

COMM 470: INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION
Spring 2021 (*online nonsynchronous*)

Professor: Dr. Dawn O. Braithwaite, Willa Cather Professor of Communication

Pronouns: she/her/hers

Office: 353 Louise Pound Hall (teaching and holding office hours *remotely* this semester)

Phone: 472-2070 (main Communication Studies office; I receive messages within 24 hours during the work week)

Email: dbraithwaite@unl.edu (email encouraged and often the fastest way to reach me. I try and respond within 24 hours)

Office Hours Wednesday 1-3 PM via Zoom <https://unl.zoom.us/j/93009206655> and by appointment (email me @ dbraithwaite@unl.edu)

Required Books:

- 1) Guerrero, L. K., Andersen, P., A., & Afifi, W. A. (2018). *Close Encounters: Communication in relationships* (5th edition), Sage. (*Note: Students should purchase/rent the 5th edition*). To see the cover: https://www.amazon.com/Close-Encounters-Communication-Laura-Guerrero/dp/150637672X/ref=sr_1_3?dchild=1&keywords=Close+Encounters%3A+Communication+in+relationships&qid=1611011100&sr=8-3
- 2) *Braithwaite, D. O., & Wood, J. T. (Eds.). (2015). *Case studies in interpersonal communication: Processes and problems*. Kendall Hunt.
- 3) *Braithwaite, D. O. & Schrodt P. (Eds.). (2015). *Engaging theories in interpersonal communication: Multiple perspectives* (2nd ed.). Sage.

*We will read 30% of these two books (provided to you via Canvas *at no cost*). Individual chapters are included in weekly modules. *Whole books* are uploaded in two modules at the end of the class. (Note: the *Engaging Theories* book is a final corrections copy which is why I can provide it for free for you).

COMM 470 Course Description & Objectives: Interpersonal communication forms the foundation and constitutes our personal, professional, and civic lives. How we choose to communicate and relate with others around us are among the most important choices we make. Honestly, it is hard to think about a topic more important in life and more worth our attention, study, and understanding. This is an upper-division course for those wishing to study interpersonal communication theory and research in an advanced way. Students are expected to have completed COMM 200, 201, or 202 (or a research methods class if from another discipline) and have a working knowledge of reading and writing research and theory.

Our class theme is to work together to "*expand our repertoire of communicative choices*" by studying a blend of research, theory, and skills that are important to understanding and being able to practice effective interpersonal communication in our various relationships to help us make competent decisions about how best to communicate. We will accomplish these goals by reading, watching professor and theorist videos on Canvas, reflecting understanding on weekly quizzes, and completing a semester project that helps students better understand and apply what they are learning to communication in personal relationships.

Learning in an Asynchronous Online Class: Learning involves knowledge + experience; it is *active, rather than* passive. We are teachers and learners together. As a student, your job is preparation via active, *meaningful participation and making an ongoing effort to apply the material* to your life and experience. As the professor, my job is to provide the materials and structure for you to be able to watch, read, learn, and apply the material each week to be ready for your weekly quiz and to work on your semester project. I want you to learn and succeed. I am here to guide and help you succeed in any reasonable way I can. Please visit my office hours, contact me via email, or set up an appointment to meet. I do realize this is a pressure-packed unprecedented time. Please reach out to me and/or to other campus resources as you need them: <https://covid19.unl.edu/information-students#health-support> <https://caps.unl.edu/2019-novel-coronavirus-and-covid-19-response>

Mission of the Department of Communication Studies: The role and mission of the faculty and students of the Department of Communication Studies is 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 attention to understanding the ways in which communication erodes and sustains collaboration within and among local, national, and global communities.

The Department of Communication Studies is committed to achieving inclusive excellence as outlined by the university's Office of Diversity and Inclusion <https://diversity.unl.edu/diversity-home>. As Communication scholars and teachers, we believe communities and relationships are enriched when we give voice and value to diverse perspectives based on “group and social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, indigeneity, class, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, country of origin, and (disability) <http://www.accessiblesociety.org/topics/demographics-identity/dkaplanpaper.htm>, historically underrepresented populations, and cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations.” We are committed to continual reflection and refinement of curriculum, scholarly endeavors, and community engagement to achieve goals of inclusiveness and equal opportunities for our students, faculty, and staff. If you have questions or concerns, feel free to discuss these with your instructors, the chair of the department, Dr. Jody Kellas <https://comm.unl.edu/directory-group>, or members of the department's Committee on Diversity and Inclusion: <https://comm.unl.edu/committees>, or the UNL Office of Diversity and Inclusion (linked above).

