

SPC 252: Interpersonal Communication

Fall 2015

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McKendree University

TEXTBOOK:

Guerrero, L. K., Andersen, P.A., & Afifi, W. A. (2013). *Close encounters: Communication in relationships* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

COURSE PURPOSE, LEARNING OUTCOMES, AND GOALS:

Our course is designed to increase our understanding and implementation of effective interpersonal communication behaviors and skills. Throughout the semester we will examine basic verbal and nonverbal elements affecting communication between individuals in family, friend, and romantic contexts. This course requires you to participate in activities designed to develop interpersonal communication skills. Topics include: an introduction to interpersonal communication, identity and perception within communication, verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication, effective listening, emotions and communication, relational maintenance, conflict management, and relational development in a variety of interpersonal contexts.

Throughout the semester, successful students will be assessed on the following objectives:

1. Understand the need to reflect upon interpersonal communication practices.
2. Define and explain interpersonal communication and its importance to others.
3. Process and apply theory to relationships.
4. Develop and practice communication skills in a supportive environment.
5. Understand various contexts (friendship, family, romantic interactions, employee settings, etc.) in which interpersonal communication occurs.
6. Understand and critique current Interpersonal Communication research.
7. Critique relational communication within a variety of contexts.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

20% Research Abstract: You will complete one formal research abstract. A formal abstract is a concise report of the purpose of the research, what was done, and what was found. These abstracts should include the following sections: Literature Review, methods, results, and discussion. You will sign up for a topic at the beginning of the semester. The project is due on the day we discuss the topic.

20% Mini Papers: I will provide a variety of prompts based on the content of the course. Throughout the semester, you will be required to write 2 mini research papers, which are 3-4 page papers that address some of the more critical and difficult issues surrounding interpersonal communication.

30% Reading Objectives and Participation. After each reading assignment, you will be asked to complete a set of reading objectives. These reading objectives ask you to record certain facts you need to obtain from the readings. At the end of each class, you will fill out a participation log. Your participation logs will be graded throughout the semester. Each day of attendance will be assessed on a 5 point scale.

20% Exams. Throughout the semester, you will complete three exams that aim to assess your understanding of interpersonal communication. These exams will include approximately 20 multiple choice questions and two essay questions. The final will be an open book, open notes, essay exam covering the entire semester.

20% Final Project: The final project for this course will be a paper (approximately 10 -12 pages). I recommend that you work in groups (2-3 people) on this project. You have three options:

Option 1: Research Proposal – For communication majors or students who are interested in conducting a larger scale study in the future, the research proposal may be the best option for you. You will design a 10 page proposal that includes an introduction, a review of literature, a proposed methods section, and a discussion section. Think of this paper as a justification for studying a context of interpersonal communication.

Option 2: Advice Chapter – Since we have discussed several concepts concerning building and maintaining a relationship, this option will ask you to write a chapter for a popular press book that aims to provide relationship advice. This will be in a 10 page minimum chapter. You should include images, graphics, surveys, and other elements as well as support from at least 8 external sources.

Option 3: Review of Literature – Finally, you can choose this option if you are interested in a particular area of interpersonal communication and would like to know more. In this paper, you would read through several articles and write about what is known in this specific area of interpersonal communication. For example, if you wanted to review Internet Dating, you would read several articles and book chapters on the current research. Then write an overview of the subject. You would also include a section on where future research needs to look.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

Week	M	W	F
1	Introduction to the Course Best Relationship Story	<i>What is Communication</i> <i>Worst Relationship Story</i>	<i>Introduction to IPC</i> <i>RO Ch. 1</i>
2	Identity & Face Saving RO Ch. 2		
3	Attraction RO Ch. 3	Uncertainty & Expectations RO Ch. 4	
4	Relationship Stages RO Ch. 5 -1	Relational Dialectics RO Ch. 5 -2	Self-Disclosure Chapter 6-1
5	Privacy Chapter 6-2	Intimacy RO Ch. 7-1	Social Support RO Ch. 7-2
6	<i>Exam #1</i> <i>Mini Paper Group #1 Due</i>	<i>Love</i> <i>RO Ch 8-1</i>	
7	Attachment RO Ch. 8 -2 <i>Due: Verbal Proposals</i>	Maintaining Relationships I RO Ch. 10	
8	<i>Film – Single the Documentary</i>		
9	<i>Exam #2</i> <i>Mini Paper Group #2 Due</i>	<i>Conflict</i> <i>RO Ch. 11</i>	
10	<i>Power</i> <i>RO Chapter 12</i>		
11	<i>Relational Transgressions I</i> <i>RO Ch. 13</i>		<i>Forgiveness</i> <i>RO Ch. 14</i>
12	<i>Relational Termination I</i> <i>RO Ch. 15</i>		
13	<i>Exam #3</i> <i>Mini Paper Group #3 Due</i>		
14	<i>Film – The Invisible War</i>		
15	<i>Project Work Week and Presentations</i>		
16	Final 12:30		