

HEALTH AND RISK COMMUNICATION IN PANDEMICS AND BEYOND

STRATEGIES FOR A SYSTEM THINKING, COMMUNITY-CENTERED, AND
EQUITY-DRIVEN APPROACH

The American University of Rome
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Short Biographies

Faculty Lead and Course Director

RENATA SCHIAVO (PHD, MA, CCL)

Renata Schiavo is a global health practitioner and a public health/ sociomedical sciences academic with a deep commitment to public service, health equity, community engagement, and systems- driven solutions. She is a senior lecturer at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, Department of Sociomedical Sciences, a principal at Strategies for Equity and Communication Impact (SECI), a women-owned global consultancy, and the founder and board president of Health Equity Initiative, a nonprofit volunteer organization.



She is the Editor-in-Chief of the peer-reviewed Journal of Communication in Healthcare; Strategies, Media, and Engagement in Global Health, and serves as Senior Editor of the Journal of Health Equity, and on the editorial board of Health Equity.

Her work is at the interface of health and risk communication, health equity, global health, social and behavior change, health policy, multisectoral partnerships, and community and patient engagement. She has worked with leading organizations, including UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the World Bank, the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (FIOCRUZ-Brazil), the Office of Minority Health Resource Center, HHS Office of Minority Health, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Macy's, Safe States Alliance, Solving Kids' Cancer, focusing on research, interventions, and policies, and/or serving on advisory committees, to improve health outcomes among groups from underserved and marginalized settings. Renata's extensive experience spans 20+ health and human rights areas, including COVID-19, epidemics and emerging disease outbreaks, health equity, maternal and child health, immunization, and building trust in science. She has worked in the United States, Africa, Europe, Eastern Asia, and Latin America. Her capacity building and training experience includes 500+ organizations.

As an advocate, researcher, and practitioner, she is interested in community and system-driven solutions for health, equity, and communication issues. As a global health practitioner, she focuses primarily on capacity building and training, community-based participatory research (CBPR), community and patient engagement initiatives, communication strategy design, and program design and evaluation.

She is the author of *Health Communication: From Theory to Practice* (Jossey-Bass, an imprint of Wiley), and 195+ scientific presentations and 85+ publications. She is also the lead editor of a contributed volume on *Health Equity: Strategies for Action* (Wiley, 2026) and is leading *The Science of Trust Initiative* at the Journal of Communication in Healthcare. She is a well-recognized expert in health and risk communication, global health/public health, and health equity, and works, writes and speaks on these topics in a variety of settings.

For a full bio: <https://www.renataschiavo.com/about.html>

Site Visit Hosts and Guest Lecturers*

ARIANNA DE LEO (MA - UNICEF, ITALY)

Arianna De Leo serves as Philanthropy Manager at UNICEF HQ in Geneva, with a focus on accompanying and engaging philanthropic families and family business owners in making meaningful contributions to causes they care about while maximizing the impact of their investments for the advancement of children's rights. In her previous role at UNICEF Italy, she served as Head of Corporate Partnerships and Philanthropy, being in charge of corporate alliances and CSR, philanthropy partnerships, and the innovative finance programme.



Before joining UNICEF, she contributed to the set up and led the TIDE Foundation – Technology and Innovation for Developing Economies, a corporate foundation of the venture capital firm TLcom Capital LLP aimed at promoting the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Sub Saharan African countries. At TLcom Capital she also served as Director of Development Impact focusing on impact and ESG policies and metrics. Previously, Arianna De Leo worked for 15 years as Director of Programs of an international NGO in Sub Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia and Central America and as a free-lance development consultant for International Organizations and NGOs. Arianna De Leo studied business administration at LUISS University in Rome and has a master's in development economics and international Cooperation from Ferrara University.

ANTONIO MARCHESI (PHD – THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ROME)

Antonio Marchesi teaches international law at the Law Faculty of the University of Teramo and is Director of the Graduate Program in Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution at The American University of Rome, where he teaches international law of war and peace and international human rights. He was Chairman of Amnesty International Italy from 1990 to 1994 and from 2013 to 2019. He has been a consultant to the International Secretariat of Amnesty International, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, the European Parliament and the European Commission, several NGOs and the Italian National Guarantor for the Rights of Persons Deprived of Personal Liberty. He has written for daily newspapers and periodicals and has authored over fifty academic articles and several books. His interests include State responsibility, international human rights, international criminal justice and refugee law. He holds a PhD in Law from the European University Institute.



