustworthiness, and search challenges
 - Sadasivam et al. (2012). Internet health information seeking is a team sport: Analysis of the Pew Internet Survey
 - Eysenbach & Köhler (2002): How do consumers search for and appraise health information on the world wide web?

- April 2 **Social media, impacts on health & health promotion**
- Collier, et al. (2011). OMG U got flu? Analysis of shared health messages for bio-surveillance
 - Kontos, et al. (2010). Communication inequalities and public health implications of adult social networking site use in the United States
 - Korda & Itani (2011). Harnessing social media for health promotion and behavior change
 - Fox (2011). The social life of health information
 - Manago, et al. (2012). Me and my 400 friends: The anatomy of college students' Facebook networks, their communication patterns, and well-Being

April 9 No class – meet individually on final papers

April 16, 23 Student presentations, course wrap-up

April 23: Submit final paper. Please bring a printed copy, but also make certain you submit it electronically through Sakai.