Communication Studies 192
Introduction to Communication Studies

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Course Objectives

The primary goals of this course are to provide introductions to the general history and concepts of communication, and to the particular theories and practices of small group communication, interpersonal communication, and public communication. These goals are premised upon the conviction that an appreciation for communication principles will make us better thinkers and better communicators, and will thus enhance our abilities to influence our personal, social, and political worlds.

To achieve these general goals we will work to accomplish several more specific objectives. By the quarter's end you should be able:

1. To explain the historical and contemporary significance of Communication Studies.
2. To explain important communication concepts related to language and perception.
3. To explain how language and perception relate to interpersonal communication, and specifically to stereotyping, nonverbal communication, and gender/cultural differences.
4. To explain how language and perception relate to small group communication, and specifically to problem-solving, decision-making, and leadership.
5. To explain how language and perception relate to public communication, and specifically to the invention, development, and support of ideas.
6. To create specific products that demonstrate the ability to apply communication concepts related to interpersonal, small group, and public communication.

Your performance in the course will be measured by how well you fulfill these objectives. This course is intended to help each of us develop our skills in a variety of communication settings, and thus to become better thinkers, better students, and better citizens.

Readings


Participation and Attendance

Education is a process of interactions about ideas. Its success cannot be measured solely by how much information one has learned. You must be in class to participate in the interactional process of education. You should think about the issues we cover, express your ideas in class, ask questions, and discuss the ideas raised by others. We learn from one another, and each of us has just as much responsibility to share our thoughts with others as we do to learn from what others say.
Some of the ideas we will read about and discuss are difficult. People faced with complex ideas often choose one of two options: they either give up, figuring that difficult material is not directly relevant to them and thus not worth their time and effort; or they work hard to understand as much as possible, and ask numerous questions about the rest. Take the second option. Class will be fun if you participate. It will be boring if you don’t.

I will calculate your participation grade based on your preparation for class and your contributions to in-class discussion and to the on-line bulletin board (available through the course D2L site). I will evaluate in-class discussion based upon my assessment of the quality and consistency of your contributions. You should come to class each day having read carefully the assigned reading and having prepared for discussion of that reading. You should have at least one opening question written down when you arrive at class to discuss a reading. I will evaluate the on-line bulletin board based on my assessment of the quality and consistency of your contributions. My hope is that everyone will contribute to each class session's discussion.

In general, I will consider attendance as part of your participation grade. However, eleven or more sessions absent is grounds for failure in the course. NOTE: For Tuesday-Thursday, evening, and summer classes every 50 minutes equals one class session.

Some considerations to remember:

- Respect the class time. Arrive early. Don't pack up to leave until class is over. If you must depart early on a given day you should sit by the door so you can exit without a disruption.

- Turn off pagers and cell phones while you are in class.

- In-class participation is public; refrain from private conversations, which distract people from what's going on in class.

- If you miss class, don't ask me what you missed. It's your responsibility to get notes and information from someone who was in class.

- If you need to contact me, please do so by email or leave a local phone number where you can be reached. In general, I do not return calls to long distance phone numbers.

Small Group Assignment

I have adapted this assignment, with permission, from an assignment created by Professor Marla Kanengieter.

“We are expected to develop our own opinions, outlook, stances to things, to a considerable degree through solitary reflection. But this is not how things work with important issues, such as the definition of our identity. We define this always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the identities our significant others want to recognize in us. And even when we outgrow some of the latter – our parents, for instance – and they disappear from our lives, the
conversation with them continues within us as long as we live.” Charles Taylor, The Ethics of Authenticity.

Assignment Rationale:

A primary goal in this class is to examine how language shapes the perceptions that constitute our worlds. This influence is especially striking in our personal relationships, where we constantly create reality through talk, shape one another’s lives and personalities through words, mold each other’s beliefs and viewpoints through interaction. Ponder for a moment the extent to which communication with others has shaped who you are. It’s significant, to be sure.

One result of this recognition ought to be a realization that our most firmly held beliefs arise from interactions with others, and that our friends and acquaintances who have lived different histories and experienced different influences might live within a world of basic assumptions and perceptions that differs markedly from our own such world. If we really lived out this realization it would improve greatly the quality of our relationships. Our basic inclination would be to appreciate a diversity of perspectives rather than to assume that ours is the correct viewpoint.

One of the most interesting communication contexts is the small group. The group is the setting for almost all of our personal relationships, so interpersonal communication principles are important. At the same time a group context calls forth a number of unique communication expectations that influence the relationships within it, so small group communication principles are important as well. The amount of time we spend communicating in small groups is astounding. Whether our time is spent in social, learning, or problem-solving groups, the quality of interaction between members determines the degree of satisfaction we perceive in the experience.

