CH 99/HCOMM 522 (equivalent): Health behavior in context: The art and science of health communication

Class meetings: Tuesday 9 – 11:30 a.m. (seminars)
Three required meetings with instructor (1 individual, 2 group)
Applied Fieldwork hours (arranged, students will complete 4 additional hours over the course of the semester)

Location: 11 Talbot Avenue, Room 103

Professor:
Carolyn L. Rubin
112 Packard Ave. (second floor)
(617) 636-3444
Carolyn.Rubin@tufts.edu

Office Hours: Monday, 11 am – 12 noon

Course Description

This course takes an ecological approach to health. The determinants of individual health can range from individual actions to broad social and environmental conditions. While interventions can be directed at the individual, for example helping patients adhere to a low fat dietary regimen, or to the population as a whole, such as mandating seat belt use, an objective of public health practice is often to encourage people to adopt behaviors that will improve their health status. This course provides an overview of the scientific basis for understanding human health behavior and strategies available for changing it. Special focus is put on the role, theory and practice of health communication, as a core element of public health interventions and programs.

Students will be introduced to a range of theories, evidence-based strategies, and resources critical to effective public health practice. A series of skill-building sessions and assignments will allow students to practice the skills necessary to design and implement public health interventions in a variety of real-world settings. The course is organized around process. How one analyzes a problem, selects a strategy, and draws on theory and best practices to develop interventions and/or programs to achieve desired outcomes.

The course will make use of case study examples during sessions and will mix didactic, lecture/discussion, and focused small group exercises. In addition, students will apply concepts they are learning in the field.
Learning Objectives
At the conclusion of the course students will be able to develop strategies and programs to address health problems. Learning objectives for this course will allow students to:

- Describe the determinants of health and health behaviors using a social-ecological model and develop strategies for health interventions that take into account individual and contextual factors, such as:
  - Literacy
  - Culture
  - Race
  - Gender
  - History
  - Poverty
  - Community
  - Structural factors

- Describe and discuss several of the basic health behavior theories and models and explain how they can be used to understand behavior and inform interventions and communications. Theories may include:
  - Health Belief Model
  - Theory of Reasoned Action/Planned Behavior/
  - Transtheoretical Model
  - Social Learning Theory
  - Diffusion of Innovation

- Develop and describe program planning strategies and methodologies.

- Demonstrate basic skills required to respond to an RFP, including:
  - Problem analysis/literature review
  - Writing goals and objectives (or specific aims)
  - Program planning drawing on theory
  - Logic models
  - Evaluation (formative, process, outcome)
  - Budgeting

Course Mechanics
The course meets once per week. Sessions will generally be composed of lecture, discussion and small group activities and simulations. It is expected that students will be prepared and will have completed the reading and other course assignments prior to class. The success of the entire group depends on the willingness of each student to attend each class and be fully prepared.

The text is Planning Health Promotion Programs: An Intervention Mapping Approach edited by L. Kay Bartholomew, Guy S. Parcel, Gerjo Kok, and Nell H. Gottlieb. (2011), published by Jossey-Bass. Most weeks we will read a chapter or two from this text. Readings that are not found in the course text will be online in some form (either posted on TRUNK or a complete reference provided for accessing them through the library). Readings generally will be available at least a week prior to class.
Assignments

Required assignments are designed to allow students to apply the knowledge and practice skills gained throughout the course. Assignments focus on the competencies necessary to conceptualize, plan, and implement strategies and programs to enhance population health. It is important to take particular care with early assignments as they are designed to build skills needed for the final assignment.

The first assignment, The *Theory Exercise* will involve applying the individual level theories presented in class to explain a discrete behavior and how that behavior might be changed. The second assignment, the *Assessment* will involve conducting a public health assessment in order to develop an intervention strategy and provide a rationale for that strategy based on a review of the literature. The third assignment, the *Strategic Intervention plan* provides an opportunity to map out the critical elements of your final proposal and to develop a matrix of change objectives using the tools and skills provided up to that point in the course work.

