

Course Syllabus
Speech 3350: Interpersonal Communication
Spring Semester 2009

BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor Contact Information

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- Office Hours: MWF 11-12, TR 3-4

Course Description and Objectives

The goal of Speech 3350 is to provide a survey of topics related to communication as it occurs between pairs of people in relationships. Contexts to be investigated include friendships, romantic relationships, families, and work-place interactions. Focus will be placed on theory designed to explain relational phenomena including relational escalation, maintenance and de-escalation. At the conclusion of the course, you should be able to explain relationship phenomena in terms of theories and concepts as presented in class. Further, you should be able to identify communication patterns that contribute to both positive and negative relationship outcomes. Ultimately, you should be able to apply the concepts from this course to your own relationships to identify the patterns of communication that impact the quality of those relationships. For those students who plan to work as clinicians, understanding the fundamentals of relationships as taught in this class should provide a foundation for being able to identify communicative interventions to improve relational quality, particularly in marital therapy.

Class Format

The format of this course will consist primarily of lecture, but will also include class-discussion and in-class activities designed to enhance the lecture material. You are expected to participate enthusiastically in all discussion and activities. You will be best prepared to engage in discussion and activities if the reading has been done prior to the class meeting time. Lecture material will reflect and supplement material from the reading.

Further, this course is writing intensive. You will be asked to write a series of 6 papers – the first 5 will be about 5 pages long and will be focused on the application of specific course concepts to one of your own personal relationships. The final paper will serve as the culminating activity for the course. It will serve as a synthesis of some of the content of the previous papers as a big-picture analysis of the quality and trajectory of one of your own close relationships. The final paper should be about 10 pages long. We are fortunate enough to have Kelley Draper with us this semester who will serve as a Writing Fellow from the Writing and Communication Center. Her job will be to facilitate your successful writing in this course.

Required Reading

There is no required textbook for this course. I'm actually quite opposed to textbooks. There is no reason for students to purchase a book that synthesizes research when I can simply direct you to the original research. As such, the readings for this class will be original research articles written either by communication or psychology scholars. All of the articles will be provided on D2L.

COURSE POLICIES

Contacting Your Professor

My general preference is to communicate with students face to face, as it tends to be efficient and allows for the enhanced clarification of information. This means that you are more than welcome to talk with me before or after class, or during my office hours. If, however, you opt not to speak to me in person, or for whatever reason, prefer to communicate with me via email, please take note of the following regarding my expectations for email:

- Please allow up to 48 hours for me to reply to any email. Generally, I will reply well before 48 hours is up, however, you should not email drafts or questions the night before an assignment or exam. You may or may not receive a reply.
- When emailing, please write in complete sentences, and use correct punctuation and capitalization. Please exhibit a general sense of courtesy, professionalism and graciousness in your emails, particularly when making requests. Finally, please address and sign your emails. In other words, start them with my name and end them with yours.
- I am happy to look at drafts of assignments. I have found that the most efficient and effective way for me to provide feedback on drafts is to first look at a copy of the assignment and then meet with you to go over my feedback. If you would like me to look at one of your drafts, please allow 48 hours for me to look at the draft – either in hard copy or electronically – and then make an appointment with me to come by to discuss the feedback.

One other thing that I would like to note regarding how you address me: It is my preference that you call me by my first name – both in person and in written correspondence. If you are at all uncomfortable with that level of informality, either Dr. Carrie, Dr. O., or Dr. Oliveira will be fine.

Special Accommodations

Any student with a special need for an accommodation in course activities should make arrangements with me.

Policy Regarding Attendance, Tardiness and Late Work

Students at ETSU are expected to attend class (in fact, the school's attendance policy can be read [here](#)). I absolutely agree that you should come to class – you are paying for it. Ultimately, however, the decision to attend class is yours alone. In deciding whether to attend class, it might interest you to know that students who attend class on a regular basis typically perform substantially better than those students who do not. That being said, if you for, whatever reason, elect not to attend class, please know that you are responsible for all material presented in class. Moreover, you are responsible for due dates for assignments and dates for exams.

