

Utah State University
Department of Languages, Philosophy and Communication Studies
COMST 2110-002: Interpersonal Communication

Fall, 2015
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
10:30 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.
Location: Old Main 301

Instructor: Dr. Kristina M. Scharp

Office location: MAIN 069B
Office hours: Mondays and Fridays 11:30-1:00 and by appointment
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Course Description & Goals

This course is designed as an introductory course on face-to-face communication in our social and personal relationships—our acquaintanceships, friendships, romantic partnerships, and relations with other (dis)liked/(hated)loved ones. The basic premise of the course is that one is positioned to maximize communicative effectiveness in these relationships with **knowledge** about how communication functions combined with **application** of communication practices and experiences.

The majority of our meetings will emphasize the knowledge component, but each week we will also engage in discussions and assignments where you will be asked to apply what you've learned. The textbook is knowledge-centered and the team/class assignments will be application-centered. The exams will emphasize the knowledge component and the written/oral assignments will emphasize the application component.

Specific goals of the course include:

- Gaining factual knowledge (key terminology in interpersonal communication)
- Learning fundamental principles and interpersonal communication theories
- Learning to apply course materials to your everyday life
- Set the foundation for more advanced communication studies courses

Required Text

The following required text can be purchased in the University Bookstore:

Knapp, M. L., Vangelisti, A. L., & Caughlin, J. P (2014). *Interpersonal communication and human relationships*, 7th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson
(ISBN: 10:0-205-0060806)

The most important thing I can stress is that I am here to help you! I want you to succeed, be engaged with the course material, and look forward to coming to class. Please let me know how I can make this happen!

Course Evaluation

Typically, I do not change grades unless there is a mathematical error. If you have a concern, please be sure to contact me within seven days of receiving your grade but not sooner than 24 hours. My reasoning is that applying subjective standards after the fact invalidates the standards applied to the entire class and is unfair to every student.

Points will be distributed as follows:

- **Class Attendance/Participation: 80 points**
- **Essays: 120 points** (60 points each)
- **Exams: 100 points** (50 points each)
- **Journal Entries: 100 points** (10 points per entry)
- **Irreplaceable Presentation: 50 points**
- **Final Presentation: 50 points**
 - **Total: 500 points**

Grading Scale

A	93-100	B-	80-82	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	C+	77-79	D	63-66
B+	87-89	C	73-76	D-	62-60
B	83-86	C-	70-72	F	<60

Attendance/Participation: Come to class having completed assigned readings. I will take attendance at the beginning of every class period. Students will accumulate two points for every day they attend class and actively participate in class.

Students are allowed **three absences** (TOTAL) over the course of this semester. In other words, I do not make the distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences. Save these absences for situations when you NEED them. If you are absent, you obviously cannot participate and so you will not receive that day’s participation point. After you use up your free absences, I will deduct **ten points per absence** from your overall grade. Don’t take a few days off for no reason – you might find that you need them later for an illness or family emergency. **80 points possible** (Day One is Exempt)

Essays: The textbook discusses how relationships progressively become closer (i.e., Up the ladder) and progressively dissolve (Down the ladder). Each essay will consist of two components. For the first component, you will choose a popular song (or you can write one if you want) for each stage of relationship (de)escalation and discuss how the relationship stage is evident in the song lyrics. In other words, use the song lyrics to show me that you understand each of the different stages. The second component requires that you choose a particular relationship (friend, co-worker, roommate, teammate, romantic partner, etc.) and discuss whether the staircase model holds up. Is that how the relationship formed/dissolved? If not, is there another model that works better? How useful is the staircase model in your own life? These essays should be in APA format (see more details on Canvas.)

Exams: Exams will be based on the readings and class discussions (anything we discuss is fair game.) Questions will (typically) be multiple choice and the second exam is NOT cumulative.

Exams cannot be made up or taken early (unless the circumstance is dire).

Study Guides: Students study for exams in different ways – create a study guide that is going to best help you (and your teammate) prepare for the exam. I will not grade you for this assignment but students who prepare for the exams typically do better than those who do not.

Journal Entries: Every week I would like you write a journal entry about how the course concepts for that week (what we learned in class or through the team/class assignment) apply to your interpersonal relationships. Perhaps a course concept made you think of a song... a YouTube clip ... a TedTalk ... your spouse ... a magazine article ... your best friend? Whatever it is – I want to hear about it and your analysis of it. Tell me a story, share a memory, send me a link. Maybe you had a really meaningful conversation with your teammate – or maybe the assignment made you look at the world in a new way. Remember to connect a specific course concept to a specific artifact. Put differently, don't just say concept X made you think of X - tell me why and how! These are due every Monday EXCEPT the first week (8/31), Thanksgiving week (11-23), last week (12/07), and Exam weeks (10/19 and 11/30).