All of these assignments occur within the context of the Group Project which will simulate an "RFP process" such as that used in the public and private sectors to award contracts to potential service vendors. At the beginning of the course small groups will be formed and topics assigned. Groups will be required to analyze the problem they are given, develop and design a strategy to address it, and provide an oral and written presentation. (An outline of the issues to be covered in the presentations will be provided). The group project will provide students with a final opportunity to use the knowledge and skills developed during the course in undertaking the design and development of a communication strategy and present it to the class. *The mock grant is due on the second to last class. There can be no exceptions to this deadline.* The oral presentations will take place at our last meeting and attendance is required.

Details for all assignments will be distributed in class and will include instructions about the required elements.

*Group assignments*

In addition to the above assignments, there will be several individual and small group fieldwork activities. This course is designed to be interactive and class participation is expected from everyone through regular attendance, participation in class activities, and dialogue with your classmates and the course instructor.
Grading Policy
Assignments will be weighted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Percent of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1: Theory exercise</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 2: Needs assessment</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 3: Strategic intervention plan</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Project/Grant proposal</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignments and participation (in-class group activities, theory presentations)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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</tbody>
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Attendance and Late Policy
It is recommended that should you be absent you contact the Professor at least a week in advance. Absences are less likely to affect your participation grade if you notify the Professor ahead of time. Failure to hand in an assignment on time will almost always result in a grade reduction of at minimum a half letter grade, unless you have clearly asked for and been granted a new due date by the Professor.

**ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED AT THE FINAL PRESENTATIONS AND NO EXTENSIONS WILL BE GIVEN ON THE FINAL PROJECTS.**

Contacting the Professor
Feel free to contact me at any time about any aspect of the course; problems with assignments or group projects, feedback and comments about the course, or ideas about topics to discuss in class. If you do not get a response within 2 working days you might need to resend your email.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/20</td>
<td>Course Introduction and the Determinants of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/27</td>
<td>Theories of Health Behavior, part 1 Individual-oriented theories</td>
<td>Meet with Professor Rubin over the next 2-3 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>Theories of Health Behavior: Part II</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2/10</td>
<td>Visit to Sociedad Latina (1530 Tremont Street, Roxbury, MA 02120)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2/17</td>
<td>Environment-Oriented Theories Fieldwork at Sociedad Latina</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2/24</td>
<td>Intervention Mapping Step 1: Conducting Assessments</td>
<td>In-class Theory Presentations Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>Intervention Mapping Step 2: Preparing Matrices of Change Objectives</td>
<td>Assignment 1 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3/10</td>
<td>Intervention Mapping Step 3: Selecting Theory Informed Intervention Methods and Applications</td>
<td>Groups meet with Professor Rubin</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3/24</td>
<td>Intervention Mapping Step 4: Producing Program Components and Materials &amp; Intervention Mapping Step 5: Planning Program Adoption, Implementation, and Sustainability</td>
<td>Assignment 2 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3/31</td>
<td>Visit to Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (38 Ash Street, Boston, MA 02111)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4/7</td>
<td>Intervention Mapping Step 6: Planning for Evaluation and Grant Writing</td>
<td>Assignment 3 Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4/14</td>
<td>Health Equity and Public Health Workshop</td>
<td>Groups meet with Professor Rubin</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4/21</td>
<td>FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS</td>
<td>Group projects due</td>
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Session #1

Introduction & Determinants of Health

Learning Objectives:
- Describe the levels and components of the ecological model
- Understand how health is shaped by conditions at multiple levels of the ecological model
- Describe ecological and systems approach to intervention development
- Name key aspects of the ethical practice of health promotion

Reading/Discussion Questions:
- What does it mean to take a “social determinants” perspective?
- What is the relationship between individuals and their environment and what does this mean for health promotion?
- Community engagement – what are some of the purposes?

Readings:
1. Text, Chapter 1 (read carefully Box 1.1, Perspectives & Need for Framework pp.8-18, and Important repeating Concepts pp. 35-42, skim 18-33, and skip Navigating the Book & Usefulness of Intervention Mapping)

Session #3

Health Behaviors: What can theory tell us?

