

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

Spring 2016
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
12:30 p.m. – 1:20 p.m.
Location: Ray B. West 114

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

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: 60 points**
- **Irreplaceable Presentation: 50 points**
- **Reflections: 60 points (20 points each)**
- **Exams: 100 points (50 points each)**
- **Interpersonal Development Project: 230 points**
 - **IDP Proposal: 30 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

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 **two 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 **five 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. **60 points possible** (Day One is Exempt)

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)

Reflections: Over the course of the semester you will be asked to write three 2-3 page reflections. The first will pertain to the book *Becoming a Learner*, the second will be about the

irreplaceable presentations, and the third will be about the team activities you will be engaging in with your partner. (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 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.

Interpersonal Development Project:

The purpose 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 in HARD COPY. Emailed 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.
- **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 other 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, 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 - 01-11	Introduction to the Course		
1	W - 01-13	Modes, Levels, Dimensions of IPC'	Chapter 1	
1	F - 01-15	Becoming a Learner		Reflection I
2	M - 01-18	Martin Luther King Day		
2	W - 01-20	Stages of Relationship Change	pp. 30-51	
2	F - 01-22	Library Day		Rm 122
3	M - 01-25	Relational Dialectics Theory	pp. 52-54	
3	W - 01-27	CPM and Social Exchange Theory	pp. 54-61	IDP Proposal
3	F - 01-29	Irreplaceable Assignment (Class)		Presentation
4	M - 02-01	FCP and Interpersonal Needs	Chapter 3	
4	W - 02-03	Culture & Communication in Relating	Chapter 4	
4	F - 02-05	Irreplaceable Assignment (Class)		Presentation
5	M - 02-08	Perceiving Others	pp. 146-164	
5	W - 02-10	Impression Management & Attraction	pp. 164-175	
5	F - 02-12	Irreplaceable Assignment (Class)		Presentation
6	M - 02-15	President's Day Break		
6	W - 02-17	Intimacy Acceleration Project (Team)		
6	F - 02-19	Intimacy Acceleration Project (Team)		
7	M - 02-22	Managing Uncertainty	Chapter 6	
7	W - 02-24	Narrative and IDP Discussion		
7	F - 02-26	Irreplaceable Assignment (Class)		Presentation
8	M - 02-29	Love: Those Three Little Words	Chapter 7	
8	W - 03-02	Study for Exam I (Team)		Reflection II
8	F - 03-04	Exam I		
9	MWF 7-11	Spring Break		
10	M - 03-14	Commitment	pp. 301-311	IDP Annotated
10	W - 03-16	Rituals of Meaning	pp. 311-318	
10	F - 03-18	Attachment & Symbolic Interactionism	Article I	
11	M - 03-21	Managing Openness	pp. 260-271	
11	W - 03-23	Lying and Deception	pp. 271-277	
11	F - 03-25	Working on Relationships (Team)		
12	M - 03-28	Power Politics	318-322	
12	W - 03-30	Transgressions & Forgiveness	Chapter 11	
12	F - 04-01	Conflict and the Drama Triangle		
13	M - 04-04	Managing Conflict I & II	pp. 278-292	
13	W - 04-06	The Process of Relationship Dissolution	pp. 342-348	
13	F - 04-08	Attributions & Conflict Styles (Team)		
14	M - 04-11	(The After-Math of) Dissolution	pp. 348-366	Reflection III
14	W - 04-13	Loss: A Different Kind of Goodbye		
14	F - 04-15	Effective IPC in Relationships	Chapter 12	IDP Final Paper
15	M - 04-18	Study for Exam II (Team)		
15	W - 04-20	Exam II		
15	F - 04-22	IDP Final Thoughts (Class)		