Title of Course: Foundations of Health Communication

I. Catalog Description and Credit Hours of Course:
Study of theory and research on communication in health and illness contexts, focusing on how messages from interpersonal, organizational, cultural, and media sources affect health beliefs and behaviors (3 credit hours)

II. Prerequisite(s): None

III. Purposes or Objectives of the Course:
A. To help students explore communication in health care delivery, health care organizations, as well as health promotion and disease prevention.
B. To help students examine the multiple levels of communication, different communicative channels, and the use of diverse communication media and technologies in health communication.
C. To provide students with insight into how theoretical and experimental information concerning health communication can be applied at an individual, family, professional, organizational, and societal level.

IV. Student Learning Outcomes (Minimum of 3)
A. Identify and understand the theoretical foundations underlying differences in the ways individuals communicate about health.
B. Exhibit familiarity with health campaign strategies and organizational influences on health.
C. Identify strategies for generating successful or beneficial health-related communication, as well as recognize problematic communicative trends.

V. Expectations of Students:
A. Complete all assigned readings and responses.
B. Participate in class discussions.
C. Complete a research paper on a health communication topic.
D. Outline and present research to the class.
VI. Course Content or Outline (Indicate number of class hours per unit or section):

A. Overview (2 weeks; 6 hours)
   1. How health communication has developed as a field of study within the communication discipline
   2. Explanations of the different areas of study within health communication:
      a. interpersonal
      b. organizational
      c. social and cultural
      d. mediated health communication.

B. Caregiver-Patient Communication from the Caregiver’s Perspective (2 weeks; 6 hours)
   1. Issues and challenges from the caregiver’s perspective
      a. how providers are socialized into the medical profession
      b. sources of stress and anxiety accompany providing care to others
   2. How time constraints and organizational rules can affect health care delivery

C. Caregiver-Patient Communication from the Patient’s Perspective (2 weeks; 6 hours)
   1. Issues and challenges patients experience while communicating with their health-care providers.
      a. difficulties patients may face when trying to talk openly with their doctors
      b. consequences of avoiding open discussions
   2. Strategies for improving patients’ capacity to self-advocate for better quality of health care.

D. Social and Cultural Issues (2 weeks; 6 hours)
   1. Importance of social support when coping with health-related issues
      a. strategies for providing ideal emotional support
      b. friends and family members in need
   2. Inherent Intercultural challenges and barriers and ways they can be addressed and overcome by health care professionals and their patients
      a. health care policies
      b. treatments and procedures
E. Communication in Health Organizations (2 weeks; 6 hours)

1. Professional and organizational features of health communication
   a. roles that people can play within health organizations
   b. cultural diversity within organizations

2. Team and organizational interventions
   a. strengthen team functioning
   b. manage conflict

F. Health in the Media (2 weeks; 6 hours)

1. The range of health-related information in the media
   a. personal health
   b. public health

2. The concept of media literacy education and other interventions

G. Health Campaigns (2 weeks; 6 hours)

1. The role of health campaigns in Americans' lives and the presence of health-related content in media messages
   a. interpersonally
   b. via the media

2. How health campaigns are designed and studied.

H. Research Presentations (1 week; 3 hours)

VII. Textbook(s) and/or Other Required Materials or Equipment:


VIII. Basis for Student Evaluation:

A. In-class responses to readings 150 points
B. Research Paper 100 points
C. Presentation Outline 50 points
D. Presentation of Research 100 points
TOTAL: 400 points