

Western Kentucky University
COMM 348: Interpersonal Communication
SYLLABUS (TOPNET)

Professor: Holly Payne, Ph.D.
Office: 100 Ivan Wilson Fine Arts Center
Phone: 745-5876
E-Mail: holly.payne@wku.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION and OBJECTIVES

COMM 348--Interpersonal communication introduces you to the complex interaction of social and psychological forces operating in human communication. You will critically evaluate the intricacies of interpersonal relationships and the communication issues surrounding human interaction in various contexts. We will examine basic concepts, theories, and research findings relevant to initiating, developing, modifying, maintaining, and terminating relationships with an eye to the role of communication in the process. This course requires you to participate in written and verbal activities designed to develop your understanding of interpersonal communication and has the potential to improve the quality of your life if you keep an open mind and participate actively. Lecture, discussion, in and out-of-class observations, and research assignments will be used to increase your knowledge and behavioral competence in interpersonal communication.

COMM 348 introduces you to the fundamentals of interpersonal communication and exposes you to interpersonal theory and scholarly research. At the conclusion of the course it is expected that you will:

1. Know, understand, and be able to articulate the definition, realm, and scope of interpersonal communication and relational communication.
2. Demonstrate competence and an ability to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of interpersonal strategies used in various interpersonal relationships.
3. Comprehend effective ways to listen and manage conflict.
4. Make connections between what you learn in the course and what you experience in your own relationships.
5. Demonstrate an increased awareness of interpersonal communication theories and how they influence communication behaviors.
6. Be introduced to and practice analyzing interpersonal research.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Guerrero, L.K., Andersen, P.A., & Afifi, W.A. (2018). *Close encounters: Communication in relationships*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

CLASSROOM CIVILITY

There are certain basic standards of classroom civility that should be adhered to, particularly in a communication course. Civility does not eliminate appropriate humor, enjoyment, or other features of a comfortable and pleasant classroom community, but emphasizes the following:

1. Displaying **respect** for all members of the classroom community, both your instructor and fellow students. This includes avoidance of **racist, sexist, homophobic**, or other **negative** language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom community.
2. **Attentiveness** to and **participation** in lectures, group activities, workshops, and other classroom exercises.
3. Avoidance of **unnecessary disruptions** during class such as *private conversations, reading newspapers, doing work for other classes, text-messaging, or ringing cell phones*.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Class attendance and participation are important in accomplishing the goals of this course. Readings, class discussions, presentations, and in-class activities increase both your understanding of interpersonal communication theory and the development of your interpersonal communication skills. In order to receive credit for attendance you must attend for the **entire** class period. **Failure to do so will result in an absence for the given class session.**

TARDY POLICY

Please arrive to class on time. Tardiness is unprofessional and is not fair to me or to your classmates. Consequently, if you are consistently late or leave early you **can expect to have points deducted from your final grade for EACH tardy or early departure.** Moreover, it is YOUR responsibility to make up any missed work and to make sure I have not marked you absent for that day. This must be done on the day you are late; otherwise, it holds as an unexcused absence.

EXCUSED ABSENCE POLICY

An excused absence includes 1. A documented illness of the student or serious illness of a member of the student's immediate family. 2. The death of a member of the student's immediate family. 3. Trips for members of student organizations sponsored by an academic unit, trips for University classes, and trips for participation in intercollegiate athletic events. 4. Major Religious holidays.

For any officially excused absence, you are responsible for completing an **EXCUSED ABSENCE REQUEST FORM downloadable in Blackboard, which I will review and approve or deny. You are responsible for attaching official documentation of your absence to the form.** For university-sponsored absences, this notification is to be given to me **prior to** the absence; for other excused absences, this documentation must be presented at the next class meeting. If you do miss class, please see a classmate regarding class discussions and assignments. You are responsible for arranging to make up missed individual work. **Missed group work and missed in-class exercises cannot be made up.**

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

You cannot make up work missed for unexcused absences—you simply receive a zero. **If you have absences in excess of one-fifth of the class contact hours, you need to withdraw from the class or you will be assigned a failing grade for the course.**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS—Preparing for Class and Writing Expectations

This course combines lectures, class discussion of assigned readings, group work, audio/video presentations emphasizing certain communication concepts and skills, oral presentations by students, exams, and classroom activities which all contribute to your overall understanding of interpersonal communication. It is essential for you to actively participate in the course and to keep up with the readings. If you do not do the reading, do not expect to benefit substantially from the course. **Class sessions supplement rather than review the reading material assigned. Assigned chapters, research articles, and cases should be read before class** so that you will be able to contribute to the class discussions and activities and perform well on the exams.

