

COMM 301 - MW
Interpersonal Communication Course Syllabus

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Course Introduction: This interpersonal communication course is designed with the goal of familiarizing you with the basic concepts of interpersonal communication and helping you become more sensitive to interpersonal communication situations. The focus is a relational one that explores how relationships are created, negotiated, maintained, and terminated.

Instructional Objectives: At the end of this quarter, you should be able to:

1. understand the basic concepts of interpersonal communication theory
2. understand the different cultural contexts of interpersonal communication
3. apply classroom knowledge to real-life situations
4. analyze your own interpersonal skills and identify ways to improve them
5. metacommunicate about the interpersonal communication process

Required Readings

Guerrero, L. K., Andersen, P. A., & Afifi, W. A. (2014). *Close Encounters: Communication in Relationships*, Fourth Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Attendance:

Following University policy, I expect you to be in class on time (defined as the time the class is scheduled to begin). Bring textbooks, course materials, and this syllabus to each class. I will note absences and tardiness. More than two unexcused absences will result in lower grades due to your inability to participate and cover classroom material. You are responsible for material covered in class whether or not you are present. I will not offer a re-cap of material. Exams cannot be made up except for University-approved absences. University policy requires documentation for absences to be excused. Please make arrangements with a classmate to get copies of notes and materials covered in class.

Written Assignments and Late Work Policy

1. All writing assignments completed outside of class must be typed, and (unless specified otherwise) posted on-line by class start time of due date. No e-mail attachments are accepted.
2. All written work submitted in this course must follow APA guidelines (APA Manual, 6th edition) see university libraries' "Reference and Research Help" section. For additional support, visit the university Writing Center.
3. Specifics: White paper, black type, double spaced; indented paragraph format (do not double space between paragraphs); Times New Roman font only; 12 point type size; 1-inch margins. Papers which do not meet these criteria will have points deducted. Please include

page numbers and a reference page for all written assignments. Staple all assignments. Do not use paper clips, folders, or plastic covers.

4. Points will be deducted for excessive typing errors and grammatical mistakes (excessive would be more than 8 total errors). Please follow page limits for all assignments. Papers that are more than one full page below or above the required number may be penalized.
5. Your work will be evaluated in terms of clarity, syntax, spelling, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, pronoun/antecedent agreement, etc. All papers are expected to have an introduction with a thesis statement, a body with main points, and a conclusion. Your main points should contain topic sentences and be connected with each other through transitions. Proofread your work; ask a friend to proofread your work, and visit the Writing Center for assistance.
6. All written assignments are **due on Blackboard at the beginning** of class. Students arriving more than 15 minutes late to class on a day that an assignment is due will be unable to turn in that assignment. If you know you will be absent on a day an assignment is due, please turn it in one class period early, with the exception of the abstracts: **abstracts will NOT be accepted for a day that you are absent**, as the purpose of the abstracts is to prepare you to participate actively in class discussions.

Oral Presentation Policies: Due to the nature of this course there are no scheduled make-up times for presentation of papers, group projects, in-class activities, and other assignments.

Laptop Use and Text Communications Students may **NOT** use laptops during class. There will be no text messaging during class time.

Respect and Privacy. All communication and discussion in this course, whether through technology or face to face, is meant for class-use only and should exhibit respect for other class participants and the instructor.

Speech Etiquette: If you must leave class for any reason, please be quiet and courteous to other students. DO NOT leave during a presentation for any reason other than physical injury or imminent illness. Also, do not enter the classroom while a student is giving a speech. Wait until the person has finished speaking to come in.

University Policies and Procedure

Official statement: *I take seriously the University Honor Code, and consider our class bound by its provisions. They cover; cheating and attempted cheating; plagiarism; lying; and stealing. You should be thoroughly familiar with the rules and guidelines that are listed in:*
<http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html>.

I do not tolerate cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and reusing old or "filed" papers. You must receive permission in advance of using/rewriting papers that you have already submitted for a grade in any other course. You are expected to watch all movies and

read all relevant materials for this course. If I determine that you have cheated, I will report it immediately to the proper university authorities. If you see or know of instances of academic dishonesty, you are also obligated to report it to the proper authorities as soon as possible. You are welcome to tell me about the situation and I will address it more formally.

Emergency Alerts: In the event of an emergency a telephone and exit strategy are located in this classroom. In addition, I am registered to receive University emergency alerts. I suggest that you do the same. To receive emergency alerts, register at: **alert.gmu.edu**

Other University Policies and Procedures:

1. This class adheres to all published university policies regarding sexual harassment and equal opportunity. The goal is to provide all of us with a safe, fair, and equitable learning and teaching environment.
2. All students enrolled in this course will be required to have access to, and utilize, a GMU email account. For assistance with setting up an account, please call computer support at (703) 998-8870, or go to Patriotweb.gmu.edu and click on “student” and follow the directions. You must have an account established no later than the third day of class. You are welcome to forward that account into another email account, but the GMU account must be active so you can receive mail there.
3. If you live with a disability, please visit the Office of Disability Services, or call (703) 993-2474. This office will notify me directly so that appropriate accommodation can be made.
4. Per University policy, cell phones should be set to silent mode and should not disrupt the learning environment in the classroom. Cell phones cannot be answered or used in the classroom except for emergency alerts. Students who fail to turn off such devices and disrupt the class will be asked to leave. See the undergraduate catalog for more information on classroom disruptions.

