

Introduction to Human Communication

HCOM 100, Summer 2006

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& by appointment

This course is an introduction to the theory and practice of human communication. The focus of the course is on learning and practicing the skills needed to improve the quality of interpersonal communication in a variety of contexts, such as in relationships, groups, organizations, public settings, and diverse cultures. You are expected to practice skills in class and in everyday communication outside of class.

This course fulfills the General Education requirement for the core competency of category I.A, Oral Communication. As stated in University Policy Statement 411.201, the seven goals for student learning in the oral communication category (all of which this course addresses) are:

1. To develop and present a clearly spoken message in English.
2. To practice effective listening and speaking in a dialogue.
3. To present an oral message clearly and effectively using relevant and adequate supporting evidence.
4. To understand the influence of culture and context on oral communication.
5. To understand and value difference in communication styles.
6. To negotiate cooperative action and solutions to problems.
7. To select and use effectively appropriate techniques and materials to support ideas and to motivate and persuade others.

Other objectives specific to this course are:

8. To be more competent in interpersonal communication across a variety of contexts, for example, relational, group, organizational, public, and intercultural communication situations.
9. To recognize the responsibilities of being an ethical communicator.
10. To understand various methods for managing communication anxiety.

You will demonstrate that you have met these goals in a variety of ways, including class participation, in-class activities, writing assignments, oral presentations and examinations. Details regarding these assessment strategies appear in this syllabus. Further information on each form of assessment will be provided orally in class and/or on materials distributed during the semester.

Required text:

Beebe, S. A., Beebe, S. J., & Ivy, D. K. (2004). *Communication: Principles for a lifetime* (2nd ed.).

Boston: Pearson.

*****Books MUST be brought to every class*****

Course Readings: You are expected to read the designated chapters in the text **before** coming to class on the day the readings are due. Coming to class is **not** a substitute for reading the text, nor is reading the text a substitute for attending class. Class time will be used to build on your reading, not to review it. Come to each class prepared to ask questions you have about the reading, to explore confusing aspects of the material, and to provide examples and illustrations of the theories and concepts covered in the text.

Writing Requirements: There are two writing assignments in this course. Your writing competence will be assessed in determining your final course grade (see “Point Summary” section). You are expected to organize and express your ideas well. You will receive timely feedback and suggestions on your writing. You will be expected to address any deficiencies in your subsequent writing assignments. Guidelines regarding the writing assignments for the course appear in this syllabus, and more specific expectations will be addressed in class orally and/or through handouts.

Course Requirements (Assessment strategies related to course learning goals):

Since this is a communication course, you will complete certain tasks in the different areas of communication. These include oral presentations, written papers, group discussions, practice applications of concepts, and examinations of learned concepts.

Class Participation/Attendance:

A course in human communication **requires active participation** in class discussion and exercises. You must be *present* to be an active participant. Through your participation and receptivity to other class members’ participation, you will specifically address learning goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, and 9 for this course. Excessive tardiness is unacceptable and will result in a lowered participation grade. If you foresee problems being in class or arriving to class on time, you should seriously consider dropping this class. I suggest that if you have a legitimate reason to miss class (e.g., illness, family emergency) you contact me to see what you missed in class that day. Extenuating circumstances (documented) will also be taken into account. Participation will be evaluated by attendance, degree of preparation for class, demonstrated efforts to learn and understand the material, and constructive input and receptivity to others during class. I will facilitate in-class discussion; it is your responsibility to participate. While I encourage open expression of ideas in this class, your freedom to share your thoughts should not infringe on other students’ rights. Civility is expected. Please be considerate of others and of your instructor so we can all enjoy a dynamic, engaging, and comfortable environment! There is a possibility of fifty (50) points for class participation and attendance.

Assignments:

We will complete some in-class and some outside of class exercises that will require your oral and/or written participation. You must bring your text to class with you for this reason. Sporadically, I will collect written exercises and award points to those who have completed the task. These assignments often will require group discussions with classmates. Other times, they will require you to complete an activity outside of class and be ready to discuss or submit reactions to the activity during a particular class period. Examples of in-class assignments include exercises involving your practicing effective listening behaviors, activities requiring you to practice using evidence to support your ideas, simulations enabling you to appreciate different communication styles and cultural approaches, and group projects intended to foster your ability to negotiate effective solutions to communication problems. These assignments will address all of the learning goals of this course. There is a possibility for one hundred (100) points for turning in these assignments.

Reaction Papers:

The reaction paper is your opportunity to (1) analyze what you have learned from an in-class exercise or an activity assigned for completion outside of class, (2) integrate concepts from class to elaborate on your explanation of the experience, and (3) illustrate your growing communication competency through your analysis and your written communication. Each reaction paper is to be turned in on the date listed in the course schedule. You MAY NOT submit a paper after it is scheduled to be turned in. Each paper must be two to three pages, double-spaced, and typed with your name clearly at the top of each page. Proper grammar and language rules must be followed for you to receive a desirable grade. Successful completion of reaction papers will facilitate your reflection upon your progress toward accomplishing the learning goals of this course. The first reaction paper is worth thirty-five (35) points and the second reaction paper is worth forty (40) points for a total of 75 points possible.

