

GSOLE, Course 2, Module 1

Content:

1. Instructor-Facing Materials for Unit
2. Student-Facing Materials for Unit

Instructor-Facing Materials

Unit Overview: Public Advocacy Critique and Revision¹

Course Context:

This unit has been created for a junior-level Advanced Composition course. According to the university's catalog, students in this course "examine the rhetorical forms and approaches to the problems of composition." My current approach to this course is to offer students a semester-long examination of various public-facing dialogues about health, medicine, and disability. In this course, we examine the rhetorical choices embedded in two related public conversations: (1) how individuals communicate about their experiences with health, disability, and medicine by way of creative nonfiction such as memoirs, poems, essays, op-ed's, etc., and (2) how governmental and nonprofit organizations communicate with the public about public health issues. By studying these conversations, students gain an understanding of the rhetorics of health, disability, and medicine. In so doing, students are invited to apply this knowledge through multiple types of writing including analyses of cultural artifacts related to these conversations, as well as using digital composing practices to share their own health experiences.

Writing Unit Context:

This unit is the second of three major units for the course. In the first unit, students are introduced to the rhetorical studies more generally and disability rhetorical studies more generally. The first unit culminates with an analytical essay in which students choose a cultural artifact (such as movies, tv series, advertisements, etc.) and analyze the representations of disability embedded in these artifacts. In the second unit, students study health, disability, and medicine more broadly, and interrogate the rhetorical underpinnings of public health campaigns. Based on the students' analysis of the campaign, students create digital text that communicates the original campaign's message to a different audience than the original campaign. Students' choices of artifacts range significantly. Many students create an image-based text that could be included on the campaign's website, or create a small website designed to convey the message for the new audience. Other students create social media based content, such as a series of Instagram posts, Tik Tok videos, etc. The choice to develop a remix component of the course was developed to reinforce students' developing online

¹ The idea for this project came from Elisabeth Miller's courses at University of Nevada, Reno. I am indebted to her generosity in sharing assignment ideas.

literacy skills ([GSOLE OLI Principle 1](#), [CCCC Position Statement of Principles and Effective Practices for OWI, Principle 2](#) and [Effective Practice 2.3](#)).

Like unit one, students choose a digitally-based public health campaign, analyze the rhetorical techniques and critique the construction of health-related discourses based on course readings. In the final unit, students use what they've learned about representations of health, medicine, and disability and create their own creative, multimodal texts that tell their own stories.

Unit Breakdown:

In this unit, students engage in multiple writing exercises that culminate in a major project. Below is an overview of the five-week unit.

Week One:

This week, students are introduced to health as a rhetorical construction, as well as how advocates and scholars have critiqued the rhetorical constructions of health. Alongside these scholarly texts (introduction to [Against Health](#) and Richard Klein's chapter in the collection) students begin reading Roxane Gay's *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body*, which confronts students with a writer's experiences with racism, homophobia, sexual violence, and fatness. As part of students' ongoing inquiry into public health, obesity and fatness become an ongoing example that we return to as students work through the concepts. This week's writing is informal and centered around writing to learn: students reflect on their ideas about what 'health' and 'obesity' are and where their understanding of these concepts come from (see "Writing Prompts and Materials under the Student-Facing Materials).

Week Two:

Students continue to read Gay's memoir alongside introductory readings that frame 'public health' as a set of political, social, and material practices, (Bethany Thivierge's "Public Health," American Public Health Association's "[What is Public Health](#)," Eleanor Cummings's "[Stock Photos are Terrible...](#)" [UNC Writing Center's materials on Logical Fallacies](#)). Students will begin looking at sample public health campaigns (see Student-Facing Materials) and apply their understanding of rhetoric and the rhetorical situation to these campaigns to understand how governmental and/or nonprofit organizations attempt to create a health-based reality and persuade their audiences to alter their lives in some ways. Finally, students are (re)introduced to logical fallacies and learn about the biases that pervade stock images, including sexism, racism, ableism, ageism, and others. Students begin to connect these critiques of stock images (often

the center of online public health campaigns) to the health campaigns they are investigating. Students' writing this week continues to be informal and reflective, but shifts to practicing the rhetorical analyses that will be the foundation of the unit's project. Students are also doing research into public health campaigns that interest them (see Student-Facing Materials).

Week Three:

Students complete reading Gay's memoir and reflect on how Gay intervenes into conversations of obesity and fatness and how the practice of centering one person's experiences with fatness challenges broader conversations about obesity and health. Students continue their research into public health campaigns and select a campaign to investigate for the project. Student's writing this week includes writing a proposal for the project that asks students to outline their understanding of the rhetorical affordances and constraints of online health advocacy and asks them to begin thinking about the digital texts they will compose for the project (see Student Facing Materials).

Week Four:

Students' readings taper off this week as the focus shifts toward exploring the concepts from students' own understanding and perspectives rather than what others say about the topics. The final reading is a guide for media outlets from [Time to Change](#) on how to responsibly report on mental health and begin drafting their essays. (NOTE: Time to Change has closed its projects as of March 2021, so the resource is no longer available). Students develop drafts of their digital compositions and workshop them as peers.

Week Five:

Students revise their digital compositions and finish drafting their essays. These are submitted to the instructor for feedback. Students will revise their projects after receiving instructor feedback. When they submit their final projects, students write a metacognitive reflection letter, in which they discuss their digital composing process, the process of writing the essay, and how they have used rhetorical practices to refine these texts to meet their goals and their rhetorical situations.

