Tufts University, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy

NUTR 226 – Health Claims and the Food Industry
Spring 2017

Class Meetings:  Monday, 3:15-4:45 PM AND Tuesday, 1:30-3:00 PM, Jaharis 118

Instructor(s):  Norbert Wilson Email Norbert.Wilson@tufts.edu

Co-Instructor(s):  Richard Black Email richard.black@QuadrantDConsulting.com
                  Eleanor Shonkoff Email Eleanor.Shonkoff@tufts.edu

Office hours:  Tuesdays 4:00-5:00 pm

Teaching Asst.:  Townsend Benard Townsend.Benard@tufts.edu

Office hours:  TBA

Graduate Credits:  1 credit

Prerequisites:  none

Course Description:  This course examines the United States food policies governing the use of diet and health information in commercial communications. In the mid-1980s, the food industry began, for the first time in modern history, to use health claims in food advertising and labeling. This proved to be a highly effective marketing method for the food industry. However, the industry’s use of health claims product promotion created public controversy, and policies – a comprehensive new labeling law as well as many new FDA, USDA and FTC regulations – governing food advertising and labeling that use nutritional and medical information. The object of this course is to review current food policies governing health claims and the regulatory regime controlling their use in commercial communications.

Course Objectives:  Upon completion of the course, students will be able to

1. Assess critically food health claims considering the legal, social, and competitive environments.
2. Develop evidence-based strategies to communicate health claims by food companies.
3. Communicate strategies effectively.
4. Collaborate successfully within groups.

Texts or Materials:  We will use case studies and peer-reviewed articles. See weekly details and the course bibliography below.

Academic Conduct:  Each student is responsible for upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, as specified in the Friedman School’s Policies and Procedures manual (http://nutrition.tufts.edu/student/documents) and Tufts University policies.
It is the responsibility of each student to understand and comply with these standards, as violations will be sanctioned by penalties ranging from failure on an assignment and the course to dismissal from the school.

**Classroom Conduct:** You are responsible for coming to class prepared in terms of reading the assigned readings, preparing questions for speakers, and engaging the speakers. Do not use cell phones or recording devices (unless approved as part of academic accommodations) during class.

**Lectures:** Lectures will be provided by one of the instructors or by guest lecturers. The instructor and/or co-instructors will be present for all class meetings. Guest lecturers are accomplished professionals and their presentations are integral to the course. Attendance at lectures is expected.

**Assessment and Grading:** In the course, we will have three graded activities. You will develop a group project evaluating the strategy around a health claim for one of the firms. You will analyze three case studies. You will have a take-home midterm exam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GROUP PROJECT ASSESSING HEALTH CLAIMS</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>CASE STUDY ANALYSIS (3, 10 POINTS EACH)</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAKE-HOME EXAM</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100</td>
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**Assignments and Submission Instructions:**

*Group Project:* A major undertaking of the course is the development of a group project report and presentation. The project will center on the companies that invite us to evaluate a health claim for them. Your job is to work with one of the companies over the semester to develop a strategy to address a health claim. The company will define the problem, but you are to develop evidence-based support for the best strategy of the firm. Work on this project will take place outside of class. However, the teaching team will work with groups to mentor students through the project. All presentations will take place over two days during Week 13. The report is due on our last class meeting. The group project is worth 40 points. From the teaching team, you can earn up to 15 points for the presentation and 15 points from the paper. The last 10 points are from peer evaluation of your team members. The teaching team will provide rubrics for scoring each component of the group project.

*Case Study Analysis:* In the same groups, you are to develop strategies for three Harvard Review Case studies. You are to provide a strategy for the company or government. The case analysis will require three components: a case overview, background supporting material, and a clear strategy based on the evidence of the case and background material. Case studies are snapshots in time. Therefore, you must treat the case material as key, and background material must be specific to the time of the case. Each component (overview,
background, strategy) is worth 2.5 points with 2.5 points for overall quality, clarity, and writing. Over the three case studies, you will lead three of the components, your team will decide who leads each component each time; however, no one person can lead the same component more than once or write the whole case. As this is a team project, you will receive a unique grade based on an equally weighted average of your individual score from the component that you lead and total score for the case. You are to develop the case analysis outside of class. The team will submit one case analysis for the group. We will not grade individual student assignments.

Take-home Exam: You are to write a take-home exam in week 9. The exam will be based on the readings. Thus, you should read the material as assigned. Your answers should be well documented with appropriate citations and references. You must follow the format style of any relevant journal in the disciplines of economics or public health. This assignment is individual work. Please do not share any answers or materials in the preparation of your exam.

