

## CMNS 3500 - Language and Power: Clarity, Accessibility and Persuasion in Health Messaging

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# Where we're going today

01

Getting your  
attention in a  
crowded linguistic  
marketplace

02

Preparing for in-  
class task

03

Course Evaluation  
Project Work (as  
time permits)



<b>Nov 26</b>	<b>Social Media and the language of health: Clickbait, metaphor, sensationalism.</b>  <b>Submit Unessay today through Dec. 3 (30%)</b>
<b>Dec 3</b>	Final In-class task (15%): Designing ethical health communication: Navigating misinformation, accessibility, and trust

- How language choices shape health messaging on social media
  - Linguistic features of
    - clickbait
    - sensationalism
    - metaphors
- 

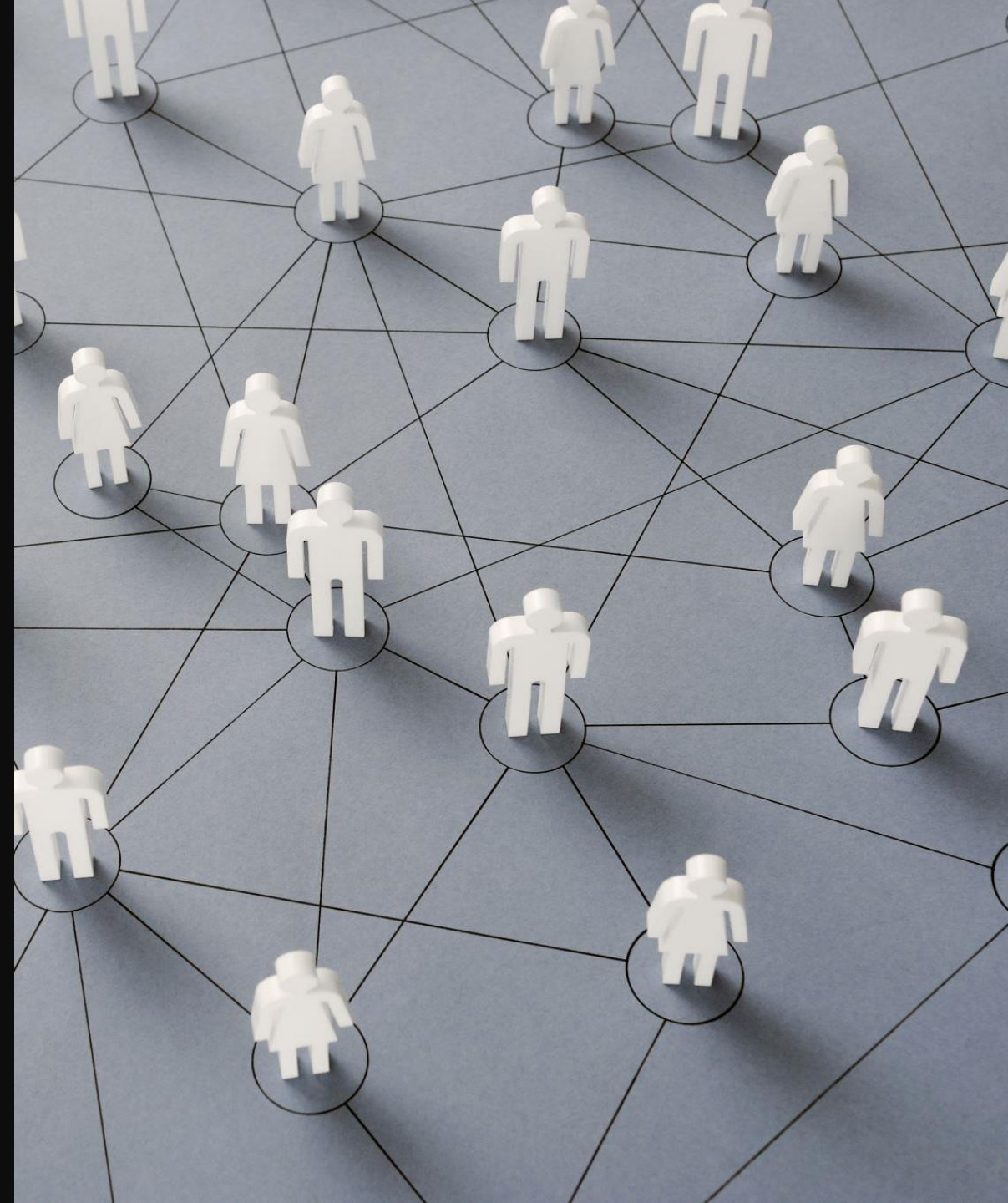


Social Media and the  
language of health

## Social media and health information

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- Increased access
  - Democractized information
  - Fragmented authority
  - Increased spread of information
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From	To
Medical authority	The “everyman” or “everywoman”
Monologue	Dialogue
Primarily text-based	Multi-modal
Lengthy explanations	Bite-sized content
Scientific/medical jargon	Conversational language
Institutional voice	Personal narrative



# The attention economy



Maël BALLAND on Unsplash

This Tim Hortons item has  
more sugar than 5 donuts -  
nutritionists are warning  
Canadians

