

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

Fall 2016
Tuesday and Thursday
1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.
Location: Old Main 326

Instructor: Dr. Kristina M. Scharp

Office location: MAIN 069B
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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)

Sanders, M. (2012) *Becoming a learner: Realizing the opportunity of education*. Hyde Park, UT: Institute for Communication & Leadership. ISBN-13: 978-1-4675-3634-9

Course Evaluation

Typically, I do not change grades unless there is a *mathematical error*. 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:

- **Participation: 60 points**
- **Irreplaceable Presentation: 50 points**
- **Learner Essays: 60 points (20 points each)**
- **Exams: 120 points (40 points each)**
- **Interpersonal Development Project: 210 points**
 - **IDP Proposal: 10 points**
 - **IDP Annotated Bibliography: 100 points**
 - **IDP Interaction Analysis: 100 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	73-36	D-	62-60
B	83-86	C-	70-72	F	<60

Participation: Come to class having completed assigned readings. Students are expected to contribute to the classroom discussion by either (or both!) submitting a discussion question by Midnight before class and/or by contributing to the conversation in class.

Discussion questions and class discussion will be graded based on the content of the discussion. In other words, it not only matters THAT you contribute but it matters WHAT you contribute.

You can earn a possible 60 points over the course of the semester. I will give you an update on that grade during exam time for each exam. In other words, you can earn up to 20 points by each exam. If you are unhappy with your first grade, you have time to improve!

20 points: You never miss class and regularly contribute meaningfully to **both** discussion board and in-class conversations.

15 points: You hardly ever miss class and regularly contribute meaningfully to discussion board and/or in-class conversations

10 points: You hardly ever miss class and participate in online and in-class discussions **regularly**

5 points: You miss class from time to time and **sporadically** participate in online and in-class discussions

0 points: You miss a lot of class, **rarely** contribute to conversations, and/or rarely post to the discussion board.

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)

Learner Reflections: Part of this course is dedicated to the process of *becoming*; That is, I want to help you acquire new tools to become a better version of yourself in your education broadly. The learner essays are ways for you to set educational goals and chart your progress. You will be asked to make plans to achieve these goals, take actions, and reflect on the journey (see more details on Canvas)

Exams: Exams will be based on the readings and class discussions. Anything we discuss is fair game. Questions will be multiple choice and cannot be made up or taken early (unless the circumstance is dire).

Interpersonal Development Project:

The primary goal of CMST 2110 is to help you understand how to improve your relationships with others by understanding your own communication choices and how changing your communication choices can positively influence your relationships. Too often our natural inclination is to want or expect others to change. We usually do not think about how our own communication plays a significant role in our interpersonal conflicts.

The Interpersonal Development Project (IDP) is designed to help you create this self-awareness. The project is based on consulting models used in organizations to help executives improve their relationships with their co-workers and their own families. Corporate America spends billions of dollars each year to help very competent people learn how to communicate more effectively. I have seen these programs work on individual and group levels, and I am constantly amazed at how such competent and successful people lack a basic knowledge of interpersonal communication. These people have significant troubles at work and with their families. However, people can come out of these programs with improved relationships and increased work and family success if they take their learning seriously.

The goal of this project is to enable you to learn how to be successful in all your relationships. It is important that you develop this knowledge now because it will enable you to avoid costly mistakes in the future. So, I encourage you to take this project very seriously and work very hard. I am hopeful that the flexibility you have in how you approach this project will increase the meaningfulness and impact it will have in your life.

There are several steps to the IDP. Each one builds upon the next. This process allows you to get the maximum amount of feedback and help along the way. (see more details on Canvas)

***All assignments are due before class turned in on CANVAS. Emailed and hard 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. Please do not ask for exceptions.
- **Learning Environment:** The classroom should be an environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing their experiences. Thus, it is my expectation that students actively listen to their peers and respect their experiences. We learn about ourselves when we communicate with others responsibly and you can expect the same from me.
- **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, this 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	T - 08-30	Introduction to the Course	pages 8-13	
1	TH - 09-01	Becoming a Learner and Goals Setting	Book	
2	T - 09-06	Library Day		Learner Essay I
2	TH - 09-08	Coming Together	pages 30-52	
3	T - 09-13	Needs, Attraction, and Attachment	Chapter 5	IDP Proposal
3	TH - 09-15	Relational Turbulence Theory		
4	T - 09-20	Liking and Love	Chapter 7	
4	TH - 09-22	Symbolic Interactionism and Identity	Chapter 6	
5	T - 09-27	Intimacy Acceleration Project (Team)		
5	TH - 09-29	Irreplaceable (Class)		Presentation
6	T - 10-04	Exam I		
6	TH - 10-06	Communication Privacy Management	Chapter 8	
7	T - 10-11	Relational Maintenance	Chapter 9	Learner Essay II
7	TH - 10-13	Family Communication Patterns		
8	T - 10-18	FCP and Applying What We Know (Team)		IDP Annotated
8	TH - 10-20	Fall Break		
9	T - 10-25	Narrative Theories		
9	TH - 10-27	Providing Supportive Communication	Article 1	
10	T - 11-01	Irreplaceable (Class)		Presentation
10	TH - 11-03	Exam II		
11	T - 11-08	The Justification Trap	Chapter 11	
11	TH - 11-10	Conflict and Applying What We Know (Team)		
12	T - 11-15	Relationship Dissolution	Chapter 10	
12	TH - 11-17	Relational Dialectics Theory		
13	T - 11-22	Reflection with your IDP Person (Individual)		Learner Essay III
13	TH - 11-24	Thanksgiving		
14	T - 11-29	Estrangement Article	Article 2	
14	TH - 12-01	Loss and Effective Communication	Chapter 12	IDP Final Paper
15	T - 12-06	Irreplaceable (Class)		Presentation
15	TH - 12-08	Exam III		