COMM 5309: SEMINAR IN INTERPERSONAL COMM
Spring, 2018
Section 001: Wednesdays, 7-9:30pm, BH 128

Professor: D. K. Ivy, Ph.D.
diana.ivy@tamucc.edu
Office: BH 325, 825-5986
Office Hrs: M 5-6pm;
TU 3:30-5:30pm; W 5-7pm
(Other 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:
(1) 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.

(2) 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.

(3) Technology Usage: Personal technology is allowed in the classroom, but please mute your cell phone, laptop, and/or tablet so that only you’ll be aware if you receive a call or text. If use of cell phones, pads, or laptops becomes excessive or disruptive, such that class attention and discussion is hampered, I reserve the right to ban their usage in the classroom. Please use technology as a tool to assist your learning, not as a replacement for the work needed to make classroom time successful.
REQUIRED READINGS: Required readings will be made available to you as downloads and will constitute the bulk of our discussion material for the semester. (Refer to the required reading list in the course guidebook handed out to you the first night of class.) 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* (8th ed.) by Beebe, Beebe, and Redmond will be placed on reserve in the Bell Library for the entire semester, as supplemental reference material. (This textbook is not required reading.)

ACADEMIC ADVISING: Students pursuing the Master of Arts in Communication will be paired with a graduate faculty member advisor in their first semester. Students should contact their advisors within the first two weeks of a semester to arrange a meeting during which degree plans, tracks, and opportunities for professional development should be discussed. If you have a question as to who your academic advisor is, contact Dr. Stephanie Rodriguez, Graduate Coordinator (361-825-5753; stephanie.rodriguez@tamucc.edu). To finalize your degree plan and register for graduation, you must also meet with the Graduate Student Academic Advisor in the Academic Advising Center for the College of Liberal Arts. This office is located in Driftwood 203E and can be reached at (361) 825-3466.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR: As an academic community, TAMUCC requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, behavior that interferes with (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of peace and subject to disciplinary sanctions outlined in Article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, e.g., classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips.

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 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact Disability Services for assistance. Once you have contacted Disability Services, please feel free to discuss classroom accommodations with me so that I can provide an optimum learning environment for you.

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: If you miss class when you’re 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 admitted to a hospital (not just seen by someone in an ER) and unable to attend class; or (2) you’ve experienced a death in your family. In both of these situations you must provide documentation supporting the reason for the missed activity. 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 Student Affairs (361-825-2612) and request that a written memo be sent to all your instructors. Anyone traveling for a school-related event must turn in assignments or take quizzes before your travel, not after.

DROPPING A COURSE: I hope you never find it necessary to drop this or any other course. However, events sometimes occur that make dropping necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, the Graduate Coordinator, and me before you decide to drop. Should dropping be your decision, you must initiate the drop process by filling out a course drop form in the Student Services Center (round building). Just stopping attendance and participation won’t automatically result in your being dropped from the course. For the spring semester of 2018, Friday, April 6 is the last day to drop a course with an automatic grade of “W.”

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY/PLAGIARISM: 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, and plagiarism (presentation of someone else’s work as one’s own work). 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. Prof’s do compare notes and discuss student assignments. Do not even think about using material that is not your own—this includes online 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.
EQUITY STATEMENT: All people, regardless of sex/gender, age, class, race, ethnicity, religion, physical/learning ability, sexual orientation, veteran status, etc., shall have equal opportunity without harassment in this course. Any problems can be discussed confidentially with your instructor.

CITATION STYLE: APA 6th edition style is required for all assignments for this course. Other styles (MLA, Chicago, etc.) will not be acceptable in this course.

ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION: Most 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.

Reporter/Critic Assignment: For most readings, 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 an assigned reading. (See guidebook for more info.)

Reflections: You will write 4 informal essays (reflections) about interpersonal communication. These are a bit like journal entries, in that they should be 1-2 pages (typed, double-spaced, standard font size and margins) and no sources are required. These short essays should reflect your own thinking and offer me insight into how you engage in and respond to interpersonal communication. (See guidebook for more info).

Annotated Bibliography Assignment: This assignment involves locating published research about interpersonal communication and annotating it for possible later use. Select a topic you think you might want to pursue for the final project; then find 3 published articles from academic journals or edited book chapters (2000 to the present) that you think will become part of your lit review for your final paper. Read over each article, extrapolating important ideas and incorporating them into your annotations. (See guidebook for more info.)

Abstracts Assignment: For this abstract assignment, you will locate 3 published articles (which may or may not be the same 3 sources used for the annotated bibliography assignment) from academic journals or edited book chapters (2000 to the present) that you think will become part of your literature review for your final paper. Next you will write original abstracts for each article. Abstracting means summarizing the highlights or most important aspects of an article. (See guidebook for more info.)

