

SYLLABUS
SPCH 3250: INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION
SPRING 2011

A copy of this syllabus and related course materials can also be found on our Desire2Learn website for SPCH 3250/Interpersonal Communication.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

The study of human communication and relationships. Contemporary theories and basic concepts concerning interpersonal communication are covered with an emphasis on dyadic communication. Three credits.

(Note: This course does *not* satisfy the prerequisite requirement for Communication Technologies 3010/Business Communication. If your academic major *requires* COMM 3010, please be advised that the prerequisites for that course are SPCH 1010/Public Speaking, SPCH 1250/Professional Speaking, or SPCH 2010/Speech Communication for Teachers.) Also note that the College of BILSA requires *its* students to satisfy the speech requirement with SPCH 1010/Public Speaking.

GENERAL EDUCATION CREDIT

This course satisfies the university's General Education Program competency requirement in Speech (speaking and listening) *or* serves as a General Education elective in the Social Sciences area.

Students should be able to understand spoken English and to use it effectively to communicate. A course meeting competency requirements in speaking and listening is designed to enable you to accomplish the following tasks.

- Understand the processes of human communication;
- Access and organize information logically;
- Design and deliver speeches effectively;
- Develop critical listening and reasoning skills.

The purpose of studying the social sciences is to develop an understanding of social systems, the dynamics of individual and group behavior, and the forces that operate in social relationships. Through their study of the social sciences, you will be able to accomplish the following tasks.

- Develop knowledge of individual and social behavior;
- Display knowledge of the problems and issues within the social sciences;
- Demonstrate knowledge of the methods used to study these problems and issues.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

As a result of this course, you should achieve the following learning outcomes.

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the theories, concepts and terminology of the communication process as they relate to interpersonal communication;
2. Demonstrate the ability to access and organize information logically;
3. Demonstrate critical listening and reasoning skills;
4. Discuss and demonstrate knowledge of nonverbal communication;
5. Demonstrate self-knowledge and the ability to conduct *intrapersonal* analysis;
6. Apply the concepts of interpersonal communication in a variety of contexts; and,
7. Discuss and demonstrate knowledge of conflict management.

ASSESSMENT OF GENERAL EDUCATION COMPETENCIES & SLOs

In an effort to help you understand the nature of General Education, you will be asked to submit (electronically) several short reflective essays on the application of our course assignments (e.g., self-concept paper, URP papers, journaling, other activities).

TEXTBOOK

Kathleen S. Verderber and Rudolph F. Verderber. Inter-Act: Interpersonal Communication Concepts, Skills, and Contexts (10th edition). New York: Oxford University Press (2004). 443 pp.

A tentative schedule of text readings is included within this syllabus. Additional materials will be distributed in class. You are expected to complete assigned readings *before* coming to class.

We will also maintain course materials and communication online (Desire2Learn website).

COURSE CONTENT

We will cover the following topics in this course.

- Interpersonal communication theories, concepts & terminology
- Self disclosure, concepts & perceptions
- Verbal & nonverbal communication patterns & styles
- Listening & interpersonal dynamics
- Ethical communication
- Conflict management & problem-solving strategies
- Interpersonal communication in intimate relationships
- Interpersonal communication in work relationships
- Electronically mediated interpersonal communication

EVALUATION

Your semester grade will be determined by the following criteria. We will discuss appropriate weighting of these three components during the first week of class. The percentages below are semester *projections*, subject to minor adjustments based on assignments and events in the coming semester.

- | | |
|---|------------|
| • Written examinations (3) | 30% |
| • Individual written assignments (e.g., papers) * | 40% |
| • Participation** | <u>30%</u> |
| TOTAL | 100 % |

*Including—but not limited to—a “self-concept” paper, three phases of an “undesired repetitive patterns” paper, and individual journal entries

**Including—but not limited to—in-class written & oral assignments, group assignments, subjective participation/discussion contributions, one-on-one conferences, and other activities

Your final semester grade in this course will be determined on a 1000-point scale; grade distributions will not be “curved.” The following scale will be used to determine final grades for the semester.

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------|
| A | ≥ | 900 points, i.e., 90% or higher |
| B | ≥ | 800 points, i.e., 80% or higher |
| C | ≥ | 700 points, i.e., 70% or higher |
| D | ≥ | 600 points, i.e., 60% or higher |
| F | < | 600 points, i.e., less than 60% |

In order to conform to the component percentages specified in this section, the written assignments, exams, class activities, etc., will be pro-rated (i.e., weighted)—depending on the *number* of activities within that component. In other words, individual assignment scores may *not* be additive, but we *will* adhere to the standards above (i.e., 90% A, 80% B, etc.).

EXPECTATIONS

Just so we *understand* each other ...

