

My project focuses on how people's perceptions of the pandemic are mediated and informed by the media, providing a new lens for examining how people experience health and disease. I build on extant literature discussing how language shapes people's experiences and perceptions of the material world. For example, I find that military metaphors spur community action by tapping into a shared sense of national identity. Alternatively, a media framing that uses natural disaster metaphors invokes fear, creating panic in society. These framings change how people live their lives. By analyzing media coverage for socioeconomic outcomes, my work is more holistic and falls under the pillars of "social equity" and "human health."

My research falls in the field of Rhetoric of Health and Medicine (RHM). While rhetorical studies examines the role of vernacular structures in argumentation and communication in general, RHM focuses on the health and medical context. It places the subject within its broader context and looks at the intermixing of different loci of power, structure, and agency. This enables me to identify and analyze the relationship between health campaigns and messaging, subject matter experts, patients, and clinicians. In this way, my work examines how human health and people's experiences of health are shaped by discourse occurring at the population level. For example, I find that national identity can be combined with economic metaphors to create divisions along national (Scotland vs England) and international (U.K. vs China) levels, shaping how people view and create an "other" in society.