

Health Mythbusters: Quest 2 Syllabus

Primary General Education Designation: Social and Behavioral Sciences

I. Course Information

IDS2935

Class #20332; Section 2SE1

Spring 2024

Meeting Day/Time: Tuesdays 10:40 - 11:30 ([Little 121](#))
 Thursdays 10:40 - 12:35 ([Little 121](#))

<https://elearning.ufl.edu/>

General Education Designation: Social and Behavioral Sciences

* A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit *

Instructor:

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Course Description

Why do erroneous beliefs about health continue to persist even without any scientific support? In a world where so much information is at our fingertips, why are there persistent health myths? How can we help spread health information and squash misinformation? In this course, you will learn how to separate health fact from myth. Health myths persist for various reasons, such as a lack of understanding related to the scientific process, motivated and/or biased reasoning, or political, religious, and cultural influences. In this class, we will explore health myths related to exercise, food/nutrition, sexual health, mental well-being, alternative medicines, and the environment. For each myth, we will examine how this myth came about, the scientific evidence supporting or refuting the myth, and why this myth persists. We will also learn what we can do as mythbusters to help refute health myths through social and traditional media.

Inclusive Learning Statement

Your success in this class—and at UF and beyond—is important to me. I strive to provide an environment that is equitable and conducive to achievement and learning for all students. I ask that we all be respectful of diverse opinions and of all class members. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together to develop strategies to meet both your needs and the needs of the course.

Required & Recommended Course Materials

All of the media for the course, including videos, readings, and audio recordings, are available through our Canvas course (see www.elearning.ufl.edu), and some materials will also be available through the UF Libraries Course Reserves.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- **Identify, describe, and explain** the role psychological heuristics and biases related to decision-making have in perpetuating health myths and how the scientific process clarifies the refutation of certain health myths.
- **Identify and apply** the potential reasons (heuristic biases, motivated reasoning, unfamiliarity with scientific reasoning, cultural reasoning, etc.) why health myths persist.
- **Apply** the knowledge of sound scientific principles to critical consumerism of health information.
- **Analyze** the impact of believing health myths on the overall health of the society, and the role that informed consumers and scientists can play in disputing these myths
- **Bust** health myths, by understanding basic principles of science and experimentation, biases that may impact public's understanding.
- **Connect** class work to the current work scientists are doing in myth-busting.
- **Develop presentations** and health communication information that helps bust common health myths.

II. Coursework & Schedule

1. List of Graded Work

- A) **Quizzes (50 points)**- There will be 5 quizzes. Each quiz will be worth 10 points each. These quizzes will be on Canvas. These quizzes will allow you to demonstrate your learned knowledge and understanding of scientific principles and pseudoscience.
- B) **Weekly Assignments (10 points each)**
- **Each week there will be one of the following assignments**
 - i. **Reading/Annotating** – For these assignments, you will read the assigned articles and then participate in either online or in-class discussions about the reading.
 - ii. **Sleuthing**- For this assignment, you will share relevant health myths you have found on social media platforms with your peers. These assignments will help you see how information about health is conveyed through (social) media, from those who spread health myths to scientists and journalists trying to bust health myths.
 - iii. **Investigating**- In order to bust a myth, you need to investigate! These assignments will be given to help you better become better mythbusters: some of these activities will entail taking the steps to bust myths in real life/class, whereas others will help you break down the research related to busting myths.
- C) **Myth-busting (130 points)**- Time to put all your myth-busting skills into practice! In small groups or by yourself, you will bust a health myth. This assignment will culminate in a project, where you/your group will examine why the myth exists (and persists), the scientific evidence refuting the myth, and then present possible ways to help spread myth-busting information to the

general public. You/your group will determine this project format and could be a video, Spark page, podcast, etc. You also present your myth-busting project to the class in an “art gallery”/”poster presentation” format.

- This overall myth-busting assignment is comprised of the following smaller assignments:
 - i. *Health myth topic* (10 points)- You will submit a health myth topic. This myth cannot be one that we will discuss in class, and it needs to be a health myth that can be scientifically assessed. Topics need to be approved before moving forward with any other project steps.
 - ii. *Myth-busting project and presentation* (100 points) -You/your group will submit a project (format can be video, podcast, Adobe Spark, etc.) that explains the health myth: what the myth entails, why it exists and persists today, and the scientific evidence that helps refute the myth. You will also provide possible avenues of how myth-busting evidence could be presented to the general public in a way that would help bust this myth once and for all.
 - iii. *Reflection* (20 points)- You will submit a reflection that examines your personal and professional growth throughout the semester. In this reflection, will 1) describe the learning experience of this project, 2) examine your experiences with the project linked to the learning outcomes of the course/project, 3) articulate learning by expanding and deepening your learning of the experience of this project, including how your learning can improve your future actions. The specific reflection questions will be posted in this Canvas assignment to help guide you through the post-reflection process.

Point Breakdown

Work	Point Totals	Point Total
Quizzes	10 points (x 5)	50 points
Weekly Assignments	10 points (x 12)	120 points
Busting Project	130 points total	130 points
		300 points total

2. **For the Weekly Course Schedule, see Canvas.**
3. **Life Happens Pass.** Please see the Canvas page in the Introduction Module entitled “Life Happens Pass” for more details on the late/missing work policy.

Grading

1. Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A	94 – 100% of possible points		C	74 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%		C-	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%		D+	67 – 69%
B	84 – 86%		D	64 – 66%
B-	80 – 83%		D-	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%		F	<60

IV. Required Policies

1. Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/>) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

2. UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

3. University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

4. Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

5. The Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

7. Campus Resources (More/Updated Descriptions in Canvas)

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).

University Police Department: [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC
Week 1	Tues Jan 9	Introduction
	Thurs Jan 11	What is a Myth?
Week 2	Tues Jan 16	Basics of Scientific Information
	Thurs Jan 18	
Week 3	Tues Jan 23	Psychology of Misinformation
	Thurs Jan 25	
Week 4	Tues Jan 30	Use of Fallacies in Misinformation
	Tues Feb 1	
Week 5	Tues Feb 6	How Can we Bust Myths?
	Thurs Feb 8	
Week 6	Tues Feb 13	How Can we Bust myths?
	Thurs Feb 15	Complementary & Alternative Medicine Myths
Week 7	Tues Feb 20	Complementary & Alternative Medicine Myths
	Thurs Feb 22	
Week 8	Tues Feb 27	Sexual Health Myths
	Thurs Feb 29	
Week 9	Tues Mar 5	Catch-Up Week
	Thurs Mar 7	
	Tues Mar 12	SPRING BREAK
	Thurs Mar 14	
Week 11	Tues Mar 19	Exercise Myths
	Thurs Mar 21	
Week 12	Tues Mar 26	Eating/Food/Nutrition Myths
	Thurs Mar 27	
Week 13	Tues April 2	Eating/Food/Nutrition Myths
	Thurs April 4	
Week 14	Tues April 9	Mental Health Myths
	Thurs April 11	
Week 15	Tues April 16	Presentations
	Thurs April 18	Presentations
Week 16	Tues April 23	Presentations