



Syllabus for COMM 7—Interpersonal Communication

Course Information

Semester & Year: Fall 2021

Course ID & Section #: D2356 (052356)

Instructor's name: Daniel M. Chick (he/him/his)

Course units: 3

Instructor Contact Information

Office location: E Building, Room 4

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Catalog Description

An introductory survey communication course designed to increase interpersonal awareness and effectiveness in person-to-person communication settings. Students will read, discuss, and apply concepts and principles while developing skills dealing with the verbal and nonverbal transactions that occur in relationships.

Course Student Learning Outcomes

1. Identify ethical, competent, and incompetent verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors.
2. Explain the relationship between self-concept and communication.
3. Analyze how communication affects relational dynamics.
4. Describe the role of perceptual frameworks in interpersonal communication.

Your Course Text

Textbook: Jason S. Wrench, Narsissra M. Punyanunt-Carter, and Katherine S. Thweatt, *Interpersonal Communication: A Mindful Approach* (New York, NY: Milne Open Textbooks, 2020).

Additional readings and important content will be provided in your weekly packets.

Teaching Philosophy

My goal for the course is to create a student-centered environment, one which appreciates the nuances of interlocking identities and provides a strong foundation for students to develop into

ethical, reasoned citizens who positively influence public discourse through personal and civic engagement. In doing so, I emphasize the need for constructive, reciprocal dialogue that enhances the experiences of everyone in this environment. To accomplish this, I approach each lesson as an opportunity to uncover the nature of students' surroundings and of power structures at play. I demonstrate and, in turn, expect engagement that will allow for students to uncover these influences in themselves. In sum, as a critical rhetorical pedagogue, it is ultimately my goal to invite students to imagine a better world, vigorously defend it among equals, and then realize it through advocacy.

Course Norms

Good information and clear communication about your needs will help you be successful. Please let me know about any specific challenges or technology limitations that might affect your participation in class.

This is an environment in which we are all in solidarity with one another. We're going to learn what ethical, informed, and respectful communication looks like and do our best to embody it every day. It is also true that we are human and therefore imperfect. Sometimes we will say something stupid, ignorant, misinformed, or hurtful—even if we don't intend to. Even as the instructor, I also fall in this category.

My promise as the instructor is that I will always treat you with the utmost respect and develop an environment in which you are welcome and in which your identity, history, and culture is respected. At the same time, as a cisgender white man with relative economic security, I acknowledge that I sometimes have areas of ignorance about how the world works. If I fail to live up to the obligation I have laid out here for any reason, please call me out or in to discuss the problem (we'll discuss some strategies on how to do that throughout the semester). I will also routinely request your anonymous feedback throughout the semester to ensure I am living up to this promise.

Similarly, you, the student, will also live up to this standard. Students are expected to remember that they are in the process of becoming more competent and ethical communicators. In doing so, you should abide by the ethical guidelines laid out in the NCA credo for ethical communication found in your unit 1 packet.

Accessibility

College of the Redwoods is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. When needed, you have the right to request reasonable accommodation under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act. As [the United States Department of Labor](#) has explained:

- Under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a job, the work environment, or the way things are usually done during the hiring process. These modifications enable an individual with a disability to have an equal opportunity not only to get a job, but successfully perform their job tasks to

the same extent as people without disabilities. The ADA requires reasonable accommodations as they relate to three aspects of employment: 1) ensuring equal opportunity in the application process; 2) enabling a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of a job; and 3) making it possible for an employee with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment.

