COMM 5309: SEMINAR IN INTERPERSONAL COMM
Fall, 2011
Section 001: 7:00-9:30pm, Wednesdays, BH 111
Professor:  D. K. Ivy, Ph.D.
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Office:  BH 325, 825-5986
Office Hrs: 3:30-6:30pm Tu; 5-7pm W
(Other office visits by appointment.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This graduate seminar will focus on interpersonal communication, defined as face-to-face communication between people who mutually influence one another. A variety of instructional strategies—discussion, lecture, class exercises and activities, individual projects—will be employed in this course to help us accomplish our goals. We will begin with a discussion of terminology and concepts necessary to a fundamental understanding of interpersonal communication; then we will read and critique both scientific research and popular literature in interpersonal communication. As the course progresses, students will conduct a literature review of an interpersonal topic of their choosing. Assignments will be directed toward the final course project—a literature review and research proposal on an interpersonal communication topic.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: At the end of the course, students should be able to:
1. define key terminology in interpersonal communication;
2. identify and explain basic theories, issues, and research trends in interpersonal communication;
3. develop and present an instructional strategy or training exercise based on an interpersonal communication concept;
4. illustrate their abilities to analyze and synthesize research findings on a topic in interpersonal communication and propose future research on the topic;
5. demonstrate their ability to deliver an effective oral presentation, summarizing their final papers.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS: The first expectation I have for students is that you keep up with the reading. Several readings will be assigned for each session; these readings are intense, so it’s important to plan ahead and make sure you’ve read (and understood) the material thoroughly before coming to class. You cannot hope to be successful in this course if you get behind in the reading. A secondary expectation surrounds the seminar approach to this class: In a seminar, students are primarily responsible for generating discussion. If you don’t read, we’ll have no substance for discussions and the course will degenerate into merely an exchange of personal anecdotes/opinions. I expect balanced participation, as well as rigorous, open-minded discussion, stemming from assigned readings. We need everyone’s involvement for the course to be successful. I appreciate all points of view and encourage an open, honest exchange of ideas.

REQUIRED READINGS: Required readings will be placed on reserve in the library and will constitute the bulk of our reading and discussion material for the semester. (Refer to the required reading list in your course guidebook.) In addition, because of students’ varied backgrounds (i.e., some students have taken an undergraduate interpersonal communication course, others haven’t taken any comm courses), an undergraduate textbook, Interpersonal Communication: Relating to Others (5th ed.) by Beebe, Beebe, and Redmond is required reading, and can be purchased in the campus bookstore. Students are expected to keep current with readings even if the material is not directly covered in class.
CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE: (1) Please turn off all pagers, cell phones, watches that beep, etc. before the start of class and KEEP THEM OFF. If you’re on call or have an emergency, turn off your phone’s sound so that only you’ll be aware of a call and notify your instructor of such. If you have to answer an emergency call, please leave the room quickly and quietly. (2) Be respectful of your instructor and classmates during class sessions. While I appreciate and encourage discussion, I won’t allow someone to dominate or show disrespect for another person’s contribution. I won’t tolerate talking among yourselves when I am presenting information, during classmates’ presentations, or while classmates are offering comments. (3) I expect you to not to work on things for other classes or your personal life during my class. No texting or checking emails on laptop computers or phones. I don’t allow students to use laptops during class for 3 reasons: (1) They’re distracting to students around you; (2) I can’t be assured that you’re working on class material; and (3) students working on laptops tend not to engage in class discussion because they’re engrossed in their computers. Class discussion is a key element in a communication course. If you have a problem with this policy, talk to me.

EQUITY STATEMENT: All persons, regardless of sex/gender, age, class, race, ethnicity, religion, physical/psychological/learning ability, sexual orientation, veteran status, etc., shall have equal opportunity without harassment in this communication course. Any problems with or questions about harassment can be discussed confidentially with your instructor.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class must notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services Office, located at Driftwood 101, 825-5816.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Because this course places a great deal of emphasis on discussion, it’s imperative that you attend all class sessions. Since the course only meets once a week, it’s even more important to attend so that you stay current and receive pertinent information. If you do miss a class, it’s your responsibility to get the information that was covered from one of your classmates. I suspect that many of you will feel that an attendance policy for a graduate course is inappropriate, but I’ve found that such a policy acts as an incentive. Here’s the policy that will be enforced for this class: (1) Your first absence is without penalty. Use this absence for illness and emergencies. (2) Each subsequent absence will lower your final course average by 6 points (equivalent of day class). (3) You must attend at least 2 hours, 15 minutes of each 2 and a half hour class to be counted present.

