

# **CMST 2110: Interpersonal Communication**

Utah State University

Fall, 2018

9:30-10:20, Monday, Wednesday, Friday

College of Agriculture Bldg., Room 141

Instructor: John Abbott, MS (Interpersonal Comm.)

Office: Old Main 202 Conference and/or Computer Room

Office Hour: Wed., 10:30-11:30 (Ag Bldg. Food Court)

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**Text: Looking Out, Looking In (15th Edition)**

**Adler and Proctor**

## **Course Description**

CMST 2110 offers three credits while we focus primarily on the relational dynamics surrounding the crucial area of interpersonal communication. Awareness of your interpersonal style and experimenting with different types and styles of responses should occur. Opportunities in discussion include: 1) the impact of perception in our interactions, 2) the impact of self-concept, personality, and temperament, 3) the various conflict styles and healthy conflict alternatives, 4) the influence of nonverbal messages in social contexts on relationship development, 5) the uses of social media and its impact on communication and relationships, and 6) the application of interpersonal communication principles to businesses and business-type situations.

## **Course Objectives**

The objectives of this course:

- 1) To enable you to critically examine interpersonal communication events, drawing on theories of communication and essential concepts in the literature.
- 2) To help you evaluate your own interpersonal communication skills and provide you with opportunities to develop and demonstrate competency in your interactions.
- 3) To allow you to experience and prepare for communication research and literature.
- 4) To apply course material to improve thinking, problem solving, and decision-making in an effort to maximize your satisfaction in interactions and relationships.

## **Course Rationale**

A study sponsored by the US Department of Labor identified oral communication/listening skills and interpersonal skills as two of the seven "basic workplace" skills. Surveys of employers published in Harvard Business Review, Nation's Business, and other publications consistently identify weak oral communication and human relations skills as major deficiencies of many college graduates. One study found that communication/human relations training is the third most frequently offered training program in American industry. Recent surveys of top level executives indicate that, while technical skills were most valuable upon entering a job, interpersonal skills are the most valuable in later careers.

If you are not comfortable with either my instructional philosophy or process-oriented approach to teaching, I encourage you to find another course that will better meet your needs.

## Major Projects and Assignments

1. You will write 6 - 12 "Journal" entries. Four of those will be generated by "In-class Exercises." The others will be spread between "My Interpersonal Experiments" and "My Interpersonal Communication Goal." The total number of entries will be determined by time constraints.
2. You will respond to a "Check Test" on each of twelve chapters.
3. You will successfully navigate three unit exams (objective and essay).
4. You will complete selected chapter exercises complementing major concepts of the text and respond in discussion and/or present a "Teach-Back" session often assigned to you and a group of peers during class that day that illustrates a particular concept through improvisation. Only your participation is scored here; not your creativity and improvisational prowess.
5. You, in groups of 5-7, will select one concept discussed in class and prepare a creative improvisational "talk-show" presentation (Dr. Phil, Oprah, Ellen, etc.) using a full class session. I evaluate the group and the group evaluates each member. This project tends to be more relaxed and a lot of fun but when time gets tight, it is usually the first project to be dropped.

## Assessment Plan

I don't wait until the end of the semester to apply assignment "weighting." You amass points on various assignments, exercises, and assessments and each of these receives a point-value (weighting) at the time of the assignment so you get a feel for the different impacts these are having throughout the semester. You will also have input in placing point-values to some assignments. Point totals are later converted to a percentage of total-points-possible and your final grade is reached.

## Exams

The exams are designed to assess your command of material covered in class discussions, exercises, and readings. They will consist of true/false, multiple guess (oops, choice), and essay questions. Test I covers chapters 1-5; Test II covers chapters 6-8; and Test III covers chapters 9-12. There is **no comprehensive exam.** :) Any questions generated by "Talk-show" presentations will appear in the last exam. **All** objective questions on the exams will be covered at some point in class discussions. **Come to class!** :) After all, this is an interpersonal communication class. You can't participate in interpersonal interaction and exercises **if you are not here.** :(

## Journal

Your "Journal" will be a little different than what you might expect when you normally hear the word. It will consist of three sections. The first section deals with observations and applications of "In-Class Exercises." The second section allows you a shot at trying your hand at a little contrived human behavioral research. Don't worry. It will be fun. Let's call this section "My Interpersonal Experimentation." The last section revolves around a personal goal that you declare by week 5. Your entry/entries will consist of observations and analysis as you attempt to achieve your goal. We'll call this section "My Interpersonal Goal." Each entry must be a one-page word-processed document. Sample entries will be handed out in class.