

**American University of Beirut  
Faculty of Health Sciences  
Department of Health Promotion and Community Health**

**HPCH 301 (sect 1)  
Health Communication  
[2 credits]**

**Course Instructors**

**Dr. Tamar Kabakian (Section 1)**

Office: Van Dyke 304

Email: [tk00@aub.edu.lb](mailto:tk00@aub.edu.lb)

**Class time and location**

**Section 1:** Monday, 9-10:40am, Van Dyke Room 203

**Course description**

Health communication is a discipline that examines how human and mediated communication can influence the outcomes of health-care and health promotion efforts. This core MPH course introduces you to the basic concepts of health communication and its scholarship, including the focal areas of health literacy, patient-provider communication, social marketing, health campaigns, risk communication, crisis communication, and health advocacy. During the course, you will discover how communicating health is influenced by individual, social and societal factors.

The course will provide you with tools to critically evaluate existing health campaigns and to outline strategies to effectively communicate with different audiences about health-related topics. You will review and design culturally appropriate, evidence-based health messages for specific publics. Additionally, you will learn how to effectively communicate scientific information to different audiences (e.g., general population, experts, the media) using appropriate oral and written materials and communication channels.

Format: **Lecture & Discussion**

**Course learning objectives (LOs)**

**By the end of the course, students will be able to:**

- LO1. Differentiate between health, risk, and crisis communication, social marketing, and media advocacy for public health.
- LO2. Specify steps needed to develop and disseminate health messages to varied audiences (professionals, the media, policy makers, and the public). **[CC18,20]**
- LO3. Analyze, interpret, and evaluate materials for disseminating a health message. **[CC18,20]**
- LO4. Apply persuasive communication strategies and models to the design of public health materials. **[CC18,19]**

- LO5. Design effective and culturally appropriate oral and written materials targeting selected publics, using appropriate digital or traditional media channels. **[CC18,19,20]**
- LO6. Discuss issues related to communicating data and other findings of health and science research to the public. **[CC19]**
- LO7. Discuss the ethical, cultural and professional issues surrounding the use of communication techniques and apply ethical principles to the presentation and communication of public health messages. **[CC19]**
- LO8. Apply effective interpersonal communication and group interaction skills (listening, openness to others' ideas, preparation, contribution, leadership).

### Competencies of the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)

CC18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors.

CC19. Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation.

CC20. Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content.

### Assigned text book and required readings

A big part of this course is based on the book "*Health communication: From theory to practice*." edited by Roberta Schiavo (2013), published by John Wiley & Sons. A digital version of the book is available from ProQuest Ebook Central, accessible from AUB libraries ([e-book](#)). Selected book chapters and other mandatory readings are highlighted with an asterisk (\*).

A list of additional reading materials for each session is provided with the course schedule below. PDF copies will be shared on Moodle.

### Course requirements and Student evaluation

Students will be evaluated on the following assessments. Detailed information will be shared with the students in advance.

**Table 1. Modes of assessment mapped to course learning objectives**

Mode of assessment	Learning Objectives							
	LO1	LO2	LO3	LO4	LO5	LO6	LO7	LO8
<b>1. Planning a response (30%, individual)</b>		X						
<b>2. Message analysis and development (35%, group)</b>			X	X	X		X	X
<b>3. Science communication activity (25% individual)</b>						X	X	
<b>4. Participation in the course (10% individual)</b>	X							

