



**TUFTS UNIVERSITY**

**COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES IN NUTRITION AND HEALTH PROMOTION  
NUTRITION 218  
Spring Semester 2017**

**Instructor:** Jeanne Goldberg

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**Class Time:** Friday 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

**Class Location:** Jaharis 156

The overall objective of this course is to provide students with the expertise to develop effective health communications, either as standalone campaigns or as components of broader health interventions. To achieve this objective, the course includes two separate but overlapping elements. The first focuses on the design, implementation, and evaluation of interventions that emphasize communication and are based on appropriate theoretical models. The second focuses on the communication tools that are critical to these interventions.

**The course will:**

1. Explore some of the widely used theoretical bases for effective health communications.
2. Explore the development of effective communications-focused health promotion programs.
3. Provide students with:
  - a. the ability to determine how and when to use communications strategies to influence behavior;
  - b. the skills to develop campaign/intervention materials, including
    - i. Selecting an appropriate theoretical framework
    - ii. Learning how to better understand the target population
    - iii. Choosing communication channels that are appropriate and feasible
    - iv. Tailoring messages to the target population
  - c. the skills to evaluate the communications component of interventions as well as specific communications materials; and
  - d. hands-on experience in communicating health messages effectively.

## **Expectations for students include:**

1. Being present for all classes and arriving on time (or notifying the instructor of extenuating circumstances);
2. Submitting all written assignments on time;
3. Completing all required readings in advance of class;
4. Participating actively in class discussions (and using computers only for note-taking or targeted searches relevant to class—not for personal communications);
5. Being receptive to feedback.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

Most readings will be assigned at the beginning of the course. A small number of additional readings may be distributed as appropriate. Assigned readings will form the basis for class discussion. All course readings will be available on Trunk.

Each class will begin with a brief discussion of the week's newsworthy nutrition events. Students are encouraged to subscribe to a food/nutrition listserv, such as GMA SmartBriefs (<http://www.smartbrief.com/gma/>) or Food Navigator (<http://www.foodnavigator.com/>) to inform these discussions. Students will also be expected to track nutrition stories that create major media attention, and be prepared to discuss them.

Over the course of the semester, students will work in groups to design a communications campaign that is a stand-alone campaign or part of a larger intervention. The proposal will include a literature review; a description of the project's rationale and specific study aims; formative research, including focus groups and/or key informant interviews; an implementation plan; an evaluation plan; and communications materials. A budget plan is optional.

**For Assignments #1-5 and the Final Proposal, each group will submit one copy electronically to Trunk by 9:00 AM on the due date.** For Assignment #6, your group has the option of submitting the Materials & Evaluation Plan section early for feedback before the Final Proposal due date.

We will provide feedback on the individual project components as you submit them over the course of the semester. For the final project submission, we urge you to actively incorporate changes in response to that feedback.

## **DISTRIBUTION OF CREDIT**

Design and development of a campaign to influence dietary behavior.

### Project Components:

Literature review	15%
Formative research	20%
Campaign design and implementation plan	20%
Materials	15%
Evaluation plan	15%
Class participation (SmartBriefs, readings, contribution to discussion)	10%
Group/peer/self-assessment of group project	5%

**NOTE:** Various course documents, as well as any announcements (including location changes), will be posted on the Trunk website (<https://trunk.tufts.edu>). Log in and, under ‘My Courses,’ click on Nutrition 0218. From there, you’ll be able to access documents, see announcements, etc.

**In case of extreme weather, we will notify you by email of class cancellation by 7:30 am.**

**Please note this syllabus is subject to revision.**

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### Week 1: Friday, January 20<sup>th</sup>

#### **Part I. Overview of course**

**Jeanne Goldberg**

#### **Part II. Introduction to and evolution of nutrition and health communication, 1720-2015**

This class will provide an historical context for nutrition and health communications and discuss the role of communication in promoting behavior change. Dietary Guidelines graphics will be used as examples of attempts to communicate nutrition and physical activity messages to the general public. The class will also define the key features of a communications campaign and when they should be deployed.

### Week 2: Friday, January 27<sup>th</sup>

#### **Part I. How to frame a communications campaign**

**Jeanne Goldberg**

The GREEN Project will be used as an example.

#### **Part II. Introduction to group projects**

Students will present and discuss potential clients.

### Week 3: Friday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>

#### **Part I. Theory to practice and practice to theory in nutrition and health communication**

**Jeanne Goldberg**

This class will provide students with an overview of the theories and models that are most widely used to understand and influence health behaviors at individual and environmental levels. The class will also explore the role of persuasion and fear in health communications.

#### **Part II. Identifying and understanding the target audience**

**Jeanne Goldberg**

This session will focus on the process of identifying and understanding the target audience through literature searches, including popular literature; intercept and key informant interviews; environmental mapping; and resources assessment.

