

COMS 4386 Family Communication

Spring 2018

Tue/Thur 12:30 - 1:50pm

DRCB 320

Credit Hours: 3

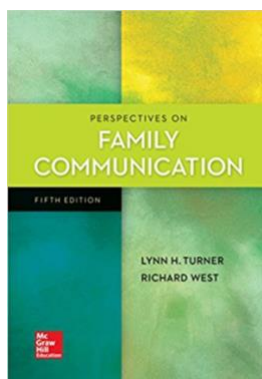
Instructor: Dr. Lisa van Raalte
Department: Communication Studies
Office Hours: Tue/Thur 2:00-3:15pm
Office: DRCB 212A
Work phone: (936) 294-1970
Email: lisa.vanraalte@shsu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to COMS 4386! This course is designed to teach you concepts related to family communication. This course will cover a wide variety of contemporary family types and will challenge your own perspectives about families, roles and rules, and conflict. It is my hope that this course will be interesting and helpful to you as you reflect on your own communication with your family (or families).

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Required Text: Turner, L.H. & West, R. (2018). Perspectives on family communication. (5th ed.). NY: McGraw Hill.



COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Recognize and be able to identify the various forms that families currently are manifested.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of theories and methodologies used in family communication research.
3. Develop an awareness of how family communication has shaped your identity.
4. Use course concepts to explain and reflect on communication within your family.
5. Evaluate the communication between your own family members.

6. Increase family communication competence by implementing class concepts to your family relationships.

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 is 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/Makeup Work: 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).

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, research shows that students 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>

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy: Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20..." A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/861001.pdf>

Visitors in the Classroom: Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

COURSE ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW

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

Family History Assignment (30%): The goal of this paper is to interview a member of your family and to gain insight into their experiences and life. You will interview this person for at least an hour and transcribe the interview. The essay will cover your own reflections to the interview and relate the interview to two concepts covered in class.

Examinations (45%): 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/Discussion (15%): 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. Instructions for activities might be given a class period early, so if you miss class when the instructions are provided, you forgo the opportunity to earn the activity points. Additionally, participating in class discussion is an enriching experience for students and makes the learning process more enjoyable! Discussion points earned toward this portion of your grade is at the discretion of your instructor. Make an effort to answer questions and participate in thoughtful discussion during class.

Attendance (10%): It is in your best interest as a learner to come to class alert and attentive. Please refer to the attendance policy above for more information. If you do not miss any classes (outside of your two “freebies”), 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
Interview Paper	200	_____
In-Class Activities/Discussion	100	_____
Participation/Attendance	50	_____
Exam 1	100	_____
Exam 2	100	_____
Exam 3	100	_____
Total Points Possible	650	

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>
Week 1	Thurs 1/18	Introductions, Syllabus	
Week 2	Tues 1/23	Providing Definitions	CH 1
	Thurs 1/25	Lecture Cont. & <i>Class Discussion</i>	
Week 3	Tues 1/30	Providing Theoretical Frameworks	CH 2
	Thurs 1/1	Lecture Cont. & <i>Class Discussion</i>	
Week 4	Tues 2/6	Examining Structures: Roles and Rules	CH 3
	Thurs 2/8	Lecture Cont. & <i>Class Discussion</i>	
Week 5	Tues 2/13	Exam Review	
	Thurs 2/15	Exam 1	Chapters 1-3
Week 6	Tues 2/20	Social Context for Family Communication	CH 4
	Thurs 2/22	Lecture Cont. & <i>Class Discussion</i>	
Week 7	Tues 2/27	Communicating Intimacy	CH 5
	Thurs 3/1	Lecture Cont. & <i>Class Discussion</i>	
Week 8	Tues 3/6	Telling Stories and Making Meaning	CH 6

	Thurs 3/8	Lecture Cont. & <i>Class Discussion</i>	
Week 9	Tues 3/13	NO CLASS: Spring Break	
	Thurs 3/15	NO CLASS: Spring Break	
Week 10	Tues 3/20	Expressing Conflict, Power, and Violence	CH 7
	Thurs 3/22	Lecture Cont. & <i>Class Discussion</i>	
Week 11	Tues 3/27	Exam Review	
	Thurs 3/29	Exam 2	Chapters 4-7
Week 12	Tues 4/3	<i>Activity TBD</i>	
	Thurs 4/5	NO CLASS: Southern States Communication Association Conference	
Week 13	Tues 4/10	Communicating Under Stress	CH 8
	Thurs 4/12	Lecture Cont. & <i>Class Discussion</i>	
Week 14	Tues 4/17	Challenging Dialogues in the Family	CH 9
	Thurs 4/19	Lecture Cont. & <i>Class Discussion</i>	Family History Assignment DUE Sunday 4/22
Week 15	Tues 4/24	Concluding Perspectives on Family Communication	CH 10
	Thurs 4/26	Lecture Cont. & <i>Class Discussion</i>	
Week 16	Tues 5/1	Exam Review	

	Thurs 5/3	NO CLASS: Study for Exam	
FINALS WEEK	Tues 5/8	Exam 3 - 1:00-3:00pm	Chapters 8-10

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.