JAMS380-Lec 202: Health and Media (Online, Summer 2018)
Class Time 7/23-8/18

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Office hours: via email, Skype or other electronic means. Contact the instructor for details. The instructor is readily available by e-mail for any questions, comments and concerns you have.

ABOUT THE COURSE

Many people rely on media to acquire information about a wide range of health issues and even make decisions based on it. Hence, the first goal of this course is to help students become critical consumers of health information from a variety of media. The second goal is to help students understand the impacts that media can have on our beliefs and opinions about health-related issues and health behavior. The third and final goal is to introduce effective communication strategies that are used by healthcare professionals and health organizations to promote behaviors that benefit personal and public health.

To these ends, we will first look at some important issues related to personal and public health such as health information seeking, health information quality, health literacy and health disparities. Afterward, we will examine a range of potential effects that media may have on health beliefs, attitudes and behavior and a variety of media that may produce such effects—including, but not limited to, news media, entertainment media, advertising, public health campaigns/interventions and the internet. Along the way, students will learn 1) how to evaluate the health information they receive from media (e.g., the Internet), 2) theories that explain the impacts of media on our beliefs, attitudes and behavior (e.g., the agenda setting theory, framing theory, cultivation theory, health behavior change theories as well as theories on narrative persuasive and fear appeals), and 3) effective strategies (e.g., fear appeals and message tailoring) that can be used to promote health behavior (e.g., taking cancer screening tests and smoking cessation).

WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THE COURSE?

The course is for students 1) who care about health-related issues, 2) who want to become a critical consumer of health information, 3) who plan to become a healthcare professional, 4) who are in the Healthy Aging Certificate program, 4) who are interested in how and why media influence us, and/or 5) who want to fit an interesting and useful online course into their busy schedule.
ABOUT REQUIRED READINGS AND TEACHING MODULES

- The class will function on a Monday through Thursday schedule. Weekends allow students to work on their writing assignments/posts/exams.
- Please read all the lecture notes and required readings.
  
  **Note:** Many required readings for this class are from academic journals and include somewhat complicated statistical analysis. Students do not have to be statistical savvy or a number person to read those articles. Students can certainly skip the parts of an article involving statistical analysis and still get the gist of the article. So, don’t worry about the math part, if it’s over your head!
- All the lecture notes and readings are posted on the D2L. For more information on the D2L site for this course, please see a separate document titled “Getting started in JAMS380-202 online” under “Content.”
- The module of each day becomes accessible at 5pm the day before. For example, the module for July 23 becomes accessible at 5pm on July 22.
- Keep in mind that there will be test and quiz questions about lectures and readings.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

**Essay post 1:** For this assignment, students will be required to use two evaluation tools to assess an online publication related to a health issue of their choice (e.g., a news report and a blog post etc), report the results of their assessment, and critically examine the pros and cons of each evaluation tool. Detailed instructions will be posted on July 24. The assignment will be due at 10pm on July 30.

***Main grading criteria include 1) the extent to which the post follows the assignment instructions, 2) the clarity and soundness of arguments for the pros and cons of each evaluation tool, and 3) how clear, correct and logical the writing is.***

**Two response posts to essay post 1:** For this assignment, each student will be required to respond to two other students’ essay posts. The response posts should critically examine the essay posts’ arguments for the pros and cons of each evaluation tool. Detailed instructions will be posted on July 24. The posts will be due at 10pm on July 31. **STUDENTS MUST POST THEIR ESSAY BEFORE RESPONDING TO OTHER STUDENTS’ POSTS.***

***Main grading criteria include 1) the extent to which the posts follow the assignment instructions, 2) the clarity and soundness of the arguments made, and 3) how clear, correct and logical the writing is.***

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1 Throughout the session, an average student is expected to spend 33 hours reading and comprehending lectures, 16 hours on course readings, 10 hours taking quizzes and exams, 62 hours completing all other assignments, and 32 hours reviewing course material.
Essay post 2: For this assignment, students will be required to find media coverage of a health issue, analyze the frame adopted by the coverage, and speculate on how the coverage may influence the audience in terms of their beliefs, attitudes/opinions, and/or behavior. Detailed instructions will be posted on August 6. The assignment will be due at 10pm on August 13. ***Main grading criteria include 1) the extent to which the post follows the assignment instructions, 2) the soundness and comprehensiveness of the analysis and, 3) how clear, correct and logical the writing is.