MISSED WORK: Please realize that if you miss class the night you are expected to make a presentation, turn in an assignment, or take a quiz, you will not be allowed to make up that activity on a subsequent date. The grade is a ZERO. There are only two exceptions to this policy: (1) you’re hospitalized and unable to attend class; and (2) you’ve experienced a death in your family. In both of these situations you must provide documentation supporting the reason for the missed class. You or someone you know should get in touch with me, preferably by phone, as soon as the emergency arises. Contacting me before an absence is always preferable to contacting me after the fact. In extreme situations, you may also contact the Office of Student Affairs (825-2612) and request that a written memo be sent to all your instructors regarding your situation.
EXCUSED ABSENCE/EARLY DUE DATE POLICY: If you have to miss a class because of a school-sponsored experience (e.g., athletic competition, professional conference), you must submit official written documentation (signed by faculty/administrative sponsors) regarding the absence before you are due to travel. If your absences occur when we have quizzes scheduled or assignments to turn in or present, you must take the quiz or complete the assignment BEFORE your absence, NOT AFTER. If you don’t make arrangements well in advance of an absence, you will not be allowed to re-take a quiz or submit the assignment once you return to campus; the grade will be a zero.

PLAGIARISM POLICY: Please understand that plagiarism is grounds for suspension from the university. Any student caught plagiarizing someone else’s paper, presentation, or speaking notes; lifting information from sources without citing those sources; attempting to turn in or present the same work in multiple classes; or cheating on a quiz may be given an automatic F for the course. Profs do compare notes and discuss student assignments. Do not even think about using material that is not your own—this includes website material. If you’re uncertain about the university’s policy on academic misconduct, refer to the Student Handbook or University catalog. If you’re uncertain as to what actions constitute plagiarism in communication courses, ask me.

GRADE APPEAL PROCESS: As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in a course. The burden of proof is on the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2 Student Grade Appeals and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01 Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible on the University Rules Web site at www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, contact the Office of Student Affairs.

ASSIGNMENTS: Assignments in this course build on one another, meaning that they progress toward a culminating final course project. Brief explanations of each assignment appear below; complete explanations of all assignments and quiz review guides can be found in your course guidebook. Written assignments must be typed and turned in at the beginning of the class session indicated in this syllabus. No emailed or faxed assignments will be accepted.

**Reporter/Critic Assignment:** For each reading, students will serve as reporters and critics who will lead and facilitate class discussion. The reporter’s task is to summarize key ideas in an assigned reading. The critic’s task is to be evaluative, meaning that you explore with the class what you liked and didn’t like, thought to be difficult to understand, or found particularly relevant or irrelevant in a reading.

**Annotated Bibliography Assignment:** This assignment involves locating published research about interpersonal communication and annotating it for possible later use.

**Abstracts Assignment:** You will locate and abstract published articles (which may or may not include the sources used for the annotated bibliography assignment) primarily from academic journals that you think will become part of your literature review for your final paper. Abstracting means summarizing the highlights or most important aspects of an article into 1 or 2 paragraphs.
**Instructional Strategy/Training Exercise:** Students will share with classmates an instructional strategy (teaching lesson or activity) on interpersonal communication that you have used in the classroom or think would be effective to use were you a teacher, OR a training exercise in interpersonal communication—one that you might use while conducting, for example, a workshop for a corporation or organization on effective interpersonal communication in the workplace.

**Final Project—Oral Presentation:** Each student will make an informal, 10-minute presentation to the class, summarizing her or his final paper and fielding questions from classmates and the instructor.

**Final Project—Paper:** The final research paper has two parts: (1) a literature review of research on a specific topic of your choosing, related to interpersonal communication; (2) a proposal of research that you believe needs to be conducted on your topic.

**Quizzes:** Two 25-multiple choice question quizzes will be given. Quizzes will be based on required readings; review sheets for Beebe chapters are in your course guidebook.

**GRADING SCALE:** Here’s my approach to letter grades: a “C” is average; a “D” is below average, and an “F” is way below average (a bomb out). A “B” is above average and an “A” is way above average. As and Bs are rewards for above-average performance, not minimal or average work.