Student concerns and feedback. Your experience with remote learning in this course is important to me. If you have questions, concerns, or positive feedback, please contact me at dbraithwaite@unl.edu or leave me a phone message at 402 472-2070 (I usually receive messages within 24 hours during the work week). I will provide you a feedback survey for the class early in the semester to see how things are going for us as a class. If I am unable to respond, or you believe I have not adequately addressed your concerns, you may contact the department chair Dr. Jody Kellas (contact info: <https://comm.unl.edu/directory-group>).

EXPECTATIONS OF CLASS MEMBERS

Completing Work. Assignments are due by the date and time assigned, out of fairness to all class members. Late work deductions are 10% per 24 hours late, weekends included. Class members are encouraged to keep a copy of all work and to make regular backups of computer files (computers and flash drives can crash). Class members must complete *all* work to pass this course. If you have an emergency surrounding the due date, contact the professor before work is due: dbraithwaite@unl.edu

Pass/No Pass: Class members taking the course Pass/Fail must earn a grade of 74% (“C”) or better to receive credit for the course. C- grades are not passing grades. *For Spring 2021, the deadline to change a course to Pass/No Pass is March 26 and to withdraw is April 16.*

Perspectives. We may be exposed to perspectives that are new or different than our own. Class members are asked to treat respectfully the opinions and experiences of others in the class. One does not need to agree with another person to try and understand their perspective and treat them respectfully. Please talk with the professor if you have questions or concerns.

Accommodations. The professor has a long scholarly and personal commitment to issues surrounding disability. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs. 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 by SSD or in this class, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 117 Louise Pound Hall, (402) 472-3787 voice or TTY.

Contesting Grades on Quizzes and Assignments: Submit an argument in writing (good, specific rationale for your answer) to Dr. B *within one week the quiz closing* or receiving a paper grade: dbraithwaite@unl.edu. No arguments accepted after one week.

Incompletes are used rarely and must be negotiated and approved by the professor *before* the end of the semester.

Email: Dr. Braithwaite will send periodic messages out via Canvas and will post announcements, including changes to the syllabus or calendar. Be sure to check your email regularly.

ASSIGNMENTS & EXAMS

Weekly Questions for each assigned reading and the theorist interview are provided in your weekly module on Canvas. All quiz questions will come from the answers to the Weekly Questions. Use this documents as you read (suggestion: read the chapter and watch the theorist video first and then go back and answer the questions).

Weekly Quizzes: To help students check their comprehension spread testing out weekly rather than in large exams, we will have 11 weekly quizzes via Canvas (skipping weeks 8, 14, 15). *Quizzes open Thursdays 8 AM and are due no later than Thursdays at 11:59 *PM**. Quizzes will include multiple choice, true-false questions and short answer or fill-in questions. Note: Canvas will post quiz score from the multiple guess answers before I grade the short answer.

Ask questions over the material in office hours (Wednesday 1-2 PM), via email, or via appointment. Consult with the professor *early* in the semester if you are not doing well on quizzes.

If you want to make an argument about a quiz answer, submit an argument in writing (good, specific rationale for your answer, cited from course materials) *within one week of the quiz closing* for that week. Email to Dr. Braithwaite. No arguments accepted after one week.

There will be (a) one practice quiz on Week #2 (not counted toward the final grade), and (b) 10 additional quizzes. *We will drop the two (2) lowest quiz scores*, in case a student does not fare well on a quiz, is ill, or is absent. With dropping two scores, there are **no make-up, early, or late quizzes given**.

Semester Project: There is one semester project consisting of four (4) assignments broken into smaller papers. The project is designed to give you the opportunity to study an interpersonal communication (IPC) topic that is meaningful to you and to apply this knowledge to your own IPC. My goal is for this to be a very practical and useful project. Find the full assignment and complete sample papers for all four assignments is in the top course module called “Course Materials” on Canvas.

Assignment	Title	Focus	Points	Due
#1	What I Want to Study: Project Concept Worksheet/Meet with Dr. Braithwaite	Identify IPC concepts to be addressed (main communication concepts for study); Planning for project	20	Saturday February 13, no later than 11:59 PM
#2	What the Experts Think/ Survey Draft	Read and report on research literature and theories; Draft of survey questions for “real people” for Assignment #3	75	Saturday March 6, no later than 11:59 PM
#3	What Real People Think: Survey Results/Case Study Plan	Report results of survey analysis; Plan for case study for Assignment #4	75	Saturday April 3, no later than 11:59 PM
#4	What I Think: Case Study and Analysis	Write case study; Analysis of case study and conclusions	75	Saturday May 1, no later than 11:59 PM

Extra Credit: There will be different extra credit opportunities announced (e.g., special lectures, participating in a study) and some other extra credit assignments listed and updated at the end of the modules on Canvas. Students may earn up to 20 points of extra credit. All extra credit must be completed **no later than Thursday May 6 11:59 PM**.

