

**University of Florida**  
**College of Public Health & Health Professions Syllabus**  
**PHC 6316: Health, Risk, & Crisis Communications in Public Health**  
**Summer 2017**  
**Delivery Format: Online**  
**Course: <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>**

---

Instructor Name: Jerne Shapiro, MPH  
Email Address: [shapiroj@ufl.edu](mailto:shapiroj@ufl.edu)  
Office Hours: By appointment

Preferred Course Communications: You have email on the course site under the "Inbox" tool. This is the preferred method of communication, and this is how I will contact you if necessary. I only check the course website once daily, if you have questions or need to contact me in a more timely fashion please contact me using my [shapiroj@ufl.edu](mailto:shapiroj@ufl.edu) account.

---

**Prerequisites:** Admitted, in good standing, to the Masters of Public Health program at the University of Florida. No other pre-requisites apply.

---

## **PURPOSE AND OUTCOME**

### **Course Overview:**

Communication is a core public health competency and thus a key component of the job description of all public health professionals. While a single course cannot convey all of the subtleties of good oral and written communication, the overall goal of this course is to describe "best practices" under ordinary, risk, and crisis situations. Through the use of lectures, exercises, discussion boards, readings, and assignments, students will be encouraged to reflect on the role of communication in their careers and how they can work to maximize their personal effectiveness.

### **Course Objectives and/or Goals:**

By the completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Differentiate between health, risk, and crisis communication.
2. Explain the basic theoretical foundations of health communication.
3. Apply persuasive communication strategies to design different types of public health communications.
4. Discuss the ethical and professional issues surrounding the use of communication techniques.

### **Instructional Methods:**

- 1) Lectures: are for general orientation. Students are responsible for all the material presented in the course and assigned readings.
- 2) Readings and Resources. In addition to the required text, supplementary readings and resources will be posted in the course. The reading list may be supplemented during the course.
- 3) Assessments: A variety of assessments will be used in this course, including but not limited to discussions, assignments, journal club presentations, final projects, written critiques, community agency interview and exams.

*What is expected of you?*

You are expected to actively engage in the course throughout the semester. Your participation fosters a rich course experience for you and your peers that facilitate overall mastery of the course objectives.

It is important that students become familiar with this syllabus and the course requirements. Since we do not meet weekly in a classroom, I am not able to provide weekly reminders of impending due dates for assignments, projects, etc. **This is your responsibility.**

## DESCRIPTION OF COURSE CONTENT

### Getting Started

To start this course you MUST open the “Modules” tool in the course and complete the Getting Started Module. In order to successfully complete this module, you MUST earn a 100% score on the Syllabus Quiz. The other course modules will NOT open until you have done this. If you do not receive a 100% score, please review the feedback on your quiz attempt and retake. This is an important element to insure that all students are aware of the curriculum requirements for this course. If you have ANY difficulty with this quiz, please send an email in the course to “All Teachers” as soon as possible using the “Inbox” tool.

The first assignment in this course is Discussion Board 1 – Introduce yourself. This is a graded assignment to allow the instructor and students to get to know each other better.

After successful completion of the syllabus quiz, the remaining modules will open. Please click on “Modules” tool and start with “Week 1”. Here you will find the course materials that will take you through to the last week of the course.

### Topical Outline/Course Schedule

Week	Dates	Lectures, Topics	Readings	Activities
1	May 8-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of syllabus</li> <li>Introductory terms and concepts</li> <li>Attitudes, beliefs, behaviors</li> </ul>	B&B: 1, 4	Syllabus Quiz  Discussion-Thought Exercise Due 05/15 by 11:59 pm ET
2	May 15-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethical issues and communication</li> <li>Source characteristics</li> </ul>	B&B: 3	Discussion-Thought Exercise Due 05/22 by 11:59 pm ET
3	May 22-28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Message content</li> <li>Message organization and style</li> </ul>	B&B: 6, 7, 8	
4	May 29-Jun 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audience characteristics: Receivers</li> <li>Receivers: Real Life Issues</li> </ul>	B&B: 5, 9	Discussion-Thought Exercise Due 06/05 by 11:59 pm ET
5	Jun 5-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cognitive theories of persuasion</li> <li>Consistency theory</li> </ul>	B&B: 2, 10	Discussion-Thought Exercise Due 06/12 by 11:59 pm ET