CHIARA MONTALDO (MD, MS – DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS, ITALY)

Chiara Montaldo, a medical doctor specialised in tropical medicine (University of Genoa) and with a master's degree in epidemiology (London School Hygiene and Tropical Medicine), has been working with Médecins Sans Frontières since 2005 as a doctor, project coordinator and medical coordinator in various fields and contexts, including

- HIV/AIDS and TB/MDR/XDR TB in China, India, Ukraine and Italy
- Chagas's disease in Latin American communities in Italy
- Health of migrants and refugees in Italy, Greece, Serbia, Lebanon, Tunisia
- Haemorrhagic fevers (Ebola and Lassa fever) in Guinea Conakry, Nigeria and Democratic Republic of Congo
- Cholera epidemic in Haiti



In addition to her work with MSF, she has worked as a clinician in infectious diseases wards in Genoa and Savona. From March 2019 to July 2022, she worked as a researcher on emerging infections and COVID-19 at the National Institute of Infectious Diseases, Lazzaro Spallanzani (Rome). She has been the head of the medical unit at MSF-Italy since August 2022.

MASSIMO PAPI (MD – PHYSICIAN CLUB ASSOCIATION OF ROME; AND DermArt)

As a graduate in Medicine and Surgery and specialist in Dermatology, Dr. Papi worked for over thirty years in a Roman dermatological hospital. Associate Editor of the International Journal of Lower Extremity Wounds (IJLEW, GB) and peer reviewer for various international specialized journals. Founding Member of the Italian Association for the Treatment of Skin Ulcers (AIUC). Creator and organizer since 2009 of the "transversal" project DERMART: Dermatology between science and art. Organizer of the educational meetings "Questioni di pelle" (Skin Issues) dedicated to the communication of skin health problems to the general public. Dr. Papi is also a member of the Associazione Club Medici (Physician Club Association) of Rome, and a member of the Scientific Committee of the Association's Cultura E' Salute (Culture is Health) professional network/initiative.



CRISTIANA SALVI (REGIONAL ADVISER, COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND PROTECTION, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE)

Cristiana leads the Community Resilience and Protection Unit in the Health Security Division at the WHO Regional Office for Europe. She supports countries in building whole-of-society approaches that partner with communities, ensuring health interventions are people-centered, co-created, and tailored to local risks, perceptions, and needs. With over two decades of field experience across Europe, Asia, and Africa, Cristiana has supported national responses in risk communication, community engagement, and infodemic management (RCCE-IM). She has led RCCE-IM operations during major emergencies, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.



Her operational experience has translated into establishing RCCE-IM as a technical area in the WHO European Region and strengthening national capacities through innovative platforms and tools. She also initiated civil society engagement and infodemic management in the Region and contributed to creating the first WHO Technical Advisory Group and WHO Collaborating Centre on RCCE-IM.

FRANCESCA SCORSINO (NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH, MIGRATION AND POVERTY (INMP), ROME)

Francesca Scorsino is an administrative expert in the Training, Education and Communication Unit of INMP. She has experience in public and intercultural communication and vocational training and specializes in social policy issues, particularly in the fields of health, migration, and poverty. During the last ten years, she has been particularly involved in identifying the core competencies of the training curriculum for cultural health mediators and developing training programs for health professionals. She has also contributed to the development of strategies and specific content for communication and awareness-raising campaigns on health, migration, and poverty with a culturally sensitive approach.



LEUCONOE GRAZIA SISTI (MD, PHD - NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH, MIGRATION AND POVERTY (INMP)/ WHO COLLABORATING CENTER ON HEALTH AND MIGRATION EVIDENCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING, ROME)

Leuconoe Grazia Sisti is a medical doctor and public health specialist in the International Relations, Regional Relations and Project Cycle Management Unit at INMP. She has experience in producing evidence on refugee and migrant health and in training students and health professionals on global health and health inequalities. She is also involved in researching and producing guidelines and operational procedures for building migrant- and vulnerable population- sensitive health services at national and international levels. Since 2023, she has also been co- leader of the WHO Collaborating Centre on Health and Migration Evidence and Capacity Building.



Additional guest speakers to be announced.

*In alphabetical order by last name