

Health Reporting and Communication
Course Outline – FIMS 9603

Winter, 2017

Tuesdays, 1:30-4:30

Rm 295 NCB

Instructor: Meredith Levine, NCB 219, x88010

mlevine7@uwo.ca

Office hours: Thursdays 12:00-1:00

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course combines graduate level research and journalism/communication practice. Students will be given an opportunity to gain knowledge in the following areas:

1. Issues in health reporting and communication;
2. How to critically assess scientific studies AND health and medical reporting on these stories.
3. The relationship between corporate interests, peer-reviewed scientific journals, PR and the media.
4. Students will further be required to conduct in depth research into an issue/topic of their choosing (but must be pre-approved by your instructor) and transform that research into a first-rate, engaging content.

NOTE: All ASSIGNED READINGS ARE POSTED ON COURSE WEBSITE (NING)

Jan 10

Course overview

Defining and contrasting health and medical journalism and communication.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS VISIT:

MONICA FLECK, COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR OF
[MCCORMICK CARE](#), DEMENTIA TREATMENT, DAY
PROGRAM AND RESEARCH.

Jan 17th

1. How to Understand Health and Medical Studies.
2. VISITOR: Dr. Naomi Martin, former South Asia Regional Marketing Manager for Pfizer. TOPIC: HIV treatment- a global perspective.
3. Pitch from potential partner: EUGENIA CANAS, CO-ORDINATOR CENTRE FOR RESEARCH ON HEALTH EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION OR [CRHESI](#)

Jan. 24

[Dr. Bobby Stojanoski](#), Western brain researcher will discuss his research AND you will turn it in to a **SAME DAY STORY**

Jan. 31th

Media and Indigenous Health, guest lecture and community partner visit. [Vanessa Ambtman Smith](#), Aboriginal Health Lead, South West Local Health Network. and Cassandra Harris, Communication Coordination, Southwest Aboriginal Health Access Network.

WORKSHOP: How to search the health and medical literature. **NOTE:** **room location change** Kellogg Computer Room at Alyn and Betty Taylor Library.

Health and Medical Research Librarian, **Kelly Hatch** will lead a demonstration on searching the health and medical literature. Please come with topics/issues/questions to search.

Feb.7.

Guest Speakers: [Carly Weeks](#), Health Reporter, the Globe and Mail
[Warren Weeks](#), Owner of Eleven PR.

Feb. 14

[Gillian Howard](#), Vice President Communication, University Health Network via Google Hangout.

Lecture: The Story of Vioxx

How medical knowledge is created and disseminated. The story of Vioxx, medical research, universities, Big Pharma and the media.

Feb. 21

No class reading week

Feb. 28

[Nicole Bell](#), Longtime PR for pharmaceutical companies in Europe and Canada and current PR for Google Canada.

March 7

NO CLASS MEETING WITH MEREDITH IN HER OFFICE.

March 14

Lecture: Public Figures and mental health from Barry Goldwater to Donald Trump. Brought to you by #Bell Let's Talk.

Visitor: [Amy Soares](#) (TBC), Science, Health and Tech content analyst, Diply.

March 21

Presentations Group 1

March 28

Presentations Group 2

April 4

No class: Meet in Meredith's office.

April 11

LAST CLASS.

EVALUATION:

- **Same Day Story for general audience. Due Thursday, Jan 24. 8:00 pm. (10% for MMJC students, 5% for non-MMJC students). 500-700 word article on Bobby Stojanoski and his work. Story should demonstrate additional research. Evaluated on accuracy, accessibility of language/ideas and ability to engage general audience.**
- **Final project Pitch. Due Monday, Feb. 7th, 12 pm 10%**
One or two paragraphs outlining the focus of your final project and why it is important
- **Annotated bibliography. Due Feb 14. 15%**
A bibliography of sources, including those from science and health academic literature, the media and experts you will be using in your feature article. A minimum of fifteen references. Ten of these sources must be annotated, that is, a brief (and I mean brief) paragraph outlining basic focus/argument of paper/interview and how this item contributes to your project. At least 5 of your references must come from scholarly literature. **All scholarly references must be annotated.**
- **Argument Outline. Feb. 28. 10%. One page that maps the structure and main points/arguments of your story(ies), project or essay.**

- **Presentation: March 21th and March 28. 20%. A 15 minute presentation to the class on your project followed by class discussion. The presentation aims to help you synthesize, target and engage a general audience with your content. Use the classroom and your colleagues as a focus group, brain trust and problem solving lab.**
- **Final Project- One 1,500wd story- Journalism. OR two connected 800 wd stories for Communication. PLUS communication plan.**
- **Academic option for non-MMJC students: 20 page essay +bibliography.**
Final project is worth 20% for MMJC students and 25% for non-MMJC students.

ROUGH DRAFT DUE: MARCH 28 or 31 (depending on which week you present)/ 12:00 PM
FINAL DRAFT DUE: APRIL 11, 1:30 PM.

- **Professionalism-15%**

Attendance is mandatory. So is arriving to class on time. All assignments must be handed in/posted on deadline. Any absences or missed deadlines may require a note from a healthcare professional. Participation in class and effort on assignments will be strongly reflected in your professionalism mark, this not only includes contributing to class discussion but also refraining from using electronic devices for anything other than note-taking. Effort counts. This includes evidence of having read the assigned material, contribution to class discussions, and a respectable level of research, elbow grease and craft demonstrable in your assignments.

SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES

Members of the University Community accept a commitment to maintain and uphold the purposes of the University and, in particular, its standards of scholarship. It follows, therefore, that acts of a nature that prejudice the academic standards of the University are offences subject to discipline. Any form of academic dishonesty that undermines the evaluation process, also

undermines the integrity of the University's degrees. The University will take all appropriate measures to promote academic integrity and deal appropriately with scholastic offences.

Plagiarism: Students must do their work, essays and assignments, in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

SUPPORT SERVICES

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwoom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.