Grading Policy and Methods of Evaluation

1. Your total points will be added at the end of the semester to determine your final grade for the course. ***You should keep track of all grades to calculate class standing during the semester and at semester’s end.***
2. It is my policy not to discuss points on assignments or course performance before, during, or after class without a written statement from you. If you have any concerns about your performance on an individual assignment, please contact me via email within a week of receiving your evaluation. After I have had a chance to review your concern, we will set up a time to meet.

Grading Weights and Point Distribution

Theory Application Presentation (Group) 50 points	_____
Chapter Presentations (Group) 100 points	_____
Personal Reflection Essays: 50 points	_____
Exam 1: 100 points	_____
Exam 2: 100 points	_____
Class Participation: 100 total points*	_____

TOTAL 500 points

Point Distribution

A+ = 486 to 500	C+ = 385 to 399
A = 465 to 485	C = 350 to 384
A- = 450 to 464	C- = 339 to 349
B+ = 435 to 449	D = 300 to 338
B = 415 to 434	F = 299 or less
B- = 400 to 414	

NOTE: An A and A+ are both recorded as a 4.0; a C- is considered passable at GMU but carries a 1.67 GPA designation on the transcript and as such is not considered a passing grade at most institutions and would not be transferred.

*Active participation is needed in this class. To encourage informed discussions, weekly abstracts will be due of the chapter readings. As stated earlier in this syllabus, **2 or more unexcused absences will result in -10 participation points for each absence.**

Important: No abstracts will be accepted from students absent from class, as the purpose of abstracts is to prepare you for that day's class discussions. A total of 7 abstracts or more are required for full participation points; 5 points will be deleted for each abstract below the required 7.

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Assignments and Learning Activities

Group Presentations:

During the first week of class you will be assigned two days from which you may select a theory (for the first presentation) or chapter (for the second presentation) for a 25 - 30 minute group presentation: 20 minutes to present the information and 5 - 10 minutes to start a mini-discussion based on the questions. **Make sure that you include an evaluation at the end, telling us how you believe the article is useful for learning about intercultural communication.** This group presentation, and its questions (3 questions total) will form the

basis for our discussions each week, which will be extended by instructor-moderated discussions and debriefing.

How to do the group *summary* (to hand in to me on the day of your presentation):

Begin the written summary with the APA bibliographic reference (Purdue University's The Owl <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/> contains guidance and samples. Please follow this format). The rest of the group summary should be divided into three sections: ***summary, analysis, and evaluation***. Summaries will be graded on a) having a correct bibliographic entry on top; b) an accurate description and summary of the theory / chapter; c) an analysis that includes references to interpersonal terms, theory, and applications to real life (give examples!); and d) an evaluation that assesses the theory or chapter's validity and applicability, contribution to learning, and impact on your thinking about interpersonal communication. Again, conclude the summary with three related questions to be addressed in class. This is not a lecture but an opportunity to share your interpretation of the material.

Be prepared to present the summary to the class (see grading rubric on our Blackboard Discussion Board).

- Handouts, visual aids, and creative approaches (video/audio clips, current events, etc.) are welcomed
- You may use PowerPoint to add clarity and a professional aesthetic to your presentation.
- Rescheduling is not permitted, as it disrupts the class schedule.

1. Theory Application Group Presentation

Select one theory from our textbook in assigned readings up to the day of presentation, cite and define it, and apply it to your daily lives. This assignment is designed to encourage you to reflect on your personal experiences, and see it through the lens of interpersonal theory. Tell how this theory has made you think of the situation in a new light, and whether you see the theory as useful and realistic. Use the DIE (Describe, Interpret, Evaluate) to describe the theory, interpret how it applies to your life, and evaluate its usefulness / suggest an area or two where the theory falls short in real life. The TAP presentation should be 25 - 30 minutes long, and is graded on 1) clarity of understanding of the theory; 2) organization, clarity and articulation of how it applies to you or your experiences in real life; and 3) group summary of the theory and its value to your lives, and 4) APA references. See the presentation rubric on our Blackboard site for specifics. One group summary should be submitted prior to the presentation, with a group presentation sheet (one per group), and individual peer group evaluations that assess each of your peers' contributions to your group effort. All evaluation sheets should be downloaded from Blackboard.