EVALUATION OF WORK

Communication Studies faculty assume that all students enter courses with the ability to earn at least a “C” grade in the course. Students who meet *minimum* requirements will earn a “C” for that work. Students who earn “B” and “A” grades *exceed* the minimum requirements. Students will be graded based on expectations appropriate for their class level and the program.

- A= EXCELLENT. *Greatly exceeds* requirements. Shows outstanding creativity, skill, initiative, effort
- B= GOOD. *Exceeds* requirements. Shows substantial creativity, skills, initiative, and/or effort
- C= AVERAGE. *Meets* the requirements in *every* respect, but does not exceed requirements
- D= BELOW AVERAGE. Meets *some* requirements, but *deficient* in others
- E= POOR. Deficient in *most or all* requirements

Grading Scale:

A+	98-100%	B-	80-83%
A	94-97%	C+	77-80%
A-	90-93%	C	74-77%
B+	88-90%	C-	70-73%
B	84-87%	D+	68-70%
		D	64-67%
		D-	60-63%
		F	59% and below

POINTDISTRIBUTION	Points	Due
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Quizzes 8 @ 20 pts. Week 1 Course Tour Quiz + 8 additional quizzes (dropping two lowest scores) (20 points each)	160	Weekly no later than Saturday 11:59 PM
Meet with Dr. Braithwaite during Week 2 (15 minutes)	10	Schedule by Saturday 1/30 11:59 PM
Assignment #1	20	Saturday February 13, no later than 11:59 PM
Assignment #2	75	Saturday March 6, no later than 11:59 PM
Assignment #3	75	Saturday April 3, no later than 11:59 PM
Assignment #4	75	Monday May 3, no later than 11:59 PM
Total Points	415	
Extra Credit <i>Optional</i> (maximum of 20)	20	Thursday May 6 11:59 PM

ACADEMIC & PERSONAL INTEGRITY

Violations of academic integrity are serious and will result in automatic failure of the assignment and/or the class, and referral to the proper university officials.

Dr. Stephen Cooper of Marshall University articulates my position on academic dishonesty: “Don't do it. Plagiarism is a fool's shortcut. Not only do you cheat yourself of the opportunity to learn and grow, but also you expose yourself to severe academic penalties. Plagiarism is dishonest. In the I Ching there is a saying that sincerity inspires respect. Earn your self-respect through your own efforts.”

All work a student submits is expected to be the student's own, and must be work completed for this particular class and assignment.

Academic dishonesty includes handing in another's work or part of another's work as your own, turning in one of your old papers for a current class, turning in the same or similar past or current paper for two different classes, presenting a group project as your work solely, purchasing or otherwise obtaining research or papers, using of those materials written by another and turning that work in as your own. Using unauthorized notes, books, flash drives, phones, the internet, or other study aids, if prohibited in a class, or otherwise obtaining another's answers for an examination also represents a breach of academic integrity. Sanctions are applied whether the violation was intentional or not.

Students wishing to build on an old project or work on a similar topic in two classes must discuss this with both professors. If starting with work done by a group, students must have permission of those group members to use that work.

You must keep all your original data for projects (surveys or contact information for respondents) and be prepared to present them to the professor when requested.

Plagiarism means intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own. This includes your own previous work. Plagiarism includes quoting or paraphrasing from other sources without acknowledging/citing the source of your information or presenting quoted material as your own words. You must be very clear about attribution of sources and you must know how to cite sources in a paper. Students who are unfamiliar with how to cite sources should purchase a style manual of the American Psychological Association). Claiming lack of knowledge about standards for writing and attribution is not an acceptable excuse.

I believe strongly that academic dishonesty hurts us all. It makes a mockery of what we are all doing here together. This professor will pursue academic dishonesty vigorously and all violations have serious consequences. The penalty is severe, and it will hurt you now and in the future. Please do not do it. No one wants to see you have these kinds of problems with your work; start tasks early and seek help when you need it. Come to a faculty member for help if you are at all unsure about any of these issues or seek help at the campus UNL Writing Assistance Center, see <https://www.unl.edu/writing/home> for info and appointments