

# Spring 2019 4140 Family Communication Syllabus

## Instructor

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[APA For Family.pdf](#)

[Spring19 FamilySchedule Student-1.docx](#)

## Course Resources

All readings will be posted on Canvas or available through a box link.

## Course Description

An important aspect of becoming a more competent communicator is the ability to understand the various communication patterns that characterize those individuals with whom we relate to on a daily basis. Since the family is the first “communication classroom” that we all attend and the first social group we belong to, this course is designed to investigate the nature of family communication. Specifically, this course focuses on family communication patterns and the extent to which different forms of interactions contribute to, and change, familial identity. This semester, we will explore: (a) the changing and complex definition of “family,” (b) family interaction from different theoretical lenses, (c) the role of narratives and mental health in family interaction, and (d) the darkside of family communication.

This is a upper-level class, designed for students who already have a foundation in communication studies and interpersonal specifically. The overall objective of this course is to provide an introduction to the various messages and message strategies that fall within the purview of family communication. In doing so, I also hope to provide you with an opportunity to reflect upon your family’s communication patterns, to think critically about how these patterns influence your own communication tendencies, and to compare and contrast the patterns in your family with those represented in other family forms. In other words, our primary goal this semester will be to expand your understanding of how

different communication patterns emerge in different people, and thus make you a more competent communicator.

## Course Objectives

1. Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories of family communication
2. Learning to apply course materials (to improve rational thinking, problem solving and decisions).
3. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.
4. Describe the changing nature of “family” and use at least four different communication theories to describe family interaction.
5. Evaluate family communication scholarship and apply the findings to both your own personal, familial relationships as well as the familial relationships of significant others.
6. Illustrate how rituals, narratives, and stories help family members make sense of their family experiences, and how such symbolic activities help construct a family identity.

## Course Requirements

**READING:** I expect you to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned materials. This means that you have completed the reading assignments for that day and have given some thought as to how this material relates to your personal, professional, and academic pursuits. Given that participation and critical thinking is essential to success in this course, it is *extremely important* that you keep pace with the assigned readings.

**ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION:** It is important that students come to class and be actively involved in class discussions – in other words, I expect each of you to contribute to our learning experience in CMST 4140. In addition to taking notes (when needed), I expect each of you to contribute your understanding of the material as it relates to your academic, professional, and personal experiences. I also expect each of you to listen with an open mind and respect the opinions of others in class. 100 points will be attached to attendance and participation, this involves actively participating in class discussions, offering thoughtful comments, and making sure to take notes and read prior to coming to class.

This course will implement a discussion-method designed to facilitate critical thinking and classroom participation. Each student is responsible for emailing **two questions** each week based on the assigned readings for a given week. The questions should be either a **question of clarification**, i.e., a question useful for clarifying confusing material and/or extending our understanding of certain research theories or methods used in the conduct of research, or a **question of extension** whereby the student asks a heuristic/thought-provoking question based on the readings (e.g., a question concerning how we might use the findings practically, whether they are relevant, or providing an idea for extending the research). **Email your questions no later than 12:00 noon on the day of each**

**class.** There are 12 sets of readings. Each set of questions is worth up to 10 points. However, you may skip 2. 10 sets of questions x 10 points = 100 points. Carefully consider which weeks you need to skip.

**\*\*Note:** You must attend class that day in order to earn the points for those questions (i.e., if you submit questions but don't attend class you will receive a zero). Questions that are not attached to the readings will not receive points. Questions must reference the article, i.e., "in the Schrod et al. (2008) article the authors found.....".

**Technology Policy--No Technology will be allowed in class. This means no laptops/tablets. Readings must be printed and brought to class.**

## **Evaluation Methods and Criteria**

**ASSIGNMENTS** (briefly described below)

1) Exams (200 points)– students will complete one (or possibly two) exams on all lectures, handouts, and readings covered in class. The midterm exam will consist of essay questions. Students may use one 3x5 notecard (front and back) as a “study crutch” for the midterm exam– more details to follow.

2) Class Activity (50 points)– students will co-lead an activity on the readings for the week they are assigned—details to follow.