6	Jun 12-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpersonal communication</li> <li>• Small group communication</li> <li>• Communication campaigns</li> </ul>	B&B: 11, 12	<u><b>Persuasive Essay (Part A)</b></u> <u><b>Due 6/14 by 11:59 pm ET</b></u>  <u><b>Exam 1</b></u> <u><b>Open 06/16-18</b></u>
7	Jun 19-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer Break</li> </ul>		No activities this week
8	Jun 26-Jul 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk communication: Fundamentals</li> <li>• Risk communication: Receivers</li> </ul>	Glik, D.C. (2007) Finkel, A.M. (2008)	<u><b>Persuasive Speech (Part B)</b></u> <u><b>Due 6/28 by 11:59 pm ET</b></u>  Discussion-Thought Exercise Due 07/03 by 11:59 pm ET
9	Jul 3-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk communication: Sources</li> <li>• Risk communication: Messages</li> </ul>	Bostrom, A. (2008) Peters, E. (2008)	Discussion-Thought Exercise Due 07/10 by 11:59 pm ET
10	Jul 10-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crisis communication: Basics</li> <li>• Crisis communication: Role of the organization</li> </ul>	Zaremba: 1, 2, 3	
11	Jul 17-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crisis communication: Response options</li> <li>• Crisis communication: Ethical concerns</li> </ul>	Zaremba: 4, 5, 6	<u><b>Project: Case Analysis</b></u> <u><b>Due 7/24 by 11:59 pm ET</b></u>  Discussion-Thought Exercise Due 07/24 by 11:59 pm ET
12	Jul 24-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crisis communication: Team approach</li> <li>• Crisis communication: Talking with media</li> <li>• Crisis communication: Planning ahead</li> </ul>	Zaremba: 7,8,9	Discussion-Thought Exercise Due 07/31 by 11:59 pm ET
13	Jul 31- Aug 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course wrap-up</li> </ul>		<u><b>Exam 2</b></u> <u><b>Open 08/1-3</b></u>

## Course Materials and Technology

### 1. Lectures – provide a general overview of each topic.

### 2. Required Text, readings, and materials

Benoit, W.L. & Benoit, P.J. (2008). *Persuasive messages: The process of influence*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Zaremba, A.J. (2010). *Crisis communication: Theory and practice*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

#### Required Articles

The following articles, in order of use, are provided on the course website under the weekly modules where they are assigned.

Glik, D.C. (2007). Risk communication for public health emergencies. *Annual Review of Public Health, 28*, 33-54.

Finkel, A.M. (2008). Perceiving others' perceptions of risk. Still a task for Sisyphus. *Annals of New York Academy of Science, 1125*, 121-137.

Bostrom, A., Anselon, I., & Farris, J. (2008). Visualizing seismic risk and uncertainty: A review of related research. *Annals of New York Academy of Science, 1128*, 29-40.

Peters, E. (2008). Numeracy and the perception and communication of risk. *Annals of New York Academy of Science, 1128*, 1-7.

### 3. Examinations:

There will be two exams. Each exam will be worth 100 points. The exams will cover material presented in the text, lectures, and supplemental materials. The exams may include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Each exam will be limited to 90 minutes. Both exams are closed note, closed book. The online MPH program uses a proctoring service for all graded exams (See below). Students are expected to take the examination on the scheduled date and time.

This course will be utilizing the services of ProctorU as proctoring service for the exams in this course. This service is a user-friendly system, but you must follow these guidelines to register and take your exams:

- Students must register for a time slot for their course exams with ProctorU starting the second week of the semester, but no later than 3 days prior to an exam. You will register for your exams at [www.proctoru.com](http://www.proctoru.com). Their website will describe how you register and log on for your exam. Your exams will be taken in your canvas course, but only ProctorU will be able to open the exam for you.

- Exams will be available via ProctorU 8:00AM – midnight (Eastern time) from Monday through Sunday during the exam period only on the days the exams are scheduled in this course.

- Students will need to have a microphone and webcam in place during the test-taking period. An inexpensive webcam and mic will work fine. Students will NOT be allowed to take an exam without a webcam. (Note: a microphone and webcam are program requirements for our online programs, see computer requirements on our program website)

- Students will be asked to show 1 or 2 forms of ID with a picture and ask some questions as part of their public record for identification purposes.

- Exams may be taken at a student's home, but students must plan to take their exams in an environment where other people are not in the room with the student during the exam. No phones, no other computers/tablets, no TV. See the "Taking Exams" document posted in the tool column in your course site for more information on taking exams in this course.

**4. Part A: Persuasive Essay (30 points)**

Using skills gained from the first 3 lectures, students will craft a *brief* (no more than 500 words) persuasive essay on a topic of their choice. Using “track changes” (or a similar program) students will add “comments” that highlight the persuasive techniques they are employing in their essay.

**5. Part B: Persuasive Speech (30 points)**

After crafting your persuasive essay and identifying its persuasive components, students will orate their speech using YouTube to record and share their speech with classmates.

**6. Public Health Crisis Communication: A Case Analysis (100 pts)**

Students will select a public health crisis, provide an overview of the crisis, approximate timeline of messages communicated, analysis of communication mistakes made by a major stakeholder about the crisis, and provide an outline for a better crisis response. This is the major assignment for the course. Detailed instructions for the case analysis will be available in the course site.

