

COMM 341-001 is a new course curriculum addition conceived, developed, and taught by me in the COMM department curriculum and the SU catalog. This Fall 2019 was its first offering as a new course in our department.

Content: The course integrates theory and practice of health communication from multiple perspectives and through helping students understand the health industry and their role as communication professionals in it. Focusing on patient-caregiver communication, health education, social support, and inclusive healthcare approaches, in this course students complete a *civic-engagement campaign*.

In their civic engagement community project, students conduct formative research with dental health, STD awareness, drug and alcohol addiction, and related issues. Students worked with community partners: dental health offices, daycare centers for one group, an after-school program, Finding Authentic Beauty, and the Moose Lodge, the UFC and Live F.I.T. Gym, and Peninsula Regional Mental Health Services. In each, students conducted interviews and gave surveys and observed sessions to design campaign materials, workout sessions, brochures, that they disseminated along with hosting educational sessions and presentations for the members of the community group on that health behavior.

Sample student reflections:

- “I could say that I’ve never been through something like this before, so it would be hard to compare this to anything else. My most memorable experience was when I had gone on a walk with one of the patients and the one thing he told me I’ll never forget...I still think about what he said to this day and I know I’ll use this every day from here on out in my future journey. My most important lessons were nothing short of valuable.”
- “I can honestly say that this project has been one of a kind in the making. My interest in this project has developed over the course of us actually being more hands on. Once I and my group started to go out and talk with people and organizations, I found that it is our topic that can help change people... I gave it my all in this project because I want something that I can look back at in a few years and or show during a job interview. Having something that I can show to people and educate them on, a project I did back when I was in college at Salisbury University can help put together my professional portfolio.”
- “. I was truly invested in this project once a team member of mine gave me information she had learned about the topic from her friend who works at a dental office. I was interested at this time because I then used this information in order to design a pamphlet. This pamphlet was to be circulated through the dental office and I knew I wanted to do a great job on it. Also, my team members gave me free reins on this portion. I enjoyed finding a cool template that would interest young children and a way to educate those children with memorable information.”
- “Throughout a previous digital public relations course, I had to create a social media campaign about a cause important to me and hold events to gain community support. Instead of health promotions involving surveys and a workout plan, I created environmental promotions involving social media and flyers. During both projects I partnered with local businesses, throughout this project we were able to partner with Live F.I.T. Gym in addition to partnering with Go Green OC for my social media campaign. I also had the opportunity to hold successful events for this team project and my social

media campaign. I was able to host a workout event for the community to reach back out and involve them, as well as host two beach cleanups and partner with Go Green OC for one of the clean ups. Throughout both experiences, I had the incredible opportunity to connect with and visibly benefit the community I live and work in.” [Referencing my Digital PR and Health Comm course projects]

- “During the event, twenty adults showed up to participate and I was able to engage the participants as I walked them through every exercise in the plan. In addition, the ability to successfully host the workout event was the most memorable experience for myself. It was initially the most memorable experience because I successfully planned the event, booked the location, acquired participants, and achieved our goals. However, what made it more special was the ability to utilize the community outreach survey to tailor a workout plan and event for distribution to the initial participants. The Live F.I.T. Gym members who generously answered the community outreach survey were appreciative and thankful for our efforts to give back to the community. Because of this, I believe I learned my most important lessons of what role I can play and the best practices to utilize. I learned that in the complex and ever changing health industry I can still make an impact, I found that I could be a community resource for information and support. In addition, utilizing empathetic and inclusive communication approaches were the best practices”
- “I eventually recognized the significance of the project reached further than my previous experiences, involvement in similar projects, or relevance to my future goals and challenges. My experiences showcased a social significance in the role of social support to not only maintaining health, but also in the general scope of engaging and interacting with the community. The ability for the community to participate in an inclusive and collaborative environment encouraged them more in their efforts”
- “I had an unanticipated interest in this project. I had expected the Health Communication to be a simply lecture course. Never would I have thought to partake in a form of community outreach in this class.
- “I had never had a class assign a project like this one ever. There were courses where community outreach was discussed in theory, but never implemented.”
- “In previous experiences, I have not been given the chance to speak to community members about certain topics, so I don’t have any past experiences to compare with this experience. However, this experience of going to Glen Avenue Elementary School and talking to the students, teachers, and parents about youth health definitely gave me a better perspective and insight into how kids view food and exercise.”
- “The most memorable experience I had with this project was definitely when my group members and I got to go to Glen Avenue and present our topic to the elementary school students. The students were all very eager, happy, and engaged and made the experience a very positive one for group members, and myself.”
- “We went to a local elementary school and did an informational presentation for the kids that covered all aspects of health; physical, emotional, and dietary... I have never conducted any sort of presentation like this before, so I do not have very much to compare this overall experience to... this project really helped me understand how to go about planning an event because that is something I have always been interested in. Seeing that I am capable of putting together a good presentation and executing it well, somewhat proved to myself that I can succeed in that for my future. The project also

taught me a lot about how to network with people in the community... The most memorable part of this project was carrying out the actual presentation for the group of kids. There were about 35 of them and they all were so excited to talk to us and listen to what we had to say. We also had them play a game which they seemed to really enjoy, it was a fun experience to see how our presentation brought some sort of joy to them. I think the most important lesson I learned from this project was how important networking is, because we have made connections with this school they told us we could come present anytime now so in the future if I have another project like this, it'll be easier to find a place to sponsor an event."

- "I had never taken on a project like this before, so I was extremely out of my comfort zone on this one. I have done community outreach projects where I've worked with non-profits before, but never one where I had to present at the non-profit in front of a lot of people. This allowed me to get more experience with the health field. I would love to work in a hospital or with a private practice one day and this experience gave me so much insight on this field."
- "This allowed me to contribute a presentation on an extremely important topic (importance of sexual health) to an audience who truly needed the information on the topic. I provided my audience with facts and resources that they would be able to use after my presentation in their everyday live. My most memorable moment during this project was the amount of basic but important information my audience didn't know about the importance of sexual health. I am satisfied with my project overall because I feel that my presentation was an eye-opener to my audience. The most important lesson I learned throughout this was that it is important to choose to educate the people on a topic you find purpose and passion in, this way you deliver the information to the best of your ability."
- "Prior to this project, my previous experiences with team projects have been hypothetical situations. Writing a grant proposal and creating media campaigns for imaginary audiences were great lessons in creativity and helped build my communication skills. With this project, we actually reached out to the public and communicated a message to a real target audience, which took my communication skills to another level."
- "I created the presentation that we showed the students and created the activities. I did a lot of research on physical, mental, and dietary health for the age group of the students so I could give them accurate information. I also created and pre and post questionnaire for the students to take so we could gauge their knowledge before and after the presentation. I also helped email schools looking for someone to host us. As group we all worked together to make the campaign come together fully. The most memorable experience for me was getting to work with the students. I had a lot of fun getting them to participate and interact with us on this important topic. It was great to see how involved they were and how open they were to be learning about health. I really enjoyed the activities we did with them and I think they did too. The presentation ended up being way more fun than I thought it would be and I appreciate that we got to do it. The valuable knowledge we provided the students made the struggles of this project worth it."