Table 2. Description of assessment methods

Assessment method	Date (tentative)	LOs covered (CEPH Competencies)	Grade percentage
<b>1. Planning a response (individual)</b>	<b>March 10</b>	<b>LO2 (CC18)</b>	<b>30%</b>
Learning from the response to the current COVID-19 pandemic in Lebanon and other countries in the world, you will outline a risk & crisis communication strategy for a hypothetical future scenario.			
<b>2. Message analysis and development (group)</b>	<b>TBD (during reading period)</b>	<b>LO3,4,5,7,8 (CC18,19,20)</b>	<b>35%</b>
<p>Working in a group of 3-4, you will analyze a specific component of a selected, existing public health campaign, provided by the instructors or proposed by the students. You will research the topic and understand the context of the campaign, target audiences, and communication objectives, etc. using available online resources.</p> <p>The group will complete a message evaluation form using predefined criteria Which will be provided by the instructor.</p> <p>Based on the message analysis, you will <b>brainstorm</b> and <b>develop key, alternative messages</b> to improve the analyzed campaign component. You will have to apply persuasive communication strategies, while considering socio-cultural and ethical principles.</p> <p>The final presentation will briefly outline the campaign information, then delve into the message analysis. The <b>presentation</b> will summarize the result of the message analysis and highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the messages. The presentation will include also the new messages developed by the team, hence providing recommendations for improving the campaign, if needed.</p>			
<b>3. Science communication (individual)</b>	<b>April 11</b>	<b>LO6,7 (CC19)</b>	<b>25%</b>
You will “translate” a scientific text provided by the instructor into texts that could be used by different audiences, such as policy makers, laypersons, or journalists. You will be asked to provide justifications for your communication approach for each audience, in consideration of the cultural context.			
<b>4. Participation in the course (individual)</b>	<b>Throughout the course</b>	<b>LO1</b>	<b>10%</b>
The quality and amount of learning in this course will largely depend on the active participation during the all sessions whether in the form of discussions during lectures or when students will be working in smaller groups. Students are expected to have prepared the readings before coming to class.			

## Course etiquette



**Be ready for class** by reading materials beforehand,



**Engage**, by participating in the discussions, asking questions,

## AUB/FHS policies

### ✓ **Attendance**

You need to be ready and attend classes **on time**; if you cannot attend a class, you should notify the instructor beforehand. If you miss more than one-fifth of the online sessions of any course in the first ten weeks of the semester you may be dropped from the course.

### ✓ **Academic Integrity**

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Review [the Student Code of Conduct](#) in your handbook and familiarize yourself with definitions and penalties. If you are in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, ask your instructor because it is your responsibility to know. The American University of Beirut has a strict anti-cheating policy. Penalties include failing marks on the assignment in question, suspension or expulsion from University and a permanent mention of the disciplinary action in your records.

### ✓ **Non-Discrimination – Title IX – AUB**

AUB is committed to facilitating a campus free of all forms of discrimination including sex/gender-based harassment prohibited by Title IX. The University's non-discrimination policy applies to, and protects, all students, faculty, and staff. If you think you have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual misconduct, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. If you speak to a faculty or staff member about an issue such as harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, the information will be kept as private as possible, however, faculty and designated staff are required to bring it to the attention of the University's Title IX Coordinator. Faculty can refer you to fully confidential resources, and you can find information and contacts at [www.aub.edu.lb/titleix](http://www.aub.edu.lb/titleix). **To report an incident**, contact the University's Title IX Coordinator Ms. Mitra Tauk at 01-350000 ext. 2514, or [titleix@aub.edu.lb](mailto:titleix@aub.edu.lb). An anonymous report may be submitted online via EthicsPoint at [www.aub.ethicspoint.com](http://www.aub.ethicspoint.com).

### ✓ **Accessible Education Office (AEO)**

The Accessible Education Office (AEO) coordinates academic accommodations and services for all eligible AUB students with disabilities (such as ADHD, learning difficulties, mental health conditions, chronic or temporary medical conditions, and others). If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations at the department, faculty or university level, please contact AEO as soon as possible. Once you register with our office, we will assist you in receiving appropriate accommodations and will liaise with your instructors and any related entity to best support your needs. AEO is located in West Hall room 314, and can be reached by phone at 1-350000 ext. 3246 or by email: [accessibility@aub.edu.lb](mailto:accessibility@aub.edu.lb). Information about our services can be found at: <https://www.aub.edu.lb/SAO/Pages/Accessible-Education.aspx>

### Detailed course outline

Changes in the schedule of any class or assignment will be promptly communicated via Moodle.