**7. Discussion Board (40 total points) 8 @ 5 points each**

Discussion topics will be posted on the discussion board in the Assignment tool. Students are expected to provide thoughtful posts to **four** of these thought exercises. As well as comment/ask questions to at least one other student during that same week (total of four responses for the semester). Discussion board posts will be graded on quality of your original response, and the quality of the comment/questions you ask to your peers. You will need to sign up in advance for the discussion topics you wish to respond to, please see the link. If you miss a discussion board for which you are signed up (see weekly due dates) you will receive 0 points for that week toward your final grade. Discussion board topic close dates are posted in the course outline.

For technical support for this class, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu)
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

**ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

**Grading**

Requirement	Due date	Percent of final grade	Points
<b>Discussions</b>	Various	10%	40
<b>Persuasive Essay</b>	Jun 14	7.5%	30
<b>Persuasive Speech</b>	Jun 28	7.5%	30
<b>Exam 1</b>	Jun 16-18	25%	100
<b>Case Analysis</b>	Jul 25	25%	100
<b>Exam 2</b>	Aug 1-3	25%	100
<b>TOTALS</b>		100%	400

Point system used (i.e., how do course points translate into letter grades).

<b>Points earned</b>	93 - 100	90 - 92	87 - 89	83 - 86	80 - 82	77 - 79	73 - 76	70 - 72	67 - 69	63 - 66	60 - 62	Below 60
<b>Letter Grade</b>	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E

Please be aware that a C- is not an acceptable grade for graduate students. In addition, a grade of C counts toward a graduate degree only if an equal number of credits in courses numbered 5000 or higher have been earned with an A.

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	WF	I	NG	S-U
Grade Points	4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	0.67	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

For greater detail on the meaning of letter grades and university policies related to them, see the Registrar's Grade Policy regulations at:

<http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

#### Policy Related to Make up Exams or Other Work:

**Requirements:** Students are responsible for all course material, including reading all required materials prior to each lecture. Students should also read your e-mail and announcements in the course several times a week. Students should also reference the calendar in the course to keep up with weekly deadlines.

#### Make Ups:

**Readings and Discussions:** Students should read the assigned readings prior to viewing course lectures and be prepared to discuss the material.

#### Policy Related to Required Class Attendance

**Attendance Policy:** Per the University of Florida, students are responsible for satisfying all academic objectives as defined by the instructor.

All faculty are bound by the UF policy for excused absences. For information regarding the UF Attendance Policy see the Registrar website for additional details:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS, ROLES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INPUT

### Expectations Regarding Course Behavior

#### Communication Guidelines

Preferred Course Communications: You have email on the course site under the "Inbox" tool. This is the preferred method of communication, and this is how I will contact you if necessary. I only check the course website once daily, if you have questions or need to contact me in a more timely fashion please contact me using my [shapiroj@ufl.edu](mailto:shapiroj@ufl.edu) account.

#### Academic Integrity

Students are expected to act in accordance with the University of Florida policy on academic integrity. As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge:

**“We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.”**

You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

**“On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”**

It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding

academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For additional information regarding Academic Integrity, please see Student Conduct and Honor Code or the Graduate Student Website for additional details:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>  
<http://gradschool.ufl.edu/students/introduction.html>

Please remember cheating, lying, misrepresentation, or plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and inexcusable behavior.

### **Faculty Course Evaluation Process**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

---

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you require classroom accommodation because of a disability, you must register with the Dean of Students Office <http://www.dso.ufl.edu> within the first week of class. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation of accommodations to you, which you then give to me as the instructor of the course to receive accommodations. Please make sure you provide this letter to me by the end of the second week of the course. The College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to assist students in their coursework.

### **Counseling and Student Health**

Students sometimes experience stress from academic expectations and/or personal and interpersonal issues that may interfere with their academic performance. If you find yourself facing issues that have the potential to or are already negatively affecting your coursework, you are encouraged to talk with an instructor and/or seek help through University resources available to you.

- The Counseling and Wellness Center 352-392-1575 offers a variety of support services such as psychological assessment and intervention and assistance for math and test anxiety. Visit their web site for more information: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu>. On line and in person assistance is available.
- You Matter We Care website: <http://www.umatter.ufl.edu/>. If you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed, you can reach out for help through the You Matter We Care website, which is staffed by Dean of Students and Counseling Center personnel.
- The Student Health Care Center at Shands is a satellite clinic of the main Student Health Care Center located on Fletcher Drive on campus. Student Health at Shands offers a variety of clinical services. The clinic is located on the second floor of the Dental Tower in the Health Science Center. For more information, contact the clinic at 392-0627 or check out the web site at: <https://shcc.ufl.edu/>
- Crisis intervention is always available 24/7 from:  
Alachua County Crisis Center  
(352) 264-6789  
<http://www.alachuacounty.us/DEPTS/CSS/CRISISCENTER/Pages/CrisisCenter.aspx>

Do not wait until you reach a crisis to come in and talk with us. We have helped many students through stressful situations impacting their academic performance. You are not alone so do not be afraid to ask for assistance.