COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES IN NUTRITION AND HEALTH PROMOTION
NUTRITION 218
Spring Semester 2019

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 for a stand-alone campaign or as a component of a broader health intervention. 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 Canvas.

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 are 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 goals; formative research, including, but not limited to 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 Canvas 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 feedback on project components provided during the semester.

DISTRIBUTION OF CREDIT
Design and development of a campaign to influence dietary behavior.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Components</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Formative research</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campaign design and implementation plan</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Evaluation plan</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation (SmartBriefs, readings, contribution to discussion)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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NOTE: Various course documents, as well as any announcements (including location changes), will be posted on the Canvas website ([https://canvas.tufts.edu](https://canvas.tufts.edu)). Log in and, under ‘My Courses,’ click on Nutrition 0218. From there, you will 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 18**

Part I. Overview of course  
Jeanne Goldberg
This will include a particular focus on the expectations for each of the individual assignments which contribute to the major project.

Part II. Introduction to and evolution of nutrition and health communication, 1720-2019
This section will provide an historical context for nutrition and health communications and discuss the role of communication in promoting behavior change. Dietary Guidelines graphics will serve as examples of attempts to communicate nutrition and physical activity messages to the public.

**Week 2: Friday, January 25**

Part I. How to frame a communications campaign  
Jeanne Goldberg
The process of planning a successful campaign relies on several key steps that we will explore throughout the course. These include defining a problem that exists for a group of individuals, developing an understanding of that problem within the group, identifying potential approaches to the problem, and finally developing and testing messages that will create the identity for a campaign. The GREEN project will serve as a model for campaign development.

Part II. How to develop a literature review  
Amy LaVertu
This session will focus on the process of constructing a literature that is relevant to your project and that will serve as a foundation for thinking about moving forward with the various steps in its development.

**Week 3: Friday, February 1st **  
**ROOM CHANGE: CLASS MEETS in Jaharis 155**

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 that include popular literature and other forms of evidence; intercept and key informant interviews; environmental mapping; and resources assessment.

In hour 3 of this class, student groups will each have 15 minutes to present and get feedback on their chosen clients.

Assignment #1 due: Choose group and topic of interest

Week 4: Friday, February 8th

Part I. Applying the creative process to build a campaign

Rachel Bleiweiss-Sande

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

Part II. Conducting an ideation session

Catherine Wright
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 15th

Formative research

Jeanne Goldberg

Formative research includes far more than focus groups. It includes observational methods, key informant interviews, and intercept interviews. This session will consider several approaches to conducting formative research and describe how the information obtained from them is organized and presented.

Assignment #2 due: Literature reviews

Week 6: Friday, February 22nd

Conducting a focus group and synthesizing results

Sara Folta

Focus groups are a major tool for conducting formative research and are widely used in a variety of situations. 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 discuss the analysis of information obtained from focus groups.

Week 7: Friday, March 1st

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 it 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](https://vimeo.com/143873008)

**Assignment #3 due: Focus group guides**

**Week 8: Friday, March 8th**  
Choosing communication channels and developing campaign materials  
Jeanne Goldberg

This session will focus on campaign materials, from conceptualization to design to evaluation. It will include discussion of what materials to use and why.

*In-class mid-course evaluation*

**Week 9: Friday, March 15th**

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

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 a brief 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 22nd**  
NO CLASS  
*Spring Recess*

**Week 11: Friday, March 29th**

**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 5th **  
**ROOM CHANGE: CLASS MEETS in Sackler 604**

**Lessons from health communication campaigns: what can we learn?**  
Jeanne Goldberg
In this session, we will provide students with examples of campaigns that target specific health behaviors. Working in groups, students will analyze the strengths and weaknesses of one campaign, present their findings to the class, lead a brief discussion.

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

**Week 13: Friday, April 12th**

The evolution of working in communities: what we have learned  
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**

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

**Week 14: Friday, April 19th**

Working with the media  
President, SR Strategies

Sylvia Rowe

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.

**Week 15: Friday, April 26th**

In-class work period

**Week 15: Friday, May 3d**

Final presentations  
Jeanne Goldberg
Rachel Bleiweiss-Sande

Project clients

Student groups will present their final projects and discuss what they have learned from the exercise. Students are expected to practice their presentations as a group to prepare for this final effort.

**Final proposals due by 9:00 AM on May 6, 2019.**
Peer evaluations are also due on May 6, 2019 by 11:59 PM.