Toronto doctor reveals the  
supplement Big Pharma  
doesn't want you to buy

If you're taking this  
medication, stop  
immediately and read this





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- Vague Deictic Pronouns
  - Superlative and Absolute Language
  - Imperative Commands
  - Curiosity Gap Construction
  - Conspiracy Framing Language
- 



# COVID-19 Metaphors

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- “navigating uncertainty”
  - “tsunami of cases”
  - "avalanche"
  - "we're not out of the woods yet"
  - "drowning healthcare system"
  - "flatten the curve"
  - "we're all in this together"
  - "fighting COVID"
  - "long road ahead"
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Categories

# Metaphors help us conceptualize abstract concepts

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- War
- Container
- Balance
- Journey
- Machine

"Opioid-related deaths in BC increased 5% year-over-year, reaching 1,827 deaths in 2023"

"BC's DEADLY opioid crisis EXPLODES as death toll SOARS to shocking new heights - five people dying EVERY DAY in devastating epidemic"



"Health Canada recalls Brand X chicken due to possible Listeria contamination"

"URGENT: This chicken product could be KILLING Canadian families - check your fridge NOW before it's too late!"

"Legal pot to trigger EXPLOSION of teen drug addiction, experts warn"

"Cannabis legalization will REVOLUTIONIZE Canadian healthcare and CURE the opioid crisis"

## Sensationalism – The Linguistic Megaphone

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- Time compression
  - Quantifiers
  - Catastrophizing
  - Loaded language
  - Intensifiers and amplifiers
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# Preparing for in-class assignment – December 3

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Once again, you can bring whatever written materials you'd like into the room – electronic devices under chair

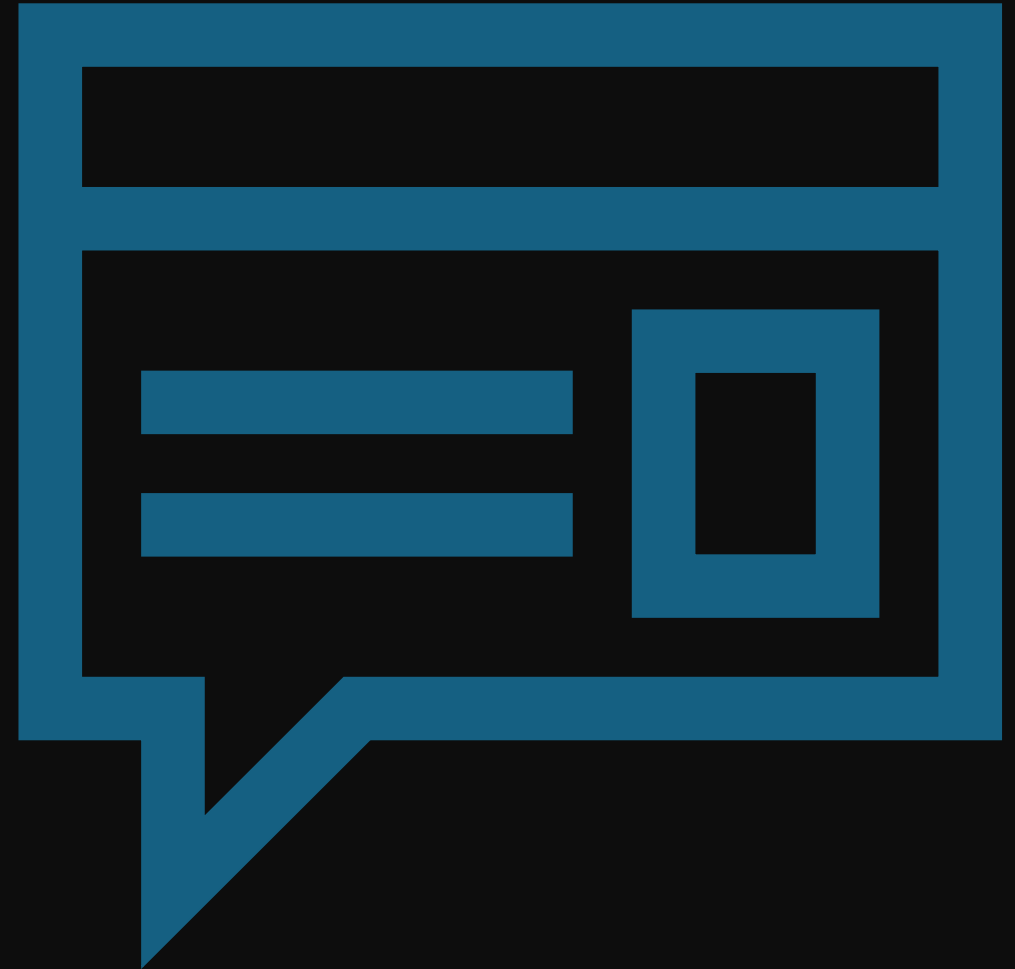
We will begin at 9:00 – you must be in the room by then. One hour exam

We will all reconvene in class at 10:30

To prepare, I suggest you reflect on the following question:

How Can We  
Communicate Health  
Effectively Without  
Manipulation?

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Password for course evaluation

xn46mj