



Graduate Course Syllabus

COM 577: Healthcare Ethics

Center: Online

Course Prerequisites

COM-500 or COM-510

Course Description

Certainly ethics is important in every branch of communication. But when conveying messages about subject matter as sensitive, high-stakes, and emotionally-charged as health care, ethics takes on a new level of significance. In this course, students will re-examine general principles of responsible communication in the new context of health communication. Through investigation of relevant case studies, students will logically extend and add definition to their existing moral frameworks. The course will emphasize the nuance and complexity of health-related ethical issues, including the impacts of technology on health privacy, stigma surrounding controversial health issues, illnesses, and treatment options, and one's moral responsibility to ensure accuracy in disseminating public health information.

Course Outcomes

- Incorporate the ethical principles essential for responsible health communication in a way that logically extends and adds definition to one's existing moral framework
- Propose solutions to relevant ethical dilemmas in health communication that appropriately balance moral considerations and strategic objectives
- Evaluate contemporary issues for their salient ethical components and resulting implications to responsible, effective health communication
- Collaborate with peers to devise strategies and craft messages that appropriately communicate the ethical brand of various health organizations
- Examine the nuance and complexity of ethical issues in healthcare by identifying their various moral dimensions and dissecting the interrelationships therein

Required Materials

Using your learning resources is critical to your success in this course. Please purchase directly through SNHU's online bookstore, [MBS Direct](#), rather than any other vendor. Purchasing directly from the bookstore ensures that you will obtain the correct materials and that the Help Desk, your advisor, and the instructor can provide you with support if you have problems.

Instructor Availability and Response Time

Your class interaction with the instructor and your classmates will take place on a regular, ongoing basis. Your instructor will be actively engaged within the course throughout the week. You will normally communicate with your instructor in the weekly discussions or the General Questions discussion topic so that your questions and the instructor's answers benefit the entire class. You should feel free, however, to communicate with your instructor via SNHU email at any time, particularly when you want to discuss something of a personal or sensitive nature. Your instructor will generally provide a response within 24 hours.

Grade Distribution

Assignment Category	Number of Graded Items	Point Value per Item	Total Points
Discussions	10	15	150
Journals	4	20	80
Short Papers	4	50	200
Case Studies	3	50	150
Milestone One	1	5	5
Milestone Two	1	20	20
Milestone Three	1	50	50
Milestone Four	1	50	50
Final Project Submission	1	260	260
		Total Course Points:	965

This course may also contain practice activities. The purpose of these non-graded activities is to assist you in mastering the learning outcomes in the graded activity items listed above.

University Grading System: Graduate

Total Points. 965				
Grade	Numerical Equivalent	Points	Points Equivalent	
			Lower	Upper
A	93-100	4.00	897	965
A-	90-92	3.67	869	896
B+	87-89	3.33	840	868
B	83-86	3.00	801	839
B-	80-82	2.67	772	800
C+	77-79	2.33	743	771
C	73-76	2.00	704	742
F	0-72	0.00	0	703
I	Incomplete			
IF	Incomplete/Failure*			
W	Withdrawn			

* Please refer to the [policy page](#) for information on the incomplete grade process.

Grading Guides

Specific activity directions, grading guides, posting requirements, and additional deadlines can be found in the Assignment Guidelines and Rubrics section of the course.

Weekly Assignment Schedule

All reading and assignment information can be found within each module of the course. Assignments and discussion posts during the first week of each term are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time. Assignments and discussion posts for the remainder of the term are due by 11:59 p.m. of the student's local time zone.

In addition to the textbook readings that are listed, there may be additional required resources within each module in Brightspace.

Module	Topics and Assignments
1	The Role of Ethics in Communication <i>Practicing Communication Ethics: Development, Discernment, and Decision-Making</i> , Chapters 1 and 2 1-1 Discussion: Current Ethical Issues 1-2 Final Project Milestone One: Getting Started 1-3 Journal: Ethics, Communication, and Standards
2	Ethical Orientations <i>Practicing Communication Ethics: Development, Discernment, and Decision-Making</i> , Chapters 6 and 7 2-1 Discussion: Healthcare Ethical Orientation 2-2 Learning Activity: Ethical Orientation Components 2-3 Short Paper: Comparing Ethical Orientations