Irreplaceable Presentation: Students should bring in (picture/object/etc.) that is irreplaceable/invaluable to you. Tell the class a story about this object and discuss how it has shaped your identity and your relationships with others. (see more details on Canvas)

Final Presentation: Students should be prepared to give an oral presentation on ANY of the essay assignments or their journal experience. I want you to share how you personally connected the material to your interpersonal relationships. Thus, you might want to build your presentation around your music selections for up or down the staircase. You might want to talk about how you were able to apply the concepts we learned in class to your family, friend, or co-worker relationships. Perhaps you might even want to talk about your teammate (with permission) and the ways you two worked together to explore the concepts. You must include at **least three** of the course concepts but other than that, you are free to be creative! (see more details on Canvas)

***All assignments are due before class turned in through Canvas. Emailed or paper copies will not be accepted.**

Course Policies

- **Assignment Due Dates:** Late work will NOT be accepted. Any work that is not turned in on time will result in a zero for that assignment. In certain instances that are unavoidable, students may request an alternative due date. This must be negotiated BEFORE the assignment is due.
- **Grade Management:** I will provide grades as quickly as possible but it is your responsibility to keep track of your grades. No grades will be shared via e-mail.
- **Extra Credit:** It is possible (but not guaranteed) that an opportunity for extra credit might arise. This opportunity will be research-related. In the event you do not qualify for the study, another opportunity will be made available.
- **Academic Misconduct:** Plagiarism is not tolerated in any course. Students are required to complete their own work and give credit (both in writing and orally) to any source used in completing an assignment. All citations should be APA 6th edition style. Instances of academic misconduct will be reported to the University and I will determine appropriate sanctions.
- **Computer/Technology:** Technology can be a great asset to learning but research suggests that students who don't use laptops consistently outperform their peers. Thus, semester I am asking that you keep your laptops/iPads/other technology at home (or tucked away in your bags). Please take a minute to read this article for more explanation: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/12/30/this-year-im-resolving-to-ban-laptops-from-my-classroom/>
Or this one: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2014/09/25/why-a-leading-professor-of-new-media-just-banned-technology-use-in-class/>
*Special exceptions can be made (please contact me if you have a particular need to use a computer/certain technology)
- **Students with Disabilities:** Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him/her from fully demonstrating his/her abilities should personally contact me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as possible so that necessary accommodations can be made. Students are responsible for contacting Disability Resource Center and filing all necessary paperwork so that the disability can be properly documented.

Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change if the demands of the course require it. Readings will be discussed the day they are listed. All assignments are due at the beginning of class.

Week	Session	Discussion Topic	Reading	Due
1	M - 08-31	Intro: What's at Stake	Preface	
1	W - 09-02	Modes, Levels, Dimensions of IPC	Chapter 1	
1	F - 09-04	Location, Contract, and Goals (Team)		
2	M - 09-07	Labor Day Break		
2	W - 09-09	Stages of Relationship Change	pp. 30-51	Contract/Goals
2	F - 09-11	Intimacy Acceleration Project (Team)		
3	M - 09-14	Relational Dialectics Theory	pp. 52-54	
3	W - 09-16	Social Exchange Theory	pp. 54-61	
3	F - 09-18	FCT and Assessment (Team)		
4	M - 09-21	Interpersonal Needs	Chapter 3	
4	W - 09-23	Irreplaceable Assignment (Class)		Presentation
4	F - 09-25	Irreplaceable Assignment (Class)		Presentation
5	M - 09-28	Culture and Communication	Chapter 4	
5	W - 09-30	Perceiving Others	pp. 146-164	
5	F - 10-02	Irreplaceable Assignment (Class)		Presentation
6	M - 10-05	Impression Management	pp. 164-175	
6	W - 10-07	Managing Uncertainty	Chapter 6	
6	F - 10-09	Irreplaceable Assignment (Class)		Presentation
7	M - 10-12	Narrative Theories		
7	W - 10-14	Love: Those Three Little Words	Chapter 7	
7	F - 10-16	Fall Break		
8	M - 10-19	Exam Review (Team)		Exam Guide I
8	W - 10-21	Exam I		
8	F - 10-23	Commitment	pp. 301-311	
9	M - 10-26	Rituals of Meaning	pp. 311-318	Essay I
9	W - 10-28	Managing Openness	pp. 260-271	
9	F - 10-30	Rituals – Halloween Stories (Class)		
10	M - 11-02	Lying and Deception	pp. 271-277	
10	W - 11-04	Power Politics	318-322	
10	F - 11-06	Conflict Styles (Team)		
11	M - 11-09	Transgressions & Forgiveness	Chapter 11	
11	W - 11-11	Managing Conflict I	pp. 278-292	
11	F - 11-13	Process of Relationship Dissolution	pp. 342-348	
12	M - 11-16	Managing Conflict II		
12	W - 11-18	The After-Math of Dissolution	pp. 348-366	
12	F - 11-20	Independent Work Day:	Kristina at NCA	
13	M - 11-23	Loss: A Different Kind of Goodbye		
13	WF - 25-27	Thanksgiving Break		
14	M - 11-30	Effective IPC in Relationships	Chapter 12	
14	W - 12-02	Exam Review (Team)		Exam Guide II
14	F - 12-04	Exam II		
15	M-F- 07-11	Presentations		W: Essay II