

# COM 691—INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE

## SPRING 2021

**Professor:** Dr. Liesel Sharabi

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**Virtual Office Hours:** Thursdays 1:45pm – 3:00pm, 4:15pm – 6:00pm, and by appointment

### REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

1. Rudder, C. (2015). *Datachism: Love, sex, race, and identity—What our online lives tell us about our offline selves*. Penguin Random House.
2. Additional PDFs of readings will be posted on Canvas.

### IMPORTANT WEBSITES

1. Canvas: <https://canvas.asu.edu>

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

From mobile phones to social media and everything in between, technology permeates many aspects of our communication and relationships. In this seminar, we will examine interpersonal communication in mediated contexts, including the role of technology in relationship initiation, maintenance, and dissolution. The seminar readings and discussions are designed to provide a broad foundation for understanding major theoretical perspectives and research findings at the intersection of interpersonal and technologically-mediated communication. Specific topics we will cover this semester include interpersonal communication and online dating, social media, artificial intelligence, and multimodality, among others. Our work will be organized around a central question: What implications do communication technologies have for interpersonal relationships?

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Analyze and critique empirical research on interpersonal relationships and technology.
- Understand and apply theories of interpersonal and technologically-mediated communication.
- Extend knowledge of interpersonal communication processes to the digital environment.
- Gain experience designing an academic study to advance your own program of research.

### A NOTE ABOUT ZOOM AND COVID-19

For now, this course will be taught remotely through ASU Sync. This means that we will be meeting synchronously via Zoom during our regularly scheduled class time. To participate in this course, **it is preferred (but not required)** that you have your camera turned on when possible. Your **microphone should be muted** when you are not speaking. Virtual backgrounds are encouraged for privacy in our Zoom classroom. If you are ever feeling overwhelmed, please know that I am always here to talk. In addition, ASU Counseling Services is offering tele-mental health consultations, in-person appointments, and virtual support circles. More information can be found by calling 480-965-6146 or by visiting <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>.

### COMMITMENT STATEMENTS

Academic Integrity: The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences are strong proponents of academic integrity. Thus, we expect that all of your work will be original. Therefore, cheating on exams, quizzes, or other assignments will not be tolerated. If you choose to violate University standards for academic integrity, you will be subject to one of the following sanctions: failing the assignment, failing the class, receiving an XE for the class, which goes on your transcript denoted as a drop from a class for cheating, or being removed from the program.

Plagiarism and Cheating: Plagiarism is the use of direct quotations without identifying them as such, or the summarizing or paraphrasing of quotations without proper citations. If you do not identify the sources of ideas other than yours, you are plagiarizing. Cheating is the unauthorized giving or receiving of information on exams or other class assignments. If someone else submits in-class work, homework, or extra credit in your name or takes an exam in your name, this is considered cheating. I expect that you will not plagiarize or cheat since you are familiar with the policy regarding academic integrity in this course.

Inclusivity: Students with disabilities who require academic adjustments in this class should contact me and submit a request for accommodations through the ASU Disability Resource Center (DRC). More information can be found by calling the DRC at 480-965-1234 or by visiting <https://eoss.asu.edu/drc>.

Sexual Misconduct: Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>.

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>, is available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately. ASU online students may access 360 Life Services, <https://goto.asuonline.asu.edu/success/online-resources.html>.

#### **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

The materials that are provided to you as part of this class are protected intellectual property. Please do not post, sell, or share these materials (e.g., PowerPoint slides, exams, handouts, etc.) outside of this class. Doing so may result in disciplinary action.

### **COURSE POLICIES**

#### **ATTENDANCE**

As graduate students, I expect that you will attend and participate in all class sessions. However, I understand that illnesses and emergencies may sometimes prevent you from being in class. If you must miss class, I ask that you please **email me a one-page, single-spaced summary of the readings within 48 hours of your absence** to make up your participation points.

#### **COURSE WITHDRAWAL**

If you choose to withdraw from this course, you must do so yourself through the My ASU system. You are not automatically withdrawn from this course if you stop attending class. I am not able to administratively drop you for nonattendance.

#### **MAKE-UP AND LATE WORK**

- You can only make up exams and assignments with official documentation and approval. The only course-approved absences are: (1) medical illness or emergency; (2) death in the family; (3) religious observance; and (4) university sanctioned activity.
- **Late assignments will only be accepted for partial credit.** For each calendar day (not class period) the assignment is late, your grade on it will be reduced by 10%. If the document containing your assignment fails to open, it will be considered late. Please do not email me assignments. Your work should be turned in as instructed in class.