Two response posts to essay post 2: For this assignment, students will be required to respond to two other students’ essay posts. The response posts should critically examine the original essay’s analysis of the framing effects of the coverage under discussion. Detailed instructions will be posted on August 6. The posts will be due at 10pm on August 14. STUDENTS MUST POST THEIR ESSAY BEFORE RESPONDING TO OTHER STUDENTS’ POSTS. ***Main grading criteria include 1) the extent to which the posts follow the assignment instructions, 2) the clarity and soundness of the arguments made, and 3) how clear, correct and logical the writing is.

Online midterm exam: A study guide for the exam will be posted by 5pm on August 1. The exam will become accessible at 5pm on August 5. Between 4pm on August 5 and 10 pm on August 6, NO questions related to the exam or lecture content will be answered except for questions for clarification purposes. The exam is due at 10pm on August 6.

Take-home final exam: A study guide for the final exam will be posted by 5pm on August 14. The final exam will be posted on D2L at 5pm on August 16. Between 4pm on August 16 and 10 pm on August 18, NO questions related to the exam or lecture content will be answered except for questions for clarification purposes. The exam is due by 10 pm on August 18 and the completed exam should be submitted through Dropbox.

Quizzes: a total of seven quizzes will be given throughout the section (see the course schedule for deadlines). Each quiz will test students’ understanding of the reading and lecture of the week.

Late work: Assignments (including essay posts) will receive a letter grade deduction for each day that they are late unless a deadline extension is granted by the instructor prior to deadlines. NO late exams or quizzes will be accepted unless a deadline extension is granted by the instructor prior to deadlines.
Grading Scale

Essay posts 20%
Responses to other students’ essay posts (5% each) 20%
Quizzes 30%
Exams (15% each) 30%

Total 100%

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code of the University. Violators (including students who plagiarize others’ work or allow others to plagiarize their own work) will receive a failing grade for this course.

COURSE CALENDAR

7/23: Introduction

Required readings:
- The syllabus
- The document “Getting started in JAMS380-202 online” under “content” on D2L

Assignment and Deadline:
- Quiz 1 due at 10pm of 7/23

7/24: Health information seeking

Required readings:

Assignment and deadline:
- Quiz 2 due at 10pm on 7/24

7/25: Health information quality

Required readings:

Assignments and deadlines:
- Essay post 1 due at 10 pm on 7/30
• Response to two other students’ post 1 due at 10pm on 7/31

7/26: Health literacy
Required readings:

7/30: Health disparities
Required readings:

Assignments and deadlines:
• Quiz 3 due at 10pm on 7/30
• Essay post 1 due at 10 pm on 7/30

7/31: Social support and health
Required readings:

Assignments and deadlines:
• Quiz 4 due at 10pm on 7/31
• Response to two other students’ post 1 due at 10pm on 7/31

8/1: Advertising and Health
Required readings:

Assignment and deadline:
• Quiz 5 due at 10pm on 8/1
8/2: Midterm study day  
*Required reading:*
- The exam study guide

8/6: Midterm exam day  
- An online mid-term exam is due **at 10pm on 8/6**

8/7: Agenda-setting, framing and public health  
*Required readings:*

*Assignments and deadlines:*
- Essay post 2 due at 10pm on 8/13
- Response to two other students’ post 2 due at 10pm on 8/14

8/8: Cultivation Effect and Health  
*Required readings:*

8/9: Narrative Persuasion and Health  
*Required readings:*

*Assignment and deadline:*
- Quiz 6 due at 10pm on 8/9

8/13: Health campaigns/interventions—message framing and fear appeals  
*Required readings:*
**Assignment and deadline:**
- Essay post 2 due at 10pm 8/13

**8/14: The theory of planned behavior and health behavior change**

*Required readings:*

**Assignment and deadline:**
- Response to two other students’ post 2 due at 10pm 8/14

**8/15: Stage model of behavior change and tailored health interventions**

*Required reading:*

**Assignments and deadlines:**
- Quiz 7 due at 10pm on 8/15

**8/16: Take home final**

*Required reading:*
- The study guide for the final exam

*Assignment:*
- A take home exam is due by 10pm on 8/18 and submitted via Dropbox.