

Communication 389/589
Relational Communication
Fall 2015

Tuesday and Thursday, 2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m., CAC 204

Professor: Dr. Sylvia L. Mikucki-Enyart
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Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m., and by appointment.

Course Description: Communication 389/589 is an advanced course designed to introduce you to the theory and research in interpersonal communication, particularly the scholarship relevant to close relationships. Although this is not a “skills based course” per say, the theoretical knowledge you accrue over the course of the semester should allow to you be better informed and, therefore, more skillful when managing your current and future relationships.

Required Textbook Rental:

Guerrero, L., K., Andersen, P. A., & Afifi, W. A. (2014). *Close encounters: Communication in relationships* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Additional Readings:

- Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). You can purchase this from amazon.com.
- Popular culture readings posted on D2L.

Course Objectives: After completing this course students should be able to:

- Describe the prominent theories and principles governing interpersonal communication.
- Summarize, evaluate, and critique scholarly research.
- Utilize interpersonal communication research and theory to provide evidence-based research advice.

Assignments and Grading

Grading Philosophy:

My primary aim is for you to understand course material and its utility and application in your daily life. As such, I view grades as a means to an end, not an end themselves. In other words, I want you to be focused on learning rather than simply receiving a high grade. If you focus on the latter, this course will seem onerous, assignments and exams will seem like obstacles, and your

motivation will quickly evaporate. If you focus on the former, however, you are more likely to stay engaged, involved, and motivated. And, in more cases than not, this intrinsic desire and motivation often goes hand in hand with higher marks.

Based on my philosophy, I view grading as a tool that allows me to (a) assess your demonstrated competence of particular content area, and (b) provide you feedback on how well you appear to comprehend course material. Unfortunately, I cannot assess or assign a grade to effort or time. Even if you worked “really hard” on a paper or spent “hours” studying for a test, I can only evaluate how competently you demonstrate knowledge and understanding of lecture and textbook material.

If you are unhappy with your grade, I am happy to meet with you to discuss your approach to learning, such as how you prepare for class, exams, and assignments.

Grading: Your grade will be calculated based on your scores from three exams and writing assignments:

Exam 1:	20%
Exam 2:	20%
Exam 3:	20%
Popular Culture Reading Responses (3):	15%
Relationship Advice Paper:	<u>25%</u>

Grading Scale: The following grading scale is used to determine your final grade:

100% - 94% = A	79% - 77% = C+	59% or less = F
93% - 90 = A-	76% - 74% = C	
89% - 87% = B+	73% - 70% = C-	
86% - 84% = B	69% - 67% = D+	
83% - 80% = B-	66% - 60% = D	

Exams: There will be three exams throughout the semester: Exam 1, Exam 2, and Exam 3 (which will be held during the final exam time). Each exam will consist of true/false, multiple choice, and matching questions. Questions will range from straight recall (e.g., definitions, etc.) to applied questions (e.g., you will be given an example and then must identify the correct concepts/theories/etc.). Exams will include information from both the textbook and lecture, including questions about examples, video clips, and discussions that occur during class time. Brief review sessions will be held the day before exams. I also encourage you to form study groups with fellow classmates.

Writing Assignments: There are two major assignments in the course: (a) Popular Culture Reading Responses (3 responses total), and (b) Relationship Advice Paper. More details about these assignments will be provided in separate handouts.

****All writing assignments must be turned in electronically via the dropbox in D2L *and* hardcopy in class.****

Students often ask why points were deducted from a writing assignment. This question suggests that you began the assignment with a 100%. I take the approach that all student assignments begin at a 0% and students earn rather than lose points.

Your grade for writing assignments will be determined by how well you demonstrate your knowledge of course concepts along with your ability to critically think and make logical and meaningful connections between interpersonal concepts and theories and real-life and/or fictional interpersonal interactions. In addition, writing assignments must be relevant, thoughtful, and well-written. Excessive grammatical or typographical errors make it difficult to understand the content of the paper and prevent students from demonstrating their knowledge and earning points.

