

Utah State University  
Department of Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies  
**CMST 2110-004: Interpersonal Communication**  
Spring 2019, MWF  
10:30-11:20, Huntsman Hall 122

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Office: Lundberg Hall 203  
Office Hours: Mondays 12:30-1:30 or by appointment

**Course Description**

This course will cover theories and practices of communication as it occurs in two-person and small group settings. Primary concern will be given to understanding how an individual can use verbal and nonverbal communication to improve relationships and derive maximum social rewards. Topics covered will include (but are not limited to),

- The fundamental elements of the communication process.
- The role of culture in communication.
- The dimensions of verbal and nonverbal communication.
- The role of perception and emotion in the communication process.
- The dimensions of close relationships; how communication is defined in close relationships; and how communicators develop, maintain, and terminate close relationships.
- The moral and ethical implications of a variety of communication situations.

Students will apply core concepts in written work and in exams that contribute to the course grade.

**Required Text**

McCornack, S. (2016). *Reflect and relate: An introduction to interpersonal communication*. Bedford/St. Martin's. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.)

**Points Distribution**

Exams	52% (exam one and two 16% each, third exam 20%)
Reading Quizzes	10% (6 total, lowest dropped)
In Class	8%
IDP	30% (5% proposal, 10% annotated bib, 15% final paper)
TOTAL =	100%

## **Grading Scale and Policies**

### Grading Scale

92.95-100%	A	72.95-76.94%	C
89.95-92.94%	A-	69.95-72.94%	C-
86.95-89.94%	B+	59.95-69.94%	D
82.95-86.94%	B	59.94% and below	F
79.95-82.94%	B-		
76.95-79.94%	C+		

\*Grades are rounded to the nearest tenth. That means that an 89.95 is an A- and an 89.94 is a B+. This policy is non-negotiable and there will be no exceptions.

In order to uphold a fair standard for all students, I do not change or reconsider a grade unless there has been a mathematical or clerical error. Earning your grade is your responsibility. To help you achieve your highest potential in this course, I offer detailed expectations of each assignment, make myself available to meet during office hours, and communicate via email. Other resources are also available to you on campus as well (e.g., the library).

Grades are considered final 48 hours after posting to Canvas.

## **Specific Course Assignments**

### **Exams**

Exams cover material found in the text and class discussion. Exams may involve multiple choice, matching, true/false, and short answer questions. Exams are non-cumulative. I will post study guides to Canvas for each exam at least one week in advance. If you arrive to take our exam after someone else has already finished, your exam will be subject to a minimum 10% deduction. You will not receive extra time for the exam. No exam will be given early or at a different time unless changed by the University (excused absences not included – see below). Mark your calendars and make your travel plans accordingly.

### **Reading Quizzes**

Quizzes will be given on Canvas. Quiz closing dates and times are listed on the syllabus. It is not the responsibility of the instructor to remind you to take a quiz or to allow you to make up a quiz should you forget. Like the exams, quizzes will direct your attention to important aspects of the readings and encourage you to critically engage with course material. Reviewing quizzes will help you to study for exams. There will be six quizzes total and your lowest quiz score will be dropped.

### **In-class**

Throughout the semester, there will be opportunities to earn points through in-class free writes, activities, homework, and small groups discussions. You can only earn these points if you arrive to class on time, attend the entire session, and fully engage in the exercise. One of these assignments will be “dropped” from your final grade so that if you need to miss a day for whatever reason (or cannot provide documentation for an absence), your grade will not be

adversely affected. These points can only be made up if an absence meets a number of criteria, which are outlined below (see “attendance”).

### **Interpersonal Development Project**

Though valuable, exams, quizzes, and class discussion cannot fully measure whether you are capable of applying what you have learned about communication. Thus, this class will involve a semester long project designed to help you change your communication behaviors in ways that will have a positive impact on a relationship (e.g., boss, romantic partner, roommate) or set of relationships (e.g., co-workers, siblings).

The IDP is divided into three components: a proposal, an annotated bibliography of scholarly research, and a final paper in which you will pull from and expand upon the earlier assignments. Detailed guidelines will be provided on Canvas.