Accommodations are sometimes referred to as “productivity enhancers”. Reasonable accommodations should not be viewed as “special treatment” and they often benefit all employees. For example, facility enhancements such as ramps, accessible restrooms, and ergonomic workstations benefit more than just employees with disabilities. Examples of reasonable accommodations include making existing facilities accessible; job restructuring; part-time or modified work schedules; acquiring or modifying equipment; changing tests, training materials, or policies; and providing qualified readers or interpreters. Here are some more examples. Many job accommodations cost very little and often involve minor changes to a work environment, schedule or work-related technologies:

- Physical changes
 - Installing a ramp or modifying a rest room
 - Modifying the layout of a workspace
- Accessible and assistive technologies
 - Ensuring computer software is accessible
 - Providing screen reader software
 - Using videophones to facilitate communications with colleagues who are deaf
- Accessible communications
 - Providing sign language interpreters or closed captioning at meetings and events
 - Making materials available in Braille or large print
- Policy enhancements
 - Modifying a policy to allow a service animal in a business setting
 - Adjusting work schedules so employees with chronic medical conditions can go to medical appointments and complete their work at alternate times or locations

If you have a disability or believe you might benefit from disability-related services and accommodations, please use your Ask CR form we can coordinate with Disability Services and Programs for Students (DSPS).

Inclusive Language in the Classroom

College of the Redwoods aspires to create a learning environment in which all people feel comfortable in contributing their perspectives to classroom discussions. It therefore encourages instructors and students to use language that is inclusive and respectful.

Disruptive Behavior

Student behavior or speech that disrupts the instructional setting will not be tolerated. Disruptive conduct may include, but is not limited to: unwarranted interruptions; failure to adhere to instructor's directions; vulgar or obscene language; slurs or other forms of intimidation; and physically or verbally abusive behavior. In such cases where the instructor determines that a student has disrupted the educational process, a disruptive student may be temporarily removed from class. In addition, the student may be reported to the Chief Student Services Officer or designee.

Evaluation & Grading Policy

Assignments

Readings

Regular reading assignments are listed on the course schedule. Be sure to read the material before coming to class each period. You are responsible to read each assigned reading completely.

Notes and Journaling | 50 pts (5 x 10 = 50 overall, 5 pts each)

A combination of reading notes and posed questions, notes and journaling should be an introspective view of each week's material. That is, how do you relate to it? How does the material from the current week relate to previous weeks? What stuck out to you the most and the least? What burning questions do you still have? How have you been living up to the concepts and ideals we discussed that week? (For what it's worth, you're not limited to answering these questions. But, I think they're a good start in getting your thought processes going!) You'll have an opportunity every week to turn one in, meaning you'll have 15 opportunities to complete this assignment!

Experiment Journals | 75 pts (25 x 3 = 75 overall, 25 pts each)

Students will conduct 3 communication experiments that apply skills and behaviors discussed in class or in the text. After each communication experiment, students will write a one-page paper describing the skill, technique, or theory, how they applied it, their experience during its use, and their thoughts about and analysis of the results. A complete description of this assignment will be provided, as well as a grading rubric.

Final Course Reflection Paper & Outline | 125 pts (100 pts for final paper, 25 pts for outline)

The purpose of this paper is for students to look back and think deeply about the communication skills they have developed throughout this semester and reflect on the outcomes that result from these new skills. The paper should demonstrate students' competency of the course material and concepts/theories learned throughout the semester. A complete description of this assignment, along with a grading rubric, will be provided.

Final Exam | 50 pts

There will be one exam for this course during the prescribed final exam period. It will assess your understanding of the communication concepts and theories covered throughout this

semester. Most notably, it will assess your ability to apply these concepts to hypothetical and real life scenarios. It will be a combination of multiple choice, short essay, and open-response questions. You will ultimately be tasked with *making an argument* for each question. Thus, the exam will be open-book and open-note so you can make a reasoned case **with evidence**.

Attendance/Participation | 100 pts

Learning interpersonal communication isn't just a hypothetical thing. We perform it, embody it, every single day in every interaction we have. So, it is very important for to have real discussions about the content we're covering. Participation is a function of attendance, meaning that the student will demonstrate they read the material, ask questions that extend the thinking of the class and the instructor, and demonstrate their own deep thinking on the subject.

