

## Environment and Health in Society and the Mass Media

Spring 2015

11:374:225

**Meeting time:** Tuesdays 9:15-12:15

**Classroom:** Blake 131

**Instructor:** Mary L. Nucci, Ph.D.

**Office:** Cook Office Building, Room 227

**Office Hours:** By arrangement

**Email:** mnucci@rutgers.edu

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### Course description

This course will provide an introduction to media representations of environment and health. Students will explore how cultural factors influence public perceptions and opinions of the environment and health. We will consider how the depictions of environment and health affect the perceptions of those topics, the role of audience and source on communication, and the implications for those working to address environmental and health issues. Particular examples of social and media coverage will be used to provide an insight into the workings of the mass media and their effect on society, and demonstrate how the challenges of addressing environmental and health issues are based on much more than just disseminating science information.

### Course objectives

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify and discuss social components to environmental and health issues and barriers to creating social change.
- Identify and analyze how society, mass media and individuals frame environmental and health issues.
- Critically engage with mass media depictions of environmental and health issues.

### Required text

Reading materials will be made available on the Sakai course site. You will be required to use the *New York Times* for a semester-long project: paper copies can be found at Alexander Library (College Ave Campus) and Douglass Library. The paper is available free in the dorms on SEBS.

### Class protocol

Class begins promptly at 9:15 am. Please plan to be on time. If you are going to be late, please let me know by phoning, texting or sending an email. **Mobile phones may not be used in class.**

**Due dates are firm.** I will NOT accept late assignments unless you speak to me in person or by phone **BEFORE** the due date. NO email or text communications will be considered. I

am here to help you learn the material in the class, so if you need extra time for a legitimate reason I will work with you. However, repeated latenesses will not be allowed.

### **Academic Honor and Integrity**

Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. This includes the improper citation of materials from any source, including the Internet. If you have questions about citation issues, please bring them up with me. We will use American Psychological Association formatting (<http://libguides.rutgers.edu/writing>). Rutgers University Policy on Academic Integrity considers cheating, fabrication, facilitation of academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and the denial of access to others of materials or information as violations of academic integrity. All violations will be dealt with according to the rules laid out in the policy which can be found at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>, ranging from loss of class credit to expulsion depending on the level of the violation.

### **Attendance**

The University is committed to a culture of academic engagement between students and faculty. Part of this commitment involves taking responsibility for attending your classes, labs, and exams, and informing your instructors when you cannot attend. Rutgers students are expected to attend all scheduled course meetings. University policy excuses absences due to religious observance or participation in Rutgers-approved activities, and permits students to make up work missed for these circumstances. If you will be absent from a class, lab, or exam for any reason, you need to report your absence through the University Absence Reporting Website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>. The University recommends that you also contact me directly to let me know of your absence.

I will take attendance at every class—note that missing class will mean you will miss material that cannot be made up. **More than 2 unexcused absences other than per Rutgers guidelines (religious observance, participation in Rutgers-approved activities) may result in a letter grade drop in your final grade.**

### **Assignments and grading**

|                                   |                   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| In class participation/activities | 15 points         |
| Reading responses                 | 20 points         |
| Media log                         | 20 points         |
| Final presentation                | 15 points         |
| Final paper                       | 30 points         |
| <i>Total</i>                      | <i>100 points</i> |

A: 90-100 points; B: 80-89 points; C: 70-79 points; D: 60-69 points<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> If you are concerned about your grade standing, please do NOT leave it to the last weeks of class to speak with me. I can do very little at that point to help you improve your grade.

**Schedule (NOTE: Schedule subject to change at professor's discretion)**

Week 1

Introduction and review of course outline and objectives.

**Begin semester-long project.**

Week 2

Intro to mass communication and mass communication theories.

**Media log: Week 1.**

Week 3

History of environmental and health communication.

**Media log: Week 2.**

Week 4

Culture, environment and health.

**Media log: Week 3.**

Week 5

Communicating science and health: literacy, expertise, boundaries and access.

**Media log: Week 4.**

Week 6

Communicating science and health: politics, persuasion and risk.

**Media log: Week 5.**

Week 7

Analyzing communication: Case studies in environmental and health communications

**Media log: Week 6.**

**Media log due (Weeks 1-5).**

Week 8

Analyzing communication: Case studies in environmental and health communications II

Week 9

**SPRING BREAK**

Week 10

New media and social networks in communication.

**Media log: Week 7.**

Week 11

Advocacy and activism

**Media log: Week 8.**

Week 12

Visual communication and storytelling.

**Media log: Week 9.**

Week 13

Field research

**Media log: Week 10.**

Week 14

Movie [to be determined by class vote]

Week 15

**Final project presentations.**

**Complete media log due.**

**Final paper due.**