Foundations of Communication

Course Description: This course examines a breadth of topics fundamental to the study of communication and works to improve students’ communication skills in three primary contexts: interpersonal relationships, group/teamwork, and presentational speaking.

Learning Objectives:
1) Apply principles of effective oral, written, and visual communication to interpersonal, small group, and audience-centered communication contexts;
2) Work with a group to gain experience in collaboration and meeting shared goals;
3) Engage in organized research processes for the purpose of evaluating and synthesizing information to support ideas; and
4) Deliver presentations using oral, written, and visual evidence that supports specific purposes and includes messages tailored to specific audiences.

The content will address the following Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board categories:
- Critical Thinking:
  - Generate and communicate ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing information.
- Communication Skills:
  - Develop, interpret, and express ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
- Teamwork:
  - Integrate different viewpoints as a member of a team.
  - Work with others to support and accomplish a shared goal.
- Personal Responsibility:
  - Evaluate choices and actions, and relate consequences to decision making.

Required Materials:
Computer with Internet access and word processing software
REVEL: online supplementary material provided by the textbook publisher.
Recording device (for presentations)

Major Course Requirements:
Communication Model Analysis 50 points
Expectancy Violations Report 75 points
Interpersonal Mini Paper 100 points
Communication Model Analysis – 50 points
For this assignment you will construct your own transactional model of communication illustrating an interaction you had with one other person. You will label each part of the model and write a brief (2-3 sentences) description of each component to demonstrate your understanding. Creativity in model design is encouraged!

Expectancy Violations Report – 75 points
You will be asked to prepare a simple experiment that will allow you to observe what happens when you violate others’ expectations. You will write a brief report detailing your experiment conceptualization, implementation, and analysis of the results.

Interpersonal Mini Paper – 100 points
You will be asked to show your ability to explain a theory of interpersonal communication by defining/explaining the theory and providing a face-to-face and mediated example of the theory in action. This assignment will require a paper of at least 3 full pages, double-spaced, exclusive of an APA reference page. You will be required to find and cite credible sources for this assignment.

Collaborative Informative Presentation (Group Project)—200 points
Students will work in groups to develop a 15 minute voice-recorded PowerPoint presentation based on a set of criteria to be explained by the professor. This assignment will require the groups to produce an outline, a research synthesis chart, and a video presentation that showcases both the group members and a visual aid. This will serve as the final assessment for this class, and the project will be due on August 3.

Individual Persuasive Assignment—175 points
You will be asked to develop a 3-5 minute persuasive presentation based on a set of criteria to be explained by the professor. This assignment will require you to construct an outline, a research synthesis chart, and a presentation using a visual aid. You will also give and receive peer feedback on this presentation.

Exams—200 points
There will be an online test at the end of every unit. These will be considered open-book, open-note, but limitations will be set in Blackboard to minimize time spent searching for answers and/or collaboration.

Participation—200 points
Throughout each unit you will be asked to complete supplemental activities (e.g., discussion board posts, short written assignments, Internet searches for example material, etc.) designed to help you engage with your classmates and gain a deeper understanding of course material.

Final Grading Scale: This scale is based on a point system and not a percentage; therefore, grades will not be rounded up. If a student earns 799 points they receive a “C” in the course not a “B”. All grades are final unless a miscalculation has occurred. Grades will be regularly updated on Blackboard throughout the session.

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1000-900</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>899-800</td>
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Students will be held to a high standard of performance in all sections. To receive an "A" in this course, your work must be significantly better than that which passes for acceptable work. Do not assume that you can do simply what is assigned to receive a high grade in this course. Doing "what is assigned" gets you only a "C." An "A" requires considerably more work. This course is academically rigorous and time-consuming, and it will require a lot of you to do well. You must do all the work that is required of you according to the instructions provided in order to be successful in this class.

The professor will not hold grade negotiation conversations with students. Often students state that they “need” a particular grade in a class in order to maintain scholarships, financial aid, membership on teams or in organizations, etc., and ask for extra points to raise their grades. This is unfair to the other students in the course who have earned their grades without being offered extra points, and it also detracts from the integrity of the grading scale in the course. An A holds little to no value when it is given to students who did not submit A quality work. It hurts your future job prospects when employers see As on your transcript, expect you to deliver A work using related skills, and you can’t do it because you didn’t actually earn those As (for further information, see Grade Appeals.)

Online Policies

Online courses can at times present unique challenges to both students and instructors in terms of building rapport, communicating with clarity, and ensuring that course obligations can be met via the use of (sometimes troublesome) technology. As such, it will be your responsibility to ensure the following:

- Have consistent access to a reliable computer and Internet connection. Without access to Blackboard, you will not be able to access the course and/or complete assignments. Lack of access to BB or the Internet is not an excuse for incomplete work. *Please note: Blackboard can be fickle at times, and often the Internet browser you are using can interfere with its functionality. If you are having difficulty accessing BB or getting it to work properly, use a university computer and/or a different browser (e.g., Firefox, Chrome, or Safari – NOT Internet Explorer).
- Contact your instructor ASAP if you do not understand any part of the course content and/or assignment specifications. It is better to ask before you proceed than to work for a long time and find out later that you were doing something incorrectly.
- Keep a close eye on the course calendar and what is due each week. Since we are on a weekly schedule and will not meet in person, it will be to your benefit to make a weekly to-do list of class assignments, activities, etc.
- If you know you will be traveling, working, or otherwise occupied around the due date/time for the week’s work, plan accordingly to submit early. No extensions will be granted for students’ inability to get online and submit work by the deadline.