### **SEMINAR ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **CLASS FACILITATION**

The purpose of this assignment is to provide an opportunity for you to gain experience leading a graduate seminar. Each week, a different person will be responsible for facilitating a portion of our class discussion of the assigned readings. You will choose a class for your facilitation early on in the semester. In preparation for your facilitation, you will compose a list of questions about the readings and lead the class in discussing them. You will also prepare a brief handout to guide our conversation.

#### **EXAMS**

To assist in your learning of the course material and help prepare you for comps, there will be two written exams this semester. For the exams, you will be given four take-home questions one week in advance, and you will be asked to select three of them to respond to in essay form. You will have access to all course materials when completing the exams.

#### **RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND PRESENTATION**

The semester will culminate with a research proposal and presentation. This assignment invites you to propose a study that will allow you to pursue your own research interests related to this seminar. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the class, you will have considerable flexibility in the type of research project that you propose based on the norms and expectations in your home discipline. There will be a peer review workshop to give you the chance to discuss your project one-on-one with your classmates and to obtain feedback on your research idea. At the end of the semester, you will deliver a conference-style presentation of your proposal and answer questions. More specific details will be provided throughout the semester.

## PARTICIPATION

This seminar requires that you attend class regularly and actively participate. I see participation as being about more than just how often you speak up in class (although that is one component). Participation is also about being alert, demonstrating that you completed the assigned readings, posing thoughtful questions, and showing respect to your peers and myself. You will have the opportunity to offer input into your participation score by completing self-evaluations. **You will also participate in short pop-quizzes to test your comprehension of the assigned readings** that will count toward your participation score.

## COURSE POINTS

ASSIGNMENT	POINT VALUE	YOUR SCORE
Class Facilitation	10	
Exam #1	20	
Exam #2	20	
Research Proposal and Presentation	40	
Participation	10	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>100</b>	

## GRADING SCALE

### Outstanding

A =92% and above

A- =90% – 91%

### Good

B+ =88% – 89%

B =82% – 87%

B- =80% – 81%

### Unsatisfactory

C+ =78% – 79%

C =70% – 77%

D =60% – 69%

E =59% and below

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

### Week #1 (January 14): Introduction to Interpersonal Dynamics in the Digital Age

1. Mosbergen, D. (2015, October 9). Craigslist 'Missed Connection' about a rainy day in 1972 goes viral. *The Huffington Post*. [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/craigslist-missed-connection\\_us\\_56177218e4b0dbb8000df6d4](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/craigslist-missed-connection_us_56177218e4b0dbb8000df6d4)
2. Vitak, J., & Ellison, N. B. (2018). Personal relationships and technology in the digital age. In A. L. Vangelisti & D. Perlman (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of personal relationships* (pp. 481-493). Cambridge University Press.

### Week #2 (January 21): Cues Filtered Out, Cues Filtered In

1. Hall, J. A. (2020). *Relating through technology* [Ch. 3]. Cambridge University Press.
2. Stoll, C. (1995, February 26). Why the web won't be Nirvana. *Newsweek*. <http://www.newsweek.com/clifford-stoll-why-web-wont-be-nirvana-185306>
3. Walther, J. B. (1996). Computer-mediated communication: Impersonal, interpersonal, and hyperpersonal interaction. *Communication Research*, 23(1), 3-43. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009365096023001001>
4. Walther, J. B., & Whitty, M. T. (2020). Language, psychology, and new new media: The hyperpersonal model of mediated communication at twenty-five years. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X20967703>

### Week #3 (January 28): Warranting Theory and Impression Formation

1. DeAndrea, D. C. (2014). Advancing warranting theory. *Communication Theory*, 24(2), 186-204. <https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12033>
2. Tong, S. T., Van Der Heide, B., Langwell, L., & Walther, J. B. (2008). Too much of a good thing? The relationship between number of friends and interpersonal impressions on Facebook. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(3), 531-549. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2008.00409.x>
3. Walther, J. B., Van Der Heide, B., Kim, S. Y., Westerman, D., & Tong, S. T. (2008). The role of friends' appearance and behavior on evaluations of individuals on Facebook: Are we known by the company we keep? *Human Communication Research*, 34(1), 28-49. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2007.00312.x>
4. Wotipka, C. D., & High, A. C. (2016). An idealized self or the real me? Predicting attraction to online dating profiles using selective self-presentation and warranting. *Communication Monographs*, 83(3), 281-302. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2016.1198041>

### Week #4 (February 4): Multimodality and Modality Switching Perspectives

1. Caughlin, J. P., & Sharabi, L. L. (2013). A communicative interdependence perspective of close relationships: The connections between mediated and unmediated interactions matter. *Journal of Communication*, 63(5), 873-893. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12046>
2. Haythornthwaite, C. (2005). Social networks and Internet connectivity effects. *Information, Communication & Society*, 8(2), 125-147. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691180500146185>
3. Parks, M. R. (2017). Embracing the challenges and opportunities of mixed-media relationships. *Human Communication Research*, 43(4), 505-517. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hcre.12125>
4. Ramirez, Jr., A., & Zhang, S. (2007). When online meets offline: The effect of modality switching on relational communication. *Communication Monographs*, 74(3), 287-310. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637750701543493>

### Week #5 (February 11): Race, Identity, and Big Data

1. Rudder, C. (2015). *Datachism: Love, sex, race, and identity—What our online lives tell us about our offline selves* [Ch. 1-7]. Penguin Random House.

