



**COMM 471 Media, Health, and Medicine**  
Spring 2020  
T 12:45-2:00 pm (BLTN 018)  
Th online

Instructor: Dr. Lu Tang  
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Office: BLTN 209D

Office hours: 10 am-noon Tuesday or by appointment. I will also hold online office hour on skype every Thursday between 11-noon. (my skype handle is: germanica\_tang). Alternatively, you can ask questions in our private Facebook group. (More details will be provided in class.)

**Course Description**

Analysis and evaluation of representations of health in media; examination of gender, class and race as they intersect with health issues.

This is a W-class. It is not possible to pass the course without passing the writing portions of the class.

This course is a hybrid class, which is a combination of face-to-face classes and online classes. Typically, we will meet face-to-face (FTF) every Tuesday in our assigned classroom and have online classes every Thursday. Typically, you will watch a recorded lecture on eCampus during online classes. During the FTF classes, we will further investigate these topics through class activities, case studies, group discussions, etc.

Prerequisite: Junior or senior classification.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Be familiar with a set of social science and critical theories about mass media
- Understand how mass media influence health on both individual and policy levels
- Be able to conduct scholarly analysis and critique of media representation of health and illness.
- Become expert of media representation of one specific topic about health and medicine.

**Textbook**

Walsh-Childers, Kim (2017). *Mass Media and Health: Examining Media Impact on Individuals and the Health Environment*, Routledge. (Recommended).

We will read 5 chapters from the above book. You could purchase the book from the university bookstore or through online bookstores such as Amazon if you want to. Alternatively, you could access chapters of this book online through TAMU library.

Additional readings about theories and research methods will be posted on eCampus. (If you need technical help with e-campus visit <http://ecampus.tamu.edu/Help/Student-Help>.) Please note you are required to read all assigned readings for a particular day.

### **Course Assignments**

	Assignments	Points
1	Exams	100 (50 each *2)
2	Online quizzes	5*12=60
3	Media portrayal of health Research Paper and presentation	120
4	Participation	20
	Total	300

#### 1. Exams. (50 points \*2=)

There are two exams, each worth 50 points. The format of these exams includes multiple choice questions, and short answer questions. The exams are not cumulative. I will provide you with a study guide for each exam.

#### 2. Online quizzes (5 points \*12)

We will have 14 online lectures this semester. On the days when you watch an online lecture, you will complete a short quiz after watching the lecture. The quiz needs to be completed by the end of Thursday day. There are a total of 12 quizzes. Each quiz is 5 points.

#### 3. Media portrayal of health Research Paper (100 points) and Presentation (20 points)

In this course, you are going to write a scholarly research paper on the media portrayal of one health-related topic. I will recommend good research papers to be presented at undergraduate research conferences.

Please choose one medium only (such as TV, or newspaper, movie, or Facebook, among others) and one health-related issue (such as HIV/AIDS, heart disease, skin cancer, depression, vaccination, among others). You are going to complete this assignment in the following steps:

- 1) **Part 1:** Choice of media and health topic. You are going to turn in a one page proposal that identifies what you will study. Which health topic will be studied? Which medium have you chosen? Why? (10 points. Due: Feb 18)
- 2) **Part 2:** Literature review and research plan. You are going to turn in a roughly 6-8 page paper. This paper will include the following component: (1) a literature view in which you will conduct a thorough literature search on published scholarly articles about the media coverage of your topic, (2) identify one theory that you will use to guide your own analysis of the media portrayal of the topic and propose a few RQs and/or hypotheses, and (3) design a content analysis study (qualitative or quantitative) to answer your RQs or test your hypotheses. (We will cover these topics in class before you have to write it. 30 points. Due: March 26.)  
*I will provide you with formative feedback so that you can fix any problems in this assignment.*
- 3) **Part 3:** Final paper. This paper should be around 12-15 page long and needs to include both Part 1 and Part 2. (Of course, revised and improved based on my comments), as well as the following new components: (1) results, in which you describe the findings of your content analysis study and (2) discussion, in which you discuss your findings in terms of what are the health implications of such media portrayal, limitations and directions of future research. (60 points. Due: April 28)
- 4) **Final presentation.** At the end of the semester, you will make a 4-5 minutes' presentation about your projects. (20 points)
4. Participation (20 points)  
Includes – but not limited to attendance, promptness, evidence of preparation, quality of contributions to class, in-class activities, etc. I am interested in having you as an active participant in our class discussions instead of just another warm body in the room.

