

Interpersonal Communication – COM 162

Fall 2011

Western Connecticut State University

Section 14: 9-9:50am MWF
BR 208

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Objectives/Description

This class will (a) focus on the basic principles of interpersonal communication, (b) practice developing interaction skills between two or more individuals, and (c) explore and identify pitfalls in interpersonal communication and practical ways to approach these. Through lectures, discussion, readings, and classroom activities, this course will explore the practical and theoretical aspects of interpersonal communication in order to better understand and strengthen interpersonal skills.

What do I expect from you?

- 1) **PAY ATTENTION** – It is your responsibility to listen the first time something is said. I will not repeat myself – either in class or in my office hours. If you do not understand something, please feel free to ask me to explain it more clearly or more specifically. But I will not say something again just because you didn't hear it the first time. With this in mind, I will not tolerate anyone in class detracting from a classmate's ability to listen.
- 2) **PREPARATION** - I expect that you will come to class ready to discuss the topic assigned for that day. You are responsible for all information presented in class lectures.
- 3) **PARTICIPATION** - I expect you will participate in class. Since my classrooms are active learning environments – there will exist what I call “organized chaos.” The class succeeds to the extent you participate and engage.
- 4) **ENGAGEMENT** - I expect you to speak and express your ideas freely. There is no silencing in this classroom. Everyone's ideas are important to consider regardless of where on the “political” or “religious” scale they may fall. In fact, I often play “devil's advocate” to get discussion going.
- 5) **RESPECT** - I expect you to respect individuals in the classroom and to listen when others speak. I also expect you to help create an atmosphere of caring, concern, fun, and energy.

What can you expect from me?

- 1) I will be fully prepared for each class.
- 2) I will work hard to engage you in the learning process in a fun and interactive manner.
- 3) I will work to provide assignments, discussions, in-class activities that will stimulate your thinking and teach you to begin to think critically and “outside” the box.
- 4) I will be available to you through email and office hours.
- 5) I will provide clear and concise instructions on all assignments.
- 6) I will return assignments to you promptly.

GENERAL POLICIES:

Deadlines and Due dates: All assignments must be turned in ON or BEFORE the due dates. Late assignments will not be accepted. **Do everything early**, because technological difficulties do NOT excuse missing assignments. All assignments should be turned in typed, via email, *received prior* to the class period it's due. I only accept .doc, .docx, or .odt file attachments. Any other format (including pasting in emails) will not be counted. No matter what your actual grade earned, *you must complete all major assignments to pass the class.*

Participation: This course is designed with various projects to mirror the real world. In the real world, showing up and looking interested are mandatory. Participation activities will be assigned – for points both in and out of class. Missing class on the day of an in-class point assignment means you cannot make up that assignment. Missing class on the day homework is assigned means you are responsible for getting that homework information from a classmate or teaching assistant and turning it in on time. **Late work is never accepted.** Texting, sleeping, reading, doing other-class homework are not acceptable in this class. If you do any of them (and trust me, I always see you), you will *automatically be counted absent* for that day. If you decide to use a laptop in class to take notes, each day you use it, you will need to email me the full set of lecture notes you have taken on it by 5pm that day.

*There *may* be extra credit opportunities provided throughout the semester – both in and outside of class. However, I will present these to you. *Do not ask me for extra credit; no one will receive it when someone asks.**

Attendance: Absences do not excuse students from assignments due on the date of their absence. I do realize there are times when you simply cannot be in class so 4 absences, (**excused or unexcused**) will be allowed without penalty. I do not need *or want* documentation, notes, or phone calls. . . .just use these freebies judiciously, if at all. Be wise in this area – I find this is where grades are affected most. Attendance will be taken every class period and you will be graded on participation. **If you miss a class, you are responsible for the material we covered that day. Please do not ask me or the TA to re-cover the class for you; get the material from a classmate.**

This course begins on time. Habitual tardiness will equate to an absence, as will leaving class early, and will also count against your overall participation score. Each absence above your “freebies” will result in a point deduction of **15 pts.** from your overall score. You are ultimately responsible for your own withdrawal by the withdrawal date.

TARDINESS: This a 50 minute class. With that in mind, walking in consistently late begins to affect the knowledge you are capable of gaining through the course. I keep track of attendance every day. I also keep track of late attendance. A few minutes late will not affect you, but if you are *significantly late* (i.e., I have already started lecturing), you will be noted as late. Because I understand we all have days when we are just running late, your tardiness will only affect you if it becomes habitual. In other words, when you have accumulated at least 4 significantly late days on the attendance roster, you will receive a deduction on your participation points.

