Course Description and Objectives:

This course is an advanced seminar designed to explore the field of ideas relating to human modes of communication and personal relationships in the shaping of our social environment. These general sets of ideas and research is what is commonly referred to as “Interpersonal Communication”.

This course focuses not on developing a particular set of “skills” (communication competence), but to explore the overarching structures that influence interpersonal interaction and investigate research on some of the major topics of interpersonal communication.

The course takes a “social constructionist” and “ecological” approach to the study of communication, meaning that individuals, through various sign systems and mediums, create and re-create our social worlds through a dynamic web of relationships within various contexts. Thus, this course will focus largely on how we construct these ecological networks.

By the end of this course, students should be able to competently discuss the following:

- The various meanings and definitions of interpersonal communication and social interaction;
- Overarching structures such as culture, mass media and gender, and their role in shaping interpersonal interaction; and
- Dominant themes of contemporary research in interpersonal communication and social interaction; and

Textbook:

Bibliography of Course Reading Packet:


*Additional readings may be assigned during the course of the class.*

**Assignments:**

**Exams**

One component of assessing your knowledge of the course material will include a mid-term and final (not cumulative) exam. These exams are designed to assess your identification of major terms, theories and researchers in the field of interpersonal communication as well as your understanding of how each relate to another. Exams will include a wide-range of question types including matching, multiple choice, short answer and essays.

**Interpersonal Journal**

Each student will be required to keep an “interpersonal journal”. This journal will include students’ reactions, reflections, conclusions, etc. of specialized assignments given throughout the semester regarding each topic section of the course (approximately 8-10). For instance, one assignment may ask you to observe and record (if possible) the conversations of to or more people in a natural setting and respond to specific questions regarding how the conversation was “pulled off”. Or you may be asked to reflect on a prior or current relationship in which you are engaged and reflect on certain aspects of the development of the relationship. Each of these journal entries will be due at an assigned time, usually the following second class meeting. While the journal will be graded in its entirety at the end of the semester, the professor will periodically take up journals to monitor progress. Failure to have all journal entries current at that possible time will result in a penalty assessed to the students grade. Students may also periodically be asked to discuss in class their journal entries.

**Final Research Paper**

A final research paper (15-25 pages in length) covering some topic of interpersonal communication will comprise a significant portion of the student’s grade for this course. Papers will be first assigned immediately following the mid-term exam and will be due the week prior to the final exam. Students may work individually or in groups of up to four people for the paper. However different specifications will be given for those working individually and those working in groups. As well, those who choose to work in groups must also adhere to certain agreed-upon standards for group work. Once the final
paper is assigned, students will be required to periodically turn in summaries of work to help monitor your progress. More details about the final paper will be given at the time it is assigned.

**Standards of Academic Performance:**

The professor assumes that your acceptance into this university and department distinguishes you as students who know how to think, work hard, and accomplish what is expected. Thus, you will be held to these standards. Students are expected to do original work, to turn in assignments on-time and according to the professor’s specifications, to monitor one’s own progress and behave in a collegial manner.

**Attendance:**

Attendance is mandatory. There are only two reasons why you should miss class: 1). You’re in the hospital; 2). You are deceased. Seriously though, there may be times when reasons not included here may cause you to miss class. Because your professor is so understanding and sensitive you get 3 such absences before points will be taken off of your grade. In the event that reason 1 or 2 apply, please be prepared to provide documentation. In the event that you are absent, it is your responsibility to make up work that you may have missed. You have other colleagues in this class. If you miss class please do not expect me to repeat, just for you, an entire lecture or discussion or explanation of assignments. Approach your colleagues first and then, if you have questions, feel free to contact me. By the way, missing class does not exempt you from turning in assignments on time.

**Late Assignments:**

Acceptable reasons for late assignments include those listed above. Late assignments, without a proper excuse, will result in a 10% decrease in that assignments grade each day the assignment is late.

**Professor’s Promise:**

As your professor, I believe that we are both in this course together – we all have the same objective, for you to get as much as possible out of this course. It is my promise to aid you in any and every way that I can to ensure that this objective is accomplished. I promise to be prepared for class (and expect that you will also) and will give you direction so that you will know what is going on as far in advance as possible. Even though my time is spent preparing for and administering this course, conducting research and writing – there is always time for you.

I have an open-door policy. While it is ideal for you to come to my office during the specified office hours, any time that you find me in my office, if I am not working on something that is urgent at the time, I am free to talk. Please remember – “nothing ventured, nothing gained”. Don’t put off coming to me with a burning question or problem just because you think it might be a waste of my time. Try me first. If I can help you answer a question I will. If I can’t I will try my best to point you in the direction where you can have it answered. If I can help with a problem, I will, or I will point you in the direction of someone who may be able to serve you better.

**Grading:**

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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>100 Pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100 Pts.</td>
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Journal 200 Pts.
Research Paper 200 Pts.
Misc. 50 Pts.

Total 650 Pts.

A = 650 – 585 Pts.
B = 584 – 520 Pts.
C = 519 - 455 Pts.
D = 454 – 390 Pts.
F = 389 – Below

*Failure to complete in any (1) of these assignments will result in a failing grade for this course.

**Reasonable Accomodation Policy:**
If you have a disability that effects your performance in this course, please notify me at the beginning of the semester and necessary special arrangements can me made to accommodate you.
COURSE OUTLINE

**Topic Area 1:**
What is Interpersonal Communication?

**Major Concepts & Terminology**
- Conversation
- Patterned Social Interaction
- Social Networks
- Perspectives & Definitions of Interpersonal Communication
- Theoria, Praxis, Poesis; Episteme; Phoronesis, Techne
- Models of Communication
- Symbolic Interactionism
- Self Presentation

*Readings: Textbook, Chapter 1; Reading #29*

**Topic Area 2:**
Language and the Construction of “Social Worlds”.

**Major Concepts & Terminology**
- Heteroglossia, Polyphony & Polysemy
- Social Construction of Language
- Monologue & Dialogue
- Coordinated Management of Meaning
- Language-Games
- Conversational Competence
- Speech Act Theories

*Readings: Textbook, Chapter 2*

**Topic Area 3:**
Structural Influences on Interpersonal Interaction

**Major Concepts & Terminology**
- Culture
- Mass Media
- Gender
- Dissociation
- High-Low Context Cultures
- Monochronic/Polychronic Time
- Exoticism

*Readings: Articles #1, 2, 3, 8, 28*
Topic Area 4:
Special Topics in Interpersonal Communication

Topics Include:

- Romantic and Intimate Relationships
- Friendship
- Family Interaction
- Dating
- Interpersonal Interaction in Public Social Settings
- Interpersonal Interaction in the Workplace
- Interpersonal Conflict

Readings: Textbook, Chp. 5; Articles #4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27,

Topic Area 5:
Approaches to the Study of Interpersonal Communication

- Conversation Analysis
- Survey Research
- Ethnography

Readings: Articles #18, 19, 21, 22, 23

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

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<th>WEEK</th>
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Student Information Sheet

Name:_______________________________________
Home City/State:______________________________
Contact Phone:_______________________________
Email Address:_______________________________
Major:______________________________________  

Pledge

I have read the course syllabus completely and I understand and agree to the goals, objectives and requirements for this course.

_________________________________________  ____________________________
Student’s Signature                          Date