Course Name: Strategic Health Care Communication

Course Term/ Number JMC:5267:0EXW Fall19

Instructor: Bruce Japsen
Phone: 773-497-6252
Email: brucejapsen@gmail.com or bruce-japsen@uiowa.edu
Additional contact information:
Program Director: Rachelle-Biderman@uiowa.edu
DEO Contact Information: David-Ryfe@uiowa.edu

Course Meeting time:
Wednesday 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Required Course Materials:
Required Course Materials:
Instructor will provide handouts, exercises and reading materials. There is no required textbook, but instructor will offer those who need to refresh newswriting skills some resources and books such as:

Health Care Terms, a book by Deborah and Virgil Slee (optional)
A Medical Dictionary (optional)

Course Description:
Medical care spending is more than $3 trillion a year in the U.S., accounting for one in every six dollars spent in the U.S. economy and growing even before the Affordable Care Act legislation was signed into law nine years ago by President Obama. Yet this large and important system is confusing,
complex, expensive and difficult to understand.

Because health care is not written and communicated so consumers can understand it, people suffer injuries and even death from medical errors, while doctors and insurance companies that cannot convey their messages in easy-to-understand ways result in a frustrated public at large. All of this costs money and endangers lives.

What is the difference between an ACO and a PPO and how do you write that in a way that people will know whether to buy that plan over an HMO? If a patient is “treatment-naïve” for the HIV virus, why don’t medical researchers simply write that the test results turned up “negative”? The difference between Medicare and Medicaid is that one plan provides medical benefits to elderly and the other to poor Americans, but most do not even know this because it has never been explained to them effectively.

While learning and being refreshed upon basic writing and information gathering through instructor handouts, videos, texts, lectures and guest speakers, students will also spend time doing research and interviews necessary to write stories, speeches or memos to help fellow health professionals, businesses and the public at large. Students will also practice and study how to write and edit across all platforms whether they be print, digital or broadcast outlets. They will learn to write about health care and medical issues in a more understandable, organized and convincing manner. Students will also study the writing of others.

Student goals will be accomplished through lectures, guest speakers, readings and writing assignments.

Learning Objectives:
The goal of this course will be to break down medicine, related science and health care for the average person, writing and communicating about it in an understandable way.

We will spend a good part of the semester studying and examining healthcare consumers, their costs and frustrations and the Affordable Care Act, which includes individual coverage also known as Obamacare. Medicare for All and the politics surrounding that will also be discussed when we examine health
insurance generally. You’ll find that just getting health insurance is a small part of the ACA and changing it, gutting it or getting rid of has only added to its complexities.

But we will also study, work and write about things in the news as the course happens. As one example, we will look at Amazon’s potential entrance into healthcare and the rapidly changing healthcare delivery system from Aetna’s sale to CVS to Walmart and Walgreens or what next year’s elections mean to healthcare or the ACA.

**Grading Criteria:**
Attendance/participation/discussion forums: 35%
In Class Exercises And Outside Class Quick Turnaround Writing Assignments: 40%
Final Exam: 25% (5% is development of idea/outline/memo)
*The Class Will Be Based on 1,000 points (ie: Attendance/Participation is 350)

**Assignment Descriptions:**

We will have three or four graded assignments plus in-class practice exercises that count toward your participation points. Assignments will not be long because the idea is to make healthcare simple and easy to understand. Brush up on your inverted pyramid. 500 to 750 words will be on the long side of what we write. 400 words or less will be the norm.

**Participation and attendance policy:**

Attending and participating during our Wednesday evening course time is critical given sessions are interactive. Speakers will be invited in from across the country. I will not record sessions as a general rule. Plan to attend class.

Past speakers have come from NPR, the NY Times, Walgreens, CVS Health, Aetna, Blue Cross insurers, the Obama and Trump administrations, the American Medical Association and various health policy organizations and lobbies. We also include projects students may be working on for their jobs if they are relevant to healthcare.

*Extenuating Circumstances Regarding Absences:*
An unavoidable circumstances is defined as an event beyond the student's control and often involve a serious and unexpected hospitalization, a family tragedy, or a related incident. Such circumstances do not include attendance at a wedding, a family vacation, obligations related to work, or other such matters.

Students should contact their instructors as soon as possible to notify them of the event.

If this is a serious emergency that will last longer than five days, the student or a family member also may contact the UI Service Center, 17 Calvin Hall, 319-384-4300, registrar@uiowa.edu. This office will notify the student’s instructors of the absence.

CLAS Academic Programs and Student Development, 120 Schaeffer Hall, 319-335-2633, also may be contacted to help facilitate the student’s needs and to discuss options.

Much more information here: https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-syllabus-insert

Assignment deadlines and late work policy:

Deadlines are critical in my class. Don’t miss them. For every day an assignment is late, it drops a FULL letter grade. And the grade continues to fall another letter for each and every 24-hour period. If an assignment is due at 5 pm on a Friday and comes it at 5:01, an A falls to a B and so forth.

Email Policy:
Is email the best way to reach me and I respond right away? YES. I always respond within the day and usually within the hour or two unless I am at event/traveling or don't have access to my phone.

