

COMM 283: Interpersonal Communication

Fall 2019

Instructors:	Professor: Dr. Jody (Koenig) Kellas	GTA: Lucas Hackenburg
Class Meetings:	Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30-10:45, Burnett 107	
Office:	Louise Pound Hall 355	Louise Pound Hall 350
Office Hours	Thursdays, 1:00-2:00 pm & Fridays, 9:00-10:00 am and by appointment	Tuesdays, 1:00-3:00 pm and by appointment
Email:	jkellas2@unl.edu	lhackenburg2@huskers.unl.edu
Main Office Phone:	402-472-2070	
Course Website:	www.my.unl.edu (Canvas)	
Required texts	*All required readings available on Canvas.	

Mission of Department of Communication Studies

The role and mission of the faculty and students of the Department of Communication Studies are to examine human symbolic activity as it shapes and is shaped by relationships, institutions, and societies. This work concerns the creation, analysis, and critique of messages. The department's research, teaching, and service devote particular attention to understanding the ways in which communication erodes and sustains collaboration within and among local, national, and global communities.

Course Description & ACE 2 Outcome

The primary goal of COMM 283 is to provide students with an introduction to theory and skills about interpersonal communication. This course is designed to satisfy **ACE Outcome #2c** – to demonstrate communication competence by employing a repertoire of communication skills for developing and maintaining personal and professional relationships – by giving students insight into the nature of interpersonal communication and personal relationships.

This course will help you to develop your ability to critically think about, analyze, and apply issues of interpersonal communication to your personal and professional relationships. Understanding principles and skills of forming and preserving relationships in the workplace and community, and across the lifespan with family and friends, is key to achieving your goals. Moreover, communication forms the foundation of healthy relationships. The course examines the centrality and importance of interpersonal communication in our lives by utilizing various tools including readings, lectures, in-class exercises and class discussion in both large and small groups. In particular, we will focus on the link between the quality of your communication and the quality of your life, health, and relationships and several takeaways meant to better the quality of your communication this semester and well beyond. All course materials will help enhance your understanding of interpersonal communication, facilitate discussion, and encourage thoughtful approaches to communicating in your own lives.

A key component of this course is **active learning** – you will be continually challenged to both critically examine IPC theory, research, and skills and apply them to your own experiences and

choices. This approach will afford you opportunities to not only gain theoretic knowledge, but will also equip you with the knowledge to make choices about communicating interpersonally that can enhance the quality of your communication and relationships.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to assist students in developing competencies essential for effectively developing and maintaining professional and personal relationships. **The main objective of this course is to help you understand, apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate concepts and theories that support the philosophy that *the quality of our communication is directly linked to the quality of our lives*.** By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand, articulate, and evaluate the class's key takeaways of interpersonal communication and the philosophy of wholeness.
- Demonstrate the ways in which theory and research support these takeaways.
- Read, interpret, and evaluate peer-reviewed academic research on interpersonal communication and, in turn, be critical consumers of “(mis)information” about interpersonal communication (e.g., on TV, online, in the media).
- Analyze and apply principles of interpersonal communication to practical situations inside and outside the classroom.
- Synthesize principles of interpersonal communication to innovate communication choices that improve the quality of interpersonal communication.

Expectations

The contributions that we bring to the classroom will largely affect the quality of the learning that takes place. I teach best and the content of this course emerges most fruitfully when students are actively engaged in the learning process. This means that as students I expect you to be present both physically and mentally, engage in classroom discussion, complete assigned work by the due date, and help create a classroom environment that is supportive, sensitive, and respectful to all members. This also means that this class may run counter for some of your expectations for a “large lecture” course. Unlike some larger courses, you will be expected to participate by engaging the concepts critically and thoughtfully in large and small class discussions and application exercises. This is a course about interpersonal communication, after all! You will learn by communicating and doing just as much learning that way as you will learn by listening.