For Correspondence Courses

Developing our interpersonal communication skills through correspondence and not in face to face situations is, of course, difficult. To demonstrate adequate participation, students should complete all assigned materials in their packet on time. Therein, they should demonstrate their deep thinking on the subject by asking engaging questions (be sure to utilize the time you are given for your burning questions!!), taking thorough notes that not only retells the content in their own words but also deeply analyzes it, and, where appropriate and available, discussing the course and course concepts with one another in mediated ways.

Reasonable Accommodations to the Attendance and Participation Grading System

Often, attendance policies such as what I have outlined above unfairly punish those of us with illnesses and/or disabilities. According to [Stanford University](#) policy, "For students with chronic conditions that are episodic in nature, there may be periods of time in which they are too unwell to attend class." Reasonable accommodations (defined above) do exist for this policy and will be applied. If you require a reasonable accommodation for this policy, please let me know ASAP! I'm happy to work with you!

Point Breakdown

Notes and Journaling	50
Experiment Journals	75
Final Course Reflection Paper & Presentation	125
Final Exam	50
Attendance/Participation	100
Total Points Possible	400

A	375-400
A-	360-374
B+	345-359
B	330-344
B-	320-329
C+	305-319
C	280-304
D	240-279
F	≤239

Cheating, Plagiarism, and Academic Dishonesty

In the academic community, the high value placed on truth implies a corresponding intolerance of scholastic dishonesty. In cases involving academic dishonesty, determination of the grade and of the student's status in the course is left primarily to the discretion of the faculty member. In such cases, where the instructor determines that a student has demonstrated academic dishonesty, the student may receive a failing grade for the assignment and/or exam and may be reported to the Chief Student Services Officer or designee.

What this means for you: Don't plagiarize. According to Oxford University, "Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition."

Oxford University reported that plagiarism can take the form of, but is not limited to:

1. **Verbatim (word for word) quotation without clear acknowledgement**
2. **Cutting and pasting from the Internet without clear acknowledgement**
3. **Paraphrasing without clear acknowledgement**
4. **Collusion**
5. **Inaccurate Citations**
6. **Failure to Acknowledge Assistance**
7. **Use of material written by professional agencies or other persons without clear acknowledgement**
8. **Self-plagiarism (submitting your own work for multiple assignments across courses without prior approval)**

Course Schedules

Week	Course Concepts	Agenda
Unit 1	Introducing Interpersonal Communication in a Diverse Society	
Week 1 August 23-29	Syllabus, Course Introduction This week, we're getting our materials and getting acquainted with the course and your instructor.	<p>Our program is sending the first packet on August 27th. Seeing as how it's Friday and we start adjusting to our new schedules, we're staying light this week.</p> <p>Between now and Monday (8/30), make sure all your courses and course items are in order.</p> <p>You should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Course Syllabus and Schedule • Read Effective Note Taking Skills • Start Journaling! Think through and write about your questions, concerns, and expectations for the course. Reflect on the social contract you're agreeing to in the syllabus.
Week 2 August 30 - September 5	Interpersonal Communication in a Diverse Society, an Overview The ins-and-outs of sharing our experiences with one another in a diverse society with many people like us and unlike us in substantial ways.	<p>Make sure you have all course materials! Keep track of your necessary scholar items as well (pencils, pen fillers, erasers, paper, etc). Also be sure to utilize your burning questions form for any questions or concerns you have with the syllabus and/or course content! Keep an eye out for this week's mail for course updates. I'll be sending more information about your experiment journals (due in week four!).</p> <p>To do this week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lightly read TB Chapter 1, "Introduction to Human Communication": <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Read Intro & section 1.5 ○ Skim sections 1.2, 1.3, & 1.4 • Read TB Chapter 2, "Overview of Interpersonal Communication" • <u>First Chapter Notes & Journal due.</u> Mail your chapter notes and journal to the PB Education Department (attn: CR Scholars) by Thursday, September 2nd for Week 2's mail pickup that day. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Answer questions about "Why study communication?", perception process & interpersonal communication skills; reflect on what it means to communicate in a diverse society.