### **Grading Policy (Total 300 points)**

270-300	A
240-269	B
210-239	C
180-209	D
179 or below	F

### **Attendance policy**

Class attendance is required. If you want to learn and do well in this course, there is no substitute for being in class. This course is structured so that those who attend and participate in class have a better chance of performing well. Assignments will be explained in class. Often I will cover materials in class that is not in your textbook ---

these materials are subject to testing. If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to get the notes and additional information presented on that day from a classmate. Full participation in this course includes: reading the text carefully; completing all assignments on time; participating in class discussions and activities; listening to others; sharing current events that relate to our course content.

**For each unexcused absence in our FTF classes, your final grade will be reduced by 5 points (out of the 300 total).**

### **Due dates**

All assignments are due at the beginning of the class on the due date. Late assignments are strongly discouraged. There is a 10% penalty for each day the assignment is late (including weekends and holidays).

### **Make-up Policy**

If an absence is excused, the instructor will either provide the student an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the final grade or provide a satisfactory alternative by a date agreed upon by the student and instructor. If the instructor has a regularly scheduled make up exam, students are expected to attend unless they have a university approved excuse. The make-up work must be completed in a timeframe not to exceed 30 calendar days from the last day of the initial absence.

The student is responsible for providing satisfactory evidence to the instructor to substantiate the reason for the absence. Among the reasons absences are considered excused by the university are the following (see Student Rule 7 for details <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07>). The fact that these are university-excused absences does not relieve the student of responsibility for prior notification and documentation. Failure to notify and/or document properly may result in an unexcused absence. Falsification of documentation is a violation of the Honor Code.

- 1) Participation in an activity that is required for a class and appears on the university authorized activity list at <https://stuactonline.tamu.edu/app/sponsauth/index>
- 2) Death or major illness in a student's immediate family.
- 3) Illness of a dependent family member.
- 4) Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student's presence.
- 5) Religious holy day. NOTE: Prior notification is NOT required.
- 6) Injury or illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class.
  - a) Injury or illness of three or more class days:  
Student will provide a medical confirmation note from his or her medical provider within one week of the last date of the absence (see Student Rules 7.1.6.1)
  - b) Injury or illness of less than three class days:  
Student will provide one or both of these (at instructor's discretion),

within one week of the last date of the absence: (i.) Texas A&M University Explanatory Statement for Absence from Class form available at <http://attendance.tamu.edu> (ii.) Confirmation of visit to a health care professional affirming date and time of visit.

c) An absence for a non-acute medical service does not constitute an excused absence.

- 7) Required participation in military duties.
- 8) Mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate school that cannot be rescheduled.
- 9) Mandatory participation as a student-athlete in NCAA-sanctioned competition.
- 10) In accordance with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Texas A&M University shall treat pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy and recovery therefrom) and related conditions as a justification for an excused absence for so long a period of time as is deemed medically necessary by the student's physician. Requests for excused absence related to pregnancy should be directed to the instructor.

In cases where prior notification is not feasible (e.g., accident or emergency) the student must provide notification by the end of the second working day after the absence, including an explanation of why notice could not be sent prior to the class. Accommodations sought for absences due to the observance of a religious holiday can be sought either prior or after the absence, but not later than two working days after the absence.

### **Grievance**

If you disagree with a grade, there is a 48-hour period in which you must write out and email to me all of your objections, including references to course materials to substantiate your complaint.