Instructional Strategy/Training Exercise: In this assignment, 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 appropriate interpersonal communication in the workplace. (See guidebook for more info.)
Final Project: Oral Presentation: Each student will make an informal, 10-minute presentation to the class, summarizing her or his final paper. Be prepared to field questions from your classmates and instructor. (See guidebook for more info.)

Final Project: Paper: The final research paper has two parts: (1) a literature review of research on a topic of your choosing, related to interpersonal communication; and (2) a proposal of research that you believe needs to be conducted on your topic. This paper should be 20-25 pages in length (typed, double-spaced, standard font size and margins), written in APA (6th ed.) style. (See guidebook for more info.)

GRADING SCALE: Here is 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.

ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION: Your final grade in this course is based on your performance on the following assignments. All written assignments must be typed and turned in at the beginning of the class session indicated in this syllabus. Point values for each assignment are shown below. Your final grade is based on a percentage of 290 points, minus any deductions for excessive absences. Roughly 90% of 290 points (approx. 260 points) will earn you an A, roughly 80% (approx. 232 points) a B, and so forth.

- Course Participation (Reporter/Critic) (2) 50 points (25 pts. each)
- Reflection Papers (4) 40 points (10 pts. each)
- Annotated Bibliography 25 points
- Abstracts 25 points
- Instructional Strategy/Training Exercise 25 points
- Final Project: Presentation 25 points
- Final Project: Paper 100 points

290 points maximum

COURSE SCHEDULE: The tentative schedule below details assigned readings, information to be covered during each class session, presentation 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 1/17 Syllabus Overview & Introductions
Assignment: Reporter/Critic Assignment (Guidebook pp. 7-11)
Assignment: Reflection Papers (Guidebook p. 12) (#1 DUE 1/31)
Required Reading: Articles #1-2 by W 1/24
Read: Syll. & Annotated Bib Assignmnt (Guidebk pp. 1-6; 16) by W 1/24
Week 2
W 1/24
Discuss Readings #1 & 2: History, Fundamentals, & Research Methods
Assignment: Annotated Bibliography (DUE W 2/14)
Required Reading: Articles #3-6 by W 1/31

Week 3
W 1/31
DUE: Reflection Paper 1
Discuss Readings #3-6
Assignment: Reflection Paper 2 (Guidebook p. 12) (DUE 2/21)
Required Reading: Articles #7-9 by W 2/7

Week 4
W 2/7
Discuss Readings #7-9
Review Annotated Bibliography Assignment
Read: Abstracts Assignment (Guidebook pp. 17-18) by W 2/14
Required Reading: Articles #10-11 by W 2/14

Week 5
W 2/14
DUE: Annotated Bibliography
Discuss Readings #10-11
Assignment: Abstracts (DUE W 3/7)
Read: Inst. Strat/Train. Assignment (Guidebook pp. 19-20) by W 2/21
Required Reading: Articles #12-14 by W 2/21

Week 6
W 2/21
DUE: Reflection Paper 2
Discuss Readings #12-14
Assignment: Instruct. Strategy/Training Exercise (DUE W 3/28)
Review Abstracts Assignment
Required Reading: Articles #15-17 by W 2/28

Week 7
W 2/28
Discuss Readings #15-17
Assignment: Reflection Paper 3 (Guidebook p. 12) (DUE 3/21)
Required Reading: Articles #18-20 by W 3/7

Week 8
W 3/7
DUE: Abstracts
Discuss Readings #18-20
Review Instructional Strategy/Training Exercise Assignment
Required Reading: Articles #21-23 by W 3/21

SPRING BREAK
March 12-16
| Week 9 | 3/21 | DUE: Reflection Paper 3  
Assignment: Reflection Paper 4 (Guidebook p. 12) (DUE 4/4)  
Discuss Readings #21-23  
Review Instructional Strategy/Training Exercise Assignment |
|-------|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
| Week 10 | 3/28 | DUE: Instructional Strategy/Training Exercise  
Read: Final Paper & Final Presentation (Guidebk pp. 21-25) by W 3/28  
Required Reading: Articles #24-25 by W 4/4 |
| Week 11 | 4/4 | DUE: Reflection Paper 4  
Assignment: Drafts/Outlines (DUE 4/18), Final Presentations (DUE 4/25), & Final Papers (DUE 5/9)  
Discuss Readings #24-25  
Required Reading: Article #26 by W 4/11 |
| F 4/6 | University Deadline to Drop a Class |
| Week 12 | 4/11 | Discuss Reading #26  
Review Draft/Outline, APA Style, Final Presentation, & Final Paper Assignments |
| Week 13 | 4/18 | DUE: Drafts/Outlines  
Individual Appointments |
| Week 14 | 4/25 | DUE: Final Presentations |
| Week 15 | 5/2 | READING DAY (no class meeting) |
| Week 16 | 5/9 | DUE: Final Papers (turned in at Ivy’s office, BH 325) |