

## COMS 2386.03 Interpersonal Communication

Fall 2017

Tue/Thur 12:30-1:50pm

DRCB 320

Instructor: Lisa van Raalte  
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 Office Hours: Tue/Thur 2:00-3:30pm  
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Welcome to COMS 2386! This course is designed to teach you fundamental concepts related to interpersonal communication across a variety of interactions, such as those with friends, coworkers, family members, and romantic partners. Being an effective communicator helps people develop and maintain healthy relationships. Effective communicators are also perceived as more credible and competent in the workplace. Thus, being a skilled communicator is valuable in one's personal and professional life. This course focuses on learning concepts, processes, and challenges involved in interpersonal communication, as well as learning skills that will make you a better communicator.

### REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Adler, R. B., Rosenfeld, L. B., & Proctor II, R. F. (2014). *Interplay: The process of interpersonal communication*, (13<sup>th</sup> edition). New York: Oxford University Press.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Develop an awareness of the role communication plays in everyday life.
2. Understand and recognize how communication process works.
3. Understand the role context plays in communication.
4. Increase both verbal and nonverbal communication skills.
5. Increase communication competence by recognizing communication options.

### COURSE POLICIES

Please read the following course policies very carefully. You are responsible for abiding by and adhering to these course policies. This syllabus acts like a contract between you and the instructor. **None of the material within this section is subject to negotiation.** You should drop the class immediately if any aspects of the course, its rules, requirements and/or the instructor's expectations are not acceptable to you. As a student, you are responsible for the following:

**Computers.** You are expected to have access to a reliable computer and reliable, high-speed Internet access. Do not contact me with an electronic issue – it is your responsibility to make sure that your computer works.

**NOTE:** If you have computer/internet or course site-related problems or questions, please contact the SHSU Support Desk, since I am unable to assist in these matters. Help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through phone, online chat, or email. See the support desk contact information here: <http://online.shsu.edu/campus/support-desk/>

**Course Contact.** You should check your SHSU e-mail and the class announcements posted on the course site at least once daily. Periodically, I post announcements and/or send out individual and class emails with updated information about the class. Because all email sent via the course site is automatically sent to students' shsu.edu accounts, it is important that you regularly access and read your SHSU email.

**Office Hours and Email:** My office hours are posted above. If these hours do not work with your schedule, please let me know and we can set up an appointment outside of office hours. Please be prepared for our meetings with drafts of your assignments or specific questions.

If you have private issues or concerns, feel free to email me directly. Note, though, that SHSU has good firewalls. It's best to use your SHSU email to contact me. Email from accounts other than your SHSU account may not reach me.

I aim to respond to all emails within 48 hours during the work week (Mon-Fri). If you do not hear back from me within 48 hours, resend the email. I will contact you only through SHSU email. If you use another email address most of the time, please redirect your SHSU-email to that account.

**NOTE:** Be sure your e-mail messages are *professional, succinct, and clear*. Be certain to use the subject line to clearly indicate what class you are emailing about and the purpose of your message. It is important to maintain proper email etiquette, professionalism, and manners during our email correspondence (e.g., saying hello and thank you). This is good practice for your professional and work life. Be sure to follow proper grammatical guidelines in your e-mail (do not use slang or text terms). Avoid emailing me questions that you can answer by referencing the syllabus or other course material. Be resourceful and try to answer questions on your own before emailing me.

**Late Assignments:** Due dates are posted at the beginning of the semester. Please be aware of these dates and plan ahead. Late assignments may be accepted and makeup exams allowed, IF AND ONLY IF: (a) you make every effort possible to contact me PRIOR TO the due date and time, (b) you provide official documentation via email as soon as possible or on your first day back to class to verify your explanation as to why you could not turn in your assignment, and (c) documentation is official (i.e., written on official stationary or letterhead, and signed by the appropriate authority). Informal notes from your mother/father/friend/roommate do not qualify as appropriate documentation. If you are going to miss class, you are still responsible for turning in the work by the due date. Students may not take exams early. The final exam date is posted on the syllabus (plan ahead before scheduling a flight home for Christmas).