### **Disability**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, in White Creek Complex, or call 845-1637. For additional information visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>.

**Academic Integrity Statement and Policy.** "An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do." For additional information, please visit: <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu>. Students convicted of academic dishonesty in COMM 471 will receive an F on their transcript for this course.

### **Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality**

Texas A&M University and the College of Liberal Arts are committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws provide guidance for achieving such an environment. Although class materials are generally considered confidential pursuant to student record policies and laws, University employees — including instructors — cannot maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues that jeopardize the health and safety of our community. As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices if you share it with me, even if you do not want the disclosed information to be shared:

- Allegations of sexual assault, sexual discrimination, or sexual harassment when they involve TAMU students, faculty, or staff. These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In many cases, it will be your decision whether or not you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting, you are encouraged to make an appointment with the Student Counseling Service (<https://scs.tamu.edu/>). Students and faculty can report concerning, non-emergency behavior at <http://tellsomebody.tamu.edu>.

**Class Schedule (Subject to change)**

Date	Topic	Reading
1/14 (FTF)	Course Introduction	
1/16 (Online)	The media environment, US health, and the media-health effects matrix <b>Quiz 1</b>	Walsh-Childers (2017). Chapter 1
1/21(FTF)	Continued	
1/23 (Online)	Theory workshop: <u>Stigma Communication Theory</u> <b>Quiz 2</b>	Smith (2007)
1/28 (FTF)	<i>Research Paper: Overview of your research paper</i>	Tang & Park, (2017). Skin cancer on Pinterest.
1/30 (Online)	Mental illness <b>Quiz 3</b>	Sieff (2003)
2/4 (FTF)	Mental illness Continued	
2/6 (Online)	Theory workshop: <u>Health Belief Model</u> <b>Quiz 4</b>	Rosenstock, Strecher, & Becker (1994)
2/11 (FTF)	<i>Research paper: How to conduct academic research</i>	
2/13 (Online)	Tobacco <b>Quiz 5</b>	Walsh-Childers (2017). Chapter 3
2/18 (FTF)	Tobacco Continued <b>Research Paper Part 1 Due</b>	
2/20 (Online)	Theory workshop: <u>Social norms theory</u> <b>Quiz 6</b>	Berkowitz (2003)
2/25 (FTF)	Review Session for Exam 1	
2/27 (Online)	<i>Research paper: How to design a content analysis study</i> <b>Quiz 7</b>	Stroud & Joyce (2015)
3/3 (FTF)	<b>Exam 1</b>	
3/5 (Online)	Alcohol <b>Quiz 8</b>	Walsh-Childers (2017). Chapter 4
3/10	No Class. Spring Break.	
3/12	No Class. Spring Break.	
3/17 (FTF)	Alcohol Continued	
3/19 (Online)	Theory workshop: <u>Framing theory</u> <b>Quiz 9</b>	Kim & Willis (2007)
3/24 (FTF)	<i>Research paper: how to conduct content analysis</i>	
3/26 (Online)	Body Image <b>Quiz 10</b> <b>Research Paper Part 2 Due</b>	Walsh-Childers (2017). Chapter 8
3/31(FTF)	Body Image Continued	
04/2 (Online)	Theory workshop: <u>Ideology</u> <b>Quiz 11</b>	
04/7 (FTF)	<i>Research paper: how to conduct data analysis</i>	

4/9 (Online)	Sex <b>Quiz 12</b>	Walsh-Childers (2017). Chapter 9
4/14 (FTF)	Sex continued	
4/16 (Online)	Work on your final paper, individual meetings with instructor	
4/21 (FTF)	Presentation	
4/23 (Online)	Review Session for Exam 2	
4/28 (FTF) Last day of class	Presentation <b>Research Paper Part 3 Due</b>	
5/5 (FTF)	Exam 2 (8:00-10:00 am)	