What You Can Expect of Me:

- ☑ To be prepared for class every day with updated lectures, course materials, D2L postings, etc.
- ☑ To have your exams and written assignments graded and ready to discuss by the next class period (2-5 calendar days, depending on which day we designate for exams, written assignments, etc.
- ☑ To deliver a detailed syllabus (either handout or electronic form) by the first day of class, to include a tentative schedule of text readings, written assignments, exams, and other course activities.
- ☑ To notify you by e-mail if I will be unable to be in class on a particular day (e.g., illness), and to notify you in advance on our D2L site and in class if I will cancel class because of other duties (e.g., UW System meeting in Madison, conference presentation in Chicago, etc.).
- ☑ To be available during posted office hours or at other times to discuss your performance in our class. (Note: Since meetings are often scheduled on short notice, I may occasionally be required to miss a posted office hour. I apologize for this periodic inconvenience.)
- ☑ To treat you with respect in our professional relationship.
- ☑ To listen to your concerns in and out of class, to discuss answers on exams, to discuss written assignments, and other class activities.

What I Will Expect of You:

- ☑ To attend class every scheduled class meeting, to arrive on time, to be prepared for the day's content, and to not be disruptive or inattentive.
- ☑ To read text assignments prior to coming to class.
- ☑ To visit our D2L website 2-3 times per week to review course materials, assignment guidelines, journal info, etc., and to respond accordingly.
- ☑ To submit assignments on time in the form (i.e., electronic vs. hard copy) prescribed, with reasonable effort made to maintain quality control (e.g., spelling, grammar, attention to detail, etc.).
- ☑ To maintain a personal journal according to the guidelines discussed in class ... with a minimum of 4-5 entries per week.
- ☑ To maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect with others in our classroom, regardless of whether you agree with their opinions.
- ☑ To try to do your best work in our class.

TRUTH CLAIMS

The Random House Unabridged Dictionary (2006) defines a "truth claim" as "a hypothesis not yet verified by experience." In the application for our course, this implies hypotheses posed by the instructor will be verified by *your* experience in our course this semester.

As your instructor, I propose the following "truth claims" for SPCH 3250/ Interpersonal Communication this semester.

- You must invest yourself in effective *intrapersonal* reflection before you can engage others in effective *interpersonal* communication.
- Men and women communicate differently.
- Relationships evolve (i.e., change over time) as *you* evolve.
- There are significant cultural differences in how we communicate.
- Effective listening is often more important than effective speaking, especially in our interpersonal relationships.
- Maintaining an interpersonal journal—and writing in it on a regular basis—can help you better understand yourself and your relationships with others.
- Not all "messages" can be effectively translated into "words."
- Self disclosure always involves some degree of risk.
- Conflict is inevitable in *all* relationships; the more significant the relationship, the more seriously conflict is perceived.
- Conflict *per se* has never destroyed a relationship.
- Conflict *management* is more important than conflict *resolution*.
- Conflict is *not* inherently bad; positive results may occur *because* of conflict.
- Perspectives provided by other social science disciplines (e.g., psychology, economics) can help us better understand communication.
- Course activities are linked to Student Learning Outcomes, although these connections may not be initially apparent to participants.
- Electronic communication (i.e., e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, social networks like FaceBook® and MySpace®, "texting" and other forms) modifies *some*—but not *all*—aspects of interpersonal communication.
- There is value in participating in class every day, even if what you learn is never questioned on a written examination.
- Reading our text and other (required) books represents an investment in yourself, your understanding of our course material, your performance on our examinations and assignments ... *and* your commitment to our class.

COURSE POLICIES

Unless otherwise specified, we will observe the following policies and procedures in this course.

Attendance

There is a high correlation between class attendance and successful performance on in-class activities, exams, and written assignments. Our class meets only twice per week, and having more than a few absences will impact your grade on exams, in- and out-of-class assignments, etc. If you miss class (for *whatever* reason) more than three times during the semester, anticipate that your overall grade will be lowered one letter; subsequent absences will result in additional grade assessment(s). You should *not* expect to be able to make up assignments missed through absence.

You are expected to be attentive and alert in class. If you are disruptive or inattentive in class (e.g., dozing off, listening to your iPod, checking cell phone messages, checking e-mail on your laptop computer, carrying on disruptive conversations with others), you may be asked to leave ... and appropriate adjustment(s) will be made in your final grade for the semester. Grade reductions will be made at the discretion of the instructor *without* prior notification.

You are expected to attend class on time. Repeated tardiness will result in an adjustment in your final grade for the semester, at the discretion of the instructor. Absence (*excused or unexcused*) *does not preclude loss of points* for participation during in-class activities.

The following statement has been excerpted from the "Other University Policies" published in the UWP Undergraduate Catalog (22).

