

Health and Social Justice COMM 390/394-701

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COURSE POLICIES

Prerequisites

COMM 390: Junior standing and a grade of C or better in COMM 100 or 101 or 260.

COMM 394: Junior standing and a grade of C or better in COMM 100 or 101 or 102.

Course Description

The pandemic has reinforced and exacerbated disparities affecting members of marginalized populations, who experience a high morbidity and mortality burden, while being most at risk of being without a job, living in poverty, going without food, and being victims of violence. Health Communication and Social Justice guides thinking and action on how health, and communication about it, is connected to all aspects of individuals' lives, community, and the environment, especially with regard to promoting health as a social justice issue.

Instructor Communication

During the semester, I can be reached via email from the My Classes platform. I am also available with an appointment via Zoom for a meeting during office hours.

Course Meetings

COMM 390/394-701 is a fully online course. All course material, meetings, and activities will be completed online per syllabus schedule and policies.

Learning Objectives

COMM 394/390-701 seeks to guide student's gaze toward the foundational relationship between the myriad complex and intersecting issues that comprise social justice concerns and its relationship with health. In current contexts, these range from race, to environment, to our lived neighborhoods, workplaces, media, gender and sexuality, brand activism, and food insecurity. In our semester, we will take an in-depth look at these issues in our local, national, and global community to understand the relationship of social justice principles of comprising equity, access, participation, diversity, and human rights with our health.

Grounded in real-life, current, and enduring social justice concerns, in the course students will identify and explore the persistence of inequalities and the presence of social, economic, and cultural structures that are responsible for the U.S. having one of the worst health outcomes in the world among the developed nations.

Through current, dynamically evolving readings, a range of media such as videos and documentaries, and engagement with present-day challenges, the successful student will be able to:

- Understand the relationship of social justice with health
- Demonstrate critical knowledge of the interconnectedness of health with multiple and intersecting social, cultural, structural, political, governance, and economical factors
- Demonstrate in applied contexts how social determinants of health shapes health outcomes
- Communicate how the social determinants of health approach can inform initiatives to improve health equity

- Engage in a semester-long sustained critique of a current context of health inequity and its intersectionality with social, economic, or cultural factors through the semester
- Demonstrate through a public communication forum (e.g., blogs) how a social justice approach informs health meaning making and action
- Recognize and communicate how action, participation, inclusion, and collaboration can help in designing impactful initiatives for those most impacted by social and racial injustices
- Employ a systematic approach to foster accountability and develop leadership in addressing health inequities

Required Textbook:

There is no required textbook for the course. The course will employ readings from scholarly sources and websites. These are provided below. In addition, supplemental material in the form of videos, documentaries, and other media will be provided in the modules under the reading content section for the purpose of illustrating the real life and lived experiences of the social justice and health equity issues.

Course Readings

Course readings come from primary research sources and websites as indicated on the syllabus and will be accessed via the URLs provided below. The scholarly readings will lead to the SU library databases, where you will enter the SU login information to access the reading via the permalink given here.

1. MODULE 1: SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH (SDoH)

- Social Determinants of Health, Healthy People 2030 [URL: <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health>]
- Social Determinants of Health, CDC [URL: <https://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/index.htm>]

2. MODULE 2: HEALTH DISPARITIES, HEALTH INEQUALITIES, AND HEALTH EQUITY

- Disparities in health & health care: Five key questions and answers [URL: <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/issue-brief/disparities-in-health-and-health-care-five-key-questions-and-answers/#:~:text=1.-,What%20are%20health%20and%20health%20care%20disparities%3F,one%20group%20relative%20to%20another.>]
- Health and social justice [URL: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4006198/>]

3. MODULE 3: RACE AND HEALTH EQUITY

Estrada-Portales, I.M. (2020). Drylongso. Racism, health inequity, and a denial of pandemic proportions. *Journal of Communication in Healthcare*, 13, 151–153. Permalink:

<http://proxy-su.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=146599495&site=ehost-live>

4. MODULE 4: HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Riley, M. (1993). Indigenous resources in a Ghanaian town: Potential for health education.