Student-Facing Materials

Writing Prompts and Materials

Week One:

1. Week one journal writing (informal, individual writing visible only to the instructor. Journal writing is used as a writing-to-learn practice)

Based on your reading of this week's chapters, write a paragraph in which you define what 'health' is and why it's important. Next look back at the journal you wrote in week 1 in which you answered the same questions. In a second paragraph, discuss how your understanding of health is changing. Use examples of different health issues that might illustrate how your understanding is changing.

2. [Video Introduction](#) to Core Concepts in Unit & How it Relates to Composition Course

Week Two:

1. Sample Public Health Campaigns:
 - a. National Alliance on Mental Illness's [You Are Not Alone](#) campaign
 - b. NFL's [Play 60](#) campaign
 - c. First Lady Michelle Obama's [Let's Move](#) campaign
2. Journal assignment:

In this week's reading titled "Public Health" by Bethany Thivierge, seven major areas of specialization are explained. For this journal, we want to test our understanding of these areas of public health by applying them to a readily available public health issue: COVID-19. To complete this journal, try to identify **examples of public health work** that you have seen related to each area of specialization (except epidemiology; you have examples here). I have completed epidemiology with responses from students in the fall, in order to give you some ideas of how you might respond. You may be able to come up with examples for some of these specializations, but others may seem less applicable. Feel free to do some research (google) for areas that you aren't able to identify any examples. If, after your research, you still can't find anything, write some ideas of your own for ways in which those areas of specialization could potentially be applied to COVID-19. **NOTE:** we are obviously not public health experts or

students. Our goal with this exercise is to try to apply the ideas of public health to a tangible example.

You can list your ideas as follows:

- Epidemiology

- Scientists went to China to where Covid was first discovered and collected nose and throat samples for analysis and conducted surveys in the community. This helped them determine who was infected, when they got sick, and where they had been before they got sick. This led to a possible source of the virus.
- When COVID-19 began to hit, scientists noticed that many people began to develop specific symptoms like fever and pneumonia, and began to connect the symptoms that people were getting all together to a large increase of people beginning to have those and becoming bedridden to even the point of death. Scientists then began to track those numbers globally and tried to study and lessen its impact with the knowledge of their findings.
- Researchers have linked various pre-existing conditions to the fatality of COVID-19. For instance, people with conditions such as asthma, diabetes, respiratory conditions, and heart conditions are more likely to die from the virus. Researchers have also linked age to the virus; people who are older than 50 tend to have a harder time recovering from COVID-19.
- We have seen the use of epidemiology to identify both the cause of COVID-19 and the effects it has on the population. We began by identifying the risks involved with getting the virus, including not washing hands, being too close to people who are infected, and spreading it through breathing, as well as factors that increased the likelihood of severe negative effects, which include age and pre-existing conditions. We have followed these findings to determine what measures should be taken to reduce mortality, and have adopted some of the following procedures: wearing masks, social distancing, working from home, and reducing access to people who are more likely to be infected by limiting visits to hospitals and assisted living homes.
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- **Notice that these responses aren't perfect, don't use technical terminology, or cite sources. I'm looking to see if you can**

**make connections between what we are learning about COVID
with some of the terminology we are learning in class.**

- Maternal and Child Care
 - Environmental Health
 - Injury Prevention and Control
 - Substance Use, Abuse, and Dependency
 - Health Education and Promotion
 - Health Program Management and Administration
3. Complete [Flipgrid](#) (peer discussion). To access, use guest access and passcode: Health2021.

Week Three:

1. Project proposal: In a 250 word response, please answer the following questions:
 - a. 1. What public health campaign do you proposal to analyze for project #3?
 - b. Why are you choosing this campaign specifically?
 - c. What representations of health, bodies, and lives do you see in this artifact before you begin your full analysis?
 - d. Why is the representation of health in this campaign significant?

NOTE: These are graded & responded to at the very beginning of the week
2. Activity: Representation & Stock Images
 - a. After discussing the Cummin's readings, we will extend Cummin's argument about depictions of mental health by beginning with an individual reflection about how they have seen certain health topics depicted. What kinds of advertisements on TV, Instagram, or elsewhere do they see? What does it look like? Examples include: depictions of diabetics, vaping, Crohn's patients, etc. Students freewrite about how these bodies are depicted.
 - b. Then students do some hands on exploration. Using the Adobe Stock Photo suite, Google Images, or Creative Commons search, students type in the health issue they wrote about. Looking at stock photos, students are asked to create a profile of the kinds of bodies & peoples depicted and how they are depicted.
 - c. In Zoom we use the Share Screen function to take turns showing what we discovered. Instructor guides students to make connections among minoritized groups and dominant groups and their respective representation in the stock photos as well as the rhetoric that surrounds these health topics. For example, Crohn's patients are often depicted as isolated, as missing out on engaging with others. We connect these

observations to the readings in this unit & to readings from Unit #1 (esp. Jay Dolmage's "An Archive and an Anatomy")

Week Four

1. Students complete a [peer review](#) of a work-in-progress. They are not expected to have a completed draft.
2. Students also review sample projects (not shared because I do not have permission to share outside of class, per signed written student permissions). And engage in reflective writing about what's working in these papers and remixes and how they would encourage the student to continue revising, with an emphasis on conveying the writer's purpose and message.

Week Five

1. Final [projects](#) are submitted.