Assignments received after their deadline will not be accepted or graded unless extension is approved in advance. Students who are unable to complete an assignment or exam on time for any reason should notify Norbert Wilson by email, text message or phone call prior to the deadline, with a brief explanation for why the extension is needed.

Accommodation of Disabilities: Tufts University is committed to providing equal access and support to all students through the provision of reasonable accommodations so that each student may access their curricula and achieve their personal and academic potential. If you have a disability that requires reasonable accommodations, please contact the Friedman School Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at 617-636-6719 to make arrangements for determination of appropriate accommodations. Please be aware that accommodations cannot be enacted retroactively, making timeliness a critical aspect for their provision.

Course Schedule (Subject to change at discretion of instructor):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week #</th>
<th>Topic &amp; Lecturer (date)</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 January 21/22</td>
<td>• Norbert Wilson—Introduction and Overview and Legality of Health Claims</td>
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<tr>
<td>#2 January 30/31</td>
<td>• Eleanor Shonkoff—Consumer Understanding of Health Claims</td>
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<tr>
<td>#3 February 6/7</td>
<td>• Richard Black—A Firm’s View of Health Claims and How to Engage a Firm</td>
<td><strong>Case Study Analysis:</strong></td>
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<td>Lay’s Potato Chips: The Crunch is On</td>
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<td>Due 02/7 1:30 PM</td>
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<td>#</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Presenters</td>
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<td>#4</td>
<td>February 13/14</td>
<td>Mark Stavro—Bunge Limited (13) Bill Layden—Marketing the Health Promise of Food</td>
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<td>#6</td>
<td>February 27/28</td>
<td>Essie Yamini—Health Claims from the Regulatory Perspective Maureen Enright—Children’s Food and Beverage Advertising (27) Jim McBride*—Guiding Stars: Nutritious Choices made Simple</td>
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<td>#7</td>
<td>March 6/7</td>
<td>Andres Shao*—Challenges for the US Dietary Supplement Industry Timothy Morck*—Nestlé Corporate Affairs</td>
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<td>#8</td>
<td>March 13/14</td>
<td>Sylvia Row—Science to Communications to Policy (13) Sylvia Row—The “Secret Sauce” of Success Presentations (14)</td>
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<td>#9</td>
<td>March 27/28</td>
<td>Jonathan Mein--Monsanto (27) Timothy Daniel—Health Claims in Advertising: What are the Standards (28)</td>
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<td>#11</td>
<td>April 10/11</td>
<td>Catherine Kwik-Urbe*—Cocoa Flavanol Science &amp; Communications</td>
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Course Topics, Learning Objectives and Assignments

For each week, readings are numbered. See the Readings section that follows this section for details. All reading is required unless otherwise stated.

Week 1:
*Introduction and Discussion of Legality of Health Claims led by Norbert Wilson*
Monday 01/23/17 3:15-4:45 PM and Tuesday 01/24/17 1:30-3:00 PM

**Learning objectives:**
Upon completion of this week, students will be able to:
1) Understand the expectations of the course and times of activities.
2) Explain the legal parameters of health claims in the food industry

**Preparation for class:**
Readings (1-3)

Week 2:
*Consumer Understanding of Health Claims led by Eleanor Shonkoff*
Monday 01/30/17 3:15-4:45 PM and Tuesday 01/31/17 1:30-3:00 PM

**Learning objectives:**
Upon completion of this week, students will be able to:
1) Articulate consumer understanding of health claims
2) Apply findings of current research to communicate health claims factually and ethically

**Preparation for class:**
Readings (4-7)

Week 3:
*A Firm’s View of Health Claims and How to Engage a Firm led by Richard Black*
Monday 02/06/17 3:15-4:45 PM and Tuesday 02/07/17 1:30-3:00PM.

**Learning objectives:**
Upon completion of this week, students will be able to:
1) Interpret the motivations and challenges firms face when making health claims
2) Question and engage constructively the speakers from the firms
Preparation for class:
Readings—None

Assignments for this week:
Harvard Case Study Analysis “Lay’s Potato Chips: The Crunch is On” due 02/7 1:30 PM

Week 4:
Bill Layden—Marketing the Health Promise of Food
Mark Stavro—Bunge Limited
Monday 02/13/17 3:15-4:45 PM and Tuesday 02/14/17 1:30-3:00 PM

Learning objectives:
Upon completion of this week, students will be able to:
1) Interpret the health claims of firms
2) Evaluate the role of agribusiness in health claims

Preparation for class:
Readings (8, 9)

