Communication, Health Disparities, & Culture
(formerly titled “Health Literacy”)
CMNS 509: Special Topics in Multicultural Communication
HTHC 517

Instructor: Jay Baglia, Ph. D., Associate Professor, College of Communication

Course Readings:
Articles available on D2L &

Course Description
There is little doubt that the causes of health disparities are deep rooted and have been ingrained in our American health system. Consequently, attempts to counteract some and ultimately all of these differences are imperative. Because race, ethnicity, class, gender, religious preference, sexual preference, and age have all been shown to influence medical decision-making and/or outcomes, it is essential that healthcare institutions exert significant effort toward training and educational programs to address these issues. This course will address how communication scholars can contribute to the ways that health disparities can be offset by attention to health literacy, cultural competency, and intercultural sensitivity programs. Furthermore, it is important to understand how Western medicine has infiltrated other systems of healing and to develop strategies that acknowledge alternative/integrative medical options.

Course Objectives
After completing this course each student will be able to:
1. Describe the roles of history, power, privilege and structural inequality in producing health disparities;
2. Give examples of how cultural competence and cultural sensitivity are employed in healthcare provision;
3. Discuss the role of health literacy in public health practice;
4. Demonstrate a critical understanding of research methodologies and theories often used in studies of disparities in health care and health status; and
5. Appraise different data collection and research methodologies as mechanisms for monitoring healthcare disparities.

How you will be evaluated
5% Cultural Identity Paper (Week 2)
20% Critical Response Papers (Weeks 3, 5, 6, 7, 9)
10% Discussion Leader (Weeks 3, 5, 6, 7, 9)
15% Body Parts Paper—10%--and Presentation—5% (Week 4)
30% Final Project
   Part One (5%): Annotated Bibliography of ten “outside” scholarly articles about an Intercultural Health,
Cultural Identity Paper (10%)
This paper is about how your various cultural identities shape you, your beliefs, and your communication, particularly with regard to health. It will require you to examine the cultural patterns that reflect and predict your culture’s general beliefs and values as well as the beliefs, values, and norms that you have been taught as a member of your culture(s) and groups. Think of this paper as an ethnography of a culture and its members in which you describe and interpret the attributes and members’ behavior to those who are not familiar with them. The twist—as you move from the general to specific—is that here the subject/culture(s) is/are your own, and the attitudes, values, beliefs, and communicative behaviors you are examining are your own.

Critical Response Papers, Four out of five options (20% total or 5% each)
In response to designated course readings, each student will compose a 2-3 page essay (1000 words) that is focused and dialogic and that synthesizes at least three of the readings (that is, the essay should be “in conversation” with other readings). All written assignments should include a title, an attention-getting “hook,” a preview, meaningful transitions between paragraphs, and a concise, summary conclusion.

Discussion Leader (10%)
During weeks three, five, six, seven, and nine two or three students will individually summarize two or more of the assigned readings. The discussion leader assignment will be evaluated in terms of: 1) adherence to a 15-minute time guidelines (+/- two minutes); 2) presentation skills; 3) quality of interaction/engagement between presenters and the rest of the class; 4) a thorough synthesis of the selected readings; 5) quality of the discussion questions. Each discussion leader is encouraged to use creative approaches to illustrate the major concepts of the selected readings. A powerpoint (or prezi) containing an outline, at least two discussion questions for the audience, and works cited should be drop-boxed at least two hours before class.

Body Parts Paper (10%) & Presentation (5%)
Drawing from Aldersey-Williams’ Anatomies: A Cultural History of the Human Body, you have been assigned one of twelve chapters. In the first part of this three to four-page essay, you are to summarize and offer critique/feedback of the content in your assigned chapter. In the second part of this essay you are to explore cultural aspects of these body parts and the conditions, syndromes, and/or diseases that affect them. More to the point, Aldersey-Williams writes from a decidedly Western perspective. How do other cultures consider these same body parts and related ailments? Be sure to cite the sources of any outside information you discover. Finally, you will condense what you have learned from Aldersey-Williams as well as what you’ve discovered on your own into a 5-7 minute presentation. Feel free to incorporate images and video into this presentation.

Final Project (30%)
The final project for this course can be an extended literature review, community research proposal, or original research. If you are choosing the community research proposal option, the articles you summarize will lead you to a prospective study that you could conduct in your organization or community. Part one (5%)
is an annotated bibliography of ten scholarly articles about an intercultural health issue of your choice. Part two (20%) is a 8-10 page essay that includes at least five course readings and the ten peer-reviewed articles from your annotated bibliography about an intercultural health issue of your choice. This project might lead to a thesis proposal or independent study. Part three (5%) is a 10-minute rehearsed presentation to the rest of the class.