### Week #6 (February 18): Race, Identity, and Big Data

1. Rudder, C. (2015). *Datachism: Love, sex, race, and identity—What our online lives tell us about our offline selves* [Ch. 8-14]. Penguin Random House.

### Week #7 (February 25): Virtual Communities and Social Networks

1. boyd, d. m., & Ellison, N. B. (2008). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), 210-230. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00393.x>
2. Dibbell, J. (1993, December 23). A rape in Cyberspace, or how an evil clown, a Haitian trickster spirit, two wizards, and a cast of dozens turned a database into a society. *The Village Voice*. <https://www.villagevoice.com/2005/10/18/a-rape-in-cyberspace/>

3. Ellison, N. B., & boyd, d. m. (2013). Sociality through social network sites. In W. H. Dutton (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of Internet studies* (pp. 151-172). Oxford University Press.
4. Kramer, A. D. I., Guillory, J. E., & Hancock, J. T. (2014). Experimental evidence of massive-scale emotional contagion through social networks. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *111*(24), 8788-8790. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1320040111>

#### **Week #8 (March 4): Finding Love Online**

1. Ansari, A., & Klinenberg, E. (2015). *Modern romance* [Ch. 3]. Penguin Press.
2. Finkel, E. J., Eastwick, P. W., Karney, B. R., Reis, H. T., & Sprecher, S. (2012). Online dating: A critical analysis from the perspective of psychological science. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, *13*(1), 3-66. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100612436522>
3. Paumgarten, N. (2011, July 4). Looking for someone: Sex, love, and loneliness on the Internet. *The New Yorker*. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/07/04/looking-for-someone>
4. Sharabi, L. L., & Dykstra-DeVette, T. A. (2019). From first email to first date: Strategies for initiating relationships in online dating. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *36*(11-12), 3389-3407. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407518822780>

#### **\*Exam #1 Due**

#### **Week #9 (March 11): Artificial Intelligence-Mediated Communication and Algorithms**

1. Hancock, J. T., Naaman, M., & Levy, K. (2020). AI-mediated communication: Definition, research agenda, and ethical considerations. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *25*(1), 89-100. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmz022>
2. Joel, S., Eastwick, P. W., & Finkel, E. J. (2017). Is romantic desire predictable? Machine learning applied to initial romantic attraction. *Psychological Science*, *28*(10), 1478-1489. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797617714580>
3. Sharabi, L. L. (2020). Exploring how beliefs about algorithms shape (offline) success in online dating: A two-wave longitudinal investigation. *Communication Research*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650219896936>
4. Tong, S. T., Hancock, J. T., & Slatcher, R. B. (2016). Online dating system design and relational decision making: Choice, algorithms, and control. *Personal Relationships*, *23*(4), 645-662. <https://doi.org/10.1111/perc.12158>

#### **Week #10 (March 18): Human-Machine Communication and Robots**

1. Banks, J., & Van Ouytsel, J. (2020). Cybersex with human- and machine-cued partners: Gratifications, shortcomings, and tensions. *Technology, Mind, and Behavior*, *1*(1). <https://doi.org/10.1037/tmb0000008>
2. Birnbaum, G. E., Mizrahi, M., Hoffman, G., Reis, H. T., Finkel, E. J., & Sass, O. (2016). What robots can teach us about intimacy: The reassuring effects of robot responsiveness to human disclosure. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *63*, 416-423. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.05.064>
3. Croes, E. A. J., & Antheunis, M. L. (2020). Can we be friends with Mitsuku? A longitudinal study on the process of relationship formation between humans and a social chatbot. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* *38*(1), 279-300. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407520959463>
4. Mori, M. (2012). The uncanny valley. *IEEE Robotics & Automation Magazine*, *19*(2), 98-100. <https://doi.org/10.1109/MRA.2012.2192811>
5. Turkle, S. T. (2015). *Reclaiming conversation* [Ch. 12]. Penguin Press.

