

**Proposal for a new
Interdisciplinary Health Communication Major
Presented by the Departments of
Communication Studies and Health Studies**

Health Communication Planning Committee

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Proposal Rationale

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 14 of the 20 fastest growing occupations are related to healthcare and health education. Health communication is fundamental to all health-related occupations, as recognized by the U.S.-based *Healthy People 2010* report, which allocated an entire chapter to the importance of health communication. The report, developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, sees health communication as relevant to every aspect of health and well-being. Combining knowledge of health behaviors with effective communication skills is paramount as the US population continues to age and diversify. We will continue to require more healthcare as a nation, and will need to prepare both practitioners and health advocacy professionals to effectively communicate about health maintenance, prevention, and well-being.

An undergraduate major in health communication will prepare students for a variety of careers in health-related fields, including medicine and nursing, health education, patient advocacy, social services, public affairs, healthcare public relations, pharmaceutical sales, public health, crisis management, human resources, and geriatric care. The major would draw students to the university as a signature program, offering a clear connection to careers in high-growth fields while also being a unique program.

According to the Illinois Board of Higher Education, no undergraduate programs in health communication exist in the state. The only health communication programs in Illinois are MA/MS degrees offered by the University of Illinois Urbana/Champaign and DePaul University. In fact, there are very few programs in health communication at the undergraduate level across the U.S. Most of the programs that do exist at the undergraduate level are 12- to 15-hour concentrations and certificate programs (i.e. University of South Florida, Missouri State, University of Kentucky, University of Utah, and UNC Charlotte). Three undergraduate majors in health communication (Ohio University, Grand Valley State University, and Ashland University) were created in response to emerging trends and calls by organizations, including the World Health Organization and The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to increase health communication skills and expertise among professionals. An interdisciplinary major in health communication at EIU would be a vanguard program, having no similar programs in the state and only three programs existing as regional/national competition.

The Health Studies and Communication Studies departments have taken up the call from the Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs and President Glassman to develop innovative programs by realigning existing coursework. Our proposal calls for the creation of an HCM prefix and the addition of two new courses, a rotating special topics course and an introductory course. As evidenced in our documents, this major will be transfer-student friendly and students will be able to complete some of their courses online. We propose the creation of an advisory board, led by a health communication coordinator, for the purposes of recruitment, retention, promotion, assessment, advising students, and curriculum development and oversight.

Mission Statement for the proposed Health Communication Major

The Health Communication program prepares students to communicate and promote positive health behaviors in professional health-care settings and in health advocacy. Our students learn to design, evaluate, and implement health communication programs in a variety of health-related settings. We take an interdisciplinary approach by emphasizing the intersection of strategic communication and health promotion as the foundation for educating individuals and creating healthier and more vibrant communities.

Proposed Requirements for Admission to the Health Communication Major

All students wishing to declare a major of Health Communication must request Admission to the Major. EIU's admission requirements will serve as requirements to become an HCM major.

After completing 15 cumulative semester hours, students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0. Students who fall below this requirement will be placed on probationary status for the next term in which they are actively enrolled at the university. If their cumulative remains below 2.0 at the close of the probationary term, they will be removed from the major. Students who have been removed from the major have the option of applying for admission to the major again in the future once they are able to meet all admission requirements.

Communication Studies /Health Studies: Health Communication Major (B.S.)

Total Semester Hours required for the Degree: 120 semester hours

Semester Hours required for the major: 59 semester hours (including an 8 s.h. internship)

All HST classes are approved for online delivery. Select CMN studies are approved for online delivery.

Required Courses:

- CMN 2020: Communication Research Methods. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
or (Online)

HST 2800: Health Education Research Methods I. Credits: 3(See Footnote *)
 - CMN 2040: Argumentation and Critical Thinking. (Online) Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
 - CMN 2630: Introduction to Interpersonal Communication. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
 - CMN 3100: Persuasion. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *) (Online)
 - CMN 3710: Intercultural Communication. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
 - CMN 42751: Internship I. Credits 1-12 (See Footnote **)
- OR
- HST 42751-42759: Internship. Credits: 1-9 (See Footnote **)
- HCM 2910: Consumer Health Communication. Credits: 3 (See Footnote*)
 - HCM 3910: Communication in Health Professions. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
 - HCM 4910: Applied Health Education. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
 - HCM 4950 [A, B, D]: Special Topics in Health Communication: 3 (See Footnote *)
 - HST 2270: Community Health. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
 - HST 2700: Marketing Concepts for Health Promotion Professionals. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
 - HST 3700: Community Health Behavior Methods. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
 - HST 3750: Health Care Delivery Systems. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)

Total 47 semester hours of core

Electives: Students will complete one of the following elective groups by selecting 12 s.h. of coursework from that elective group.

