CJT 731
Seminar in Interpersonal Communication: Interaction in Health Contexts

Professor: Allison Scott (allison.scott@uky.edu, 236 Grehan Building, Wednesday: 4:00-5:00p and by appointment)

Course Description: 223 Grehan Building, Wednesday: 6:00-8:30p
This course examines diverse theoretical and methodological approaches to understanding the role of communication in managing mental and physical health. We will focus on four general areas related to interaction in health contexts: (a) communicating identity in health and illness, (b) health and personal relationships, (c) health care provider/patient interaction, (d) and medical decision making.

Learning Outcomes: This course is designed to help you develop various scholarly abilities: to extract key findings from scholarly articles, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a study or theory, and design and execute a research project.

Readings: Course readings will be available online via Blackboard. The readings represent a mix of some classics, some new things, some studies selected for their innovation or excellence, and some studies selected for the way they illustrate an approach or problem. I expect that you will read all the readings assigned each week and that you will read at the level expected for a graduate student (i.e., carefully, critically, curiously). I hope you will come to class with questions about things that don’t make sense. I realize that students in the course will have varying levels of experience with various kinds of research methods that are used in the studies we will read – do the best you can with what you know and let me know how I can help to clarify or explain what you don’t understand.

Basis for grade: Your grade in the course will be based on your consistent engagement with readings and with the other members of the class (50%) and on a final project (50%). The engagement portion of your grade has two components. First, I look forward to your constructive participation in class sessions. I will usually have some brief opening and closing comments, and I will lecture occasionally, but I expect that most of our time will be spent in facilitated discussion of assigned readings and related issues. Second, before 10 of our 13 available class periods, I ask that you complete a brief reaction paper in response to the full set of readings assigned for that period. These should be no more than two pages of single spaced text (containing correct spelling and grammar), emailed as an attachment to me by 5:00p Tuesday evening. Reaction papers help you to crystallize your thoughts prior to sharing them in discussion; they also help me to gauge where our collective interests, questions, concerns, and insights may lie so that I can more effectively facilitate our time together. Outstanding reaction papers will summarize and synthesize, analyze and evaluate the readings, as well as raise questions for us to consider as a group. The final project can be any one of a variety of things, including a book review that you submit to a journal, a grant proposal, or a team research project in which you collect data. Once you choose (as a class) which option you would prefer to pursue, additional information will be forthcoming.
Schedule:

**August 24: Introduction** (no reaction)

**COMMUNICATION AND IDENTITY**

**August 31: The sick role and other theories of illness identity**

**September 7: Illness narratives and biography**

**September 14: Stigma and other identity threats**


**HEALTH AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

**September 21: Disclosing illness to others**

**September 28: Managing uncertainty in illness**
October 5: Social support and stress-buffering

October 12: Puzzles of enacted social support

HEALTH CARE PROVIDER/PATIENT INTERACTION

October 19: The impact of others on health care interactions


**October 26: Interpreter-mediated interactions**


**November 2: In-class midterm** (no reaction)

**November 9: Patient self-advocacy and treatment (non)adherence**


**MEDICAL DECISION MAKING**

**November 16: Models of decision making**


**November 30: Risk information and genetic testing**


**December 7: End-of-life decision making**


Scott, A. M. (November, 2011). *Enacted and perceived goal attention in family conversations about end-of-life decisions*. Paper to be presented at the annual convention of the National Communication Association, New Orleans, LA.