Should you fail to attend class on a day on which an assignment is due or on which there is an exam, you will forfeit the points associated with that assignment UNLESS:

- You notify me of the absence in advance and agree to submit any work due on that date in advance, **OR**
- The absence was unforeseeable, unpreventable, urgent in nature, necessitated missing class, and for which documentation proving its occurrence can be provided (oversleeping, scheduling conflicts, and other absences of this sort will not be excused). Additionally, you must contact me via phone or email within 24 hours of the absence to notify me of the emergency. You will have 5 school days to make up the assignment. Failure to notify me about the emergency within 24 hours of the absence or a failure to make up the assignment within 5 schools days of the absence will result in a zero on the assignment.

Similarly, if you are tardy on a day on which an assignment is due, an exam is scheduled, or some other in class activity has taken place, and you miss the activity due to tardiness, you will forfeit the points associated with that assignment unless the tardiness meets the conditions specified above. As a general rule, you should avoid being tardy to class. Your peers and I will find it distracting. If you must be tardy for whatever reason, please make as unobtrusive an entrance as possible.

Policy Regarding the Submission of Assignments

There are several criteria which all assignments submitted for credit must meet. Additional requirements for particular assignments will be provided as the semester progresses and will provide criteria to be met *in addition* to those listed here:

- All written work shall be typed in **12-point Times New Roman or Courier font**, have **one-inch margins around the entire page**, be **double-spaced**, be **written using formal scholarly language** and be **devoid of grammatical and typographical errors**.
- Communication scholars write manuscripts so as to comply with the publication standards put forth by the American Psychological Association. Purdue University has some [tips online](#) for how to correctly format in APA style. The APA also has some tips online for how to format [electronic resources](#).
- All work shall be submitted electronically so as to be available for screening through ETSU's plagiarism detection software (see policy regarding academic integrity below). All work must be submitted via the electronic dropbox on the course's D2L site. The dropbox can be found by going to elearn.etsu.edu and clicking on the link for this course. Please note that the dropbox will close at the beginning of class on the date on which an assignment is due, and you will not be able to submit any assignments after this time. If your assignment is not in the dropbox prior to its closing, the assignment is considered late and will be subject to the late work acceptance policy specified above. You will receive a confirmation email from the D2L system when your assignment is successfully submitted to the dropbox. Please note that technical difficulties, inability to access D2L or your email not working are not valid reasons to be late on submitting your assignment to the dropbox. If you are unable to access the dropbox prior to the assignment due date, send the assignment to me via email and bring a hardcopy to class.

Policy Regarding Academic Integrity

ETSU highly values academic integrity. My policy regarding academic integrity will be the same as prescribed by the university. As students, you should be familiar with the academic integrity policy as described by your university. You can read it by clicking [here](#).

It is also important to note that ETSU makes available to its faculty a plagiarism-detection service called Turnitin. Any written work that you submit for credit to this class may be sent to Turnitin so that it can be compared to other submitted texts. Assignments are also compared to material on the internet and in some academic databases such as ProQuest.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Graded Assignments and Grading Scale

Your score for the course will be a function of the total points you earn on each of the following assignments totaling 520 points:

- Topic Reflection and Application Papers (5 at 20 points each, total of 100 points)
 - You will be required to complete 5 writing assignments that require you to directly apply some course content/concept/theory to an existing relationship. You will be required to address a specific set of questions. A detailed assignment description and a topic-specific grading rubric will be provided on D2L prior to every assignment.
- Group Presentations (100 points)
 - Students will be formed into groups of 3-4 students. Groups will be required to present on a topic of their choice. Your presentations are expected to be 20-30 minutes long. Specific guidelines and a grading rubric for this assignment will be posted on the course website.
- Final Relationship Analysis Paper (120 points)
 - You will be required to reflect back on the 5 small application papers as well as integrate other content from the course and present a big-picture analysis of your closest interpersonal relationship. You will be required to submit a draft of this paper (worth 20 points) prior to final submission. You are expected to present an analysis of the current quality of the relationship as well as your assessment of the trajectory of the relationship based on the communication patterns you exhibit in your relationship with your partner.
- Examinations (4 at 50 points, total of 200 points)
 - There will be four exams over the course of the semester. You will be asked to identify and present the correct answer to a series of items taking the form of multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, and short answer questions designed to assess your understanding of course content.
 - The final exam for this course will be held in our regular classroom on **THURSDAY, MAY 7, at 1:20-3:20pm.**
- The following scale will be adopted for calculating your final score in the course.