Professional Communication Grouping:

- CMN 2650: Introduction to Organizational Communication. (Online) Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- CMN 3650: Case Studies in Organizational Communication. (Online) Credits: 3 (See Footnote*)
- CMN 2990: Introduction to Rhetorical Studies. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- CMN 3660: Communication and Conflict Management. (Online) Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- CMN 3903: Communication of Gender and the Body. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- CMN 3640: Advanced IPC. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- CMN 4765: Communicating in Families. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- HST 2900: Human Diseases. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- HST 3500: Human Sexuality. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- HST 3560: Women's Health. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- HST 3765: Principles of Epidemiology. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- HST 4800: Drugs and Society. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)

- HST 4830: Perspectives on Health and Humor. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- HST 4890: Health and Aging. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)

Community Outreach Grouping:

- CMN 2650: Introduction to Organizational Communication. (Online) Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- CMN 2920: Introduction to Public Relations. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- CMN 2990: Introduction to Rhetorical Studies Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- CMN 3640: Advanced IPC. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- CMN 3660: Conflict Management. (Online) Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- CMN 3920: PR in Society. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- CMN 3950: Conference and Event Planning. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- CMN 3960: Advocacy and Message Design. (Online) Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- HST 2200G: Health Citizenship. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- HST 3100: Disasters and Public Health: Planning and Response. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- HST 3300: Mitigation of Unintentional Injuries. Credits: 2 (See Footnote *)
- HST 4770: Health Services Administration. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- HST 4800: Drugs and Society. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)
- HST 4890: Health and Aging. Credits: 3 (See Footnote *)

Footnotes:

*These courses must be completed with a grade of “C” or better.

**Students must enroll in a minimum total of 8 semester hours of internship

Major GPA based on all Communication Studies/Health Studies courses taken at EIU. The minimum major GPA required for graduation is 2.0

Approved by Dept. of Health Studies: 2/5/16

Approved by Dept. of Communication Studies: 3/14/16

Approved by CAHCC: 9/14/16

Health Communication Sample 4-Year Plan

Year 1

Fall		Spring	
ENG 1001G	3	ENG 1002G	3
HUM Gen Ed	3	HST 2270	3
SBS Gen Ed	3	CMN 1310G	3
Bio Science Gen Ed	3	MAT Gen Ed	3
FA Gen Ed	3	HUM/FA Gen Ed	3

Year 2

Fall		Spring	
HST 2800 OR CMN 2020	3	HCM 2910	3
CMN 2040G	3	HST 2700	3
Phys Science Gen Ed	3	CMN 2630	3
SBS Gen Ed	3	SBS Gen Ed	3
Foreign Lang or elective	4	Foreign Lang or elective	4

Year 3

Fall		Spring	
HCM 3910	3	HCM 4910	3
HST 3750	3	HST 3700	3
CMN 3100	3	CMN 3710	3
HCM Elective group	3	HCM Elective Group	3
HCM Elective group	3	elective	3

Year 4

Fall		Spring	
HCM 4950	3	CMN/HST 42751	8
HCM Elective group	3	Elective	4
Senior Seminar	3		
elective	3		
elective	3		
elective	1		

Health Communication Sample 2-Year Plan

Year 1

Fall		Spring	
HST 2270	3	HST 3700	3
HST 2800 OR CMN 2020	3	HCM 2910	3
HST 2700	3	HST 3750	3
CMN 2040G	3	CMN 3100	3
CMN 2630	3	CMN 3710	3

Year 2

Fall		Spring		Summer	
HCM 3910	3	HCM elective group	3	CMN/HST 42751	8
HCM 4950	3	Senior Seminar	3		
HCM elective group	3	HCM 4910	3		
HCM elective group	3	HCM elective group	3		
HCM elective group	3				