Instructor: David Ring, MD PhD  
Class: Every Monday (3-6PM) in (PAI 5.33)  
Office hours by appointment

TAs: Deepanjli Donthula  
Shashwat Tripathi

Course Description
Training for healthcare professionals has long emphasized technical knowledge and assumed that communicating expertise would come naturally. It is increasingly clear that nontechnical skills (e.g. effective communication strategies, emotional intelligence, cultural humility, etc.) are also important to help people get and stay healthy. In this seminar, students interested in health professions can begin to learn and practice helpful communication strategies. Guest speakers from various clinical and professional backgrounds will help introduce pre-health professionals to aspects of effective communication using group dialogues and practical exercises.

Grades
This is a three-credit, letter-graded course. Grades will be based on the cumulative number of points earned in class from the following elements:

- In-Class Participation: 20 points total
- Discussion Questions: 30 points total
- Research/Project Proposal: 50 points total
- Topic Idea: 10 points total
- Literature Review: 20 points total
- 1 pp/Proposal Final: 20 points total

TOTAL POINTS: 100 POINTS

The following scale will be used to determine final letter grades:
- 100 – 90 points = A
- 89 – 80 points = B
- 79 – 70 points = C
- 69 – 60 points = D
- 59 – 0 points = F

Attendance and Participation
Attendance and participation are mandatory. Make at least three meaningful comments/questions per class to be counted as present. We allow 2 excused absences. If you exceed this, you will automatically drop a letter grade with each additional absence over the limit. Also, please do not use laptops or cellphones during class, especially when we have a guest joining us.
**Discussion Board**
Each week, there will be a question/prompt posted under the ‘Discussion’ section on the class Canvas page. Respond to the post AND comment on another student’s response for cull credit. **Responses are mandatory and are due by 11:59pm, the Friday before class.** The question/prompt will pertain to that week’s assigned material(s)/reading(s), which can be found under the ‘Files’ section on the Canvas page. We will allow 2 late discussion board assignments with no penalty. If you exceed this you will automatically lose 5 points, with each additional late/missing assignment.

**Proposal**
Throughout the course, students will be exposed to communications in several areas in medicine. For the Proposal, students will have two options to choose from:

1) Option 1: Propose communications in healthcare or health related research project.
2) Option 2: Design an intervention or initiative that will have an impact on communications related to healthcare or health in general.

The proposal is split into 3 parts: Topic Idea, Literature Review, and a Final proposal (see grade breakdown above and due dates below). The Topic Idea requires a (half-page or less, double-spaced) description of the topic that you are interested in exploring and what you might propose. The Literature Review is a two-page, double-spaced, 12pt. font report and should include the following: the significance of the project, what is already known, and what are some unanswered questions. Please include a bibliography with at least 15 citations, (at-least 10 of which are scholarly publications). The Final Proposal explains various components of the proposed project or research protocol. If choosing Option 1 or Option 2, you will be asked to pull together components of a grant proposal or an IRB submission respectively. (Even if your proposed research idea does not involve human subjects IRB research, a similar format will be used). A clear outline/ rubric of what we are looking for will be provided during class. Students are free to conduct the research if they are interested, and we can help you if we have the resources or expertise for it.

The idea behind this proposal is that we want students to explore and maybe discover an idea or question that they are passionate about. This assignment is extremely exploratory in nature. Grading will not be overly strict, so feel free to think outside of the box and have fun with it.

