



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 20th

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 27th

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 3rd

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 10th

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 17th

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 24th

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 3rd

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 10th

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 17th

**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 24th

Spring Recess

Week 11: Friday, March 31st

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 7th

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 14th

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 21st

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 28th

No class

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

Friday, May 5th

**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.