The University of Oklahoma  
College of Continuing Education  
Advanced Programs – Course Syllabus

Course Title:  
Directed Readings: Health Communication

Course Number:  
COMM 5960-475

Course Description:  
Communication is essential in individuals and their supportive others’ management of mental and physical health. People facing illness or trying to maintain good health face many challenges: making decisions about treatments and other courses of action, managing uncertainty about their future or the trajectory of their illness, coping with large volumes of information containing potentially conflicting advice, and responding to changes in their identities and relationships as a consequence of illness. Managing those challenges can be helped or hindered by communicating with others (e.g., family, friends, and health care providers). This course focuses on three general areas: (a) communication and identity, (b) health and personal relationships, (c) health care provider-patient interaction. This is an advanced course on the theoretical bases for understanding social interactions in health care settings.

Course Dates:  
January 3 – April 30, 2012  
Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: January 3, 2012

Site Director:  
Please see your local Site Director or e-mail Carolyn Taylor at cataylor@ou.edu

Professor Contact Information:  
Course Professor: Dr. Elaine Hsieh  
Mailing Address: 610 Elm Ave. #101, Norman, OK 73019  
Telephone Number: 405-325-3154  
FAX Number: 405-325-7625  
E-mail Address: ehsieh@ou.edu  
Virtual Office Hours: 10AM-12PM Tuesday and Thursday  
Professor availability: The professor will be available via e-mail to students during the above listed Virtual Office Hours and other methods by arrangement.

Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:  
1. Materials posted on the OU Desire to Learn (D2L) system: I will assign readings, including journal articles and book chapters, for each module. Access D2L at http://learn.ou.edu; enter your OU NetID (4+4) and password, and select course to access material. Please contact your local Site Director if you require assistance.

OU E-Mail:  
All official correspondence from distance learning instructors will be sent only to students’ ou.edu address.
Online Learning Resource Center:
The Online Learning Resource Center of the University of Oklahoma’s College of Arts and Sciences Online Program is here to serve you and assist you with any questions, problems, or concerns you may have. For assistance go to [http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/](http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/) or contact us by telephone at: (405) 325-5854 or Email: casonline@ou.edu

Course Objectives:
By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Critically read research articles and generate theoretical and practical implications from the readings.
   - provide concise synthesis on the readings
   - compare and contrast different theoretical standpoints

2. Identify the various contextual factors influencing patients’ illness experiences and provider-patient communication.
   - identify specific variables that are relevant to a patient’s illness experience and explain the pathways for such processes
   - provide interventions specific to those variables to enhance a patients’ illness management

3. Recognize that illness management is a coordinated activity between the patient and his/her social network.
   - listen to a patients’ narratives and identify the social, cultural, interpersonal, and clinical concerns expressed by the patients.

Course Outline:
There are three modules for this class. You are expected to complete each module and contribute to the discussion boards.

Module 1: Illness Management as Identity Performance
Readings:

For module 1, we would like you to start thinking about how health and illness is situated in a person’s everyday life. We will explore how the definition, understanding, and performance of health and illness influence a person’s ability to solicit social support and other researches as they cope with their illness. We will first examine Parsons’ Sick Role concept to explore why illness is not just a biomedical status but also an identity that needs to be claimed through social interactions with others.
Module 2: Coping with Chronic Illness

Readings:


For Module 2, we would like you to start thinking about how individuals’ experiences and expectations of coping with illness are socially (and culturally) situated. We will examine the two primary coping strategies for stress management (i.e., problem-focused vs. emotion-focused coping). We will then explore why treatment adherence is not just about patients’ ability or willingness to follow doctors’ order. To facilitate patients’ treatment adherence, we need to situate patients’ illness experiences in their social contexts.

Module 3: Communicative Competence and Health Literacy

Readings:


For Module 3, we would like you to conceptualize provider-patient communication as coordinated communicative activities among all participants involved in the illness event. We will first examine the history, concept, and future of health literacy as a field of research. Then, we will discuss the coordinated, collaborative nature of communicative competence in health care settings. Health literacy and communicative competence is not a fixed skill. Rather, they are the coordinated accomplishment between the providers, the patient, and all others who are involved in the illness event.

