

INTRODUCTION TO INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION COURSE OUTLINE AND SYLLABUS

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COURSE TITLE: Introduction to Interpersonal Communication

COURSE HOURS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 32

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course focuses on the process of interpersonal communication as a dynamic and complex system of interactions. Interpersonal communication is viewed as an on-going process of social interaction in which people co-create meanings and relationships by using verbal and nonverbal messages.

The course is both theoretical and pragmatic. It will stress the importance of *understanding* and *applying* interpersonal communication theory in work, family, and social relationships. During the coursework, the students will be highly engaged in self-reflective activities, applying theory to analyze their everyday interactions. The course is also skill building: the students will be developing their basic interpersonal communication competences, including active listening, being other-oriented, understanding cultural diversity, etc.

The course will use a wide variety of video materials.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the students will be expected to:

- better understand the complex nature of interpersonal communication in its various dimensions, including their own practice
- understand principles and behaviors that contribute to effective interpersonal communication in various contexts (work, social relations, family, etc.)
- recognize basic interpersonal communication concepts and theories and apply them to real life situations
- increase awareness and understanding of culture's role in interpersonal communication

- increase the ability to give and receive effective feedback
- comprehend the complexities and subtleties of both verbal and nonverbal messages
- identify strengths and weaknesses as an interpersonal communicator
- identify causes of and strategies to manage interpersonal conflict
- improve listening skills
- demonstrate an awareness of empathic and ethical interpersonal communication
- achieve a better understanding of how the “Self” grows and develops in and through interpersonal communication
- increase understanding of how technology/media affects interpersonal communication
- further competencies in critical analytical thinking and writing.

TEXTS AND MATERIALS:

Floyd, K. *Interpersonal communication* (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill, 2013.

О. И. Матьяш, В. М. Погольша, Н.В. Казаринова, С.А. Биби, Ж. В. Зарицкая (2011). *Межличностная коммуникация: теория и жизнь*. Учебник для вузов. Под науч. ред. О.И. Матьяш. СПб.: Речь.

Baxter, L., and Braithwaite, D. (2008) (Ed.). *Engaging theories in interpersonal communication: Multiple perspectives*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stewart, J. (Ed.) (2011). *Bridges not walls: A book about interpersonal communication* (11th ed.). Boston: McGraw Hill.

COURSE POLICIES:

Your participation in class, including group discussions, exercises, sharing personal reflections and experiences, is essential both for your academic progress and for the entire group learning environment: the stronger the individual input, the more the entire group benefits. In contrast, a lack of participation can inhibit the progress of the entire group. It is also expected that while listening to and commenting upon each other’s ideas in our group discussions, we show patience, understanding, and courtesy. If you disagree, do so with respect for the ideas of all those participating.

Your class participation is 30% of your final grade and will be influential in determining your final grade.

ACADEMIC HONESTY STATEMENT:

The College is committed to academic integrity in all its practices. The faculty value intellectual integrity and high standards of academic conduct. Activities that violate academic integrity undermine the quality and diminish the value of educational achievement.

Cheating on papers, test or other academic works is a violation of College rules. No student shall engage in behavior that, in the judgment of the instructor of the class, may be construed as cheating. This may include, but is not limited to, plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty such as the acquisition without permission of tests or other academic materials and/or distribution of these materials and other academic work. This includes student who aid and abet as well as those who attempt such behavior.

Assignments and Grading:

1. Class Participation and In-class Assignments: I will expect you to come to class prepared and willing to interact. This does not mean that you have to make insightful comments all of the time (even though they will be appreciated), you can participate by simply asking questions. Each class will contain in-class activities and assignments. This work is worth 300 points total. Missed assignments cannot be made up.
2. Three (3) In-class Tests: 100 points each (300 points total)
3. Interpersonal / Intercultural Communication Experience. As the world becomes smaller and the workplace becomes more diverse, you will increasingly work, socialize, and live with people from other cultures. This assignment asks you to experience a culture, which is very different from your own, and then write a 750-1,000 word paper about what you learned. This assignment is worth 100 points.
4. Final Paper: 4-5 page (excluding title page and reference pages) paper that relates to interpersonal communication. The paper will be typed and double spaced using APA documentation. See details-guidelines below (150 points).
5. Group Project and Presentation: Learning to work with others is an essential skill in today's professional world. This assignment combines that skill with computer mediated communication to

create a simulation which should mirror the modern workplace. You will be assigned to a group with three or four other students to create a multimedia presentation about how the Digital Age affects, directly or indirectly, interpersonal communication (topics and more detailed description will be offered later in the course). At the end of the project, you will fill out an evaluation form on you and your group members' participation in the group project. This assignment is worth 150 points.

6. Missed Tests and Presentations: If you are absent when a test or presentation is given or due, you will receive a grade of zero for the test or presentation.
7. Late Papers: All papers are due during the class meeting on the date set by the instructor. Papers turned in after the class meeting are considered late. Ten (10) points will be deducted from the earned grade for each class period they are late. For example, a paper with an earned grade of 87 turned in one class period late will receive a 77 for the paper.