*Proposal:* A 2-3 page description of a relationship or set of relationships you would like to improve during the course of the semester. You should select a (set of) relationship that is *meaningful* to you; it should be of high personal significance. Choose a relationship with a person you will be able to have interactions with during the semester, so consider the constraints of time and place. **Due January 28**

*Annotated Bibliography:* A list of 6-8 scholarly sources *in addition to your textbook* that are very relevant to interpersonal communication in the context of your chosen relationship(s). You will include a citation for each source followed by a 1-3 paragraph summary (annotation) of the article followed by an explanation of the source’s relevance to your project. This assignment is meant to help you to understand and explain—from a scholarly perspective—the dynamics of your chosen relationship(s) and communication. We will discuss how to go about finding strong sources, and you will visit the library to obtain guided experience conducting scholarly research. **Due February 25**

*Final Paper:* Your final paper will be a culmination of the above assignments, and will also include an analysis of the interactions you have had with the person/people identified in your proposal. The paper will be 6-8 pages in length, not counting heading material and references. It will begin with a brief introduction, followed by a synthesis of scholarly research on the context (from your annotated bibliography, but may also include the textbook). Next, you will include a description of the relationship you sought to improve. The final component—the heart of your paper—will be your analysis. It will involve a detailed discussion of how you actively changed your communication behaviors in attempt to improve the relationship(s) and the outcome of these efforts. The paper will end with a brief conclusion. **Due April 19**

## **Course Policies**

### **Attendance**

The penalty for missing class is a loss of any points related to activities, free writes, or discussions. Exceptions will only be made in the case of participation in a University-sanctioned event, observation of a religious holiday, or another extenuating, documentable circumstance that you could not have prepared for in advance. For absences related to participation in a University-sanctioned event or observation of a religious holiday, the instructor must be informed *in writing prior to the missed class*. In the case of serious illness or some other kind of extenuating circumstance, you must notify me as soon as possible of your absence, and you must be able to provide authoritative documentation. This may include a note from a medical professional (not stating the specifics of your situation, just that you are unable to attend class), obituaries or funeral programs, notes from a tow-truck driver, or any document signed by a person in a position to make a determination as to the validity of the cause of absence claimed by the student. If appropriate documentation is not received within two class periods following the absence, it will be considered unexcused. Note that if you cannot acquire documentation, one in-class exercise will be dropped.

Unacceptable excuses for missing class include (but are not limited to) family vacations, a crashed computer, traffic or parking, alarm clock issues, or other technical difficulties.

You cannot earn maximum points on in class exercises if you arrive late or leave early.

For missed classes, it is the student's responsibility to get class notes and other materials from a classmate. **The instructor does not provide notes for missed classes.**

### **Plagiarism**

Students must complete their own work and give credit to any outside sourced used to complete an assignment. Lack of knowledge of the academic policy is not a reasonable explanation for any form of academic misconduct. Plagiarism includes—but is not limited to—copying and pasting another person's work, failing to give credit to information derived from another person's work, paraphrasing another persons' work in a way that misrepresents the original claims, having another student complete your work, and completing another student's work. Questions related to the course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

### **Learning Accommodations**

Any student who needs special accommodations for learning or who has particular needs is invited to share these concerns or requests with me as soon as possible. Disabilities must be documented through the Disability Resource Center; it is your responsibility to contact the DRC and fill out the necessary paperwork. Formal requests for accommodations must be completed before the scheduled assignment.

## **Respect and Etiquette**

I expect all students to help make the classroom a supportive, comfortable environment fit for learning. Confronting research on interpersonal communication can be emotional and challenging at times. To help us navigate potentially difficult discussions (e.g., mental health), I have a number of expectations for everyone in the classroom.

- When another student or the instructor is speaking, listen respectfully, without interrupting, and without getting distracted (e.g., by your cell phone).
- If you take umbrage with an argument or point being made, feel free to express your concerns if you can do so professionally and respectfully. When/if you do so, focus on critiquing the idea (not individuals), and avoid using inflammatory language.
- When you are speaking, do so in a way that invites others to engage the topic. Put otherwise, keep your opinions dialectical, or open to response – perhaps by taking note of your tone or using I-language.
- Ask questions when you do not understand something, and don't assume you know what others are thinking or what motivates them (everyone has different fields of experience).
- Commit to learning, not debating.