**Policies**

**University Code of Conduct**
The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
<th>Pre-class Material</th>
<th>1st Half</th>
<th>2nd Half</th>
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<td>Large group mock patient-physician interaction</td>
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<td>(Physician/ Pre-Health Professional/ College Student Burnout)</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 23</td>
<td>Disagreement about Tests and Treatments</td>
<td>David Ring, M.D. Ph.D.</td>
<td>Value-based Healthcare: The Value of Considering Patient Preferences and Circumstances in Orthopaedic Surgery (Article)</td>
<td>1st Half: Discuss online board assignment responses; Discuss Research Proposals</td>
<td>2nd Half: Small group activity/ brainstorming - hypothetical intervention ethical dilemmas</td>
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<td>Topic Idea Due at Midnight</td>
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<td>September 30</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Carrie Barron, M.D.</td>
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<td>OCTOBER 7</td>
<td>Alleviation of Pain and Substance Misuse</td>
<td>Laura Brown, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Pre-class material: An epidemic of the use, misuse and overdose of opioids and deaths due to overdose, in the United States and Canada: is Europe next? (Article)</td>
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<td>1st Half: ‘Motivational Interviewing’ Technique Workshop with Laura Brown</td>
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<td>2nd Half: Discuss online board assignment responses</td>
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<td>OCTOBER 14</td>
<td>Talking About Cancer: A Social Worker’s Perspective</td>
<td>Barbara Jones, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Pre-class material: Talking with Someone Who has Cancer (Article) AND The LIVESTRONG Guidebook (video story and digital guidebook)</td>
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<td>1st Half: Workshop with Barbara Jones</td>
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<td>2nd Half: Discuss online board assignment responses</td>
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<td>OCTOBER 21</td>
<td>Communicating with Patients’ Loved Ones</td>
<td>Alexandra Wilson, M.D.</td>
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<td>Pre-class material: Thin-Slice Judgements in the Clinical Context (Article) AND Parents’ perspectives on physician-parent communication near the time of a child’s death in the pediatric intensive care unit (Article) AND The New Language of Medicine (Article)</td>
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<td>1st Half: Workshop with Alexandra Wilson and real parent of a prior pediatric ICU patient</td>
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<td>2nd Half: Discuss online board assignment responses</td>
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<td>Literature Review Due at Midnight</td>
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<td>OCTOBER 28</td>
<td>High Stakes/ Emergency Medicine/ Military Communications</td>
<td>Jayson D. Aydelotte, M.D.</td>
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### 1st Half: Listen and Learn: What is the most efficient way to communicate and treat in emergencies? *Story Time with Jason Aydelotte*

#### NOVEMBER 4

**Communicating Instructions for Medications**  
*Sharon K Rush, R.Ph.*

*Pre-class material: TBD*

**1st Half:** How do pharmacists communicate instructions? *Workshop with Sharon Rush.*

**2nd Half:** Discuss online board assignment responses

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### NOVEMBER 11

**Institutional Communications with the Masses**  
*Michael Mackert, P.h.D*

*Pre-class material: TBD*

**1st Half:** Designing Public Health Infographics Workshop

**2nd Half:** Discuss online board assignment responses

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### NOVEMBER 18

**Communications is Work!**  
*Erin Donovan, Ph.D.*

*Pre-class material: TBD*

**1st Half:** Managing Health and Illness; Burden and effortful work on behalf of the patient and their loved ones: *Workshop with Erin Donovan*

**2nd Half:** Discuss online board assignment responses

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### NOVEMBER 25

**Bearing Bad News**  
*TBD*

*Pre-class material: *Discussing Serious News: An Introduction (Document)* AND *Breaking Bad News - Dr. Robert Buckman (Podcast)*

**1st Half:** Mock patient-physician interaction pair activities workshop with *James Marroquin*

**2nd Half:** Discuss online board assignment responses

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**Final Proposal Due at Midnight**
| DECEMBER 2 | End of Life Conversations and Decision Making: Palliative Care  
| Tamara McGregor, M.D.  
| Pre-class material: The Nature of Suffering And the Goals of Medicine (Article) AND TED Talk – Raymond Barfield at TEDxFranklinStreet  
| 1st Half: Listen and Learn: How to handle talking about death and the unknown? Story Time with Tamara McGregor  
| 2nd Half: Discuss online board assignment responses  
| DECEMBER 9 | Course Evaluations  
| **Reflection Day:** Please bring discussion questions to class to reflect on topics covered in the course and tie any loose ends |