The administration and the faculty assume students will attend class regularly, and teachers are expected to keep records of attendance in their classes. Those instructors who set limits on unexcused absences will inform students of their absence policies in writing and orally at the beginning of the semester. Students are responsible for all work missed through unexcused absence. Instructors are not obligated to seek out or counsel students concerning absenteeism or to allow such students any special consideration.

When students wish to participate in field trips or other extracurricular or co-curricular activities, prior approval must be obtained from the instructors of classes that will be missed. Students should contact their instructors when they return to classes, and—of course—they are expected to make up any missed work.

A student who is absent from class should notify instructors as soon as possible (either by phone, e-mail or in person). Notifying instructors and arranging make-up work is the responsibility of the student. If contact with instructors cannot be made directly, the student should call the academic department involved. This information is available in your Campus Directory.

If your absence is medical related and you have been receiving treatment from the Student Health Services, they may be able to be of assistance to you. They can be reached at 608.342.1891.

In serious situations where the student is incapacitated and temporarily unable to contact instructors, family members may contact the Office of the Assistant Chancellor for Student Affairs at 608.342.1854 for assistance with these matters. The Office of Student Affairs would then provide notification (not verification) of the absence to the instructors involved. However, arrangements for make-up work, make-up exams, etc., are the responsibility of the student.

Note: Neither Student Health Services nor the Office of Student Affairs provides excuses for absences from class.

You have the right to miss class for religious observances (e.g., religious holidays). If you wish time off for this reason, let the instructor know within the first two weeks of class. Emergencies that cause extended absence from classes should be reported to the Office of Student Affairs at 342.1854.

Participation

You are expected to actively engage in class discussion throughout the semester. You should respect the rights of others to maintain opinions that differ from yours.

You will be expected to participate in group activities during the semester. You will be expected to be accommodating and cooperative in working with others. You will be expected to "carry your weight" in sharing responsibilities for such activities. And, as suggested in the previous section, if you do not *attend* class ... you cannot participate in in-class activities (i.e., you'll lose participation points).

Classroom Environment

As noted earlier, if you are disruptive in class (a subjective decision by the instructor) or otherwise reduce other students' learning potential through *your* behavior, your participation grade in this class will be reduced—possibly without notification.

- Recognize the rights of others to maintain opinions or values that differ from yours. Be respectful of others and their opinions.

- Turn off your cell phone, pager, personal digital devices, and i-Pod in class. If your cell phone rings during class, your semester grade will be reduced ... at the discretion of the instructor. (With regard to the "Special Considerations" policies in this syllabus, please advise the instructor *in advance* if you have a legitimate health reason for using to your cell phone during class time.) If possible, set your phone to "vibrate" rather than an audible mode.
- Do not wear hats in class (even if *you* think you're having a "bad hair day").
- Unless otherwise instructed, *minimize* conversations in class during lectures.
- Return "borrowed materials" (e.g., outside book assignments) on time, since others may be depending on timely access to these materials; if you fail to return borrowed/loaned materials on time, your participation grade *will* be reduced.

Reading Assignments

You are expected to read assigned chapters in the textbook prior to coming to class. Be prepared to discuss the information covered in the text. A tentative semester schedule, including text assignments, is attached to this syllabus. Additional outside readings will also be assigned, as discussed in class the first week.

Written Assignments

Unless otherwise noted, all class assignments are to be typed (i.e., word processing) neatly, following appropriate structural and stylistic guidelines (e.g., margins of 1 inch on the top, bottom & right ... margins of 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches on the left). Grammar punctuation, spelling and neatness *are* critical considerations in this evaluation of your written work. Please realize that SpellCheck[®] is not an effective substitute for proofreading your work (since it will not identify potential errors in grammar, homonyms, etc.). In the past, some students have found it useful to take turns proofreading others' assignments before submitting them (in an attempt to identify potential problems).

In general, the *quality* of your work is more important than the *quantity* of your work. Failure to satisfy specific requirements for a particular assignment will result in grade reduction(s). Written assignments submitted after the due date/time may not be accepted, or may be accepted with grade reduction(s) that reflect the timeliness of the submission ... at the discretion of the instructor.

Written assignments are due at the time and location specified by the instructor (not necessarily the next class period). Some assignments may be prescribed to be submitted electronically (e.g., via e-mail or the Desire2Learn website). Written assignments may *not* be accepted after the due date/time, at the discretion of the instructor.

Quality Standards in Writing Assignments

As a primary basis for evaluation in our course, written assignments are perhaps the best indicator of what you know about interpersonal communication. We will attempt to employ the following standards in evaluating your written assignments.

An "A" paper will ...

- Demonstrate your ability to address all requirements of the assignment, effectively answering all questions in an articulate manner;
- Be typed neatly and submitted on time;
- Display evidence of self-knowledge, as applicable;
- Be relatively free of errors in spelling grammar, punctuation, etc.