Assignments, Grading, and Due Dates:

Module Overview

Each week you will have 1-2 assignments, which will be accompanied by a grading rubric explaining how you will be evaluated and how many points each assignment is worth. For each module, you will be required to: 1) complete 4-5 reading assignments; 2) listen to a series of short, lecture-style presentations to supplement the reading material; 3) contribute to the discussion board with comments about the readings; and 4) complete some kind of assignment in which you apply concepts from the reading to the “real world.”
You are expected to complete each module at a time that is convenient for you. However, it is **important to complete all assignments by 4/30 to avoid receiving an I grade.** After you complete the assignment(s) for each module, **please send me an email** indicating your progress. I will also review your assignment(s) and provide you feedback in the following week.

**Reflection**

In some modules, you will take time to reflect on what you have learned in the assigned readings or any other resources. The focus of this reflection is a review of argument or idea being presented by authors and how your knowledge about the module content has changed.

**Resources**

In some modules, you’ll have access to a variety of Web pages and video clips that are designed to provide you depth of knowledge and a diversity of examples on the topic at hand. Think about each item actively, working to understand the argument or idea being presented. Using these resources, you will think about how they relate to other information you’ve learned in the course.

**Discussion Board Rubrics**

| Content                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| **Quality of Work**                                                    | Points           |
| - Shares thoughts, ideas, or opinions.                                 | 20 Points        |
| - Specific details are offered to support the views expressed in the comment (there is evidence to show this isn't just "off the top of your head"). |                 |
| - Has a "So what?" theme, lesson, or specific point that attracts the readers' attention; it also addresses all the questions posed in the exercise but goes beyond just answering them to reflect on larger themes. |                 |
| - Demonstrates understanding of the topic.                             |                  |
| - Shares thoughts, ideas, or opinions.                                 | 16 Points        |
| - Details are offered to support the views expressed in the comment (there is evidence to show this isn't just "off the top of your head"). |                 |
| - Has a "So what?" theme, or lesson; addresses all questions posed in the exercise. |                 |
| - Demonstrates understanding of the topic.                             |                  |
| - Shares thoughts, ideas, or opinions.                                 | 12 Points        |
| - The opening part of the comment introduces the main point.           |                  |
| - Details are offered to support views expressed in the comment but they may be vague or the connections not completely clear. |                 |
| - Has a point; has something to do with questions posed.               |                  |
| - Shows some understanding of the topic.                               |                  |
| - Shares a thought, idea, or opinion.                                  | 8 Points         |
| - The opening part of the comment introduces the main point.           |                  |
| - Limited details are offered to support the views expressed in the comment. |                 |
| - Point of comment is unclear; does not relate to questions.           |                  |
| - Shows some understanding of the topic.                               |                  |
| - Main point is not clearly introduced.                                | 0 Points         |
| - Lacks supporting details.                                            |                  |
| - Point of comment is unclear; does not relate to questions.           |                  |
| - Comment does not reveal an understanding of the topic.               |                  |
Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of Work</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Concise (2–3 paragraphs) with a specific focus.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opening grabs the reader's attention while introducing the point of the comment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Positive tone engages the reader.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization are correct.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Concise (2 paragraphs) with a focus.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opening grabs the reader's attention while introducing the point of the comment but perhaps not as strongly as the style in an &quot;A&quot; posting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Positive tone engages the reader.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization are largely correct.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Entries are short (1–2 paragraphs) with a focus.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Positive tone.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization are largely correct.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Entries are short (1 paragraph) and may or may not have a focus.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Positive tone.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization contain mistakes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Entries are short (1 paragraph) and lack focus.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tone may not be appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization contain numerous mistakes.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Grading:

This course is graded Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory (S/U). A grade of S is equivalent to B or better.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Module 1</th>
<th>Module 2</th>
<th>Module 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S (A)</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>81-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S (B)</td>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>72-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U (F)</td>
<td>0-79</td>
<td>0-71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTICE: Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.

Incomplete Grade Policy:

A grade of “I” is not automatically assigned, but rather must be requested by the student by submitting to the instructor a “Petition for and Work to Remove an Incompleted Grade” form. An “I” can never be used in lieu of an “F” nor can an “I” be assigned because of excessive failure to participate in class activities.