Class Participation (20%)
In addition to attendance, participation is assessed through your involvement in class discussion, turning in work on time, and generally being a good classroom citizen. Missing more than one class will negatively affect your participation grade and will result in a course grade of no higher than a B. In this class there will be many opportunities for you to participate including in-class exercises, community building exercises, topic selection, and listening. We are scheduled to meet 11 times this semester for three hours each time so it is possible that you can develop some relationships in this course. Being regularly present for class will contribute significantly to one of Aristotle’s principles of public participation: ethos, or character, also known as cred – “Commanding a level of respect in an environment due to experience in or knowledge of issues affecting those environments” (urban dictionary). Notifying me of your absence in advance of class is also a component of class participation. Communicate with me. Come to class.

Course Policies

Attendance
Most content and all classroom activities are designed for your participation. Participation in these activities will be recorded as "ungraded assignments," a component of your class participation grade. Missing all or part of a class may result in missing critical information needed to complete assignments successfully. If you must miss a class and you know about it in advance—illness, or family event (such as a wedding or funeral as examples)—I expect to receive an email or phone message prior to the start time of the relevant class(es). In many ways this class depends on your participation and the mutual support of all members. Be aware that 20% of your final grade depends on class participation—this includes turning in work on time.

My “There Is No Extra Credit” Extra Credit Policy
No extra credit will be given or accepted for this course. There are a variety of ways for you to succeed in this class—each of the assignments is tied to specific objectives. I can think of no reason to invent other measures that demonstrate success. Do all the assignments as they are described and you will pass this course.

Late Work
I only accept late work without penalty if plans have been negotiated no less than 24 hours prior to the due date. Computers freeze, cars break down, and bad things happen. I will require documentation but I am not an unreasonable human being—I’m sure we can come to an understanding in most circumstances. Generally, if work is turned in late without prior agreement two things happen: a) there is a penalty of one full grade for each day that goes by (starting with the due date) and b) I reserve the right to assess that item at my leisure.

Listening & Devices
There have been many interesting changes in technology in the fifteen years since I first taught in a college classroom: namely, the rapid spread of cell phone technology. Although cell phones have been in common use since 1992, it has only been in the last six or seven years that they have achieved the proliferation they have today; it is almost an anomaly to be absent a cell phone. I understand that from time to time you may
need access to your devices in order to help a friend or as you await news of significance (an ill family member, for example). In those circumstances, I expect you to notify me at the beginning of class. Just as texting while driving is a bad idea, so is texting during class time: for the simple reason that it is distracting, both to me and to your classmates. Please set your cell phone or pager to vibrate or silence.

Students with Disabilities
Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact me as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the:

The Office for Students with Disabilities at
Lincoln Park Campus: 773-325-1677, Student Center #370
Loop Campus: 312-362-8002, Lewis Center #1420
www.studentaffairs.depaul.edu/csd

Correspondence
I have worked in many industries and at several universities. When I correspond with my colleagues I tend to include a) a salutation (“Dear Kim” or “Greetings Deborah” or “Hi Eric”) and b) a specific piece of information or question. And I expect you to do the same. My email account here at DePaul is wbaglia@depaul.edu and that is the account I’d like you to use when corresponding with me. Be sure to include something in the subject line that will provide me with some clue that you are a student in my class (such as “Health Disparities student” or “HTHC 517 student Sternberg”). I do not have a laptop strapped to my hip so please understand that I may not reply immediately. You should definitely send me an email if you are going to miss class.

My Teaching Philosophy
I enjoy teaching and I try to make it fun, but that doesn’t mean there isn’t any work involved. As a matter of fact, after a dozen years of teaching university classes, I am considered a fairly demanding instructor. Learning is, ideally, an active process and it requires participation. I do expect you to come to class (on time) prepared to discuss the reading assignment, or prepared to listen to the contributions of your classmates. I expect you to share relevant examples from your own observations (when appropriate) and to be considerate and open-minded. As your instructor, I will facilitate a supportive learning environment. I promise to try and make this class interesting, fun, and practical, but I can’t do it without you. In return for your active attendance, preparation, and mutual support for one another you can expect me to return your efforts in a timely manner (almost always one week from the due date), and do my best to educate and inform you in innovate ways. This class requires you to read, reflect, write, rehearse, speak and to talk to others about communication processes related to health and diversity. Being a member of this class requires the following:

1) Come to class – implied in this statement is active involvement.
2) Be prepared – read the assignments as though a quiz will be given.
3) Question your premises – the topics discussed in this class can be controversial and emotionally charged. Opinions and perspective of all kinds are welcome but be prepared to defend them with the resources required of an institution of higher learning.