## **Technology**

*Email:* You may address me as Mollie, or as Dr. Murphy if you are more comfortable with a formal tone. If you write an email that is blatantly unprofessional and/or hostile, I will not reply. Write an email similar to how you would write a letter (include salutation: “Hello Dr. Murphy/Dear Mollie” sign your name “Regards, Nadia/Best, Miguel”). If you are providing information that does not necessitate a reply, I may not reply. I will reply if a question is asked. I'll also reply if there is a request for me to confirm receipt of your email. I will typically respond to an email within 24 hours. If you email me in the evening, expect that I will reply the following day. There is no set turn-around time on weekends. I would ask that you, too, check and respond to email in a similar time frame.

*Cellphone/Computer Use:* Although technology has its place, study after study shows that students who do not use laptops or technology in class *consistently* and *significantly* outperform their peers (see Faria, Weston, & Cepeda, 2013; Fried, 2008; Reyol, 2012). If you choose to use a laptop or tablet to take notes, please sit in the back of the classroom so as not to distract those sitting behind you.

Obviously, you should not use your cell phone during class.

## Written Assignment Guidelines and Late Work

All written assignments must adhere to the most recent edition of the APA. Reference pages do not count as part of your paper's page limit, nor do heading material or title pages (if relevant). Additionally, all written assignments must:

- Be in Times New Roman, 12 point font
- Have standard margins (1" top, bottom, and sides).
- Have no extra white space between paragraphs (if you have trouble with this, check your format settings)
- Devote minimal space to heading material (no more than 3 single-spaced lines)

All papers are due to Canvas at the beginning of the class for which they are assigned. Work submitted after a ten-minute grace period will receive a 10% point deduction. An additional 10% will be deducted for every 24 hours it is not turned in.

## Course Schedule

*Note:* This is a *general plan* for the course. Deviations may be necessary, and will be announced either in class or via email.

<b>Day</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading (done by this day)/ Major Assignment Info</b>
Jan 7	Course intro	
Jan 9	Intro to IPC	Ch. 1 and syllabus
Jan 11	Intro to IPC	
Jan 14	Discuss the IDP	
Jan 16	The self	Ch. 2
Jan 18	The self	Quiz 1 due by 11:59PM (Ch. 1 & 2)
Jan 21	MLKJ Day, no class	
Jan 23	The self	
Jan 25	Others	Ch. 3
Jan 28	Others	<b>Paper Proposal Due to Canvas by 11:59PM</b>
Jan 30	Others	
Feb 1	Discuss annotated bibliography	
Feb 4	Emotions	Ch. 4
Feb 6	Emotions	

Feb 8	Emotions	Quiz 2 due by 11:59PM (Ch. 3 & 4)
Feb 11	Culture	Ch. 5
Feb 13	Culture	
Feb 15	Meet in library	Quiz 3 due by 11:59PM (Ch. 5)
Feb 18	Presidents' Day, no class	
Feb 20	Culture	
Feb 22	<b>EXAM 1</b>	
Feb 25	Listening	Ch. 6 <b>Annotated bibliography due to Canvas by 11:59PM</b>
Feb 27	Listening	
Mar 1	Discuss final paper	Quiz 4 due by 11:59PM (Ch. 6)
Mar 4	Verbal	Ch. 7
Mar 6	Verbal	
Mar 8	Verbal	
Mar 11-15	SPRING BREAK	
Mar 18	Nonverbal	Ch. 8
Mar 20	Nonverbal	
Mar 22	Nonverbal	Quiz 5 due by 11:59PM (Ch. 7 & 8)
Mar 25	Conflict/Power	Ch. 9
Mar 27	Conflict/Power	
Mar 29	Conflict/Power	
Apr 1	<b>EXAM 2</b>	
Apr 3	Family	Ch. 11
Apr 5	Family	
Apr 8	Family	
Apr 10	Romantic	Ch. 10
Apr 12	Romantic	Quiz 6 due by 11:59 PM (Ch. 10 & 11)

Apr 15	Romantic	
Apr 17	Friendship	Ch. 12
Apr 19	Friendship	
Apr 22	Friendship	<b>IDP Final Paper due to Canvas by 11:59PM</b>
Apr 26 (Friday), 9:30 AM	<b>FINAL EXAM</b> *The final will not be given at an earlier or different time unless changed by the university	