Plagiarism: Academic dishonesty of any kind will be considered cheating. It is *the responsibility of the student* to not only abstain from cheating, but to avoid making it possible for others to cheat as well. Any student knowingly helping another student cheat is as culpable as the student they assist. Submission of someone else's work (in literal word or in thought) as one's own constitutes plagiarism. *In other words, if you submit a paper with information from another source and do not say the sources in your paper, you are plagiarizing!* Academic honesty requires that ideas taken from another source be cited (fully acknowledged) at all times. First identification of plagiarism will result in the student receiving a zero on whichever assignment plagiarism is employed. Second offenses will result in the student failing the course and being dismissed from class. Either offence may be reported to the department chair and the dean of Arts and Sciences.

Writing style: *All writing assignments should be typed (Times New Roman, 12 size font) and carefully proofread for errors.* Both quality of writing style and substance of ideas will be graded; meaning and importance of ideas are inseparable from the language through which they are conveyed. A paper with significant typos, grammar errors, poor organization, lack of clarity, or NOT typed will be turned back to the student without a grade. *In other words, if I have a difficult time reading your college-level paper, I can't grade it for a college course.* Take the time to make all assignments acceptable at a **college level.**

The *Writing Lab* (106 Berkshire Hall; 837-8728), managed by the English Department, is a place where students can improve all aspects of writing: development, style, organization, grammar and mechanics.
<http://www.wcsu.edu/writinglab/>

Accessibility: It is my desire to have all students included in this class. Therefore, it is the student's responsibility to let me know of his/her need for special accommodations to fully participate in the course. Students can contact the coordinator of disability services at (203) 837-8225 or 837-8221 or cohende@wcsu.edu in Higgins Annex 017 to discuss reasonable accommodations.

Grades are earned, not given!

Simply meeting the requirements of an assignment *may* garner you a C. Also, time spent does not equal time earned. Excellence is rewarded, effort is not (although it is appreciated ☺).

A = Superior work. Greatly exceeds requirements. Outstanding levels of creativity, skill, initiative, and/or effort. *Elicits the “excellent, really excellent” comment.*

B = Good work/above average. Exceeds requirements. Shows substantial creativity, skills, initiative, and/or effort. Goes beyond the minimal requirements of the assignment. *Elicits the “nicely done” comment.*

C = Average work. Meets the requirements in every aspect, but does not exceed requirements. I expect this from this assignment. *Elicits the “OK, they did the work” comment.*

D = Deficient. Meets some requirements, but deficient in others. *Elicits the “hmmm, I wonder if they waited till the last minute to do this?” comment.* A good thing to do when you get this grade is to come to see me.

F = Poor. Deficient in most or all requirements. *Elicits the “well, they blew this assignment off” or “Do they think I am stupid that they are going to get points for this?” comment from me.* Again – a **MUST** is to see me!! I am gracious and kind and I really **DO** want you to pass this class. ☺

TO EARN CREDIT:

Please track your grades on the grid provided in this syllabus. That way, you will always know what you are getting in the course and will never need to ask. ☺ **I will not keep a running total of your grades for you** – do it yourself. Your end-of-semester grade should never be a surprise, because I’ll return every score to you immediately, throughout the semester.

Participation: (75 pts)

This course is interactive in nature and requires class participation. You will be required to *actively* demonstrate effective communication skills in both oral and written assignments. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss and participate in activities associated with the material. I will make this qualitative assessment of your participation/involvement at the end of the semester, when I grade. In addition to assessing your level of active involvement in the course on a day-to-day basis, other “negative” things (e.g., tardiness, sleeping, texting/phone use, poor attitudes, hostility/rudeness toward me or your classmates, and inappropriate behaviors) will also bring down this score.

Exercises: (175 pts)

Throughout this class you will be asked to do exercises that will reinforce what we are learning. Most of these will be assigned/or completed in class, others outside of class. Those activities and assignments done in class will not be able to be made up. Those activities assigned in class as homework for subsequent class periods may be obtained from a classmate or the TA.

Mini-Exams: (10 @ 30 pts = 300 pts)

There will be 11 (30 point) mini-tests. This allows you a better opportunity to do well on these tests by not having to cover a vast amount of information. Tests will encourage mastery of the terms in the interpersonal field (both from lecture and your assigned reading) and also provide for understanding of the concepts. You will be able to drop the mini-test with the lowest score, for a total of 10 tests counted toward your grade. Mini-exams can be taken in advance, if you know you will be absent on a day we have one. However, notifying me after class of your absence/excuse will not allow you to make it up.

Journals: (6 @ 15 pts = 90 pts)

Journals will be assigned related to topics currently being covered in class and in the text and will provide an opportunity to participate with class concepts without necessarily sharing them with your classmates through evidence and application to your own life. Don’t forget – all must be typed.