Learning Objectives:
- Define theory
- Identify behavior-oriented theories and theoretical constructs to explain behavior
- Describe the specific constructs and their relationship to each other for the Health Belief Model and Theories of Reasoned Action

Reading/Discussion Questions:
- What is a theory?
- For individual theories:
  - What are the key premise(s)?
  - What are the relationships between the component parts?
  - What would be a necessary component of any intervention using this theory?
- What constructs keep reoccurring across the behavior-oriented theories?
- What constructs are less often included?

Readings:
2. Visit and explore NCI’s website “Health Behavior Constructs.” Click on and read through the pages about a construct that look interesting to you http://dccps.cancer.gov/brp/constructs/

Optional Reading- HBM, TPB, TTM & SCT discussed by their developers:
4. Albert Bandura, Health Promotion by Social Cognitive Means, Health Educ Behav April 2004 vol. 31 no. 2 143-164

Session #4

Behavior change in action: Site visit to Sociedad Latina

Learning Objectives:
• Link behavior change theory with an example of a real-world intervention
• Describe what community-based interventions look like.

Reading/Discussion Questions:
• Think about questions you’d like to ask the staff at Sociedad Latina about their experience with identify needs of the community, changing youth behaviors, and implementing interventions
• How does community engagement happen? What are some of the different forms participation can take (or not)?
• How does power impact participatory processes and the development of program goals and interventions?

Readings:
Behavior-Oriented Theory Applications

Learning Objectives:
- Select behavior-oriented theories and constructs to inform methods to change behaviors
- Understand how theory can be applied to understand behaviors and develop strategies to change behaviors

Reading/Discussion Questions:
- What is the link between the theory and the definition of the problem to be addressed?
- What is the link between theory and the focus of interventions/programs?
- What is the link between theory and intervention/program activities?
- What is the link between theory and evaluation?
- Is it possible to take an a-theoretical stance?

Readings (1 & 2 are examples of using theory to understand behavior, 3 & 4 of using it to inform interventions):

Environment-Oriented Theories and Practice

Learning Objectives:
- Identify theories to describe environmental conditions that influence behavior and health
- Identify potential environmental agents whose role behavior influences the
environmental conditions
- Explain the differences in intervention methods due to role and power at higher ecological levels of the environment
- Understand the range of perspectives and world-views that stakeholders may bring to a coalition
- Develop conflict resolution skills for use in community coalition building

Reading/Discussion Questions:
- How do you define community?
- Community engagement – what barriers do the environment-oriented theories suggest? And what strategies to overcome some of the barriers?
- Why is power in society an important consideration in planning health promotion programs?
- “Program” – a set of activities undertaken by individuals or organizations – what assumptions are inherent in that definition?

Readings:
1. Text, Chapter 2: pp. 108-111, Diffusion of Innovations Theory (DIT)
2. Text, Chapter 3 (read carefully Community-Level Theories pp.136-155, skim the rest)
3. Text, Chapter 4 (pp. 171-189)

Session #7

Assessment: Overview

Learning Objectives:
- Describe the components of a needs assessment using the PRECEDE model (Green & Kreuter, 2005)
- Describe the key elements of a participatory planning group that includes program participants and implementers

Reading/Discussion Questions:
- How are the following terms used in the readings: intervention mapping, planning process, logic model, needs, core processes, triangulation?
- How are needs assessments framed and what sorts of data/information is used?
- How does community engagement happen? What are some of the different forms participation can take?
- How useful and logical are logic models?

Readings:
planning community interventions. Health Promotion Practice 2004; Vol. 5
2. Text, Chapter 4, Step 1

Session #8

Making change: Preparing Objectives

Learning Objectives:
- State expected program outcomes for health-related behavior and environmental conditions
- Subdivide behavioral and environmental outcomes into performance objectives
- Select important and changeable determinants of behavioral and environmental outcomes
- Create change objectives on each level of the ecological model that address determinants and are tied to the performance objectives
- Describe how the concepts entailed in the terms program outcomes, performance objectives, and change objectives are related to SMART objectives, goals and objectives, and specific aims.

Reading/Discussion Questions:
- Why is it important to be very specific when stating behavioral and environmental outcomes?
- How do you determine whether you could/should seek to change environmental conditions?
- What are factors to consider in differentiating priority populations? When do you need to differentiate into subgroups?