Because this is a course about interpersonal communication, we will often discuss materials and experiences of a personal nature. Personal examples will help us to effectively apply and understand the course content, but may also at times challenge our comfort zones. In order to foster a classroom environment in which our discussions and personal application will benefit our understanding, we must work together to make it a safe and respectful forum. I expect everyone in the class to respect others' rights to speak, to listen attentively to what is said, and to use discretion and sensitivity when speaking. If you have questions or concerns about this element of the course, I encourage you to bring them up in class or talk to me individually.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your final grade will be based on three exams, reading quizzes, in-class application exercises, annotation papers, and one final project. You will also be graded on involvement, which includes participation in classroom discussion as well as your involvement in in-class activities, completing homework, etc. The grading breakdown is as follows:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Midterm Exam	100 points
Final Exam	100 points
Application Papers (2)	100 points (50 points each)
Involvement	50 points (attendance; in-class participation; homework)
Reading Quizzes	75 points (17 at 5 points each, drop lowest 2)
Annotations	25 points (12.5 points each)
Final Project	<u>100 points</u>
TOTAL	600 points
Extra Credit	15 points possible (5 points per research credit; 1 research credit = 30 minutes of time)

Grades will be based on the following scale:

600-579 = A+	578-561 = A	560-537 = A-	536-519 = B+
518-501 = B	500-477 = B-	476-459 = C+	458-441 = C
440-417 = C-	416-399 = D+	398-381 = D	380-357 = D-
Below 356 = F			

Assignment/Exam Description

Exams

Exams will take the full class period to complete. They are designed to test your understanding and application of the concepts presented in the text, class lectures, group presentations, and activities. Exams will typically consist of multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer and, on occasion, essay questions.

Class Involvement:

This class is designed for active student participation. Your involvement is what will bring meaning and make this class worthwhile to you and to others. I am looking for **quality** involvement, not just quantity. This means that I want you to engage fully in class discussion and listen actively to others. Participation in activities, asking questions, and integrating reading materials into class discussion also serve as quality involvement.

Involvement includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Attending class regularly and on time (you are expected to attend all classes for the duration of the class period)

- Being focused and practicing good listening skills
- Putting your electronics away for the whole class period
- Contributing to group discussion
- Participating relevantly and actively in class exercises
- Visiting office hours regularly to talk with me about class concepts, skills, and issues
- Relating class material to the “outside” world through discussion
- Completing homework assigned during class
- Not monopolizing discussion or discrediting others
- Demonstrating your understanding of course concepts as they apply to your in-class communication

Narrative Pedagogy and Narrative Pedagogy Groups

As described in my teaching philosophy narrative (which you will receive in-class), narrative pedagogy is an adaptation of narrative medicine which is training in “narrative competence to recognize, absorb, metabolize, interpret, and be moved by the stories of illness. Through narrative training... doctors, nurses, social workers, and therapists [improve] the effectiveness of care by developing the capacity for **attention, reflection, representation, and affiliation** with patients and colleagues” (www.narrativemedicine.org). Narrative medicine can be adapted to what we (Koenig Kellas & Willer, 2019) call “narrative pedagogy” in order to build connection between classmates, students and teachers. I have used narrative pedagogy across undergraduate and graduate courses at UNL with a great deal of success. Narrative pedagogy groups help build community and connection among classmates. Thus, in an effort to ensure more effective learning, meet the course objective of helping you to optimally engage with course material and your classmates inside and outside of class, and engage in personalized communication that has the potential to impact your learning and your life in beneficial ways, we will be practicing narrative pedagogy this semester in small groups.

We have assigned you to a small group. Together, you will meet during the second period of class and get to know one another through a guided narrative interaction. Each of you will tell a bit about yourselves to the group responding to the prompt, “We will be your group members, therefore we have a great deal to learn about each other’s education and lives. Please tell us what you think we should know about your situation” (based on Charon, 2006, p. 177). Each of you will share for 5 minutes and at the end of the group session, each of you will write as much as you can remember from your group member’s story and share that writing with them.

For 5 points of extra credit, you may also visit either Lucas or me during office hours and do a narrative pedagogy appointment with us, during which you will respond to the prompt, “I am your instructor, therefore there is a great deal I need to know about your education and your life. Please tell me what you think I need to know about your situation.” We will listen and type up your story and share it with you as a way to build affiliation and learn about you in order to most effectively enhance your learning.