The instructor will make every effort to do the following:

- Answer emails within 36 hours (or sooner), and offer the option to call if student needs additional clarification about course materials.
- Provide detailed instructions for each course assignment and explain how coursework is graded.
- Write weekly (or more frequent) BB announcements to update students about what is happening each week in the class.
Attendance

Given that this is an online class, there is no formal attendance policy in terms of “you must be here, at this time, on these days.” Class attendance will be accounted for by your active participation in all course assignments. You will be expected to complete several activities each unit, thus your attendance will be noted via participation points and turning in assignments. Additionally, there are no make-ups for assignments, as you may complete the work at your own pace, on your own schedule for each unit. You always have until 11:59 p.m. at the end of a unit to complete that unit’s work (unless instructed otherwise).

Class Behavior

The instructor expects each individual student to show his or her classmates and instructor the utmost respect at all times. The instructor intends to treat each student with the highest levels of courtesy and respect and expect that behavior in return. If you have further questions about these expectations, the instructor invites you to refer to the Code of Student Conduct. Offensive remarks posted within group discussion environments (i.e., racist, sexist, homophobic, or otherwise hateful remarks) will result in a report to the Dean of Students.

Communicating with Instructor

Communication will be very important in this class, as we will interact solely online. The instructor expects students to communicate primarily via university email. If you do not wish to use your university email, please ensure that you are having your messages forwarded to another reliable email account. You are responsible for receiving and reading any and all email messages the instructor may send; using a non-university email account is not an excuse for not receiving an email. You should generally expect a response to emails within 36 hours. Students communicate with the instructor by phone via appointment.

Regardless of whether you agree with a grade or whether you are frustrated by the difficulty of an exam or any other issue, you must behave professionally at all times, per University policy.

- When emailing, please use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Do not use forms of spelling that are commonly accepted when texting with your friends.
- When emailing, introduce yourself as a student and provide your name.
- When emailing OR in person, you will demonstrate basic common courtesy and adhere to accepted norms of politeness.

Virtual Office Hours

Please note that there are virtual office hours available on Tuesday and Thursday between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. These hours are times when you may expect a faster than normal reply to emails and any inquiries requiring me to access Blackboard and/or my working computer to respond.

Using Technology

For any technology related issues, please contact the IT help desk at (361) 825-2825. Your professor, although knowledgeable about course-related technology, is unable to assist you with account lockouts, expired passwords, incompatible equipment and/or software, etc. Please contact the IT help desk FIRST with these issues, and notify your professor if you are unable to access course materials after contacting IT.

Late Work

There are NO makeup opportunities for late work. Failure to complete and submit assignments by 11:59 p.m. at the end of a unit will result in a zero.
Assignments can be found on the course schedule. The professor will also post on Blackboard detailed Assignment Specifications for each major assignment, and shorter notes about participation exercises. It is **your responsibility** to know what is expected from you each unit. Assignments must be turned in according to the instructions provided by the professor.

*Note: Computer/printer/software malfunction is not a valid excuse for late or missing assignments. The college provides computers that are available for your use and are compatible with most assignments you are given.*

Absolutely no coursework will be accepted past the final due date for the course and no Incompletes will be issued unless the student presents with a university-approved reason for taking an Incomplete.

**Academic Integrity:**

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in penalties ranging from a zero on that assignment up to and including a report filed with the Dean of Students.

**Academic Advising:**

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

**Dropping a Class:**

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. *Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course.* Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. (July 23) is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Grade Appeals:**

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, *Student Grade Appeals*, 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 the course. The burden of proof is upon 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, *Student Grade Appeals*. These documents are accessible online at: [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in
CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

For grade concerns in this class, students must discuss the issue with the professor no less than 24 hours after a grade is issued, but no more than up to the date the next major assignment is due. Grade concerns should include specific questions about feedback given, questions about opportunities for improvement on future assignments, and/or evidence that the numeric value of the grade was added up incorrectly. Grade concerns should NOT include whining about how “hard” the grading in the course is, how a student’s grade differs from another’s, or complaints that information on how to complete the assignment wasn’t given. You will be given detailed assignment specifications for each major assignment that include a grade breakdown in the form of a rubric and/or evaluation form. Failure to read and follow these instructions does not constitute an excuse to complain about a grade. You must read everything that is provided for you in this class in order to understand exactly what you are being asked to do for each assignment. Failure to read information is a sure way to do poorly in the class.

Disabilities Accommodations:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Right of Revision:

This syllabus and the information contained within it are subject to change without notice. The instructor always reserves the right to modify the course at any time.

Schedule of Classes

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<th>Related Assignments</th>
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<td>Chapters 1-2, 6</td>
<td>Communication Model Analysis (due 6/4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 7/2 – M 7/9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 1, Part 2: Principles</td>
<td>Chapters 3-5</td>
<td>Expectancy Violations Report (due 6/11)</td>
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<td>M 7/9 – M 7/16</td>
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<td>Unit 2: Interpersonal</td>
<td>Chapters 7-8</td>
<td>Interpersonal Theory Mini Paper (due 6/18)</td>
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<td>M 7/16 – M 7/23</td>
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<td>Unit 3: Groups &amp; Teams</td>
<td>Chapters 9-10, 14</td>
<td>Group PPT (due 8/3) – this is the FINAL</td>
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<td>M 7/23 – M 7/30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 4: Public Speaking</td>
<td>Chapters 11-13, 15</td>
<td>Individual Persuasive Presentation (due 8/6)</td>
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