In this assignment you will experience a variety of small group formats, roles, and problem solving/decision making processes. Your task is to discuss, through rigorous and extensive inquiry with other group members, the ideas Mitch Albom presents in his book, Tuesdays with Morrie (hereafter, TWM). Your discussion of the book will lead to the creation of three products: an essay that highlights three communication concepts your group believes are most important in TWM, a photograph that reflects what your group thinks is TWM’s central message, and a portfolio that describes your group’s activities.

Process and Tasks:

I. Group Selection: I will place you in a group with other class members for your work on this assignment. You will have the following class days to work on your project: 6/21, 6/22, 6/24, 6/29, and during the first public speeches. If additional meetings are necessary you should schedule them outside of class.

II. Read the course essays and TWM: You should complete the book by 6/21. Take notes so that you can recall your thoughts and bring them to your group discussion. As you write your notes, do the following:
A. Summarize chapters or sections of chapters from TWM.

B. Highlight favorite passages. Create a list of meaningful quotations from the book. Summarize your thoughts and reactions.

C. Make a list of communication concepts that you see illustrated in TWM. The readings that deal with basic communication concepts and interpersonal communication will be especially useful for your analysis. Consider how the communication concepts in the course essays enhance your understanding of the nature of relationships.

D. Think about how TWM has expanded your perspective about your life, your culture, your values, and about communication.

III. Preparation:

A. 6/21 -- Initial strategy session. You should determine any formal roles (do you need a secretary? nominal leader? any other roles?) and rules. (Consult the chapters by Gouran et.al. for guidance in handling issues of leadership, problem-solving, and decision-making.) What will you do with members who do not contribute, who have not read the book, who have not taken their tasks seriously, or who have missed group meetings? Will you need any additional meetings? Will you decide on “firing” a group member who does not fulfill his or her responsibilities?

B. 6/22, 6/24, 6/29 -- Group discussion. Share the ideas that you gleaned from reading TWM. Discuss the communication concepts you think are relevant to your understanding of TWM. Be prepared to have new insights on TWM as you speak with other group members. These insights and observations you will also want to record in your notes. Texts take on richness and depth as we discover the meanings others have taken from their encounters with the book. As a group, decide on three communication concepts that have the most compelling development/illustration in TWM.

IV. Product: 6/29, etc. -- Plan/write your essay. You should consult the chapter on problem solving and decision making for guidance as you engage in this process. Your group will turn in two written assignments (an essay and a group portfolio) and a photograph.

A. ESSAY REQUIREMENTS -- You should treat the essay as one of the major writing components of the course.

1. Content

a. Describe the three communication concepts you have identified as most important.
   --Why are the concepts important?
   --How have the concepts helped you to understand the role of communication in interpersonal contexts?
b. What would you want to tell Morrie or Mitch about what you learned through their stories? How have their ideas caused you to think in new and different ways about the nature and scope of communication?

c. How will you apply your knowledge of these concepts to your communication in the future?

2. Form

a. Explore ways to make the essay a compelling read for your audience (me). BE CREATIVE.

b. Brainstorm ways to make your prose dynamic. Your paper does NOT have to take the form of a traditional essay. You should remember, however, that creativity alone does not replace content.

c. When you cite concepts, ideas, and quotations in your essay be sure to document them properly. Use the MLA style of documentation.

B. PHOTOGRAPH REQUIREMENTS

1. After your group has completed the essay, you must discuss an essential message or idea in TWM.

2. Your task is to compose a photograph that reflects this essential message or thesis. Your group must plan and take the photograph. Do not use a photograph from the web. If you modify the photograph you should submit both the original photograph and the final product.

3. The size of the photograph must be at least 4x6 and must bear a caption that expresses the idea.

C. GROUP PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS: Part of your group process will be to compile a portfolio for evaluating your efforts. It should include:

1. Minutes: These minutes should include the dates and times of the meetings, who attended, and an account of what the group discussed and accomplished. The minutes should be detailed enough to help me evaluate your group’s process. A list of topics covered is not sufficient.

2. Reflective Thinking Outline: This outline will demonstrate the decision making process by which your group planned the essay. Again, consult the readings. The outline should make clear how your group made specific decisions.

All written materials be typed. Submit the essay and portfolio in a file folder, with the photograph and a list of the names of the group members on the front cover.

V. Evaluation Criteria:

A. Essay—50 pts: Creativity of presentation, analysis of concepts, substance of ideas.
B. Portfolio—25 pts: Clarity, accuracy, completeness, reflective thinking outline, and additional material.

C. Photograph—25 pts: Creativity and clarity of concept illustration.

The group assignment is worth two grades.