Graduate Students: In addition to the required assignments, graduate students will write a brief research proposal outlining a proposed study regarding an aspect of interpersonal communication. Toward the end of the semester they will present their proposal to the class. Graduate students should contact the instructor for additional details.

Course Guidelines

Attendance: Daily attendance is not mandatory, nor do I take attendance. However, regular attendance is an essential part of performing well in class. For example, a great deal of lecture will stem from material that is not included in the textbook. Additionally, lecture content along with examples discussed in class are fair game for exams. As a result, students are strongly encouraged to attend all class sessions.

Although daily attendance is encouraged, I recognize that life sometimes interferes with your ability to attend class. If you do miss a class period *it is YOUR responsibility to obtain all the information presented in class, including assignments, course material, announcements, and schedule changes from a classmate*. I do not give copies of my notes to students, so you must get this information from a classmate. If information or content is unclear, please do not hesitate to contact me.

There is one *exception*—TEST DAYS. *Attendance on tests days is required*. If you are absent on a test day and you do not have an excused absence (which we discussed in advance) you will receive a zero on your exam. No excuses, no exceptions.

Tardiness: Although attendance is not taken, it is unprofessional and disrespectful to come to class late. I understand that occasionally circumstances arise that may prevent you from being punctual; however, please do not make this a daily occurrence. *Remember: Early is on time, on time is late, and late is unacceptable.*

Excused Absences: An absence on a test day will only be excused for a University-sponsored activities (with a note provided by an advisor or coach), documented illnesses (including flu-like symptoms), or attendance at a funeral (bring a funeral card or obituary). However, just like your job, you must “call in” if you are going to be absent. You must inform me BEFORE class time

that you will be absent and not able to take the test. If you do not inform me in advance and schedule a make-up exam you will not be able to retake the test. In addition, all make-up exams will be in essay format rather than multiple-choice format.

Late Assignments: Writing assignments will be penalized 10% of available points for each calendar day (not class period) they are received past their deadlines. A calendar day begins the minute a paper is due. Thus, if the paper was due at 12:00 p.m. on Monday and you turn it in at 1:00 p.m. Monday, you will receive a 10% penalty. Turn it in at 12:00 p.m. Tuesday and the penalty is 20% and so on. See the assignment handouts for details. The course schedule includes all exam and assignment dates, please plan your work and travel schedule accordingly.

Grade Inquiry for Exam Items and Writing Assignments: Students are encouraged to take action if they believe an exam question or paper section was scored inaccurately. Students should submit a typed essay within one week after the exam or paper is returned in class. Essay should cite class material to convincingly argue for why the exam answer or paper section should be re-evaluated.

Delayed Enrollment in the Class: Of course, students are responsible for all material and assignments beginning from the first day of the semester. Students who enroll after the first day of class begin the course at a sizeable disadvantage, particularly because some points will already have been awarded. Students in this position should carefully consider whether they wish to enroll once the course is underway.

Email Etiquette: Email is a quick and convenient way for us to communicate outside of class. Remember, however, that you are still communicating with your professor. That being said, I expect all emails to be professional and courteous. Please make sure that all emails include a subject, a salutation (e.g., Dear Dr. Mikucki-Enyart, Hello Professor, etc), content that is free of grammatical and spelling errors, a close (e.g., From, Sincerely, etc), and your name. Also, be mindful of the tone of your email.

Disability Issues: Students who require disability-related assistance will be accommodated per university policy. Please notify me in writing within the first two weeks of the semester.

Academic Integrity: Academic misconduct, including cheating, plagiarism, and helping others commit violations will not be tolerated. Students who violate the university's academic code (see <http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/Academic%20Integrity%20Brochure.pdf>) will be rigorously sanctioned.

Religious Holidays: The university does not observe all religious holidays. Students who observe religious holidays that conflict with class sessions should notify me in writing within the first two weeks of the semester.