**Written Assignments Format:** All written assignments are to follow the APA guidelines including a cover letter. These formatting guidelines include:

Cover page with a creative title, name, and institution center paged, middle aligned  
 APA style headings and running heads  
 Typed and submitted in a Microsoft Word document  
 Times New Roman font  
 Size 12-point font  
 Double-spaced (remove space after paragraph for the entire document)  
 1-inch margins all around  
 Page numbers top right hand corner in the header

**24/7 Grade Policy:** I encourage conversations about your grades or progress in the class at any point in the semester. When you receive a grade back, wait 24 hours before discussing the grade with me. If you would like to *formally* appeal a grade on an assignment or exam, you must prepare a written (typed) argument as to why you feel the grade is in error. **This must be done within one week of receiving the grade.** After one week, grades are locked in.

**Submission Policy:** All written work in this class will be submitted to SafeAssign on Blackboard. Deadline for all SafeAssign submissions is 11:59pm on the due date. Computer and/or system problems do NOT excuse late work. If you have computer/internet or Blackboard-related problems, you must immediately contact the Help Desk: <http://online.shsu.edu/campus/support-desk/>. To avoid these issues, be prepared by submit your assignments early.

**Attendance:** You are expected to attend class regularly and to be part of our learning community. Therefore, attendance will be taken each day. If you have more than two unexcused absences, points will be deducted from your participation/attendance score at a rate of 5 points for every additional day absent (e.g., if you have 5 unexcused absences, your participation/attendance grade will be reduced by 15 points). There are other consequences for missing class. First, students tend to do much better when they attend class regularly. The information provided in lecture will help you better understand concepts that will appear on the exam. Also, some exam information is in lecture but not the text book. Second, if you miss a class activity you cannot receive points for that assignment (see missed activities below). Third, it is your sole responsibility to find out what you missed (including announcements) and to obtain notes from a fellow student if you miss class. I do not have notes to give students.

**\*\*Note:** two tardies constitute one absence.

**Disability Service:** Students needing accommodations in this course due to disabilities must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) before requesting accommodations. Please contact me at the beginning of the semester, as I will be more than willing to make the necessary arrangements. Contact information for the SSD is located the following website: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/disability/>

**Academic Dishonesty:** Academic dishonesty could take on several forms in this class. Knowing what constitutes academic dishonesty is important and necessary so you may avoid it. Repercussions of academic dishonesty are immediate and severe. The three most common forms of academic dishonesty include cheating, plagiarism, and collusion.

"Cheating" includes the following and similar actions: (1) Copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files, data listings, and/or programs. (2) Using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test. (3) Collaborating, without authorization, with another student during an examination or in preparing academic work. (4) Knowingly, and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying, or possessing, in whole or in part, the contents of an un-administered test. (5) Substituting for another student, permitting any other person, or otherwise assisting any other person to substitute for oneself or for another student in the taking of an examination or test or the preparation of academic work to be submitted for academic credit.

"Plagiarism" means the appropriation and the unacknowledged incorporation of another's work or idea into one's own work offered for credit.

"Collusion" means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit.

See the code of student conduct in the student guidelines: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/documents/2016-2018%20Student%20Guidelines.pdf>

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW**

Specific information about each assignment will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard.

**Papers:** You will be writing two papers in this class. Each paper is designed to assess your learning of the textbook readings.

1. **Nonverbal Analysis Paper:** The goal of this paper is to observe and analyze nonverbal behaviors between strangers. You will observe two people engaging in conversation at a distance where you cannot hear then and analyze their relationship given their nonverbal behaviors. Further information about the paper will be posted on Blackboard.
2. **Conflict Reflection Paper:** You will be writing a reflection paper on a past conflict that you have experienced. Material from the conflict chapter will be used to analyze and evaluate your conflict episode. Further information about the paper will be posted on Blackboard.

**Examinations:** There will be three exams in this course. Each exam is designed to evaluate your ability to apply the concepts introduced and to synthesize the information presented in your text and in class. Exams are not cumulative.

**In-Class Activities:** There are multiple in-class activities throughout the semester. For some activities, you will earn points toward your in-class activities grade by coming to class, engaging in the activity, and turning in the necessary paperwork connected to the activity. Sometimes,

instructions for activities are given a class period early, so if you miss class when the instructions are provided, you forgo the opportunity to earn the activity points. Further information about the activities will be announced in class.

**Participation/Attendance:** It is in your best interest as a learner to come to class alert and attentive. Participating in class discussion is an enriching experience for students and makes the learning process more enjoyable! Please refer to the attendance policy above for more information. If you do not miss any classes (outside of your two “freebies”), you ask thought provoking questions in class, and you actively participate in the class discussions, you will receive full attendance/participation points.

### GRADE BREAKDOWN

Your grade will be based on the total number of points you earn as outlined directly below. Please use the chart below to keep track of your points throughout the class.