Readings:
1. Text, Chapter 5, Step 2
4. Evaluation Guide: Writing SMART Objectives (CDC/ Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention)
Session #9

Making Change: Selecting Intervention Methods

Learning Objectives:
- Identify theoretical methods that can influence change in health determinants
- Identify the conditions under which a given method is most likely to be effective
- Select of design practical applications for applying the methods in an intervention program
- Ensure that the final applications address identified change objectives

Reading/Discussion Questions:
- To what extent does theory determine strategy?
- Is there room for creativity? For community input?
- Are there times when assumptions about the target population can lead to ineffective methods?
- How do you decide if a “proven” theory-based method will work in your intervention? What characteristics of the environment/conditions do you need to take into account?
- How does one draw from multiple theories to design a program?
- Consider the data needed for programs designed to focus on:
  - Structural change
  - Community/institutional change
  - Individual and small group behavior change
  - Normative change

Readings:
Text, Chapter 6, Step 3

Session #10

Developing programs and interventions: Site visit to Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center

Reading/Discussion Questions:
1. Brainstorm questions you’d like to ask the staff about their process of determining the needs of the community and how they develop interventions.
2. What concerns do community-based agencies have about partnering with academic researchers?

Readings:
1. Text, Chapter 7, Step 4 (to page 408)


**Session #11**

**Program Message Considerations: Health Literacy**

Learning Objectives:
- Describe how to identify channels for health communication
- Create program scope and sequence including delivery channels, themes, and list of needed program materials
- Match materials to change objectives, methods, and practical applications

Reading/Discussion Questions:
- When should you develop materials yourself and when should you bring in experts?
- Is there an intersection between health literacy and culture? How can you ensure that cultural and health literacy considerations are taken into account in developing program components and materials.

Readings:
Text, Chapter 7, Step 4 (from page 408)
2. Seligman Hilary K; Wallace Andrea S; DeWalt Darren A; Schillinger Dean; Arnold Connie L; Shilliday Betsy Bryant; Delgadillo Adriana; Bengal Nikki; Davis Terry C, *Facilitating behavior change with low-literacy patient education materials.*, American journal of health behavior 2007;31 Suppl 1.

3. Review Text, Chapter 2 (Theories of Information Processing p.64 & Elaboration Likelihood Model p.97)
4. Institute of Medicine, Executive Summary in Health Literacy: A prescription to end confusion, National Academy of Sciences, Washington DC, April 2004, pp 1-18
Program Evaluation

Learning Objectives:
- Describe program outcomes for quality of life, health, behavior, and environment and write objectives and evaluation questions
- Use a logic model to inform an evaluation plan
- Differentiate the purposes of formative, process, and outcome evaluation
- Identify study designs used to evaluate programs
- Explain how the findings of a program evaluation can be used

Reading/Discussion Questions:
- What are the purposes of an evaluation effort?
- Who benefits from an evaluation? Who is it for?
- How might the evaluation differ based on stakeholder needs?
- How might the evaluation differ based on the proposed “use”? 
- How might the format of an evaluation affect community members?
- What are the most important outcomes to measure in an evaluation?
- How might ‘policy’ and ‘science’ conflict?
- How might data be manipulated?
- How do we determine the ‘correct’ perspective on program findings?
- Is an unbiased evaluation possible?
- Who does an evaluation consultant work for?
- Contrast fidelity vs. flexibility

Readings:
Text, Chapter 8 Step 5 (skim)
Text, Chapter 9, Step 6
Wallerstein N, Power between evaluator and community: Research relationships with New Mexico’s healthier communities, Social Science and Medicine, Vol. 49, Issue 1 (July 1999)
campaigns directed at broad, geographically diffuse populations?

- Is an RCT the best evaluation design?

Readings:

Session #13

Special Topics: Health equity and public health workshop

Guest: TBA

Learning Objectives:

- TBD

Readings:

Session #14

Group Presentations

Learning Objectives:

- Give a brief overview of a project plan to peers
- Assess project plans and ask questions that build on information presented
- Respond to questions about a project plan