Readings & Reading Quizzes

Unlike many introductory courses, we are not using a textbook. This was a very purposeful decision. I want you to meet specific course objectives and I have found that textbooks can sometimes overload you with information, making us lose the forest for the trees, so to speak. You will, therefore, complete assigned readings by the date they are listed on the syllabus. You will be quizzed on many of those readings. Reading quizzes are designed to ensure that you are completing the reading and engaging in active learning and critical thinking about course concepts outside of class. They are also designed to help you prepare for the exams in manageable increments. Quizzes will be open-note, which means if you take notes on the reading prior to that day's class, you may use your notes to assist you in taking the quiz. Notes must be originals (not photocopied) and in your own handwriting or, if typed, should be printed out and not duplicative of anyone else's notes. Quizzes will NOT be open book. Quizzes will typically be multiple-choice. **You may NOT make up reading quizzes for any reason.**

Application Papers

You will be required to write two brief (3-5 page) application papers over the course of the semester in which you will apply some aspect of class reading and discussion to an interpersonal communication artifact, problem, situation, movie, podcast, etc. These application papers are designed to promote active learning of course concepts by applying the material to real (or fictional) interpersonal interactions and/or material. Assignment sheets and guidelines will be given in class and posted on Canvas.

Annotations

Because one of the objectives of this course is to read, interpret, evaluate and be critical consumers of information and research on interpersonal communication, you will complete two annotations over the course of the semester. Namely, you will read the assigned empirical, peer-reviewed research article denoted on the syllabus with ** and provide a summary (annotation) of the article. Annotations are brief and an assignment sheet with the details will be given in class and posted on Canvas.

Final Project

Over the course of the semester, you will synthesize principles of interpersonal communication to innovate communication choices that improve the quality of interpersonal communication. Your final project will give you an opportunity to complete an analysis of interpersonal communication using course concepts and innovate a plan for improving interpersonal communication in the relationship you analyze. An assignment sheet outlining specific expectations for this assignment will be given during the semester.

Course Policies

Late Work and Make-up Exams: Reading quizzes may not be made up. Late final papers are not generally accepted and will only be considered for what I consider to be **emergency** situations. **You must discuss these with me or Lucas at least 24 hours prior to the due date.** If I choose to accept an overdue paper, it will receive a grade deduction of 10% for each day late (calendar days, including weekends). No late work will be accepted one week after due date. Make-up

exams will only be given in the case of an emergency and will be different from the original exam. Make-up exams must be taken within one week of the regularly scheduled exam. **You must contact me within 24 hours (either before or after) the scheduled exam in order for me to consider a make-up.**

In-Class Etiquette: Your timely presence is required in this course. Tardiness is disruptive to your fellow students and me. Please be sure to turn cell phones off before entering the classroom, stow them for the remainder of the class, and avoid talking to your peers during class lecture and discussion. Talking on the phone, reading non-course materials (e.g., the paper, your phone, readings for another class), surfing the web, checking Facebook, and texting are **unacceptable** behaviors, and you will be asked to leave class if I see you engaging in any of them. These behaviors may also adversely affect your involvement grade. Because of the size and nature of this class and the classroom, **I am only allowing laptops on a VERY limited basis.** Believe me, I prefer typing over taking hand-written notes too. However, research shows that your engagement and retention of material increases with hand-written notes, and I have increasingly found the temptations of a screen detract from classroom engagement and learning, even with the most dedicated students (and faculty). Thus, I strongly encourage you to leave your laptops at home or put them away when class begins. If you feel very strongly about having a laptop to take notes, **you must sit in the first five rows, on the outside aisles** (first two seats on the end). If needed, we will put extra people in the front row. If we see that you are using your computer for any other purpose during class I will ask you to stop bringing your laptop to class and to take hand written notes.

Accommodations: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

Course Credit: Students taking this class pass-fail and Communication Studies majors must earn a grade of 74% (C) or better to receive credit for this course.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and grounds for university action. According to the University's Undergraduate Bulletin (2013-2014), plagiarism is considered an act of Academic Dishonesty and is defined as, but not limited to "Presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source) and submitting examinations, theses, reports, speeches, drawings, laboratory notes or other academic work in whole or in part as one's own when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person." Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given an "F" grade and may be grounds for failing the course. It is the policy of the Department of Communication Studies to file a report with the Dean of Students for any infraction (no matter how minor it may seem). It is your responsibility as a student to familiarize yourself with and adhere to these guidelines (see <http://stuafs.unl.edu/dos/code> for the university policies and descriptions of all

academic dishonesty and <http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/integrity#plagiarism> for helpful tips on avoiding plagiarism). It is my responsibility to report any cases of cheating or plagiarism to the administration. All assignments must be your own original work and must be prepared specifically for this course.