Course Assignments	Points Possible	Points Earned
Nonverbal Analysis Paper	100	_____
Conflict Reflection Paper	100	_____
In-Class Activities	70	_____
Participation/Attendance	30	_____
Exam 1	50	_____
Exam 2	50	_____
Exam 3	50	_____
Total Points Possible	450	

### GRADING SCALE

90% - 100%	A
80% - 89%	B
70% - 79%	C
60% - 69%	D
59% or lower	E

To calculate your percentage, you take the total points you have earned in the class and divide it by the total points possible.

### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Any changes to the schedule will be posted on Blackboard.

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Due</i>
<b>Week 1</b>	Thurs 8/24	Introductions, Syllabus <i>Activity: "Bingo"</i>	
<b>Week 2</b>	Tues 8/9	Interpersonal Process	CH 1
	Thurs 8/31	<i>Activity: Social Media and Comm.</i>	
<b>Week 3</b>	Tues 9/5	Culture and Interpersonal Communication	CH 2
	Thurs 9/7	<i>Activity: Cultures Around the World</i>	
<b>Week 4</b>	Tues 9/12	Interpersonal Communication and the Self	CH 3
	Thurs 9/14	<i>Activity: Brown Bag Activity</i>	Self-Concept Bags
<b>Week 5</b>	Tues 9/19	Perceiving Others <i>Activity: Stereotyping</i>	CH 4
	Thurs 9/21	Exam Review	
<b>Week 6</b>	Tues 9/26	<b>Exam 1</b>	Chapters 1-4
	Thurs 9/28	Language	CH 5
<b>Week 7</b>	Tues 10/3	Nonverbal Communication	CH 6
	Thurs 10/5	Lecture Cont. & <i>Class Activity</i>	
<b>Week 8</b>	Tues 10/10	Listening: Receiving and Responding	CH 7
	Thurs 10/12	Emotions In-Class Paper Review	CH 8 <b>NV Analysis Paper DUE Sunday 10/15</b>

<b>Week 9</b>	Tues 10/17	Lecture Cont. & <i>Class Activity</i>	
	Thurs 10/19	Exam Review	
<b>Week 10</b>	Tues 10/24	<b>Exam 2</b>	Chapters 5-8
	Thurs 10/26	Dynamics of Interpersonal Relationships	CH 9
<b>Week 11</b>	Tues 10/31	Lecture Cont. & <i>Class Activity</i>	
	Thurs 11/2	Communication in Close Relationships: Friends, Family, and Romantic Partners	CH 10
<b>Week 12</b>	Tues 11/7	Lecture Cont. & <i>Class Activity</i>	
	Thurs 11/9	Communication Climate	CH 11
<b>Week 13</b>	Tues 11/14	Managing Conflict	CH 12
	Thurs 11/16	<b>NO CLASS: NCA conference</b>	
<b>Week 14</b>	Tues 11/21	<i>Activity: Conflict Analysis Activity</i>	
	Thurs 11/23	<b>NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Break</b>	
<b>Week 15</b>	Tues 11/28	In-Class Paper Review	
	Thurs 11/30	Exam Review	<b>Conflict Reflection Paper DUE Sunday 12/3</b>
<b>FINALS WEEK</b>	Tues 12/5	<b>Exam 3</b> 1:00-3:00pm	Chapter 9-12

## PAPER STANDARDS

The standards listed below should give you an idea of how I differentiate between various papers in terms of grades.

**An “A” paper** (90% or higher) demonstrates an outstanding grasp of the literature relevant to the issue, presents an excellent analysis, and is written in a clear and engaging manner with only very minor (if any) typos and grammatical errors.

**A “B” paper** (80–89%) demonstrates a good grasp of the literature relevant to the issue, presents a good analysis, and is generally well written with only a few typos and/or grammatical errors.

**A “C” paper** (70-79%) demonstrates a satisfactory grasp of the literature relevant to the issue, presents an acceptable analysis, and is written without many typos and/or major grammatical errors.

**A “D” paper** (60-69%) is unsatisfactory in terms of the literature incorporated into the paper, the analysis, and/or the clarity of the writing. Often there are major grammatical errors, many typos, and/or the topic is only addressed in a very superficial manner.

**An “E” paper** (under 60%) does not meet the minimum requirements of the assignment, usually because the paper does not fit the assignment as outlined in the syllabus and class, does not incorporate enough relevant literature from the textbook or lecture, fails to provide much analysis, and/or is written in an incoherent manner.