This class also involves a number of written assignments where you communicate your understanding of the principles and concepts of interpersonal communication. In all written work you are expected to use correct spelling and appropriate grammar. Throughout the course you will expand your personal vocabulary through the study of terms related to the course. Your written work will be evaluated on both content and mechanics. Good writing should be reasonably free of mistakes and without composition errors, which are called gross errors (sentence fragments, run-on sentences, subject-verb disagreement, misspelled words, and typographical errors which result in such errors). All of your work **must be typed** (using no more than 12 point type with margins not exceeding 1 inch) and double-spaced—unless otherwise indicated. Please use APA 5th edition for citing and documenting outside sources.

STUDENT ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE

If you have serious problems with writing (and many people do), I advise you go to the Writing Center. Trained writing instructors are there most weekdays and on weekends to assist you in the writing process. The Center takes appointments (745-5719) and drop-ins. The university provides this service for students, so take advantage of it!

Also, consider going to The Learning Center (TLC) (located in the Academic Advising and Retention Center, DUC-A330). At TLC, internationally certified peer tutors provide WKU students with course specific assistance and study skills help. Students may make appointments for one-on-one or group tutoring sessions or may drop-in for assistance. Check out TLC's website at www.wku.edu/tlc to find out more.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCE CENTER (SARC)

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745- 3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu . Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

WKU's POLICY ON SEXUAL MISCONDUCT/ASSAULT & DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy (#0.2070) and Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040). For more information click on the following links for the full policies:

[Western Kentucky University Title IX Policy](#) and [Western Kentucky University Discrimination & Harassment Policy](#).

Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121.

Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

MEDIASITE JOURNAL ARTICLE PRESENTATION

This course provides an introduction to interpersonal communication research and theories, so in attainment of that goal you will work with a small group of classmates to analyze, summarize, and explain an assigned journal article through a MediaSite presentation to the class. Teaching others is a great way to gain mastery of complex material. The articles selected for group presentations use a specific interpersonal communication theory or concept studied in class. Each group will: 1.) define and explain the theoretical framework used in the study and 2.) summarize the major components of the research article assigned emphasizing the findings and relevancy to interpersonal communication and relationships. Students should strive for an interactive MediaSite PowerPoint presentation that includes videos and relevant links. The presentation will be evaluated on content and delivery.

More specifically, students should do the following:

- 1) Provide a one-page review sheet of the most important points of the reading with the full citation at the top in APA format

- 2) Give a brief overview of the topic/construct explored in the reading by creating and delivering a presentation through Mediasite (the recording software in Blackboard). The presentation should strive to be interactive including video, links, or an activity. The presentation should be between 15-20 minutes.
- 3) Create a set of 5 exam questions on the article that may be used on the exams

CLASS ACTIVITIES and REFLECTION PAPERS

One of the most interesting components of this course is the incorporation of case studies, research articles, and other activities. These activities serve to explain and reinforce concepts studied in the textbook. You may occasionally have quizzes on assigned readings, complete case studies, and participate in several in-class activities and assessments. There will also be five reflection papers you will complete related to the theory and articles presented by your classmates in the Outside Article Presentations. Reflection papers will address a posed question in one page double spaced. Papers will be graded on content, introspection, and qualities of good writing.