Tentative Course Schedule

“So What?!” Interpersonal communication matters		
8/27	Introduction to the course	
8/29	Storytelling matters/Narrative pedagogy	Kellas & Hackenburg Stories
[IP]C is a beautiful mess		
9/3	IPC is collaborative and transactional (not simple and one-way) and constitutive	Koenig Kellas & Manusov (in progress) Reading Quiz
9/5	IPC differs in quality based on how personal it is	Stewart (2012) pp. 31-41 Reading Quiz
9/10	Wholeness is more important than fault and blame	Kottler; Manusov Reading Quiz
[IP]C is inseparable from culture and context		
9/12	Gender, class, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual identity, time, and region all affect and reflect intergroup and interpersonal communication (<i>Lucas lecture</i>)	Wood Reading Quiz
IPC is tied to well-being (aka, “The quality of your communication is linked with the quality of your life”)		
9/17	Communication affects and reflects mental health	Parks; Review https://bringchange2mind.org/ Reading Quiz
9/19	Communicators are biological beings; communication is both socially and biologically constructed	Floyd (2016)** Annotation due
All forms of IPC can be functionally ambivalent (aka The Dark Side of IPC)		
9/24	The dark side of IPC recognizes that no form of communication is fully bright or dark	Spitzberg & Cupach (2007) Application Paper 1 due
9/26	Technology sucks, except when it doesn’t (aka, our love-hate relationship with email and Facebook)	Turner & West (from Making Connections) Reading Quiz
All of our meaning-making is filtered through cognitive and affective frames		
10/1	Cognitive schemata, such as stereotypes, are necessary, but we also have responsibility for	Canary, Cody, & Manusov Reading Quiz

	what we bring in and take away from interactions	
10/3	Sense-making is a communicative process with consequences (Part I: Attributions and accounts)	Koenig Kellas & Kranstuber Horstman Reading Quiz
10/8	Sense-making is a communicative process with consequences (Part II: Memorable messages and stories)	
10/10	Review and In-Class Application	
10/15	Midterm Exam	
Responding is better than reacting, but emotions affect our choices		
10/17	Emotions are worth being curious about when it comes to IPC	Brown (2014) Ch. 4 Reading Quiz
10/22	FALL BREAK – NO CLASS	
10/24	The only person whose choices we can control in IPC is our own	Lerner Reading Quiz
Competence, confirmation, compassion, and communicated perspective-taking are key skills		
10/29	Confirmation and feeling understood are among our most fundamental human needs (Day 18)	Dailey (2006)** Annotation due
10/31	Adapt to others and protect your own and others' face during interactions (Day 19)	Cupach & Metts Reading Quiz
11/5	The privacy paradox: Self-disclosure requires and develops trust (Day 20)	Reading TBD Reading Quiz
11/7	Film	
11/12	Film	
11/14	NCA – NO CLASS	
IPC deprivation is harmful		
11/19	Take the case of nonverbal communication (Day 21)	Reading TBD Application Paper 2 due
11/21	IPC is an antidote to loneliness (Day 22)	Floyd (2015) Reading Quiz
Communication patterns can make or break us		
11/26	Conflict is only as bad as the dysfunctionality of its pattern (Day 24)	Metts Reading Quiz
11/28	THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS	
12/3	Families are systems (Day 25)	Yoshimura & Galvin Reading Quiz
The most mundane communication can be the most important		
12/5	Everyday talk and conversations are the most significant communication events because they build relational culture and maintain relationships (Day 23) (Lucas lecture)	Bruess Final Project Due

IPC heals		
12/10	Social support helps people cope with life's ups and downs (Day 26)	Jones & Guerrero (2001) Reading Quiz
12/12	Communication affects and reflects resilience (Day 27)	Afifi & Harrison (2018) Reading Quiz
Wednesday 12/18	FINAL EXAM 10 AM – 12 PM	