How is my grade calculated?

Your Grades in this course will be determined by the following criteria:

Project	Total (1,000 Points)	% Value
3 Tests (100 Points each)	300	30%
In-class participation and activities (based on 12 chapters, 25 Points each)	300	30%
Intercultural Experience Paper	100	10%
Group Project	150	15%
Final Paper: Communication Episode Analysis	150	15%

GRADING SCALE:

Students will earn their grade for this class based on the following point system:

Total Points	Grade
900 -1000	A
800 - 899	B
700 - 799	C
600 - 699	D
0 - 599	F

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

Note that there may be additional assignments later and scheduling changes regarding discussion topics.

All readings must be completed prior to class.

Week Chapter Readings, Topics and Discussions

1. **Introduction to course.**

About Communication. Why do we communicate? The nature of human communication. How do we communicate interpersonally? How does communication affect our relationships with others? What makes someone a competent interpersonal communicator? Building your communication competence.

2. **Interpersonal Communication and Cultural Diversity: Adapting to Others.** What is culture? Understanding how culture affects communication. Understanding gender and communication.

3. **Communication and the Self.** Understanding the Self: your self-concept. Valuing the Self: self-esteem. Constructing multiple identities in communication: how do we manage our identities in interpersonal communication? Presenting the Self: image management. Face work.

4. **Perception in Interpersonal Communication.** The process of perception. Fundamental forces in interpersonal perception: Why are we prone to perceptual errors? How we explain what we perceive. How can we improve our perceptual abilities?

5. Language and **Verbal Communication**. Language and Meaning. What are the characteristics of language, and how do they affect interpersonal communication? How we use and abuse language. Communication Climate. Confirmation and Disconfirmation. How can we become better verbal communicators?

Test 1

6. **Nonverbal Communication**. The nature of nonverbal communication. Why is nonverbal communication powerful? Functions and challenges of nonverbal communication. Improving your nonverbal communication skills.

Intercultural Experience Paper due.

7. **Listening and Responding Skills**. The nature of listening. Ways of listening. Why is effective listening so challenging? Becoming a better listener.

8. **Interpersonal Communication and Emotion**. How do emotions affect interpersonal communication? The nature of emotion. Influences on emotional experience and expression. Emotional communication skills: In what way can we manage emotions constructively?

9. **Interpersonal Communication in Social Relationships**. Understanding Interpersonal Relationships, why social relationships matter. How do we use interpersonal communication to form and maintain social relationships? Social relationships in the workplace. Characteristics of friendships.

Test 2

10. **Communicating in Intimate Relationships**. The nature of intimate relationships. Communicating in romantic relationships. Communicating in families: what communication issues do families commonly face? The dark sides of interpersonal relationships. Improving communication in intimate relationships.

11. **Interpersonal Conflict**. The nature of interpersonal conflict. Power and conflict. Managing interpersonal conflict. Providing and taking criticism.

12. **Deceptive Communication**. The nature of interpersonal deception: what is interpersonal deception, and is it ever justified? Deceptive acts are diverse. Communication behaviors and deception. How can we detect deception? Detecting lies in different contexts. Managing Relationship Challenges.

Presentations and Discussions of Interpersonal / Intercultural
Communication Experience

13. Test 3
Group Project Presentations.
14. Presentations

Final Paper Guidelines:

Communication Episode Analysis

(150 pts.)

1. Choose an interpersonal interaction episode with a talk similar to the ones we analyzed from a video tape in class. Give it a title. You can be one of the participants of this talk or just an observer.
2. Describe the participants, where their talk takes place, what is the major issue discussed in the talk, whether there is an agreement or disagreement on those issues.
3. Reproduce as close as possible to the original the sequence of individual statements (who said what).
4. Analyze the episode:
 - put it into a perspective of any of the themes that we discuss in this class, for example, other-oriented or egocentric communication, interpersonal perceptions, stereotyping, metacommunication, effective/ineffective listening, gender differences in communication, non-verbal dimensions in communication, communicating the Self, confirmation-disconfirmation, supportive or defensive communication climate, cultural/intercultural influences on communication, interpersonal conflict, interpersonal power, emotional communication, deceptive communication, etc.
 - what is going on in the episode? Do the participants manage to resolve their issues, do they achieve the desired results? Describe the interaction by using 4-5 concepts from your readings (for this purpose you might want to review a relevant chapter in your textbook and read additional articles on the topic)
 - analyze what parts of the episode were constructive and effective (in which the participants used constructive communication acts, affirming each other's perspectives and achieving desired results and satisfaction), and which parts of the talk were ineffective or destructive, and why. Recreate

the negative parts: suggest what each of the participants could have done or said to create a better mutual understanding and achieve the desired goals.

Basic criteria:

1. The paper should be about 4-5 pages in length.
2. Cite 2-3 sources **other** than the course readings.
3. Apply and demonstrate an understanding of at least 5 concepts from interpersonal communication theory on a chosen topic.
4. Be ready to speak on your topic in class.