Howard Journal of Communications, 4, 249–264. Permalink: <http://proxy-su.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=16280386&site=ehost-live>

5. MODULE 5: HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- Health equity and climate change [URL: https://www.apha.org/-/media/files/pdf/topics/climate/guide_section2.ashx?la=en&hash=4D979B9630484AB24BDBA0C6B1D99BE42053E293]
 - Health impacts of climate change [URL: https://www.apha.org/-/media/files/pdf/topics/climate/guide_section4.ashx?la=en&hash=118F4FD2E4719EF51A76C0B0865BAEF57BEB7EDB]
6. **MODULE 6: HEALTH AND MEDIA**
Media: The future of public health in the 21st century [URL: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK221224/>]
 7. **MODULE 7: COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**
 - Schiavo, R. (2016). The importance of community-based communication for health and social change. *Journal of Communication in Healthcare*, 9, 1–3. Permalink: <http://proxy-su.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=118862142&site=ehost-live>
 - Schiavo, R. (2020). Advocacy, community engagement, and cross-sectoral collaborations as key strategies during COVID-19 response and beyond: New directions for a new decade. *Journal of Communication in Healthcare*, 13, 1–5. Permalink: <http://proxy-su.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=144282931&site=ehost-live>
 8. **MODULE 9: WOMEN'S HEALTH ACTIVISM**
 - Zoller, H. (2010). Communicating women's health activism: A social justice agenda. *Women & Language*, 33, 73–79. Permalink: <http://proxy-su.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=57315501&site=ehost-live>
 - Zoller, H. (2016). Women's health activism targeting corporate health risks: Women's voices for the Earth. *Women & Language*, 39, 97–119. Permalink: <http://proxy-su.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=120565639&site=ehost-live>
 9. **MODULE 10: HEALTH & SOCIAL JUSTICE**
Assignment handout
 10. **MODULE 11: HEALTH LITERACY AND HEALTH INFORMATION DISPARITIES**
Krishna, A. (2017). Motivation with misinformation: Conceptualizing lacuna individuals as knowledge-deficient, issue-negative activists. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 29, 176–193. URL: Permalink: <http://proxy-su.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=125393942&site=ehost-live>
 11. **MODULE 12: BRAND ACTIVISM AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**
Zoller, H.M. (2017). Health activism targeting corporations: A critical health communication perspective. *Health Communication*, 32, 219–229. Permalink: <http://proxy-su.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=120040476&site=ehost-live>
 12. **MODULE 13: FOOD AS SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Greenberg, M., Greenberg, G., & Mazza, L. (2010). Food pantries, poverty and social justice. *American Journal of Public Health*, 100, 2021–2022. URL: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2951938/>

Course Structure

The course structure reflects its organization by module. The course structure supports the learning and cultivation of knowledge through elements such as engagement, peer critique, and personal reflection over the semester.

To the extent possible, module elements will be planned as follows:

The course content will emphasize learning and understanding of the material covered in the readings. Students will read these, review any lectures and instructor-created content, share their thoughts, and respond to the prompt encouraging them to apply these to a specific context. The application section will emphasize reflection, discussion, critique, assimilation, professionalism (e.g., in writing and presentation), and execution.

Course Access

You will gain competency in and explore different online resources and content essential to exploring and conducting international public relations work. A proportion of our learning activities may take place online with collaborators/contributors and/or the learning material and practical international contexts.

Minimum Technology Requirements

For successful course completion, students should have access to and basic proficiency with utilizing, for example:

- A reliable Internet connection
- A laptop or desktop computer with an updated operating system
- Word processing software, web browsers, online participation, and content management systems
- Laptop/web camera
- My Classes Canvas account
- Off-campus access to SU's library's online databases*

**Please refer to [SU Course Related Policies and Resources](#) tab on the left-hand menu bar of My Classes for full list of virtual instruction, Zoom, access and accommodation, and other course related policies.*

Participation Policy

Participation may take the form of various online in-class and field work (out-of-class) assignments, online discussion, engagement, critique, and reflection. These opportunities reward your positive contribution to our collective learning space in class. Participation is an important part of our learning experience and weighted accordingly.

Late Assignment Policy

Assignments are due by Sunday, midnight of the module. Assignments that are late by 1 day will be accepted with a 50% penalty. Assignments submitted 1 day after the deadline will not be accepted.

Course Ethos

As an advanced PRSC elective course for students aiming to enter the PR and Strategic Communication industry as a professional (or graduate school), I will expect responsible

engagement from every student in class. I will strive to provide each of you with the resources and guidance necessary to achieve the course objectives. Any personal accommodations made during the semester will be at my discretion weighing individual circumstances against the principle of fairness to other class members.