Week 5:
Sarah Romotsky—Consumer Insights: Communicating the Health Benefits of Foods
Alison Eldridge—Using Dietary Intake Data for Scientific, Engagement, Product Innovation, and Guidance
Tuesday 02/21/17 1:30-3:00 PM and Thursday 02/23/17 3:15-4:45 PM

Learning objectives:
Upon completion of this week, students will be able to:
1) Assess consumer perception of health benefits
2) Use evidence to support health claims

Preparation for class:
Readings (10, 11)

Assignments for this week:
Harvard Case Study Analysis “Disney Consumer Products: Marketing Nutrition to Children” due 02/21 1:30 PM

Week 6:
Essie Yamini—Health Claims from the Regulatory Perspective
Jim McBride—Guiding Stars: Nutritious Choices made Simple
Monday 02/27/17 3:15-4:45 PM and Tuesday 02/28/17 1:30-3:00 PM

Learning objectives:
Upon completion of this week, students will be able to:
1) Explain the use and standards of health claims in advertising
2) Explain the role of retailers in health and nutrition

2) Evaluate health claims from a regulatory framework

**Preparation for class:**
Readings (12-15)

**Week 7:**
*Andy Shoe—Challenges for the US Dietary Supplement Industry*
*Timothy Morck—Nestlé Corporate Affairs*
Monday 03/06/17 3:15-4:45 PM and Tuesday 03/07/17 1:30-3:00 PM

**Learning objectives:**
Upon completion of this week, students will be able to:
1) Describe permissible health claims of the dietary supplement industry
2) Explain the bounds of dietary supplement health claims

**Preparation for class:**
Readings (16-20)

**Assignments for this week:**
Harvard Case Review Analysis Food for Thought: The “Junk Food” Act in Peru due 03/07 1:30 PM

**Week 8:**
*Sylvia Row—The “Secret Sauce” of Success Presentations*
*Sylvia Row—Science to Communications to Policy*
Monday 03/13/17 3:15-4:45 PM and Tuesday 03/14/17 1:30-3:00 PM

**Learning objectives:**
Upon completion of this week, students will be able to:
1) Identify methods to give successful presentations
2) Use these methods in future presentations
3) Evaluate the quality of health and science communications

**Preparation for class:**
Readings (21)

**Week 9:**
*Jonathan Mein—Monsanto*
*Timothy Daniel—Health Claims in Advertising: What are the Standards*
Monday 03/27/17 3:15-4:45 PM and Tuesday 03/28/17 1:30-3:00 PM

**Learning objectives:**
Upon completion of this week, students will be able to:
1) Define the role of sensory features in food choice and effects on nutrition
2) Evaluate health claims from a regulatory framework

1) Assess the methods to communicate science to the public
2) Evaluate the quality of health and science communications

**Preparation for class:**
Readings (22, 23)

**Assignments for this week:**
Course Exam due 03/28 1:30 PM

**Week 10:**
*Linda Harelick—Kraft Foods*
*Maureen Enright—Children’s Food and Beverage Advertising*
Monday 04/03/17 3:15-4:45 PM and Tuesday 04/04/17 1:30-3:00 PM

**Learning objectives:**
Upon completion of this week, students will be able to:
1) Explain the strategy to change consumer perceptions of health
2) Assess the effects of health claims advertising to children

**Preparation for class:**
Readings (24, 25)

**Week 11:**
*Catherine Kwik-Urbe—Cocoa Flavanol Science & Communications*
*Work Day on Group Projects*
*Monday 04/10/17 3:15-4:45 PM and Tuesday 04/11/17 1:30-3:00 PM*

**Learning objectives:**
Upon completion of this week, students will be able to:
1) Assess the methods to communicate science to the public
2) Evaluate the quality of health and science communications

**Preparation for class:**
Readings none

**Week 12:**
*Maha Tahiri—General Mills*
Tuesday 04/18/17 1:30-3:00 PM

**Learning objectives:**
Upon completion of this week, students will be able to:
1) Critique the messaging of health claims
2) Describe the constraints food companies manage to communicate health

Preparation for class:
Readings none

Week 13:
Group Presentations
Monday 04/24/17 3:15-4:45 PM and Tuesday 04/25/17 1:30-3:00 PM

Learning objectives:
Upon completion of this week, students will be able to:
1) Communicate health claims
2) Work in teams

Preparation for class:
Readings none

Week 14:
Structured Review and Course Integration
Monday 05/01/17 3:15-4:45 PM

Learning objectives:
Upon completion of this week, students will be able to:
1) Communicate health claims
2) Develop a report or document written by a group

Assignments for this week:
Submit Group Project Report

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References