3) Policy Paper– students will complete a compare and contrast paper on differences between what policy states and what research suggests–details to follow.

4) Darkside blog– students will complete a discussion board post about the darkside of family. Details to follow.

5) Intercultural blog– students will compare a US family practice/tradition/norm to that of another culture. Details to follow.

6) Family Rituals– students will complete a discussion board post about a recipe that represents a family ritual/tradition/story, and will bring the dish to class and present on it. Details to follow

7) Classroom Participation (100 points)– classroom participation is *essential* to a course such as this. As such, participation is expected to display the following characteristics: (1) topical relevance, (2) theoretical relevance, (3) humor and provocativeness for the ongoing discussion, and (4) attendance.

8) Discussion Questions (100 points)– extension of the specific materials on the reading list via generation of two discussion questions – one a question of clarification and the second a question of extension.

## 9) APA Worksheet (20 points)

These grade percentages are general guidelines for all grades that fall within those 10 percentage points. The plus/minus system will be used in this course. Please note that grades will not be rounded at the end of the semester. In order to calculate your grade take the amount of points you have and divide by total possible points in the class.

A(A-) = 90% - 100%      Exemplary performance- greatly exceeds requirements.

Shows outstanding levels of effort & thoughtfulness.

B(B+, B-) = 80% - 89%      Advanced performance- exceeds requirements. Shows

substantial creativity, effort, & thoughtfulness.

C(C+, C-) = 70% - 79%      Average to deficient performance- simply meets the minimum

requirements of the course, but does not exceed them.

F(D+, D) = Below 70%      Poor performance- failed to meet the minimum requirements of the course.

## **Grade Scheme**

The following grading standards will be used in this class:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Range</b>
A	100 % to 93.0%
A-	< 93.0 % to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0 % to 87.0%
B	< 87.0 % to 83.0%
B-	< 83.0 % to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0 % to 77.0%
C	< 77.0 % to 73.0%
C-	< 73.0 % to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0 % to 67.0%
D	< 67.0 % to 60.0%
F	< 59.0 % to 0.0%

## **Attendance and Excused Absences Policy**

See course expectations for attendance policy.

## **Nonattendance Policy**

### **Students May Be Dropped For Nonattendance**

If a student does not attend a class during the first week of the term or by the second class meeting, whichever comes first, the instructor may submit a request to have the student dropped from the course. ***(This does not remove responsibility from the student to drop courses which he or she does not plan to attend.)*** This option is typically used for classes that are full and the instructor is trying to make a seat available for another student, but may be considered for other courses. Requests must be made during the first 20 percent of the course and will be considered on an individual student basis. Students who are dropped from courses will be notified by the Registrar's Office through their preferred e-mail account (see [2018-2019 General Catalog](#)).

### **Assumption of Risk**

All classes, programs, and extracurricular activities within the University involve some risk, and certain ones involve travel. The University provides opportunities to participate in these programs on a voluntary basis. Therefore, students should not participate in them if they do not care to assume the risks. Students can ask the respective program leaders/sponsors about the possible risks a program may generate, and if students are not willing to assume the risks, they should not select that program. By voluntarily participating in classes, programs, and extracurricular activities, a student does so at his or her own risk. General information about University Risk Management policies, insurance coverage, vehicle use policies, and risk management forms can be found at: <http://www.usu.edu/riskmgmt/>

### **Library Services**

All USU students attending classes in Logan, at our Regional Campuses, or online can access all databases, e-journals, and e-books regardless of location. Additionally, the library will mail printed books to students, at no charge to them. Students can also borrow books from any Utah academic library. Take advantage of all library services and learn more at [libguides.usu.edu/rc](http://libguides.usu.edu/rc).

### **Classroom Civility.**

Utah State University supports the principle of freedom of expression for both faculty and students. The University respects the rights of faculty to teach and students to learn. Maintenance of these rights requires classroom conditions that do not impede the learning process. Disruptive classroom behavior will not be tolerated. An individual engaging in such behavior may be subject to disciplinary action. Read [Student Code Article V Section V-3](#) for more information.