Tentative Schedule

| | | COVERED | DUE IN CLASS |
|-----------|---|--|--|
| Aug 29 | M | Introduction to Class | |
| Aug 31 | W | Communication Overview | |
| Sept 2 | F | Interpersonal Overview | Journal 1 FIRO Scale |
| Sept 5 | M | Labor Day – NC | |
| Sept 7 | W | Perception of Others | Mini-Exam 1 |
| Sept 9 | F | Perception of Self | |
| Sept 12 | M | Identity | Mini-Exam 2 Self-Monitoring Scale |
| Sept 14 | W | Interpersonal Meaning-Sex/Gender | Interpersonal BSRI Scale |
| Sept 16 | F | Communication Gender | Gender Hunt |
| Sept 19 | M | Interpersonal Cultural Differences | |
| Sept 21 | W | Interpersonal Cultural Differences | Cultural Assignment |
| Sept 23 | F | The Listening Process Effective Listening | Mini-Exam 3 |
| Sept 26 | M | Ineffective Listening | Listening Activity |
| Sept 28 | W | Verbal & Nonverbal Basics | Mini-Exam 4 |
| Sept 30 | F | Uses of Nonverbals | |
| Oct 3 | M | <i>Emotional Intelligence</i> | |
| Oct 5 | W | Uses of Nonverbals – <i>Faces</i> | Journal 2 |
| Oct 7 | F | Emotional Animals | Mini-Exam 5 |
| Oct 10 | M | Emotion Uses | Emotional Animals Worksheet |
| Oct 12 | W | Emotion Basics | |
| Oct 14 | F | Expectancy Violations Theory | Journal 3 |
| Oct 17 | M | Power | Mini-Exam 6 |
| Oct 19 | W | | |
| Oct 21 | F | Intimacy Basics | |
| Oct 24 | M | Love | Love Scale |
| Oct 26 | W | Catch-up Day | |
| Oct 28 | F | Relationship Development | Mini-Exam 7 |
| Oct 31 | M | Relationship Development | Relationship Development Model |
| Nov 2 | W | Relational Uncertainty | Journal 4 Relational Uncertainty Scale |
| Nov 4 | F | Dialectics Theory | Mini-Exam 8 Dialectics Activity |
| Nov 7 | M | Ann Landers Workday | |
| Nov 9 | W | Turning Points Theory | Turning Points Activity Ann Landers Part One |
| Nov 11 | F | Conflict Theory & Goals | Mini-Exam 9 Journal 5 |
| Nov 14 | M | Conflict Styles | Conflict Style Scale |
| Nov 16 | W | Working with Conflict | Conflict Activity |
| Nov 18 | F | Criticism | Criticism Activity |
| Nov 21 | M | Ann Landers Part Two Workday | |
| Nov 23-25 | | Thanksgiving Break – NC | |
| Nov 28 | M | Basic Concepts in Violent Relations | Mini-Exam 10 |
| Nov 30 | W | Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) | |
| Dec 2 | F | <i>Color of Hope</i> | |
| Dec 5 | M | Ann Landers Debriefing & Evals | Ann Landers Part Two |
| Dec 7 | W | Final Day | Mini-Exam 11 Journal 6 |

RECORD OF MY GRADES:

| | Total Possible | My Scores |
|--|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Quality of In-Class Participation | 75 | |
| Exercises | 175 | |
| Ann Landers Assignment | 75 | |
| FIRO Scale | 3 | |
| Self-Monitoring Scale | 3 | |
| Gender Scavenger Hunt Assignment | 30 | |
| Listening Activity | 2 | |
| Interpersonal BSRI Scale | 3 | |
| Cultural Assignment | 20 | |
| Emotional Animals Worksheet | 7 | |
| Love Scale | 3 | |
| Relationship Development Model | 10 | |
| Relational Uncertainty Scale | 3 | |
| Dialectics Activity | 2 | |
| Turning Point Activity | 2 | |
| Conflict Activity | 2 | |
| Conflict Styles Scale | 3 | |
| Criticism Activity | 2 | |
| TA Activity | 5 | |
| Mini-Exams (Drop lowest) | 300 | |
| #1 – Interpersonal Comm. Overview | 30 | |
| #2 – Perceptions | 30 | |
| #3 – Identity, Gender, Intercultural | 30 | |
| #4 – Listening | 30 | |
| #5 – Verbals & Nonverbals | 30 | |
| #6 – Expectancy Violations, Emotions | 30 | |
| #7 – Power, Intimacy, Love | 30 | |
| #8 – Relational Development/Uncertainty | 30 | |
| #9 – Dialectics, Turning Points | 30 | |
| #10 – Conflict, Criticism | 30 | |
| #11 – Violence/Abuse | 30 | |
| Journal Entries | 90 | |
| Journal 1 – | 15 | |
| Journal 2 – | 15 | |
| Journal 3 – | 15 | |
| Journal 4 – | 15 | |
| Journal 5 – | 15 | |
| Journal 6 – | 15 | |

MY TOTAL POINTS = _____/640

SCALE

| | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|---------------|
| 90-100% | = | A | = | 576 and above |
| 80-89% | = | B | = | 512 - 575 |
| 70-79% | = | C | = | 448 - 511 |
| 60-69% | = | D | = | 384 - 447 |
| 59% or below | = | F | = | 383 and below |