Statement on online course evaluations (from DePaul’s College of Commerce)
Instructor and course evaluations provide valuable feedback that can improve teaching and learning. The greater the level of participation, the more useful the results. As students, you are in the unique position to view the instructor over time. Your comments about what works and what doesn’t can help faculty build on
the elements of the course that are strong and improve those that are weak. Isolated comments from students and instructors’ peers may also be helpful, but evaluation results based on high response rates may be statistically reliable (believable). As you experience this course and material, think about how your learning is impacted. Your honest opinions about your experience in and commitment to the course and your learning may help improve some components of the course for the next group of students. Positive comments also show the department chairs and college deans the commitment of instructors to the university and teaching evaluation results are one component used in annual performance reviews (including salary raises and promotion/tenure). The evaluation of the instructor and course provides you an opportunity to make your voice heard on an important issue – the quality of teaching at DePaul. Don’t miss this opportunity to provide feedback!

Written Work
Anything turned in that is part of a grade must be word-processed and deposited in the D2L dropbox for this course. Please use a standard font such as Helvetica, Times New Roman, Courier, or Arial (as examples) in 10- or 12-point type. Include 1” margins, and double-spaced.

Other Important Information & Resources
DePaul’s Writing Center
Consider visiting the Writing Center to discuss your written assignments for this course. Writing Center Tutors are specially trained undergraduate and graduate students who can help you at any stage of your writing project. They can help you focus and develop your ideas, review your drafts, and polish your writing, as well as answer questions about grammar, mechanics, style, and citation.

You may schedule appointments on an as-needed or weekly basis. In addition to Face-to-Face appointments, the Writing Center also provides Written Feedback by Email and Online Appointments. Be sure to schedule your appointment with enough time to think about and incorporate the feedback you’ll receive. Bring/upload your assignment handout and/or any other relevant materials to your appointment. To schedule a Face-to-Face, Written Feedback by Email, or Online Appointment, visit www.depaul.edu/writing. You can also call one of the offices: (312) 362-6726 (Loop Office, 1600 Lewis Center) or (773) 325-4272 (LPC Office, 250 McGaw Hall). When possible, the Writing Center accepts walk-in requests, but it’s always a good idea to schedule your appointment ahead of time. You may schedule tutorials on an as-needed basis or as weekly standing appointments up to 3 hours per week. All Writing Center services are free to the DePaul community.

Academic Integrity
from http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/FAQ/ForFaculty/syllabus.html
Academic integrity entails absolute honesty in one’s intellectual efforts. The DePaul Student Handbook details the facets and ramifications of academic integrity violations, but you should be especially aware of the policies on cheating and plagiarism. Cheating is any action that violates University norms or an instructor’s guidelines for the preparation and submission of assignments. Such actions may include using or providing unauthorized assistance or materials on course assignments, or possessing unauthorized materials during an examination. Plagiarism involves the representation of another’s work as your own, for example: (a) submitting as one’s own any material that is copied from published or unpublished sources such as the Internet, print, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else’s; (b) paraphrasing another’s views, opinions or insights without proper acknowledgement or copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with acknowledgement; (c) submitting as one’s own work a report, examination, paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. If you are unsure
about what constitutes unauthorized help on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution, please ask your instructor. Violations may result in the failure of the assignment, failure of the course, and/or additional disciplinary actions. For this course, an incident of cheating or plagiarism will result in an automatic zero for the assignment and an overall grade of no higher than a D.

The Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>What's due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Introduction to the course, to each other, discussion of intercultural communication and health</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>“Culture” Film: <em>Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?</em></td>
<td>Hall, Dutta, Fox/Malina, Harwood &amp; Sparks (on D2L); and Dutta &amp; Kreps (Ch 1)</td>
<td>Cultural Identity Paper</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Health Literacy &amp; Cultural Competence</td>
<td>Nutbeam, Nelson, Betancourt et al., Freedman et al., Chinn, Yee &amp; Simon (on D2L); and Introduction (pp. xv-xxv) &amp; Prologue (pp.1-15) to Aldersey-Williams’ <em>Anatomies</em></td>
<td>Response Essay 1</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Community-based Communication Interventions</td>
<td>Dutta &amp; Kreps (3, 4, 5, 7) and Tovar et al. (D2L)</td>
<td>Response Paper 2</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Community-based Communication Interventions</td>
<td>Dutta &amp; Kreps (Ch. 9, 11, 12, 13) and Willies-Jacobo, &amp; Baglia et al. (D2L)</td>
<td>Response Paper 3</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Media-based Communication Interventions</td>
<td>Dutta &amp; Kreps (Ch. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19)</td>
<td>Response Paper 4</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>What's due</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Final Project Proposal Discussion</td>
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<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Critical Perspectives</td>
<td>Dutta &amp; Kreps (Ch. 22, 24, 25, 26, 29)</td>
<td>Response Paper 5</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Final Project Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>FINALS WEEK</td>
<td>Final Project Presentations</td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>Final Paper due</td>
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