Session/date	Topic	Required readings	Relevant assignments where learning will be assessed
Session #1 Jan 24	<b>Introduction to the course</b> Going through the syllabus, feedback course practicalities and logistics		
Session #2 Jan 31	<b>Health communication and its scholarship</b> -Approaches and action areas: Current Health Communication Theories and Issues: -Selected behavioral and social science theories and frameworks	Schiavo (2014), Chapters 1 and 2	Assessment 4
Session 3 Feb 7	<b>Current Health Communication Topics and Issues</b> -Disparities, empowerment, eHealth and Health literacy (intro)	Johns et al. (2017)  Gollust et al. (2014)	Assessment 4
Session 4 Feb 14	<b>Culture and diversity in healthcare</b> -Cultural competence Discussion	Schiavo (2014), Chapter 3	Assessment 4
Session #5 Feb 21	<b>Patient-provider communication</b> Discussion on patient-provider communication models	Schiavo (2014), Chapters 4, 7  Street et al. (2009)	Assessment 4
Session #6 Feb 28	<b>Risk and crisis communication</b> Discussion on risk communication frameworks -CDC's Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) model  <i>Assignment 1 guidelines</i>	Glick (2007);  Ruiter et al. (2014);  Veil et al. (2008)	Assessment 1,4
Session # 7 Mar 7	<b>Health Campaigns &amp; Community Health Initiatives</b> Discussion: differences between approaches: Public Health Campaigns and Social Marketing	Schiavo (2014), Chapter 9 Atkin (2000); Wakefield et al. (2010)	Assessments 1,2,4
Session # 8 Mar 14	<b>Persuasive communication strategies</b>	Cialdini (2001); Rimer & Kreuter (2006)	Assessment 2
Session # 9 Mar 21	<b>Factors to consider when developing messages:</b> Health Literacy and eHealth Literacy (media, technology, science, functional, ...)	Norman & Skinner (2006); El-Benny et al.(2021)	Assessment 2

Session/date	Topic	Required readings	Relevant assignments where learning will be assessed
	<i>Assignment 2 guidelines</i>		
Session # 10 Mar 28	<b>Crafting messages</b> (framing; argumentative structure)  Evaluating Public Health Campaign Messages	Akl et al. (2011)  Gallagher & Updegraff (2011);  Morrison et al. (2005)	Assessment 2
Session #11 Apr 4	<b>Communicating science:</b> people vs. experts media vs health professionals  <b>Visual Communication and Science Communication</b>  Communicating science: effective poster presentations  <i>Assignment 3 guidelines</i>	Chang (2015);  El-Jardali (2015)	Assessment 3
Session #12 April 11	<b>Public relations and mass media; Media advocacy</b>	Schiavo (2014), Chapter 5 (selecta);  Dorfman & Krasnow (2014);  Jensen et al. (2014)	Assessment 2
TBD	<i>Group presentations</i>		

### Course Readings-organized by session

The asterisk (\*) indicates mandatory readings

#### Session 3. Current trends in Health Communication

Community Toolbox (n.a.) Chapter 27. Cultural Competence in a Multicultural World. Available from: <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents>

\*Gollust, S. E., & Cappella, J. N. (2014). Understanding public resistance to messages about health disparities. *Journal of Health Communication*, 19(4), 493-510.

\*Johns, D. J., Langley, T. E., & Lewis, S. (2017). Use of social media for the delivery of health promotion on smoking, nutrition, and physical activity: a systematic review. *The Lancet*, 390, S49.

#### Session 5. Patient-provider communication

- Fine, E., Reid, M. C., Shengelia, R., & Adelman, R. D. (2010). Directly observed patient–physician discussions in palliative and end-of-life care: a systematic review of the literature. *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, 13(5), 595- 603.
- \*Street Jr, R.L., Makoul, G., Arora, N.K., & Epstein, R.M. (2009). How does communication heal? Pathways linking clinician–patient communication to health outcomes. *Patient Education & Counseling*, 74(3), 295-301.