Public Presentation:

Given the importance of being competent in making public presentations, you will be required to make an informative speech on an important issue that affects members of your generation and, thus, your fellow students. This speech should be 5 minutes in length. VISUAL AIDS MUST BE USED. Your instructor must approve your topic and visual aids before you begin work on your speech. You will research the information and turn in a formal written (and typed) outline. It is imperative that you be prepared to make your presentation on the day you are assigned to do so. There are NO make-ups for missed presentations. Successful completion of this assignment will involve your demonstrating your efforts toward achieving learning goals 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, and 10 of this course. Tips to remember when presenting your speeches: (1) Prepare what you are going to say in advance. (2) Make a simple outline on 3 X 5 cards that have key words on them. (3) Do not read your speech. Use the cards as prompts for what you will say. (4) Be sure to make eye contact. (5) Relax and have fun. (6) Be aware if you are tapping your foot, saying “umm” too much or using other filler words, or exhibiting other distractions. (7) Do not have gum in your mouth. (8) Practice your speech beforehand with a friend or family member as the audience. This will help you work out any problems. (9) Keep within your time limits. There is a possibility of fifty (50) points for this assignment.

Exams:

There will be two exams. The midterm is worth 50 points and the final is worth 75 points. Exams will cover the material from the text and lectures. The final exam will not be cumulative. You must have a legitimate excuse for not attending an examination (e.g., a doctor’s note stating you were ill) or you will receive a zero. You may only complete a make-up exam with a legitimate excuse (be advised, make-up exams are comprised of essay questions only). Both examinations offer you the opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the concepts, theories, and processes associated with the accomplishment of all learning goals for this course.

Point Summary:

Class Participation/Attendance	50
Assignments	100
Two Reaction Papers @ 35 points and 40 points	75
Public Presentation	50
Two Examinations (midterm = 50 points; final = 75 points)	125

Total Possible - 400 points

Grading:

Plus/minus grading will be used in the final grades for this course. The following table indicates the number of points and the percent of total possible points associated with each grade.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percent of total possible points</u>	
A+	98-100	(392-400 points)
A	93-97.9	(372-391 points)
A-	90-92.9	(360-371 points)
B+	87-89.9	(348-359 points)
B	83-86.9	(332-347 points)
B-	80-82.9	(320-331 points)
C+	77-79.9	(308-319 points)
C	73-76.9	(292-307 points)
C-	70-72.9	(280-291 points)
D+	67-69.9	(268-279 points)
D	63-66.9	(252-267 points)
D-	60-62.9	(240-251 points)
F	59.9 or below	

*****You must receive a C or better in the course (i.e., 73% or higher, which means 292 points or more) for it to fulfill the general education requirement for oral communication.*****

Note about grading: I do not change grades unless I have made a mathematical error. I am happy to talk with you about how you can enhance your performance, but I will not argue with you about a grade I have given. Any discussion of grades will be held privately between the individual student and the instructor; class time will not be used as a forum to address these concerns.

General Information and Rules: Please be on time to every class meeting prepared, with assignments completed, and ready to participate in the discussion. I understand that the parking lots can be aggravating; however, your walking into class late is disruptive to your classmates. If you need to leave early please let me know beforehand and choose a seat near the door. If early departure becomes a habit for you, your participation score will be adjusted accordingly. While you are in the classroom, please do not do work for other classes or bring in other reading materials. Please **turn off** cell phones and pagers; this class is an opportunity to learn, not to take phone calls. Please be respectful and mindful to your classmates and do not interrupt, mock, laugh at, or cause a disturbance when they are talking. If I am talking, I expect the same respect. The rule is: one person has the floor at a time. If you are disrupting the learning process you will be asked to leave class. Do not close your notebook and begin packing when you feel the class period has ended. I will dismiss you.

Cheating and plagiarism (including failure to cite sources correctly for direct quotations *and/or* paraphrasing) will not be tolerated. I expect that you do your own work. This means that you will not copy from another person's exam, paper, or speech, or allow another person to copy from your exam, paper, or speech. **Engaging in either cheating or plagiarism will result in an "F" for the course** and possible dismissal from the university (see "Academic Dishonesty" in the University catalog).

Course Schedule (Schedule subject to change)

	Topic:	Chapter:	Assignments:
6/20	Why Study Communication?	1	
6/21	Self-Awareness	2	
6/22	Verbal Messages	3	
6/27	Nonverbal Messages	4	
6/28	Listening & Adapting to Others	5 & 6	Reaction paper 1 due
6/29	Understanding IPC & Relationships	7 & 8	
7/5	Midterm Chpts. 1-8		
7/6	Group & Team Comm.	9 & 10	
7/11	Basics of Public Comm.	11 & 12	
7/12	Presenting Messages	13, Appendix B	Reaction paper 2 due
7/13	Informing & Persuading	14 & 15	
7/25	Student Public Presentations		Speeches
7/26	Student Public Presentations		Speeches
7/27	Final Exam Chpts. 9-15, Appendix B		