3	<p>Making Ethical Decisions</p> <p><i>Practicing Communication Ethics: Development, Discernment, and Decision-Making</i>, Chapters 3, 4, and 5</p> <p>3-1 Discussion: Ethical Communication</p> <p>3-2 Case Study: Analyzing a Case Study</p> <p>3-3 Final Project Milestone Two: Case Study Selection</p>
4	<p>Health Organizations and Ethics</p> <p>4-1 Discussion: Ethical Oversight</p> <p>4-2 Journal: Professional Codes of Ethics</p> <p>4-3 Short Paper: Creating an Ethical Code</p>
5	<p>Ethics and Technology</p> <p><i>Practicing Communication Ethics: Development, Discernment, and Decision-Making</i>, Chapter 10</p> <p>5-1 Discussion: Health Information Websites</p> <p>5-2 Case Study: Ethical Decision</p> <p>5-3 Final Project Milestone Three: Annotated Bibliography</p>
6	<p>Medical Conditions and Stigma</p> <p>6-1 Discussion: Social Stigma</p> <p>6-2 Short Paper: Article Critique</p>
7	<p>Public Health Campaigns and Ethics</p> <p><i>Practicing Communication Ethics: Development, Discernment, and Decision-Making</i>, Chapter 8</p> <p>7-1 Discussion: Health Campaigns</p> <p>7-2 Case Study: Defending a Public Health Campaign</p>
8	<p>Public Health Research and Ethics</p> <p>8-1 Discussion: Ethical Research</p> <p>8-2 Journal: Ethical Evolution</p> <p>8-3 Final Project Milestone Four: Outline of Recommendations</p>
9	<p>Medical Marketing and Ethics</p> <p>9-1 Discussion: Ethical Concerns</p> <p>9-2 Journal: Ethical Responsibilities</p> <p>9-3 Final Project: Continue Work</p>
10	<p>Conflicting Ethical Orientations</p> <p>10-1 Discussion: Conflicting Personal Codes of Ethics</p> <p>10-2 Final Project Submission: Communication Plan</p> <p>10-3 Short Paper: Personal Ethical Reflection Paper</p>

Attendance Policy

Online students are required to submit a graded assignment/discussion during the first week of class. If a student does not submit a posting to the graded assignment/discussion during the first week of class, the student is automatically withdrawn from the course for non-participation. Review the [full attendance policy](#).

Late Assignments Policy

Meeting assigned due dates is critical for demonstrating progress and ensuring appropriate time for instructor feedback on assignments. Students are expected to submit their assignments on or before the due date. Review the [full late assignment policy](#).

SNHU College of Online and Continuing Education Student Handbook

Review the [student handbook](#).

ADA/504 Compliance Statement

Southern New Hampshire University is dedicated to providing equal access to individuals with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. The university prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of disability and takes action to prevent such discrimination by providing reasonable accommodations to eligible individuals with disabilities.

As soon as you become aware of a disability, we encourage you to contact the Online Accessibility Center (OAC) to discuss accommodations for which you may be qualified. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between the student and the OAC. Note that accommodations are not retroactive and that disability accommodations are not provided until an accommodation letter has been processed.

Contact Information:

Online Accessibility Center

Phone: 866-305-9430

Email: oad@snhu.edu

For questions concerning support services, documentation guidelines, or general disability issues, visit the [Online Accessibility Center](#) website.

If you feel you have been denied appropriate disability-related accommodations, including appropriate auxiliary aids and services, you may file a grievance as described in the ADA/504 Grievance Policy found on the [Disability Services](#) webpage.

Academic Honesty Policy

Southern New Hampshire University requires all students to adhere to high standards of integrity in their academic work. Activities such as plagiarism and cheating are not condoned by the university. Review the [full academic honesty policy](#).

Copyright Policy

Southern New Hampshire University abides by the provisions of United States Copyright Act (Title 17 of the United States Code). Any person who infringes the copyright law is liable. Review the [full copyright policy](#).

SNHU College of Online and Continuing Education Withdrawal Policy

Review the [full withdrawal policy](#).

Southern New Hampshire University Policies

More information about SNHU policies can be found on the [policy page](#).

Student Work Samples

For the purpose of continuous improvement of our educational training, Southern New Hampshire University's College of Online and Continuing Education may, on occasion, utilize anonymous student work samples for internal professional development and staff training. If you have any questions or concerns, contact your advisor. If you would like to withdraw permission for use of your work, please email assessmentcalibration@snhu.edu.