Graduate Seminar in Risk Communication
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The course will focus on the theory and practice of effective risk communication, using applied examples and cases related to food, health, technology, and the environment. It will be interdisciplinary in nature, drawing on perspectives from psychology, anthropology, sociology, political science, philosophy, and communications.

Course Learning Objectives

Goal 1: Become familiar with key theories and seminal books and papers in risk communication.

Objective 1.1: Analyze and assess the merits of various theoretical and practical approaches to risk communication rooted in different disciplinary perspectives.
Objective 1.2: Synthesize class materials and discussions and apply them to your own research and practice.

Goal 2: Acquire and practice basic skills necessary to communicate about risk issues.

Attendance
Class meets synchronously, Tuesdays from 3:55 to 6:55 via Zoom. Please login on time, silence your cell phones, and mute yourself when not speaking. Attendance and participation are mandatory. Missing more than one class for reasons other those permitted under Rutgers guidelines (serious illness, confidential, or sensitive personal reasons, religious observance, participation in Rutgers-approved activities) can result in a reduction in your final grade. Missing three classes will result in a failing grade. If you will be absent from a class for any reason, please report your absence through the University Absence Reporting Website https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra The University also recommends that you contact your professors directly to let them know of your absence.

Grading
Grading will be based on weekly class assignments (40%), participation (20%) a Final Project (40%).

Books/Readings
All readings are available through the Canvas site for the course. Because they build on each other, it will usually make sense to read them in the order they are listed.

Class Assignments
Because reading and thinking about the material before class is so important, I want to provide some incentive (beyond your own insatiable thirst for knowledge) to do both. As part of your overall grade, you will be required to submit a brief (1-2 pages maximum) reflection paper on the assigned readings to be discussed. Please submit reflection paper by 4:00 pm on Monday before class (i.e., 24 hrs. prior to our Zoom meetings), using the Canvas Submit Assignment function. These will be graded pass/fail.

Please note: These short reflection papers are intended to help you think about the material, not serve as a vehicle for you to simply repeat or summarize what you read. The idea is to stimulate careful, critical reading and formation of your own viewpoints that will be the basis of our discussions. The ideas presented in the readings are also designed to help you develop your final projects and your future research and practice.
Class Discussion
All members of the class are expected to contribute to our weekly seminar discussions based on the assigned readings. We will respect each other as colleagues in these discussions. You won’t be judged on how much you say, but on the quality/content of your contributions.

Final Papers and Projects
In addition to the chapters and articles assigned to the entire class, each seminar member will complete a final project. The assignment is to prepare a written summary of the main scientific, social, political, and communications issues related to a risk communication problem/issue of their choice. Based on the written summary, you will design risk communication materials to address the problem and present these to the class.

We will use American Psychological Association (APA) formatting for references in all written reports. For guidance in how to use APA formatting see: http://libguides.rutgers.edu/writing.

Grading: The following university scale will be used.
A  90-100
B+  88-89
B   80-87
C+  78-79
C   70-77
F   69 and under

Contact Information
Dr. Hallman’s virtual office hours are by appointment. Office phone number: 848-932-9227. Email: hallman@sebs.rutgers.edu

Academic Honor and Integrity
Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form. This includes the improper citation of materials from any source, including the Internet. If you have any questions about how to properly attribute information, words or ideas produced by others, please bring them up in class; chances are that others have the same questions.

The 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 procedures described in the policy found at http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/ The consequences of violations of academic integrity range from loss of class credit to expulsion from the University.

I invite you to join the Rutgers Science Communication Initiative
More information is available at https://scicomm.rutgers.edu/.

Academic Support Services
• Rutgers has a variety of resources for academic support. For more information, check the Academic Support website.
• Rutgers has Learning Centers on each campus where any student can obtain tutoring and other help. For information, check the Learning Center website.
• Rutgers also has a Writing Center where students can obtain help with writing skills and assignments. Learn more at the Writing Center website.
• Many library resources are available online. Assistance is available through phone, email, and chat. For information, check the Rutgers Libraries website.

**Rutgers Health Services**

• Rutgers Health Services is dedicated to wholistic health for the body, mind, and spirit. It accomplishes this through a staff of qualified clinicians and support staff and delivers services at several locations throughout the New Brunswick-Piscataway area. For more information, check the Rutgers Health Services website.

**Accommodations for Accessibility**

**Requesting accommodations**

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all the University's educational programs. To receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation. More information can be found in the Documentation Guidelines section of the Office for Disability Services website.

If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration Form on the Office for Disability Services website.

Go to the Student section of the Office of Disability Services website for more information.

**Basic Needs Resources**

If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food, or lack a safe and stable place to live, please contact the Rutgers Student Food Pantry and the Dean of Students (contacts below). If you are comfortable doing so, please notify me (or Dr. Robson), as we may be able to provide additional support.