#### **Week #11 (March 25): Online Privacy and Disclosure**

1. Barbaro, M., & Zeller, Jr., T. (2006, August 9). A face is exposed for AOL searcher no. 4417749. *The New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/09/technology/09aol.html>
2. Debatin, B., Lovejoy, J. P., Horn, A. K., & Hughes, B. N. (2009). Facebook and online privacy: Attitudes, behaviors, and unintended consequences. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *15*(1), 83-108. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2009.01494.x>
3. Jiang, L. C., Bazarova, N. N., & Hancock, J. T. (2011). The disclosure-intimacy link in computer-mediated communication: An attributional extension of the hyperpersonal model. *Human Communication Research*, *37*(1), 58-77. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2010.01393.x>
4. Ruppel, E. K., Gross, C., Stoll, A., Peck, B. S., Allen, M., & Kim, S. Y. (2017). Reflecting on connecting: Meta-analysis of differences between computer-mediated and face-to-face self-disclosure. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *22*(1), 18-34. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12179>

#### **Week #12 (April 1): Mobile Communication and Text Messaging**

1. Pettigrew, J. (2009). Text messaging and connectedness within close interpersonal relationships. *Marriage & Family Review*, 45(6-8), 697-716. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0149420903224269>
2. Przybylski, A. K., & Weinstein, N. (2013). Can you connect with me now? How the presence of mobile communication technology influences face-to-face conversation quality. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 30(3), 237-246. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407512453827>
3. Turkle, S. T. (2015). *Reclaiming conversation* [Ch. 2]. Penguin Press.
4. Vanden Abeele, M. M. P., Hendrickson, A. T., Pollmann, M. M. H., & Ling, R. (2019). Phubbing behavior in conversations and its relation to perceived conversation intimacy and distraction: An exploratory observation study. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 100, 35-47. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.06.004>

**\*Peer Review Workshop**

**Week #13 (April 8): Deception, Disinhibition, and the Dark Side**

1. Bilton, N. (2017, April 26). Silicon Valley murder mystery: How drugs and paranoia doomed silk road. *Vanity Fair*. <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2017/04/silk-road-ross-ulbricht-drugs-murder>
2. Burke, T., & Dickey, J. (2013, January 16). Manti Te'o's dead girlfriend, the most heartbreaking and inspirational story of the college football season, is a hoax. *Deadspin*. <https://deadspin.com/manti-teos-dead-girlfriend-the-most-heartbreaking-an-5976517>
3. Ellison, N., Heino, R., & Gibbs, J. (2006). Managing impressions online: Self-presentation processes in the online dating environment. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 11(2), 415-441. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2006.00020.x>
4. Suler, J. (2004). The online disinhibition effect. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 7(3), 321-326. <https://doi.org/10.1089/1094931041291295>

**Week #14 (April 15): Do You Believe in Ghosts? Technology and Relationship Dissolution**

1. Brody, N., LeFebvre, L., & Blackburn, K. (2020). Holding on and letting go: Memory, nostalgia, and effects of virtual possession management practices on post-breakup adjustment. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 37(7), 2229-2249. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407520921460>
2. Cacioppo, J. T., Cacioppo, S., Gonzaga, G. C., Ogburn, E. L., & VanderWeele, T. J. (2013). Marital satisfaction and break-ups differ across on-line and off-line meeting venues. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 110(25), 10135-10140. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1222447110>
3. Clayton, R. B., Nagurney, A., & Smith, J. R. (2013). Cheating, breakup, and divorce: Is Facebook use to blame? *CyberPsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 16(10), 717-720. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2012.0424>
4. Timmermans, E., Hermans, A. M., & Oprea, S. J. (2020). Gone with the wind: Exploring mobile daters' ghosting experiences. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*. Advance Online Publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407520970287>

**Week #15 (April 22): How Social Media Use Affects Mental Health**

1. Appel, M., Marker, C., & Gnambs, T. (2020). Are social media ruining our lives? A review of meta-analytic evidence. *Review of General Psychology*, 24(1), 60-74. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1089268019880891>
2. Fox, J., & Moreland, J. J. (2015). The dark side of social networking sites: An exploration of the relational and psychological stressors associated with Facebook use and affordances. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 45, 168-176, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.11.083>
3. Schemer, C., Masur, P. K., Geiß, S., Müller, P., & Schäfer, S. (2020). The impact of Internet and social media use on well-being: A longitudinal analysis of adolescents across nine years. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmaa014>
4. Toma, C. L. (2013). Feeling better but doing worse: Effects of Facebook self-presentation on implicit self-esteem and cognitive task performance. *Media Psychology*, 16, 199-220. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15213269.2012.762189>

**\*Exam #2 Due**

**Finals Week (TBD): Final Presentations**

**\*Research Proposal Papers Due**

**\*Research Proposal Presentations Due**