Student Resources
IT Email: dce-techsupport@uiowa.edu

ICON Student Guide and Technical Resources

Student Zoom Accounts
University of Iowa Writing Center

Grading Scale:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>work /reading due prior to class</th>
<th>Class discussion Topic</th>
<th>Preparing for our next session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 (Aug. 28)</td>
<td>Introduction to course, review of the semester and possible guest speaker. Please sign in in the first night at 5:30 pm and be patient as there are often bugs with folks signing in. (my e-mails are <a href="mailto:bruce-japsen@uiowa.edu">bruce-japsen@uiowa.edu</a> which also goes to <a href="mailto:brucejapsen@gmail.com">brucejapsen@gmail.com</a>)</td>
<td>Getting ready for our next session</td>
<td>Read up on healthcare news, particularly the Presidential race and discussions of candidate health plans and responses to those plans.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2 (Sept 4)</td>
<td>Read National Public Radio’s (NPR) Shots column/blog and be familiar with NPR content online and radio if you listen locally.</td>
<td>Healthcare communication/news in the digital age. NPR healthcare editor to speak.</td>
<td>Instructor to advise from week to week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3 (Sept 11)</td>
<td>Check out Kaiser Health News, STAT News, Healthleaders, Modern Healthcare</td>
<td>NPR healthcare editor to speak. (this week if not Week 2</td>
<td>Instructor to advise from week to week</td>
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<td>Week 4 (Sept 18)</td>
<td>Review story from previous week. Your first graded story will have been due. (Instructor will provide subject and</td>
<td>Getting rid of jargon from healthcare will be our topic. We will invite a speaker from a startup medical</td>
<td>Instructor to advise from week to week</td>
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<td>Week 5  (Sept. 25)</td>
<td>Check out media and press section of <a href="http://www.cms.gov">www.cms.gov</a></td>
<td>Medicare and Medicaid. These vast government insurance programs will be explained.</td>
<td>Hoping for guest speaker from Politico Health Pulse web site</td>
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<td>Week 6  (Oct 2)</td>
<td>Come prepared with a verbal outline or memo to discuss assignments thus far</td>
<td>Individual conferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7  (Oct 9)</td>
<td>Come prepared with a verbal outline or memo to discuss assignments thus far</td>
<td>Individual conferences</td>
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<td>Week 8  (Oct. 16)</td>
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<td>Midterm (a second graded story) will be due.</td>
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<td>Week 9  (Oct. 23)</td>
<td>(Possible speaker from Health Grades, national company that provides quality info on doctors)</td>
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<td>Week 11 (Nov. 6)</td>
<td>Medical care providers and the changing landscape. How do we write about physician issues in a skeptical way. Also talk about growth of allied health professionals like Nurse Practitioners and</td>
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<td>Week 12 (Nov. 13)</td>
<td>Examples of promotion of medical journals like New England Journal of Medicine and JAMA (Journal of the American Medical</td>
<td>Medical journals, Healthcare professional journals to be discussed.</td>
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<td>Week 13 (Nov. 20)</td>
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<td>Individual conferences. Meetings</td>
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<td>Week 14</td>
<td>Thanksgiving week. You are on vacation.</td>
<td>I am available early in the week if you need to chat about final</td>
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<td>Week 15 (Dec. 4)</td>
<td>This deadline may be moved to later in the week or into finals week. (We will discuss before Thanksgiving)</td>
<td>Final story is due. Instructor available during class window</td>
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<td>Final Information</td>
<td>We have no final planned as of the beginning of the semester. Your final is a final story that will be due the last week of class. Professor will be available finals week for follow-up discussion and</td>
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University of Iowa Policy Statements

Administrative Home
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this course and governs its add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other policies. These policies vary by college (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook).

Absent Students
All students have the responsibility of attending class and of contributing to the learning of their peers through active participation. Students are also responsible for knowing the absence policy of their courses, which will vary by instructor. All syllabi must confirm to the UI policy related to student absences, including the Holy Day obligations policy.

Accommodations for Disabilities
UI is committed to an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (such as mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related condition) by registering with Student Disability Services (SDS). The student should then discuss accommodations with the course instructor (https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/).

Nondiscrimination in the Classroom
UI is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for all people irrespective of their gender, sexual, racial, religious or other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited to optionally share their preferred names and pronouns with their instructors and classmates. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University’s Human Rights policy. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (diversity.uiowa.edu).

Academic Integrity
All undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty. Misconduct is reported to the College, resulting in suspension or other sanctions, with sanctions communicated with the student through the UI email address (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code).
Electronic Communication
Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to their UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within UI (Operations Manual, III.15.2).

Making a Complaint
Students with a complaint should first visit with the instructor or course supervisor and then with the departmental executive officer (DEO), also known as the Chair. Students may then bring the concern to CLAS (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities).

Final Examination Policies
The final exam schedule for each semester is announced around the fifth week of classes; students are responsible for knowing the date, time, and place of a final exam. Students should not make travel plans until knowing this final exam information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals (https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-examination-policies).

Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community must uphold the UI mission and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported immediately. For assistance, definitions, and the full University policy, see https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/.