Technical Support Information:

If you experience technical problems, contact Information Technology by visiting their website at: http://webapps.ou.edu/it/ or contacting them by telephone at: (405) 325-HELP (4357).
Important information you should know about online courses:

- To sign on to Desire2Learn (D2L), go to [www.learn.ou.edu](http://www.learn.ou.edu) and log in using your 4+4 and your OU network password (note that this is the same 4+4 and password that you use to access your OU email). Once you are logged in, please look on the right-hand side for “My Courses,” locate your course and click on it. Remember to check your course site on D2L every day.

- Students enrolled in online courses may be required to take the CAS student orientation in Desire 2 Learn. To take the orientation, sign-on to D2L and then click on “Self Registration” at the top left corner of the page. Information about and instructions for the orientation can be found at [http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/public/students/orientation.htm](http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/public/students/orientation.htm)

- If the course is using a course website, you will find a link for the website on the first page of this syllabus. Please click on this link to start your course.

- Course Materials are available at Follett/AP Bookstore. On this syllabus you will find a link to the Follett Bookstore.

- If you need to drop or withdraw from a course, please contact your Site Director. You can drop a course without a penalty up to the add/drop date. Courses dropped after the add/drop date may result in a penalty.

- After the class has started, you can only withdraw from the course with the professor’s permission; you will not receive a refund for your tuition. You can only drop without a penalty after the add/drop date by providing proper documentation and receiving approval from the Advanced Programs Theater Director. Provide this documentation to your Site Director.
**Policies and Notices**

**Attendance/Grade Policy**

**Note:** Attendance/absences do not apply to online courses. However, participation in all course activities is extremely important to student success in online courses.

Attendance and participation in interaction, individual assignments, group exercises, simulations, role playing, etc. are valuable aspects of any course because much of the learning comes from discussions in class with other students. It is expected that you attend all classes and be on time except for excused emergencies.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution’s policy regarding “I” (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy.

Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any “I” (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on “financial aid probation.” If the ‘I’ grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student’s Financial Aid may be suspended make the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

**Academic Honesty**

Honesty is a fundamental precept in all academic activities and … [you] have a special obligation to observe the highest standards of honesty. Academic misconduct in any form is inimical to the purposes and functions of the University and is therefore unacceptable and is rigorously proscribed. Academic misconduct includes:

cheating (using unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise), plagiarism, falsification of records, unauthorized possession of examinations, intimidation, and any and all other actions that may improperly affect the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement; assisting others in any such act; or attempting to engage in such acts.

All acts of academic misconduct will be reported and adjudicated as prescribed by the student code of the University of Oklahoma. All students should review the “Student’s Guide to Academic Integrity” found at [http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity](http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity)

**Accommodation Statement**

The College of Continuing Education [Advanced Programs] is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your OU Site Director.

**Course Policies**

Advanced Programs policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are mailed to the professor for the course.

**Copyright**

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about Advanced Programs, visit our website at: [http://www.goou.ou.edu/](http://www.goou.ou.edu/)
INSTRUCTOR VITA
Elaine Hsieh, Ph.D.

Education
2004 Ph.D. in Speech Communication, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Current Positions
- Advanced Programs professor since 2005
- Associate Professor, Department of Communication, University of Oklahoma

Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses
- Language Perspectives of Communication
- Interpersonal Communication
- Qualitative Research Methods
- Cross-cultural Communication

Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest
- Language and Social Interactions
- Interpersonal Communication
- Health Communication
- Intercultural Communication
- Language Perspectives

Representative Publications and Presentations

Representative Honors and Awards Received
- 2011 Norman Campus Vice President for Research Award for Outstanding Research Impact, University of Oklahoma.
- 2010 Featured Scholar, the Fifth Convening of Interpreter Trainers, Scholars and Researchers, Healthy House and the University of California, Merced, CA.
- 2008 Top Young Scholar Paper Award, Kentucky Conference on Health Communication, Lexington, KY
- 2001-08 Nine Top Paper awards received at various divisions (e.g., Language and Social Interaction Division and Human Communication and Technology Division) at the annual meetings of the National Communication Association Convention and International Communication Association.

Major Professional Affiliations
National Communication Association; International Communication Association