### **Session 6. Risk and crisis communication**

- \*Glik, D. C. (2007). Risk communication for public health emergencies. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 28, 3354.
- Finkel, A. M. (2008). Perceiving others' perceptions of risk. Still a task for Sisyphus. *Annals of New York Academy of Science*, 1125, 121137.
- Reyna, V. F. (2012). Risk perception and communication in vaccination decisions: A fuzzy-trace theory approach. *Vaccine*, 30(25), 3790-3797.
- \*Ruiter, R. A., Kessels, L. T., Peters, G. J. Y., & Kok, G. (2014). Sixty years of fear appeal research: Current state of the evidence. *International Journal of Psychology*, 49(2), 63-70.
- \*Veil, S., Reynolds, B., Sellnow, T. L., & Seeger, M. W. (2008). CERC as a theoretical framework for research and practice. *Health Promotion Practice*, 9(4\_suppl), 26S-34S.

### **Session 7. Health Campaigns and Community Health Initiatives**

- \*Atkin, C. K. (2000). Theory and principles of media health campaigns. In Rice RE & Atkin CK (eds) *Public Communication Campaigns* (3rd ed). Sage publications: California, London and New Delhi.
- \*Wakefield, M.A., Loken, B., & Hornik, R.C., (2010). Use of mass media campaigns to change health behavior. *The Lancet*. 376 (748), 1261–1271 doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(10)60809-4

### **Session 8. Persuasive Communication**

- \*Cialdini, R. B. (2001). Harnessing the science of persuasion. *Harvard Business Review*, 79(9), 72–81.
- \*Rimer, B. K., & Kreuter, M. W. (2006). Advancing Tailored Health Communication: A Persuasion and Message Effects Perspective. *Journal of Communication*, (56), 184–201.
- Shen, F., Sheer, V. C., & Li, R. (2015). Impact of narratives on persuasion in health communication: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Advertising*, 44(2), 105-113.

### **Session 9. Factors to consider when developing messages-Health and eHealth Literacy**

- Berkman, N.D., Sheridan, S.L., Donahue, K.E., et al. (2011). Low health literacy and health outcomes: an updated systematic review. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 155, 97–107.
- Dickens, C., Lambert, B. L., Cromwell, T., & Piano, M. R. (2013) Nurse Overestimation of Patients' Health Literacy, *Journal of Health Communication*, 18:sup1, 62-69, DOI: 10.1080/10810730.2013.825670
- \*El Benny, M., Kabakian-Khasholian, T., El-Jardali, F., & Bardus, M.\* (forthcoming) The application of the eHealth literacy model in digital health interventions: A scoping review of the literature. *Journal of Medical Internet Research* 2021;23(6):e23473
- Jensen, J. (2011). Addressing health literacy in the design of health messages. *Health communication message design: Theory and practice*, 171-190.

- \*Norman, C. D., & Skinner, H. A. (2006). EHealth Literacy: Essential Skills for Consumer Health in a Networked World. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 8(2), e9. doi:10.2196/jmir.8.2.e9
- Nutbeam, D. (2000). Health literacy as a public health goal: a challenge for contemporary health education and communication strategies into the 21st century. *Health Promotion International*, 15(3), 259–267.
- Nutbeam, D. (2008). The evolving concept of health literacy. *Social Science & Medicine*, 67(12), 2072–2078. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2008.09.050
- Taggart, J., Williams, A., Dennis, S., Newall, A., Shortus, T., Zwar, N., Harris, M. F. (2012). A systematic review of interventions in primary care to improve health literacy for chronic disease behavioral risk factors. *BMC Family Practice*, 13, 49. doi:10.1186/1471-2296-13-49