Grade Earned	%
A	100 - 93.5
A-	93.4 - 89.5
B+	89.4 - 86.5
B	86.4 - 82.5
B-	82.4 - 79.5
C+	79.4 - 76.5
C	76.4 - 72.5
C-	72.4 - 69.5
D+	69.4 - 66.5
D	66.4 - 59.5
F	< = 59.4

Tentative Course Schedule

Please note that this is a *tentative* course schedule for the duration of this course. Any modifications to this schedule will be announced in class.

Week	Date	Assignments
1	1/15	Introduction to the Course and Course Policy
2	1/20	No Class – Snow Day (how silly)
	1/22	Introduction to the Process of Communication, Interpersonal Communication, and the Knapp Stage Model of Coming Together
3	1/27	Why We Form Relationships: Interpersonal Needs and A Little Bit of Evolution Baumeister & Leary (1995)
	1/29	Beginnings: Initiation Scripts, Uncertainty Reduction Theory Person Perception and Stereotypes West & Turner - pp. 132-146 Due: Relationship Development Application Paper
4	2/3	Relational Escalation: Rules and Norms for Interaction and Social Penetration Theory West & Turner (2000), pp. 147-163
	2/5	Exam #1
5	2/10	Beginnings: Attraction
	2/12	Beginnings: Flirtation, Courtship and Other Issues Related to Nonverbal Communication Presentation by: Melissa, Jessie and Krista Henningsen (2004) Moore (2002)
6	2/17	Relational Escalation: Liking vs. Loving, and Theories of Love Due: Attraction Application Paper
	2/19	Relational Escalation: Intimacy and Commitment Presentation by: Will, Heidi, Barbie and Kellye
7	2/24	Relational Maintenance: Play and Idiosyncratic Communication Baxter (1992)
	2/26	Relational Maintenance: Dialectical Theory West and Turner (2000) - pp. 164-178
8	3/3	Relational Maintenance: Relationship Satisfaction and Social Exchange Theory West & Turner (2000) - pp. 179-191 Meeks, Hendrick & Hendrick (1998)
	3/5	Exam #2
9	3/10	No Classes – Spring Break. Don't forget to pack your sunscreen, condoms and a designated driver!
	3/12	
10	3/17	Relational Distress: Everyday Betrayals: Impropriety and Carelessness Miller (2001)

	3/19	Relational Distress: Everyday Betrayals, Teasing and Ostracism Jones et al. (2005) Williams & Zadro (2005)
11	3/24	Relational Distress: Taboo Topics and Communication Avoidance Presentation by: Trip, Angelica, LaToya, Rachael, and Sheri Rolloff & Johnson (2001)
	3/26	Relational Distress: Deception
12	3/31	Relational Distress: Infidelity and Jealousy Presentation by: Becca, Skylar, and Chuck
	4/2	Exam #3
13	4/7	Relational Distress: Defining Conflict and Conflict Patterns Due: Aversive Behaviors Application Paper
	4/9	Relational Distress: Conflict Patterns and Conflict Management
14	4/14	Relational Distress: Violence in Close Relationships Olson (2004)
	4/16	Relational Distress: Patterns of Relational Dissolution and Predictors of Dissolution Due: Conflict Management Application Paper
15	4/21	Family: Parent-Child Interaction and Attachment Styles Presentation by: Valerie, Lindsay, Tabitha, and Lisa Collins & Read (1990)
	4/23	Friendships: The Very Necessary Relationship and Cross-Sex Relationships and their Challenges Samter & Cupach (1998) Due: Attachment Application Paper Due Sunday, April 26 by 11:59pm: Draft of Final Relationship Analysis
16	4/28	Curious Contexts: Long Distance Relationships Presentation by: Brianne, Megan and Ashley Dainton & Aylor (2001)
	4/30	Curious Contexts: Online Relationships Walther (TBA)

Final draft of relationship analysis is due by 11:59pm on Tuesday, May 5.