**EVALUATION:** Point values for each assignment and quiz are shown below. Your final grade is based on a percentage of 400 points, minus any deductions for excessive absences. Roughly 90% of 400 points (approx. 360 points) will earn you an A, roughly 80% (approx. 320 points) a B, and so forth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Participation (Reporters/Critics)</td>
<td>75 points (25 pts. each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>25 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstracts</td>
<td>25 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructional Strategy/Training Exercise</td>
<td>50 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
<td>50 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz 2</td>
<td>50 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project: Oral Presentation</td>
<td>25 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project: Paper</td>
<td>100 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>400 points maximum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**COURSE SCHEDULE:** The following tentative schedule details assigned readings, information to be covered during each class session, presentation and quiz dates, due dates for assignments—roughly everything you need to know to stay on top of this course. I use the word “tentative” because this schedule might change; however, students will be informed well in advance of any changes in schedule. **Check the schedule before** you come to each class so that you will be prepared.
# TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

## Week 1

**W 8/24**  
Syllabus Overview & Student Introductions  
Introduction to Interpersonal Communication  
**Assignment:** Chapter Reporter & Critic  
Required Reading: Articles 1-2 & Chs. 1 & 2 (Beebe) by W 8/31  
Read: Syllabus & Annotated Bib. Assignment by W 8/31

## Week 2

**W 8/31**  
Discuss Articles 1-2: Interpersonal Comm., Mediated IPC, & Self  
**Assignment:** Annotated Bibliography (DUE W 9/14)  
Required Reading: Articles 3-4 & Chs. 4 & 5 (Beebe) by W 9/7  
Read: Quiz 1 Review by W 9/7

## Week 3

**W 9/7**  
Discuss Articles 3-4: Cult. Diversity, Emotion, & Listening/Responding  
Review Annotated Bibliography Assignment  
Quiz 1 Review

## Week 4

**W 9/14**  
DUE: Annotated Bibliography  
**Quiz 1**  
Required Reading: Articles 5-7 & Chs. 6 & 7 (Beebe) by W 9/21  
Read: Abstracts Assignment by W 9/21

## Week 5

**W 9/21**  
Discuss Articles 5-7: Verbal & Nonverbal Communication  
**Assignment:** Abstracts (DUE W 10/6)  
Required Reading: Articles 8-11 & Chs. 8 & 9 (Beebe) by W 9/28  
Read: Quiz 2 Review by W 9/28

## Week 6

**W 9/28**  
Discuss Articles 8-11: Conflict & Relationships  
Review Abstracts Assignment  
Quiz 2 Review  
Read: Instructional Strategy/Training Exercise Assignment by W 10/5

## Week 7

**W 10/5**  
DUE: Abstracts  
**Quiz 2**  
**Assignment:** Instructional Strategy/Training Exer. (DUE W 10/19)  
Required Reading: Articles 12-14 & Ch. 10 (Beebe) by W 10/12
Week 8
W 10/12
Discuss Articles 12-14: Relationship Challenges
Review Instructional Strategy/Training Exercise Assignment

Week 9
W 10/19
DUE: Instructional Strategy/Training Exercise
Required Reading: Articles 15-17 & Ch. 11, pp. 311-321 by W 10/26
Read: Final Presentation & Final Paper Assignments by W 10/26

Week 10
W 10/26
Discuss Articles 15-17: Friendships
Assignment: Draft/Outline (DUE W 11/9), Final Presentation (DUE W 11/30), & Final Paper (DUE W 12/7)
Required Reading: Articles 18-20 & Ch. 11, pp. 321-341 by W 11/2

Week 11
W 11/2
Discuss Articles 18-20: Romantic Relationships
Review Draft/Outline, Final Presentation, & Final Paper Assignments
Required Reading: Articles 21-24 & Ch. 12 (Beebe) by W 11/10

Week 12
W 11/9
DUE: Drafts/Outlines
Discuss Articles 21-24: Family & Workplace Relationships
Review Draft/Outline, Final Presentation, & Final Paper Assignments

Week 13
W 11/16
Library Research Day (Ivy at NCA convention)

Week 14
M 11/21 & TU 11/22
Individual Appointments to Review Drafts/Outlines of Final Papers
W 11/23 - F 11/25
Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 15
W 11/30
DUE: Final Presentations

Week 16
W 12/7
DUE: Final Papers