*Assignment #1 due: Choose group and topic of interest*

## **Week 4: Friday, February 10<sup>th</sup>**

### **Part I. Applying the creative process to build a campaign**

**Lindsay Tanskey**

This session will focus on the development and execution of a creative communications concept.

### **Part II. Conducting an ideation session**

**Lindsay Tanskey  
Rachel Bleiweiss-Sande**

Ideation is a tool that is widely used to stimulate creative thinking. In this session, students will participate in an ideation session that focuses on the creation of a concept and overall theme for their projects.

## **Week 5: Friday, February 17<sup>th</sup>**

### **Formative research**

**Jeanne Goldberg**

This session will describe the range of uses for focus groups, the methodology for conducting them, and the development of focus group discussion guides. It will also discuss other formative-research techniques, such as observational methods and key-informant and intercept interviews.

*Assignment #2 due: Literature reviews*

## **Week 6: Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup>**

### **Conducting a focus group and synthesizing results**

**Sara Folta**

This session will focus on key principles of moderating focus group discussions. Students will participate in a focus group discussion on a topic of interest to the group and later discuss the analysis of information obtained from focus groups.

## **Week 7: Friday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>**

### **Social marketing**

**Jeanne Goldberg**

This lecture will provide an overview of the basic principles of social marketing and illustrate a variety of applications. Social marketing is a tool or framework that relies on multiple scientific disciplines to create programs designed to influence human behavior on a large scale. Although social marketing has been used to address a variety of social concerns, it has been most consistently used in health promotion and disease prevention, making it an area of special interest to scholars and practitioners in health communication.

NB: Please come to class having watched the video of the seminar presentation by Tim Edgar on the PLACE component of Social Marketing, available here: <https://vimeo.com/143873008>

*Assignment #3 due: Focus group guides*

## **Week 8: Friday, March 10<sup>th</sup>**

### **Choosing communication channels and developing campaign materials** **Jeanne Goldberg**

This session will focus on campaign materials, from conceptualization to design to evaluation.

*In-class mid-course evaluation*

**Week 9: Friday, March 17<sup>th</sup>**

**Nancy Allen  
Emerson College**

**Part I. Overview of social media in health communications**

Social media have been used far more extensively by the commercial sector than by the public health community. This session will focus on what is known about the effectiveness of social media in health communication and how to consider their use in promoting positive health behaviors.

**Part II. Health literacy**

**Susan Koch-Weser**

The session will begin with an introduction to health literacy. Areas touched upon will include definitions, development of the field, measurement, and epidemiology. We will then shift focus to one area of health literacy, print materials. After an overview of best practices and resources for the development of low-literacy materials, we will conduct a workshop exercise evaluating and revising existing brochures.

**Week 10: Friday, March 24<sup>th</sup>**

*Spring Recess*

**Week 11: Friday, March 31<sup>st</sup>**

**How do you know if it worked? Developing appropriate evaluation plans and tools.**

**Jeanne Goldberg  
Dan Hatfield**

This session will focus on key steps in evaluating community-based interventions, including clearly articulating the outcomes of interest, identifying appropriate measures, testing and refining instruments, collecting process and outcome data, and disseminating results. Examples from the field, drawn from experience with a resource-constrained, community-based program, will highlight lessons that are transferable to a wide range of health-promotion interventions, including communications campaigns. It will also include post-hoc evaluation to further explain effects observed.

**Week 12: Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Working with the media**

**Sylvia Rowe  
President, SR Strategies**

This session will focus on working with the media in getting coverage, in responding to press inquiries, and in serving as an “on-camera” expert.

*Assignment #4 due: Formative research write-up*

**Week 13: Friday, April 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Christina Economos**

This session will provide a close-up exploration of what we have learned and how it has impacted our scholarship about working to effect meaningful change within communities across the US since we began this work in 1995. It is an opportunity for students to examine their current projects in the context of the challenges of working in environments where health may not be a top priority.

*Assignment #5 due: Campaign design and implementation plan*

**Week 14: Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Working with the media: A case study**

**Daniel Hatfield**

This session will focus on an analysis of an article in a major research publication that demonstrates the importance of critical thinking when presented with “the evidence.”

**Workshop session**

Students will have the opportunity to work with their project teams and to consult with the instructor.

*Optional assignment #6 due: Materials and evaluation plan*

**Friday, April 28<sup>th</sup>**

**No class**

Students are expected to practice their presentations as a group and finalize projects.

**Friday, May 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Jeanne Goldberg  
Rachel Bleiweiss-Sande  
Project clients**

**Final presentations**

Student groups will present their final projects and discuss what they have learned from the exercise.

*Final proposals due by 9:00 AM on May 8, 2016.*

*Peer evaluations are also due on May 8, 2016 by 11:59 PM.*