Potential Instructional Strategies:

- i. Content posts (textual)
- ii. Content posts (video)
- iii. Discussion posts
- iv. Website critique
- v. Web resources
- vi. Writing and formatting critique
- vii. Reading critique
- viii. Online interaction
- ix. Online research
- x. Quizzes and exams

COURSE ACCESS & SUPPORT

Support Services

For trouble with your connection, access to the course website or the materials therein please contact IT at 410-677-5454, online at [Technology Support Center](#), or via email at helpdesk@salisbury.edu.

Computer Skills and Digital Information Literacy Skills Required

In order to complete the course satisfactorily, course participants should be competent in accessing, retrieving, assimilating, engaging with and contributing to information and content presented online. Proficiency with navigating websites, creating and submitting textual and audio-visual content, and engaging with online content is a requirement for participation in the course.

Copyright Statement

The content (lectures, assignments, handouts) are the property of the instructor and protected under copyright law. You may not publicly distribute or display or share my course materials or lecture notes without my written permission.

Emergency Policy

In the event of an emergency, announcements and information will be communicated via instructor email, My Classes course website, and SU's home page. Course-related information will be updated by the instructor on My Classes and course website and via university email.

Office of Student Disability Support Services (OSDSS)

The OSDSS provides guidance, access to resources, and accommodations for students with documented disabilities including medical, psychiatric, and/or learning disabilities, and/or mobility, visual, and/or hearing impairments. They can be reached at 410-677-6536.

Academic Integrity

The CMAT department expects you have read and understand the University's policy as described in the *Student Policy on Academic Integrity* in your *SU Student Handbook* (www.salisbury.edu/Students/handbook/welcome.html) and thereby agree to honor these standards. Academic dishonesty as a serious offense and ALL incidences are subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, separation from the university.

ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW

The readings provide a framework for thought while media such as documentaries, videos, and related media provided in the reading content area of the module provides an applied context to the issues. The assignments are designed to engage the student in critical thought, discussion, and presentation of ideas in a practical and interactive manner. The assignments are described in brief below. More detail as needed will be provided at appropriate points of the semester.

Blogs [45%]: Students will write a blog comprising a thought reflection of the module's readings as applied to a current and ongoing social justice and health equity issue they choose to examine through the semester. The blog will be on a platform of your choice (WordPress, Weebly, Wix, Google, etc.). Although the blog is written in a conversational style for web reading, it will be an informed explication of the social justice and health equity issue, complete with online research done independently. The blogs are assessed on the basis of their credibility, relevance, incisiveness, appealing writing quality, and solid research, presented well.

Discussion Posts [45%]: Based on the module's content, including videos, documentaries, podcasts, and associated media provided under the module, students will write a discussion post in response to a thought prompt given by the instructor. The discussion posts are assessed on the basis of the creativity and application of students' learning to a range of applied examples. Students will share their responses and engage with their classmates in a variety of formats. The engagement supports interactive building of ideas and is assessed on the basis of meaning exchange and quality of critical engagement.

Health & Social Justice Report and Reflections [10%]:

- **Health & Social Justice Report:** A summary final report presenting the state of health disparities, equity, and social justice concerns with a health issue (e.g., cardiovascular health or chronic disease) employing a social determinant of health (SDoH) framework (e.g., race, education). The report showcases the student's semester-long engagement.
- **Reflections:** Completed during finals week, Reflections is a journal style response to a prompt. More information will be provided at the appropriate point of the semester.

GRADES

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| 1. Blogs | 45% |
| 2. Discussion posts | 45% |
| 3. Health & Social Justice report & reflections | 10% |

Grade Breakdown

A= 90.0% and above; B= 80.0%-89.0%; C= 70.0%-79.0%; D= 60.0%-69.0%; F= 59.9% and below

I strive to enter course grades within 48 hours of their submission and major assignment grades within a week of their submission. You are responsible for monitoring your grade on My Classes. All grades are considered final 24 hours of being posted on My Classes. **You have up to 24 hours from the day grades are posted to bring any concern to my notice. Requests that bring up grade-related concerns more than 24 hours old will not be reviewed.** The review process assumes you accept the possibility the grades can be revised upward/ or downward upon review. I will not review class assignments more than 24 hours after grades are returned.

In general, grading is based on the following broad rule-of-thumb: “C” work meets the basic outlined criteria, “B” work does an excellent job of meeting the outlined criteria, and “A” work not only does an excellent job of meeting the outlined criteria, but also surpasses expectations to demonstrate innovative applications of the content that go beyond the outlined criteria. “D” work does not meet one of the basic criteria outlined for the assignment at an acceptable level, and “F” work is substandard and does not meet basic expectations on two or more of the outlined criteria.

[Important Semester Dates](#)