### **University Policies & Procedures**

## Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibilities

Academic freedom is the right to teach, study, discuss, investigate, discover, create, and publish freely. Academic freedom protects the rights of faculty members in teaching and of students in learning. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in teaching, research, and creative activities, subject to the limitations imposed by professional responsibility. [Faculty Code Policy #403](#) further defines academic freedom and professional responsibilities.

## Academic Integrity - "The Honor System"

Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge:

*"I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity."*

A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge:

- Espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community;
- Understands that each act of academic dishonesty devalues every degree that is awarded by this institution; and
- Is a welcomed and valued member of Utah State University.

## Academic Dishonesty

The instructor of this course will take appropriate actions in response to Academic Dishonesty, as defined the University's Student Code. Acts of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- **Cheating:** using, attempting to use, or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity. Unauthorized assistance includes:
  - Working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done "individually;"
  - Depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
  - Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work;
  - Acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission;
  - Continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity;

- Submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or engaging in any form of research fraud.
- **Falsification:** altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.
- **Plagiarism:** representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

For additional information go to: [ARTICLE VI. University Regulations Regarding Academic Integrity](#)

### **Sexual Harassment/Title IX**

Utah State University is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free from acts of sexual misconduct and discrimination and to fostering respect and dignity for all members of the USU community. Title IX and [USU Policy 339](#) address sexual harassment in the workplace and academic setting.

The university responds promptly upon learning of any form of possible discrimination or sexual misconduct. Any individual may contact USU's [Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity \(AA/EO\) Office](#) for available options and resources or clarification. The university has established a complaint procedure to handle all types of discrimination complaints, including sexual harassment ([USU Policy 305](#)), and has designated the AA/EO Director/Title IX Coordinator as the official responsible for receiving and investigating complaints of sexual harassment.

### **Withdrawal Policy and "I" Grade Policy**

Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances, but not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term 'extenuating' circumstances includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by an employer, or (5) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.

### **Students with Disabilities**

USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, please contact the [Disability Resource Center \(DRC\)](#) as early in the semester as possible (University Inn # 101, (435) 797-2444, [drc@usu.edu](mailto:drc@usu.edu)). All disability related

accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.

## **Diversity Statement**

Regardless of intent, careless or ill-informed remarks can be offensive and hurtful to others and detract from the learning climate. If you feel uncomfortable in a classroom due to offensive language or actions by an instructor or student(s) regarding ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, contact:

- Division of Student Affairs: <https://studentaffairs.usu.edu>, (435) 797-1712, [studentservices@usu.edu](mailto:studentservices@usu.edu), TSC 220
- Student Legal Services: <https://ususa.usu.edu/student-association/student-advocacy/legal-services>, (435) 797-2912, TSC 326,
- Access and Diversity: <http://accesscenter.usu.edu>, (435) 797-1728, [access@usu.edu](mailto:access@usu.edu); TSC 315
- Multicultural Programs: <http://accesscenter.usu.edu/multiculture>, (435) 797-1728, TSC 315
- LGBTQA Programs: <http://accesscenter.usu.edu/lgbtqa>, (435) 797-1728, TSC 3145
- Provost's Office Diversity Resources: <https://www.usu.edu/provost/diversity>, (435) 797-8176

You can learn about your student rights by visiting:  
The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University: <https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode>

## **Grievance Process**

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Student Code: [Article VII](#).

**Full details for USU Academic Policies and Procedures can be found at:**

- [Student Conduct](#)
- [Student Code](#)
- [Academic Integrity](#)
- [USU Selected Academic Policies and Procedures](#)
- [USU Academic Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility Policy](#)

## **Emergency Procedures**

In the case of a drill or real emergency, classes will be notified to evacuate the building by the sound of the fire/emergency alarm system or by a building representative. In the event of a disaster that may interfere with either notification, evacuate as the situation dictates (i.e., in an earthquake when shaking ceases or immediately when a fire is discovered). Turn



off computers and take any personal items with you. Elevators should not be used; instead, use the closest stairs.