**Rutgers Student Food Pantry**

[http://ruoffcampus.rutgers.edu/food/](http://ruoffcampus.rutgers.edu/food/)  848-932-5500
College Ave Student Center, Room 115 (126 College Ave). Check their website for hours and additional locations. The Rutgers Student Food Pantry is dedicated to helping all Rutgers students in need of food, no questions asked. Students are provided with groceries that typically last about one week.

**Dean of Students Office**

[http://deanofstudents.rutgers.edu/](http://deanofstudents.rutgers.edu/)  848-932-2300
88 College Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Mon-Fri, 8:30am-5:00pm
The Dean of Students Office at Rutgers University-New Brunswick provides solutions, services, and support to help students navigate Rutgers University. The Office serves as a student support network by providing advocacy, problem resolution, and critical incident intervention for those times when additional assistance is needed. Please call to schedule an appointment to meet with a representative from the Dean’s office.
**Note:** Assignments are DUE prior to the Date Listed.
Readings are Subject to Change

Sept. 6  **Introduction to Risk Issues** –
Introduce yourself.
   - Tell us one thing **you want us to know** about you.
   - Tell us one thing that **you think we want to know** about you.
   - Tell us one thing that **you think we would get wrong** about you.

And tell us about a risk topic about which you want to communicate.

Sept. 13  **Science Literacy, What People Think They Know, and the Problems with The Deficit Model:**
Setting your goals -

**Watch:** Defining and Achieving Science Communication Goals
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovI3LLXYAsQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovI3LLXYAsQ)

**Read:**


Sept. 20  **Advancing Effective Science Communication Research and Practice**
Read *Communicating Science Effectively*. [https://www.nap.edu/download/23674](https://www.nap.edu/download/23674) Preface, Summary, Chapter 1 (Pgs. 1-22) and Chapter 2 (Pgs. 23-34).

Students give short presentations on the science behind the risks they wish to communicate.

Sept. 27  **Approaches to Risk - Theory**
**Watch:** TBD

**Read:**


Oct. 4 Risk Perception –

Watch: Public Perceptions on the Acceptance of New Technologies Enabling Foods
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tcf99h3niS0


Oct. 11 Processing of Risk Information: Gist, Mental Models, Heuristics –

Watch: Valerie Reyna – Communicating the Gist: Misinformation, memory, and meaning https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6D-3UZMvHuU


Chapter 2 (pgs. 19-33) skim Chapter 7 (pgs. 125-159).

https://www.visualcapitalist.com/18-cognitive-bias-examples-mental-mistakes/


Oct. 18 **Principles, Constraints, and Ethics**
**Read:**

Oct. 25 **Affect and Risk / Communicating Science and Risk Through Storytelling**
**Watch:** *For fun* - Any good scary movie of your choice – Halloween is around the corner.

How to induce fear https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEJKhjFWUI
Why are things creepy? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEikGKDVsCc
What is the scariest thing? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Vmws8Eabo

**Read:**


*For fun* - The scariest urban legends by state - https://www.titlemax.com/discovery-center/lifestyle/scariest-urban-legends-by-state/

Nov. 1 **Probability, Uncertainty, and Innumeracy**
**Watch:** TBD

**Read:**


Nov. 8 **Analyzing Your Audience and Developing Your Message and Methods**
Watch: TBD
Please Vote!!!

Read:
- Chapter 8 – Analyze Your Audience (pgs. 117 – 133).
- Chapter 9 – Develop Your Message (pgs. 135-151).
- Chapter 10 – Determine the Appropriate Methods (pgs. 153- 166).
Compass Message Box Workbook and Compass Message Box

Nov. 15 **Science Communication: A Conversation about Knowledge and Competencies**
Read:
Vollebregt (2019). A Quick Guide to Asking Better Questions [https://medium.com/@marcvollebregt/a-quick-guide-to-asking-better-questions-6b0dd6a2501](https://medium.com/@marcvollebregt/a-quick-guide-to-asking-better-questions-6b0dd6a2501)

Nov. 22 **Thursday Classes**

Nov. 29 **Traditional Media and Social Media**
Watch: TBD

Read:
- Chapter 16 – News Media (pgs. 259 – 283).
- Chapter 19 – Social Media (347 – 369).


Visualizing the social media universe

**Dec. 6** Communicating about Risks Using Visual Presentations – Warning Signs, Infographics, Charts, Graphs, Maps, and Posters

Listen to: Gerald Wilde on his “Risk Homeostasis Theory” ~ 11 minutes of audio
https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2683559824

Read:


View:
https://www.visualcapitalist.com/america-land-use/

**Dec. 13** Final Presentations

Student Presentations
Submit Final Papers