### Session 10. Crafting Messages

- \*Akl, E. A., Oxman, A. D., Herrin, J., Vist, G. E., Terrenato, I., Sperati, F., Schünemann, H. (2011). Framing of health information messages. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, (12). <http://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD006777.pub2>
- \*Gallagher, K. M., & Updegraff, J. A. (2011). Health Message Framing Effects on Attitudes, Intentions, and Behavior: A Meta-Analytic Review. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s12160-011-9308-7>
- Mayer, N. D., & Tormala, Z. L. (2010). “Think” Versus “Feel” Framing Effects in Persuasion. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 36(4), 443–454. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0146167210362981>
- \*Morrison, F. P., Kukafka, R., & Johnson, S. B. (2005). Analyzing the structure and content of public health messages. AMIA ... Annual Symposium Proceedings. AMIA Symposium, 540–544.
- Noar, S. M. (2012). An Audience–Channel–Message–Evaluation (ACME) Framework for Health Communication Campaigns. *Health Promotion Practice*, 13(4), 481–488. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839910386901>
- Public Health Ontario, & Dalla Lana School of Public Health. (2012). Health communication message review criteria. Toronto, Canada: Queen’s Printer for Ontario. Retrieved from [https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/Health\\_communication\\_message\\_review\\_criteria\\_2012.pdf](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/Health_communication_message_review_criteria_2012.pdf)

### Session 11. Communicating Science

- \*Chang, C. (2015). Motivated Processing How People Perceive News Covering Novel or Contradictory Health Research Findings. *Science Communication*, 37(5), 602–634. doi:10.1177/1075547015597914
- \*El-Jardali F, Bou Karroum L, Bawab L, Kdouh O, El-Sayed F, Rachidi H, et al. (2015) Health Reporting in Print Media in Lebanon: Evidence, Quality and Role in Informing Policymaking. *PLoS ONE* 10(8): e0136435. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0136435
- Foster, C., Tanner, A. H., Kim, S.-H., & Kim, S. Y. (2014). National Conversations About the Costs of U.S. Health Care A Content Analysis of Media Coverage, 1993-2010. *Science Communication*, 36(5), 519–543. doi:10.1177/1075547014536882
- Hinnant, A., & Len-Ríos, M. E. (2009). Tacit Understandings of Health Literacy Interview and Survey Research With Health Journalists. *Science Communication*, 31(1), 84–115. doi:10.1177/1075547009335345



Kendall-Taylor, N. (2012). Conflicting Models of Mind Mapping the Gaps Between Expert and Public Understandings of Child Mental Health. *Science Communication*, 34(6), 695–726. doi:10.1177/1075547011429200

\*Khalid, M.Z., & Ahmed, A. (2014). Entertainment-education media strategies for social change: Opportunities and Emerging Trends. *Review of Journalism and Mass Communication*. 2(1): 69-89.

Parrott, R., Hopfer, S., Ghetian, C., & Lengerich, E. (2007). Mapping as a visual health communication tool: promises and dilemmas. *Health Communication*, 22(1), 13-24.

Schwitzer, G. (2014). A guide to reading health care news stories. *JAMA Internal Medicine*. 174(7): 1183-1186.

### Session 12. Public Relation and Mass Media: Media advocacy

\*Dorfman, L., & Krasnow, I. D. (2014). Public health and media advocacy. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 35.

\*Jensen, Jakob D., Courtney L. Scherr, Natasha Brown, Christina Jones, Katheryn Christy, and Ryan J. Hurley. "Public estimates of cancer frequency: cancer incidence perceptions mirror distorted media depictions." *Journal of health communication* 19, no. 5 (2014): 609-624.

### Appendix-I Mapping of Course Learning Objectives to CEPH Competencies

CEPH competencies	LO 1	LO 2	LO 3	LO 4	LO 5	LO 6	LO 7	LO 8	Other CORE and/or Concentration courses that also address competency	Assignment where Competency primarily assessed
CC18		A	A	A	A				None	Assignment 1b, 2a,2b,2c,3
CC19				A	A	A	A		None	Assignment 1b, 2b,2c,3
CC20		A	A		A				None	Assignment 2c,3,4

A= CEPH competency is primarily assessed in my course