2. Chapter Group Presentation

Select one chapter in your textbook to present as a group. You may bring in outside sources to tie in to the chapter's contents, but it is optional. Explain the contents of the chapter clearly, using

examples from real-life. Use the DIE (Describe, Interpret, Evaluate) to describe the chapter contents, interpret how it applies to your life, and evaluate its usefulness. The presentation should be 25 - 30 minutes long, and is graded on 1) clarity of understanding of the theory; 2) organization, clarity and articulation of how it applies to you or your experiences in real life; and 3) group summary of the chapter and its value to your lives, and 4) APA references. See the presentation rubric on our Blackboard site for specifics. One group summary should be submitted prior to the presentation, with a group presentation sheet (one per group), and individual peer group evaluations that assess each of your peers' contributions to your group effort. All evaluation sheets should be downloaded from Blackboard.

Personal Reflection Essay

At the end of the semester, reflect upon your learning of interpersonal communication, and write about your personal journey of improvement. What did you realize about yourself? What theory or theories helped you to make that realization? What can you do to further improve your interpersonal skills? 4-6 typed pages in length, including cover sheet and reference page. Essays are graded on 1) your ability to apply theories, ideas, and terms from class reading and discussion; 2) clarity and articulation of these ideas; and 3) APA and references. See Purdue the Owl for APA guidance <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>. The "All Papers Rubric" on our Discussion Board applies to this paper.

Weekly Abstracts as Part of Attendance Point

Individual abstracts: For each assigned chapter reading each student will create a very short abstract. An abstract briefly summarizes the important contents of the chapter. The abstract will be very short: no more than 100 words (a brief paragraph), or one thirds of a page total for each chapter that is assigned as reading. Abstracts are important as they help create a common knowledge base that allows everyone to participate actively in discussions. Abstracts should be submitted online each week ***BEFORE*** the first class meeting. **No abstracts will be accepted from students absent from class.**

Exams: Exam 1 (100 points) will cover chapters 1 – 5 and Exam 2 (100 points) will cover chapters 6 – 15. Come to class with questions to clarify concepts to ensure that you are well prepared for the exams.

COMM 301 Weekly Schedule *

The dynamic global leader understands the importance of global literacy.

—Rosen, 2000

NOTE: A 300-level class should require students to spend at least 3 hours a week reading/studying class material outside of class.

Week	Date	Chapter Topics, Activities	Readings	Assignment
1	Aug 29 Aug 31	Syllabus, course overview Why study Interpersonal? Identity Circles Activity Identity: What is the relationship between interpersonal communication and identity?	Syllabus -- Ch. 1 Ch. 2	Read and download syllabus / bring to class
2	(Sep 5 no class: Labor Day) Sep 7	-- Social Attraction: Initiating Relationships / Uncertainty and Expectancy Violations	-- Ch. 3 Ch. 4	-- Prepare for Theory Application Presentations
3	Sep 12 Sep 14	Relationship Changes & Developments Disclosure and Relationships Exam 1 review– come with questions	Ch. 4 Cont. -- Ch. 5 & 6	Prepare for Theory Application Presentations
4	Sep 19 Sep 21	Final Preparations for Theory Application Presentations – work in groups Exam 1	--	
5	Sep 26 Sep 28	Communicating Closeness Interpersonal Communication Theory / Group Presentations	Ch. 9 -- Cont.	Group 1 & 2
6	Oct 3 Oct 5	Interpersonal Communication Theory / Group Presentations	Cont.	Group 3 & 4 Group 5 & 6

7	Oct 10	Love and Attachment	Ch. 7	Group 1
	Columbus Day moved to Tues Oct 11 ; Oct 12	Intimate Communication	Ch.8	Group 2
8	Oct 17	Maintaining Relationships: Making Relationships Work	Ch. 10	Group 3
	Oct 19	Cont. / Interpersonal Survey Packets		
9	Oct 24	Conflict Management	Ch. 11	Group 4
	Oct 26	Cont.	--	
10	Oct 31	Power and Relationships: Interpersonal Influence	Ch. 12	Group 5
	Nov 2	Transgressions and emotion	Ch.13	Group 6
11	Nov 7	Relationship Repair and Reconciliation	Ch. 14	-- Bring hard copy of Personal Reflection Paper
	Nov 9	-- Personal Reflection Paper Draft Peer Reviews		
12	Nov 14	Relationship Disengagement and Termination	Ch. 15	Personal Reflection Papers Due --
	Nov 16	-- Cont.		
13	Nov 21	Exam 2		
	Nov 23	Thanksgiving		
14	Nov 28	Class Wrap-up: What have we learned about ourselves? About Interpersonal Communication?		Personal Reflection Paper Presentation
	Nov 30			
15	Dec 5	Class Wrap-up: What have we learned about ourselves? About Interpersonal Communication?		Personal Reflection Paper Presentation
	Dec 7			

**The instructor reserves the right to change this schedule as necessary.*

Finals Week

<http://registrar.gmu.edu/topics/final-exam-locator/>