DUE DATE: July 8

Public Speech Assignment

Each student will prepare and deliver two graded speeches. The first speech will be delivered to an audience of five or six people; the second speech will be a revision of the first and will be presented to the entire class. You must prepare an outline and bibliography for each speech. The first speech is worth one grade, the second is worth two. You must narrow your topic appropriately and make clear how your topic is relevant and significant to the classroom audience.

Clear your topic with me before you do extensive work on your speech. You must ask the classroom audience to assume your viewpoint on a particular policy currently being deliberated by a decision-making group. You might consider political issues, environmental issues, civil rights, religious concerns, academic problems, or other areas of interest. Again, you should relate your concern directly to this audience.

Some Guidelines You Should Follow (i.e. I consider these when grading):

1. The speech should be 5-7 minutes long. Practice your speech so that you know you can deliver it in this amount of time. You will be docked for being too long or too short: 1/3 of a letter grade for every 30 second block of time.

2. Deliver your speech using brief "key word" notes. You may use a maximum of four 3x5 note cards. Under no circumstances should you read your speech. That will reduce your grade substantially. You will turn in your notes after each speech.

3. The outline must be typed. It must include a bibliography page that follows MLA style. If you are not sure of MLA style you should look it up; don't guess. Compose the outline entirely of full sentences. Underline or highlight the thesis of your speech. Follow the principle of subordination and make sure to explicate each point in your speech. You should treat the outline as one of the primary writing components of the course.

4. Utilize the advice given in the chapter on "The Initial Speech." I will listen for: an introduction that gains attention, contains a clear and specific thesis statement, and previews the speech; a body that contains clear and specific main points supported by credible examples and arguments (cite your sources), and transitions and signposts to
signal those main points; and a conclusion that summarizes the speech and restates what you desire of the audience.

Exams

You will write a response to one take home exam question during the semester. I will pose questions at several points during the first half of the semester. Responses are due one week from the day the question is given (no late responses will be accepted) and should be 2-4 typed, double-spaced pages. Use Times New Roman size 12 font; all margins must be one inch. Don't assume your word processor's default settings meet these requirements; make the necessary adjustments.

Responses should be well-written, address the question specifically, display an understanding of the concepts specified in the question, and indicate some original thinking about those concepts. Follow MLA guidelines for citations. These are exam questions, so while I will clarify the question as much as you want, I will not comment on drafts of your responses.

The exam question constitutes the major writing component of the class. You should compose your response with the seriousness and care required of a major paper. While I have stated the essential criteria in the preceding paragraphs, you can also consult my Guidelines for Papers for a more detailed explanation of expectations for college level writing.

The take home exam question is worth one grade.

You will take a comprehensive exam during the final examination period. The comprehensive exam is worth one grade.

Course Schedule

Remember: A summer session is sixteen weeks crammed into five. You have signed up for an option that requires a lot of work in a short amount of time. Make sure that you keep up on the readings and on the assignments. If you fall behind it is difficult to catch up.

Week One
June 7: Orientation; Basic Concepts; Read Burke
June 8: Introductions; Syllabus; Small Group Assignments; Read Cooley
June 9: Basic Concepts; Read Golden
June 10: Basic Concepts; Read Berlo and Booth

Week Two
June 14: Public Speaking; Read Hart
June 15: Language; Read Carey and Hyde
June 16: Exam One (first hour); Perception; Read Boulding and Schneider
June 17: Stereotyping; Read Lippmann and Lule
Week Three
June 21: Meet in Groups; Read Gouran on "Group Problem-Solving"
June 22: Meet in Groups; Read Gouran on "Leadership"
June 23: Nonverbal; Read Knapp; Public Speech Preparation
June 24: Meet in Groups

Week Four
June 28: Gender and Communication; Read Tannen; Public Speech Preparation
June 29: Exam Two (first hour); Meet in Groups
June 30: Public Speech One
July 1: Public Speech One

Week Five
July 5: Public Speech One
July 6: Public Speech One and Public Speech Two
July 7: Public Speech Two
July 8: Public Speech Two; Group Assignments due

Grading

I define the letter grades as follows:

A = work that is excellent in every respect.
B = work that meets all basic requirements and is excellent in some respects.
C = work that meets the basic requirements in every respect.
D = work that deserves credit but does not meet the basic requirements.

Please note that to meet the basic requirements merits a C. A and B grades are reserved for work that exceeds basic requirements and achieves excellence in presentation, creativity, and/or intellectual accomplishment. Each letter grade earns points, based upon a four point scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>.67</td>
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Failure to complete any one activity, or failing grades on any two activities, are grounds for failure in the course. To compute your final grade I will figure the average of your scores and consider attendance. The range of scores for each grade is as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.51 - 3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.17 - 3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2.84 - 3.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.51 - 2.83</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.17 - 2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1.84 - 2.16</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>.51 - .83</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 - .50</td>
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