

Interpersonal Communication Syllabus

COMM 273

Fall, 2016

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Class Meets: MWF 1:40-3:30

Office Hours: Wed. 3:45-4:30 & by appt.

Classroom: SOC 010

Course Overview:

It is important to understand meaning and values associated with particular communication practices. This endeavor is critical to a strong liberal arts education and finding one's place in the world. In this course, we will be asking some of life's "big questions" in order to facilitate growth in your understanding of self, others and the world around you. Throughout the semester, you will explore how you and others assign meaning and value to the things you say, and as well, what is said to you. A basic assumption of this course is that the micro-practices of everyday life collaborate in concert with your understanding of social norms and beliefs to act "into" the world. In doing so, you express a point of view that is uniquely yours that simultaneously has been shaped by many voices and experiences, past and present.

Everyday conversation is the ultimate tool of social existence and human connection. Your future carrying out communication practices relies largely on your willingness to enter into a journey of self-understanding by studying your use of language (both written and spoken). We will study speech activity to understand its role as an important feature of interpersonal relationships; moreover, to study how you come to mean, value and make ethical choices in your everyday life. Verbal and nonverbal messages are key modes through which individuals present themselves to the world. These modes of expression are further complicated by new media technologies, in which conversations are more frequently not face to face, often without the benefit of tone of voice and are abbreviated, digitally sent and responded to (or not). While digital forms of communication are undeniably significant, *in this course, we will make a conscious return to the human voice, the spoken word and full sentence written expression.*

Our purpose is to understand relationships, interaction patterns and communication processes where you and others collaborate to create social interdependence. You will be systematically examining your own communication patterns to identify areas in which you want to express yourself more competently. Skills you develop can apply equally well to enhance relationships with acquaintances, roommates, family members, romantic partners, work colleagues and/or authority figures. Ultimately, your willingness to explore and reflect upon how you express yourself ideally situates you as a substantial and authentic person who is aware of one's ethical responsibilities toward self and others.

A detailed course schedule with assignments and due dates will be given to you no later than the second week of class***

Objectives:

- 1) To engage you in a process of asking some of life's "big questions" as they pertain to your everyday social practices
- 2) To foster interpersonal communication competency by—
 - a. Developing perceptual accuracy
 - b. Understanding *choice* as a key element of conversation processes
 - c. Exploring the range of communicative choices available to you
- 3) To provide you with an opportunity for self-exploration related to meaning, value and expression

Required Resources:

Ronald Adler, George Rodman and Athena du Pre', *Understanding Human Communication* (12th edition) (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014)

Digital Voice Recorder* (high grade voice recorder; it doesn't need to be expensive; however, cell phone audio is usually inadequate for the audio-recording assignment that is a major element of this course)

Course Requirements:

Four two page reflection papers (Incorporating reading materials, exploring any relationship between <i>your</i> lived experiences and class objectives) (Typed, double spaced, minimum font size, 10 point in essay format—e.g. intro, body, summary and reflection)	400 points
In-class participation	200 points
Conversation transcripts (Accurately transcribed record of your final project conversation; minimum 20 minutes)	100 points
Final Critical Analysis of Conversation (6-8 page CRITICAL reflection on your audiotaped participation in a meaningful, significant conversation based on transcripts; essay format, typed, double spaced, minimum font size 10 pt.)	300 points
Total Points Possible:	1000

Evaluation:

Participation: You are expected to come to class regularly and participate in at least three important ways: 1) As a prepared listener and contributor to class discussions, 2) As an active member of the class "community" who respects and honors the experiences of your classmates, and 3) as a willing learner who contributes to a productive atmosphere for growth and self-understanding. In addition, other considerations for your participation grade will be your *timeliness* (turning in work, showing up to class on time), *attentiveness* (to discussions, directions, etc.) and *engagement* (with course materials, reading assignments, role-playing, discussions, etc.). You are expected to attend every class and be prepared to participate in whatever activity is on that day's calendar.

Critical Response Papers: When writing moves toward greater self-understanding, a deeper sense of whom you are in relation to others and a broader view of choice as a feature of responsible expression, it is good work. These papers are assigned to test your ability to think critically about the relationship between theory and experience (*something having to do with interpersonal communication and the meanings and values associated with your experience*). Evaluation is based on substance and thoughtfulness of your writing.

College level writing skills are expected. If you turn in work that has not been proofread, you may get it back without a grade or credit assigned. *Never* turn in a first draft. You are strongly encouraged to "free-write" 3-5 pages to focus your thoughts and then condense your point into two pages.

Average work is attentive to the relationship between theory and experience.

Superior work demonstrates evidence of conceptual engagement with assigned reading materials, your own experience and critical/reflective thought about both.

Inadequate (failing) work exhibits evidence of hasty study (incomplete sentences, multiple typographical and/or spelling errors) and inattention to the nature of the assignment.

Transcripts: are evaluated on the basis of accuracy and thoroughness. Plan to spend *ten* minutes of transcribing for every one minute of conversation.

Final Papers: The standards for evaluation of final papers are similar to those applied to response papers, except they will also refer to occurrences in your transcripts as well as reading materials.

Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated. The minimum consequence for academic dishonesty is an "F" on the assignment. However, the School of Communication and Loyola University Chicago reserves the right to enforce the most extreme consequences including, but not limited to expulsion from the major or the University.

Late Work/Attendance: No late papers are accepted. Plan ahead. Printer problems are not an excuse. Papers e-mailed to my inbox will be accepted only in the most exceptional circumstances. Unexcused reasons for not attending class include work obligations, attending a wedding, early vacation plans, friends in town, or no explanation at all. Documented medical or family emergencies and trips related to student activities when representing the university are excused; however, every attempt should be made on your part to communicate with me before the due date.