<p>Week 3</p> <p>September 6-12</p>	<p>Culture and Environment in Communication</p> <p>Where we come from affects who we become, the behaviors we think are normal, and the communication behaviors we adopt. This week, we'll take a look at how these environmental factors come into play.</p>	<p>Keep an eye out for this week's mail for course updates. You'll be receiving feedback for your first chapter notes/journal!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read TB Chapter 6, "Cultural and Environmental Factors in Interpersonal Communication" • <u>Complete intercultural communication skills inventory & questions, "Improving Intercultural Communication Skills" exercise</u> • <u>Second</u> Chapter Notes & Journal Due. • Mail your assignments to the PB Education Department (attn: CR Scholars) by Thursday, September 9th for Week 3's mail pickup that Friday.
<p>Week 4</p> <p>September 13-19</p>	<p>Power and Oppression in Culture, or, Culture and Environment in Communication Continued</p> <p>Power and oppression seem like pretty heavy terms, but let's be for real: they exist, are omnipresent, and can be observed in the ways we communicate with each other. This week, we'll be establishing a foundational understanding of what these terms mean and how we can observe them in the way we talk with one another.</p>	<p>This week we'll be dealing with some really heavy concepts. Have no fear—you are so ready to tackle them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read about Intersectionality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Intersectionality: A Fun Guide" ○ "A Beginner's Guide to Intersectionality" <p>To do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>First Experiment Journal Due</u> • <u>Third</u> Chapter Notes & Journal Due: What does your "power flower" look like? What does that mean for you? How does that shape who you are and what you believe? What else is missing from the flower, if anything? • <u>First check-in</u> • Mail your due items to the PB Education Department (attn: CR Scholars) by Thursday, September 16th for Week 4's mail pickup that Friday.

Preview for the Rest of the Semester

(don't worry about this too much right now! Just keep it in your mind as we progress)

Date/ Week	Course Concepts	Agenda
Unit 2	What Interpersonal Communication Looks Like	
Week 5 September 20 September 22	Beginning with the Self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read TB Chapter 3, "Intrapersonal Communication" • Notes & Journal due
Week 6 September 27 September 29	Sharing Meaning Verbally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read TB Chapter 4, "Verbal Elements of Communication" • Notes & Journal Due
Week 7 October 4 October 6	Sharing Meaning Non-Verbally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read TB Chapter 5, "Nonverbal Communication" • Notes & Journal Due
Week 8 October 11 October 13	Talking and Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read TB Chapter 7, "Talking and Listening" • Notes & Journal Due • Second Check-in
Week 9 October 18 October 20	Building and Maintaining Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read TB Chapter 8, "Building and Maintaining Relationships" • Notes & Journal Due
Week 10 October 25 October 27	Conflict and Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read TB Chapter 9, "Conflict in Relationships" • Notes & Journal Due

Week 11 November 1 November 3	Friendships, Family, and Marriage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read TB Chapter 10, "Friendship Relationships," and Chapter 11, "Family & Marriage Relationships" • Second Experiment Journal Due • Notes & Journal Due • Third Check-in
Unit 3	Interpersonal Communication in Various Contexts	
Week 12 November 8 November 10	Interpersonal Communication in Mediated Contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read TB Chapter 12, "Interpersonal Communication in Mediated Contexts" • Notes & Journal Due
Week 13 November 15 November 17	The Intersections of Organizational Communication and Interpersonal Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read TB Chapter 13, "Interpersonal Relationships at Work" • Notes & Journal Due
Week 14 November 22 November 24	Fall Break & Thanksgiving	Enjoy your down time!
Week 15 November 29 December 1	The Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication	29th <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read TB Chapter 14, "The Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication" • Final Experiment Journal Due • Notes & Journal Due
Week 16 December 6 December 8	In Sum...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final essays due

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Notepad

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