FINAL PAPER—FILM ANALYSIS

As a class we will view a movie, and you will write a 5-6 page paper (not including the cover page and references) analyzing the movie from an interpersonal communication perspective. Specifically, you will apply theories and concepts learned in the course to situations revealed in the movie. This paper requires in depth analysis (not superficial analysis) of communication theory and concepts. You can also add an analysis of how communication could have been improved and what might have occurred if certain behavior demonstrated in the film had continued or stopped. Do not feel a need to go in depth on the plot of the movie, but make reference to situations in the film to guide your discussion of interpersonal theory. Use quotes as needed to demonstrate key points. Your job is not to provide a movie review or critique of the film, but rather, you should think analytically about how the topics we have covered in class this semester describe, predict, or explain the situations in the movie. You are required to identify three major interpersonal themes or principles present in the film (i.e., self-disclosure, relationship maintenance) and describe how different theories and concepts apply (i.e., norms of reciprocity, Rawlins' Model of disclosure decision rules, Petronio's CPM, Baxter's dialectical tensions, Fitzpatrick's marital typologies, etc). You will also cite outside sources when discussing the relevant concepts. (See Blackboard for the full assignment description).

EXAMS

You will take 3 exams covering course readings and lecture material. Exams will consist of multiple-choice, true/false, and short essay questions.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I expect that all of the individual assignments you complete for COMM 348 (and in all of your other courses) are always your own work. However, many students are not sure exactly what "your own work" means, so, please read again the information on plagiarism and cheating from your student handbook. Aside from copying work, plagiarism includes incorrectly citing sources or presenting someone's information as your own, without crediting the source. To avoid this, you should carefully make notes to keep track of where your information came from. In written form, you must use quotation marks when referring to another's work. In a speech where you are paraphrasing, you can say "According to.....(give name).....". It does not take much effort to make sure you follow the rules for using another's thoughts.

PENALTY FOR ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Western Kentucky University and the Department of Communication are committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found guilty of plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on an exam, or purchasing papers, speeches, or other assignments will immediately receive a failing grade on the assignment and in the course, and will be reported for

disciplinary action. Falsified medical excuses and presenting another student's work as your own fall within the guidelines of this academic integrity policy.

DETERMINATION OF FINAL GRADE

POINT DISTRIBUTION

Reflection Papers (5)	50 points
Class Activities	50 points
MediaSite Journal Article Presentation	150 points
Final Paper—Film Analysis	100 points
Exam 1	50 points
Exam 2	50 points
Exam 3	50 points
TOTAL	500 points

A (500-450 points) **B** (451-400 points) **C** (399-350 points) **D** (349-300 points) **F** (299 and below)

READINGS FOR JOURNAL ARTICLE PRESENTATIONS

Group 1

Miller-Ott, A., & Kelly, L. (2015). The Presence of cell phones in romantic partner face-to-face interactions: An expectancy violation theory approach. *Southern Communication Journal*, 80(4), 253-270. doi:10.1080/1041794X.2015.1055371

Group 2

Romo, L. K., Thompson, C. M., & Donovan, E. E. (2017). College drinkers' privacy management of alcohol content on social-networking sites. *Communication Studies*, 68(2), 173-189. doi:10.1080/10510974.2017.1280067

Group 3

Hesse, C., & Mikkelsen, A. C. (2017). Affection deprivation in romantic relationships. *Communication Quarterly*, 65(1), 20-38. doi:10.1080/01463373.2016.1176942

Group 4

Goodboy, A. K., Horan, S. M., & Booth-Butterfield, M. (2012). Intentional jealousy-evoking behavior in romantic relationships as a function of received partner affection and love styles. *Communication Quarterly*, 60(3), 370-385. doi:10.1080/01463373.2012.688792

Group 5

Guthrie, J., & Kunkel, A. (2013). Tell me sweet (and not-so-sweet) little lies: Deception in romantic relationships. *Communication Studies*, 64(2), 141-157. doi:10.1080/10510974.2012.755637

Group 6

Dailey, R. M., Rossetto, K. R., McCracken, A. A., Jin, B., & Green, E. W. (2012). Negotiating breakups and renewals in on-again/off-again dating relationships: Traversing the transitions. *Communication Quarterly*, 60(2), 165-189. doi:10.1080/01463373.2012.668847