

# COMM 283: Interpersonal Communication

Fall 2016

<b>Instructors:</b>	<b>Professor:</b> Dr. Jody (Koenig) Kellas	<b>GTA:</b> Katie Brockhage
<b>Class Meetings:</b>	Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30-10:45, Richards Hall 15	
<b>Office:</b>	Oldfather 428	Oldfather 415
<b>Office Hours</b>	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00-3:00 and by appointment	Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:00-12:00 and by appointment
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<b>Course Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.my.unl.edu">www.my.unl.edu</a> (Blackboard)	
<b>Required texts</b>	Floyd, K. (2011). <i>Interpersonal communication</i> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed. Boston: McGraw Hill. Additional required readings are available on our Blackboard website. Stewart, J. (2016). <i>U &amp; Me: Communicating in moments that matter</i> .  Stewart, J. (2014). <i>U &amp; Me: Communicating in moments that matter</i> . Chagrin Falls, OH: Taos Instituted Publications.  *Additional readings available on Blackboard	

## **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 influence of interpersonal communication in our lives by utilizing various tools including readings, films, 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. 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, including but not limited to:

- Understanding different ways to view interpersonal communication and the advantages and disadvantages of each; going beyond the “common sense” notion of communication and investigating the complex interpersonal process systematically.
- Articulating the role perception and identity-management in interpersonal communication.
- Engaging in competent, flexible, and appropriate communication with others.
- Comprehending and demonstrating effective ways to listen and manage conflict.
- Exercising conversational sensitivity, empathy, and perspective-taking.
- Protecting identity and self-concept of others in interaction.
- Developing accuracy in understanding nonverbal behavior.
- Managing self-disclosure and privacy appropriately.
- Practicing interpersonal communication in a way that might help improve the quality of your relationships, health, happiness, and overall life.
- Understanding response-ability in communicating in moments that matter.
- Demonstrating the intellectual capacity of “relating” effectively across contexts.
- Applying theories of interpersonal communication to practical interpersonal situations inside and outside the classroom.

### **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, Learn Smart modules, reading quizzes, in-class application exercises, 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 application activities, completing homework, etc. The grading breakdown is as follows:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Exam 1	100 points
Exam 2	100 points
Exam 3	100 points
Involvement	50 points in-class participation; homework)
Learn Smart Modules	70 points (7 at 10 points each)
Reading Quizzes	30 points (6 at 5 points each)
Final Project	<u>100 points</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>550 points</b>

Grades will be based on the following scale:

550-531 = A+	530-515 = A	514-493 = A-	492-476 = B+
475-460 = B	459-438 = B-	437-421 = C+	420-405 = C
404-383 = C-	382-366 = D+	365-344 = D	343-328 = D-
Below 328 = 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
- 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

### **Learn Smart Modules and Reading Quizzes**

LearnSmart is a learning tool developed by the publishers of your Floyd textbook. They partnered with the author to create an intelligent learning system based on cognitive mapping that diagnoses your knowledge of a particular subject then creates an individualized learning path geared towards your success in your course. It helps you attain mastery of the content. Each module is made up of objective (e.g., multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank) questions on the content of the chapter. These modules test your understanding of the chapter and help you prepare in a way that frees up our time in-class to engage higher levels of learning. You must complete the module by 8:00 AM the day we will be covering that chapter in class at 9:30. For example, if we are reading Chapter 2 for Tuesday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, you must complete the LearnSmart module for Chapter 2 that day (9/6) by 8:00 AM. LearnSmart modules take approximately 30 minutes so you should give yourself adequate time to complete each module. Over the course of the semester, you are responsible for completing 7 LearnSmart modules. There are 8 Floyd textbook chapters assigned so you may either opt out of one OR complete more than 10 and have your lowest grade(s) dropped. A representative from McGraw Hill will visit our class early in the semester to tell you even more about how LearnSmart works.

For Stewart and other readings, you will also be responsible for 6 reading quizzes. 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. Quizzes will NOT be open book. Quizzes will typically be multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank.

