



COMM C1004 - Interpersonal Communication

Catalog Description

Transfer Status: CSU/UC

Unit(s): 3.00

Lecture: 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

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Course Description: This course covers theory, research, and application of ethical one-to-one communication practices in various and diverse interpersonal relationships including in personal, professional, and social situations. Students will examine how communication influences and is influenced by social identities and institutions (e.g. family roles, workplace contexts, etc.). (C-ID COMM 130).

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Evaluate and apply research methods and theories of interpersonal communication.
2. Critically assess sources of conflict in interpersonal relationships and implement appropriate conflict management strategies.
3. Critically assess and utilize ethical communication practices within interpersonal relationships as part of interpersonal communication competency.
4. Evaluate the influences of culture, gender, ethnicity, race, age, accessibility, and orientation on the development, maintenance, and dissolution of interpersonal relationships.
5. Analyze the ways that communication can create, develop and shape perceptions of personal and social identities including variables such as but not limited to culture, gender, ethnicity, race, age, and orientation.
6. Explain research methods (e.g. quantitative, qualitative and rhetorical) and theoretical models (e.g. transaction model) used in the study of interpersonal communication.

Course Content

Topic Titles / Suggested Time Topic

Lecture

<u>Topics</u>	<u>Lec Hrs</u>
1. Foundational theories, models, and research in interpersonal communication.	51.00
2. Influences on identity development, and the impact of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, orientation, etc. on interpersonal communication.	
3. The role of perception in interpersonal communication; including theories such as Attribution Theory and Uncertainty Reduction Theory.	
4. Symbolic and linguistic attributes with respect to language in interpersonal communication.	
5. The role of emotions in communicating effectively; may include physiological, cognitive, and neurological theories.	
6. Nonverbal communication; may include principles and theories such as Expectancy Violation Theory.	
7. Listening; processes, styles, types, challenges, and responses.	
8. Interpersonal climate (social tone of relationships) such as confirming/disconfirming messages, self-disclosure, and relational trust.	
9. Ethics in interpersonal communication; may include concepts such as navigating power, influence, bias, stereotyping, bullying, and the dark side of communication.	
10. Interpersonal conflict theories; may include Face-Negotiation Theory and Accommodation Theory.	
11. Development, maintenance, and dissolution of various types of relationships; may include Social Penetration Theory, Attachment Theory, and Knapp's Relational Model.	
12. Research methods (e.g. quantitative, qualitative and rhetorical) used in the study of interpersonal communication.	
Total Hours:	51.00

Methods of Instruction

- A. Class Activities
- B. Discussion
- C. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture

- D. Lecture
- E. Multimedia Presentations
- F. Reading Assignments

Methods of Evaluation

- A. Examples of potential methods of evaluation used to observe or measure students' achievement of course outcomes and objectives could include but are not limited to quizzes, exams, written assignments, journals, projects, research, oral presentations, etc.

Methods of evaluation are at the discretion of local faculty.

Examples of Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read the Pew Research article "Concerns about the future of people's well-being", which presents various views on the connection between digital communication behaviors and personal and social well-being. Draft a one-page position paper defending your stance on whether emotional intelligence – specifically the interpersonal intelligence component – will or will not be damaged by the age of smartphones and social media. Include specific examples from your own experience and/or observations as support. Come to class prepared to debate.
2. Read the Hollywood Diversity Report published by UCLA, focusing on racial/ethnic disparities in lead character mass media entertainment roles. Take notes about how you think those statistics relate to the textbook section on how stereotypes affect our perception and behavior. Come to class prepared to discuss in groups.

Writing Assignments

1. Review the textbook and lecture material on the "dimensions of cultural difference," and identify which dimensions best fit one of your own primary socialization groups (e.g. parental figures, siblings, etc.). Then compare your results to our class discussion of mainstream U.S. culture. Draft a one-page paper explaining the results of this comparison in terms of your early childhood socialization.
2. Read the textbook section on "facework", and then research to find an example of a public figure who has faced a "face threat", meaning a threat to their desired public image (we will brainstorm in class). Write a two-page analysis identifying the type of face threat(s) in play, explaining what they did to repair their public image, and evaluating whether that facework was effective. Conclude your paper with a paragraph exploring how you think this example might show up in the workplace (use your desired career).

Out-of-Class Assignments

1. Watch the excerpt provided from the documentary "God Grew Tired of Us". Analyze the behavior of the Pittsburgh residents and the Sudanese youth, focusing on examples of how ethnocentrism and cultural humility affected the social behavior of both groups. Come to class prepared to discuss whether one group expressed more ethnocentrism than cultural humility, or if both groups expressed both.
2. Read the assigned article about the "crisis of belonging" and the textbooks section discussing "need to belong" theory. Then, analyze a social environment you spend substantial time in, such as your home or workplace, and identify specific ways that environment provides meaningful connections. Next, brainstorm other ways meaningful connections could be built into that environment to help meet the inhabitants' need to belong. Come to class prepared to discuss your ideas with peers.

Recommended Materials of Instruction

Adler, R., & Proctor, R. (2023). *Interplay: The Process of Interpersonal Communication*. Oxford University Press, 16th. 9780197666128.

Guerrero, A. et al. (2020). *Close Encounters: Communication in Relationships*. Sage Publications, Inc, 6th. 9781544349220.

Wood, J. (2026). *Interpersonal Communication: Everyday Encounters*. Cengage, 10th. 9798214157481.

Adler, R., & Manning, J. (2023). *Looking Out, Looking In*. Cengage, 16th. 9780357033944.

Zero Cost Textbook

Usera, D. (2021). *Communication to Connect: Interpersonal Communication for Today*. (OER). Department of Communication Studies, Austin Community College. <https://sites.google.com/austincc.edu/interpersonaloer/about-this-text?authuser=0>

Leonard, V. (2025). *Interpersonal Communication Textbook*. (OER). College of the Canyons.

[https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Courses/College_of_the_Canyons/COMS_246%3A_Interpersonal_Communication_\(Leonard\)](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Courses/College_of_the_Canyons/COMS_246%3A_Interpersonal_Communication_(Leonard))

Wrench, J., Punyanunt-Carter, N., & Thweatt, K. (2025). *Interpersonal Communication: A Mindful Approach to Relationships*. (OER). State University of New York.

[https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Communication/Interpersonal_Communication/Interpersonal_Communication_-_A_Mindful_Approach_to_Relationships_\(Wrench_et_al.\)](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Communication/Interpersonal_Communication/Interpersonal_Communication_-_A_Mindful_Approach_to_Relationships_(Wrench_et_al.))

Other Learning Materials

Texts and course materials will be in accessible format. Priority will be given to OER or low-cost materials where possible. Textbook choice is at the discretion of faculty. Examples of texts include, but are not limited to: (see materials listed above)

Minimum Qualifications

Communication Studies