A "B" paper will ...

- Demonstrate your ability to address most requirements of the assignment, answering questions in an articulate manner;
- Be typed neatly and submitted on time;
- Display evidence of self-knowledge, as applicable;
- Include a limited number of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.

A "C" paper will ...

- Demonstrate your ability to address some requirements of the assignment (in less articulate manner than "A" and "B" papers);
- Be typed neatly and submitted on time;
- Include significant numbers of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.

A "D" paper will ...

- Reflect an inability to address some requirements of the assignment (in less articulate manner than "A," "B" or "C" papers);
- Be submitted late (*if* accepted at all);
- Include an unacceptable number of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.
- Suggest that future assignments should be drafted and critiqued by the Writing Center prior to submission in class.

An unacceptable (i.e., "F") paper will ...

- Be un-typed and/or submitted late;
- Fail to address the requirements of the assignment;
- Include an unacceptable number of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.
- Suggest that future assignments should be drafted and critiqued by the Writing Center prior to submission in class.

Interpersonal Journal

You will be required to maintain a journal (8 ½" x 11" spiral notebook) of your interpersonal communications throughout the semester. Do not use a smaller notebook. Entries will include descriptive discussions of your interactions with others as well as personal reflections. Anticipate that you will write in your journal 4-5 times per week, as appropriate; entries should run 1-2 pages in length. Bring this journal to each class period during the semester. Your journal and your course notebook should be separate items (i.e., not simply different *sections* of the *same* notebook). Journal entries often include personal reflections on interactions with family members, "significant others," roommates, friends, co-workers, supervisors, et al., as well as your *intrapersonal* reflections on these evolving relationships.

👉 Do not simply write down what you did today, ate, watched on TV, etc.!

Examples of typical journal entries are provided on our D2L website.

Please consider the appropriateness of your entries, given the nature of Interpersonal Communication. Ask yourself: how does this journal entry relate to what we talk about in class, what the textbook discusses, etc.

No one besides yourself will actually read the content of your reflective entries.

However, your instructor *will* review the number and length of entries several times during the semester. As appropriate, you will be expected to discuss your entries during our interpersonal conferences, on individual written assignments and during class discussions (depending on the scope of material).

Academic Misconduct

You are responsible for the honest completion or representation of your own work, for appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. If you violate these standards, you must accept the consequences of your actions.

Issues of academic misconduct include—but are not limited to—the following concerns.

- Plagiarism, e.g., submission of others' work & insufficient source documentation;
- Submission of similar written assignments in more than one class;
- Inappropriate use of campus computer facilities;
- Cheating on quizzes or examinations (e.g., looking at another's work, using notes);

In accordance with university policies, any student found cheating on examinations or plagiarizing others' work will receive a "0" on the exam or assignment, and will be subject to additional disciplinary action as allowed by university policy.

Examinations

Written examinations will be both objective (e.g., listing, matching, etc.) and subjective (e.g., short answer or essay) in structure. Examinations will cover textbook, outside readings and lecture content. Within the tentative schedule (attached), dates for two in-class unit exams and a final take-home exam have been listed. The instructor will provide a profile of each exam prior to the test (posted on D2L).

Desire2Learn

Course materials—e.g., abridged copies of PowerPoint presentations, handouts--will be loaded onto the D2L site. Visit our D2L site 2-3 times per week for updated material, handouts, etc. You *may* wish to print copies of abridged PowerPoint presentations in advance to facilitate note-taking; if you elect to print copies of our abridged PowerPoint handouts, please print 3 to 6 frames per page.

Interpersonal Conferences

We will schedule two interpersonal conferences during the semester. You should sign up for a 15-minute slot on the schedule sheet posted at 430 Warner Hall. Bring your interpersonal journal and appropriate materials to this conference.

Special Considerations

Federal law and university policies provide for special consideration for students who qualify as "challenged individuals." If you qualify under this policy (i.e., have a documented disability) and wish to discuss accommodations, please advise me by the end of the third week of class. Reasonable accommodations (e.g., extra time on exams) will be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, and psychiatric disabilities. Examples of these conditions include blindness, dyslexia & wheelchair usage.

A Verified Individualized Services & Accommodations form (a.k.a., VISA) from Services for Students with Disabilities will be needed to authorize your accommodations. For more information, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities in Warner Hall. If you have questions regarding course policies or procedures, please contact the instructor at your convenience. You are encouraged to ask questions during class so that other students may better understand specific concerns.

You are also advised to consult the UWP Undergraduate Catalog regarding university policies and procedures. If you have questions or concerns regarding this syllabus, course policies or procedures, please ask for clarification *in class* so that others may also understand these policies and procedures. Thank you.