### **In-Class Applications**

You will be required to engage in three in-class application exercises which apply some aspect of class reading and discussion to an interpersonal communication artifact, problem, situation, movie, etc. These “application days” are designed to promote active learning of course concepts by applying the material to real (or fictional) interpersonal interactions and/or material. They will require preparation in advance (i.e., bringing an artifact to class, re-reading relevant chapters) and attendance is required application exercises as you will be completing written exercise relevant to course exams during the class period. The process and product of these exercises will affect exam questions. Advanced notice and guidelines will be given in class.

### **Final Project**

Over the course of the semester, you will research in more depth than we have covered in class a topic of interpersonal communication that you find compelling and personally relevant. You will read, synthesize, and report on a set of empirical articles relevant to your topic area and then apply the research findings. The final paper will be approximately 10-12 pages.

*Assignment sheets outlining specific expectations for above assignments will be given during the semester.*

### **Course Policies**

**Late Papers and Make-up Exams:** Late 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 Katie 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 and avoid talking to your peers during class lecture and discussion. Talking on the phone, reading non-course materials (e.g., the paper, readings for another class), surfing the web, checking facebook, and texting are **unacceptable** behaviors, and you may be asked to leave class if I see you engaging in any of them. These behaviors may also adversely affect your involvement grade. Laptops should only be used for note taking, if at all. If I 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

<u>Date</u>	<u>Content/Assignment</u>	<u>Assignment/Reading Due*</u>
<b><u>Fundamentals of Interpersonal Communication</u></b>		
T 8/23	Introduction to the Course	
Th 8/25	Learning in Moments that Matter	Stewart, Ch. 7, Kellas/Brockhage stories*
T 8/30	About Communication	Floyd, Ch. 1 (Learn Smart 1)
Th 9/1	Putting on Other IPC Lenses	Stewart, Chs. 1-2 (Reading Quiz)
T 9/6	Culture & Gender	Floyd, Ch. 2 (Learn Smart 2)
Th 9/8	Culture & Gender	Stewart, Ch. 9 (Reading Quiz)
T 9/13	Self & Identity	Floyd, Ch. 3 (Learn Smart 3)

Th 9/15	Self & Identity	Stewart, Ch. 3 (Reading Quiz)
T 9/20	Perception	Floyd, Ch. 4 (Learn Smart 4)
Th 9/22	<i>Application Day 1</i>	
T 9/27	Exam Review & Catch-up	
Th 9/29	<b>Exam 1</b>	

### **Interpersonal Communication Skills in Action**

T 10/4	Nonverbal Communication	Floyd, Ch. 6 (Learn Smart 5)
Th 10/6	Nonverbal Communication	
T 10/11	Listening	Floyd, Ch. 7 (Learn Smart 6)
Th 10/13	Listening	Stewart, Ch. 6 (Reading Quiz)
T 10/18	FALL BREAK – NO CLASS	
Th 10/20	Confirmation, Perspective-taking, & Storytelling	Koenig Kellas et al.* Campbell*
T 10/25	<i>Application Day 2</i> Exam Review	
Th 10/27	<b>Exam 2</b>	

### **Dynamics and Processes in Interpersonal Relationships**

T 11/1	Developing Relationships	Floyd, Ch. 9 (Learn Smart 7)
Th 11/3	Maintaining Relationships	Stewart, Ch. 4 (Reading Quiz)
T 11/8	Relationship Complexity	Holman & Sillars (2011)*
Th 11/10	NCA CONFERENCE – NO CLASS	
T 11/15	Dissolving Relationships	
Th 11/17	Final Projects Work Day	
T 11/22	Conflict	Floyd, Ch. 11 (Learn Smart 8)

## Relational Challenges

Th 11/24      THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS

T 11/29      Conflict

Kottler\*, Prather & Prather\*  
(Reading Quiz)

Th 12/1      Conflict and Families

Stewart, Ch. 5,  
Floyd, pp. 327-331

T 12/6      Project Presentations, Exam Review,

**Final Projects Due**

Th 12/8      *Application Day 3*  
Course Wrap-Up

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*\*Indicates readings from the required reading packet*

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**Final Exam:    Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup> from 10 AM to 12 PM**