

COM 310: Relational Communication
The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication, Arizona State University

Instructor:
Email:

Office:
Office Hours:

Overview of the Course

This class is designed not only to help you communicate with confidence and competence in all your interpersonal relationships (with romantic partners, with friends, and with co-workers) but to introduce you to some of the more theoretical aspects of interpersonal communication you may not have covered in COM 110 or other communication classes. This course concentrates on defining and understanding basic communication processes that occur within the context of close relationships. Learning how communication functions in these relationships is an exciting and worthwhile enterprise. Although there are no “easy answers” when it comes to developing and maintaining good relationships, I hope the knowledge you gain from this class will help you better understand yourself and your relationships.

Required Reading:

Guerrero, L. K., Anderson, P. A., & Afifi, W. A. (2011). *Close encounters: Communication in relationships* (4th ed.). Los Angeles; SAGE Publications.

Instructor Expectations

Each time that we meet, you should expect that I will:

- Arrive to class on time, prepared, and organized
- Maintain a positive learning environment in the classroom
- Respect each student as a person and a learner
- Demonstrate enthusiasm toward the subject matter

Student Expectations

Each time that we meet, I will expect you to:

- Arrive to class on time, prepared with readings done
- Respect each other and the instructor
- Avoid talking, eating, doodling, or sleeping
- Turn off all cell phones, iPods, and computers
- Positively contribute to class discussion and activities
- Ask for help when needed

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required. The only “excused” absences will be for religious holidays, university-

sponsored events (athletic teams, debate and forensics, etc.) documented extreme illness or emergency (i.e., car accidents, death in the family, etc.). In all three cases, for an absence to be excused you will need to provide me with appropriate documentation. If you are going to miss class for religious holidays or university-sponsored events, please notify me at least two weeks in advance so that appropriate accommodations can be made. I will not offer make-up exams, or accept late work unless an absence is excused and documentation provided.

You will find that this class moves at a very fast pace; thus, it benefits you to be present every time we are scheduled to meet. In the event that you do not show up to class, beware of the following consequences:

- All assignments are due in class at the beginning of the class period. If an assignment is late, you will lose 20% for every day that it is late.
- You must be in class and participating in order to receive participation points. If you are not in class, you cannot participate; therefore, you cannot receive participation points.

Academic Integrity

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication strongly believe in academic integrity; thus, instructors in the College and School do not tolerate cheating and plagiarism. Instructors who find compelling evidence of academic dishonesty will actively pursue one or more of the following actions: assigning a grade of XE ("failure through academic dishonesty") to the student, advocating the suspension or expulsion of the student from the College, and/or referring the student to Student Judicial Affairs. If a student who is charged with academic dishonesty is found to be in violation, then one or more of these disciplinary actions will be taken. For further information, please read the Student Academic Integrity policy and the code of conduct for the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication at: <http://humancommunication.clas.asu.edu/undergraduate/major-information>.

Please be advised that **all work for this class must be original to this class**. You may not recycle papers or work from other courses you've taken, including if you are taking the course over again. We consider this behavior to be academically dishonest.

Remember, *any academic dishonesty (plagiarism or cheating) in this course will result in failure of the course*, and could also lead to disciplinary action by the college or university. I will have NO hesitation at all failing you.

Student Conduct

I want to build a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. It is especially important that we (1) display respect for all members of the classroom – instructor and students, (2) pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities; (3) avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading the newspaper, surfing the internet, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, etc.); and (4) avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom. This is *not* an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, it represents examples of the types of things that can have a dramatic impact on the class environment. Your final grade will be reduced if you engage in any of these sorts of behaviors. Further, students

who are verbally or physically aggressive towards the instructor or another student before, during, or after class will be permanently removed from the class and the proper authorities notified. For the university's Disruptive Student Policy, go to:

<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm201-10.html>

Disability Resource Center

If you are registered with the disability resource center, please notify me and have them contact me so that I may make accommodations as needed.

English Proficiency

Please note that this class, as all others in the school, is taught in English. If English is not your first language and you are having difficulty speaking, writing, or understanding English – please seek assistance at the Writing Center on campus or with the International Student office which provides conversational groups for non-native speakers. Since this class is taught in English, all work in this course will be graded based on a common rubric that assumes an understanding of English. In other words, **lack of English proficiency that affects student performance will be reflected in the grade earned in this course.**

Communicating With Me

The best way to talk with me about an issue is face-to-face during my office hours. If you have other questions, you should contact me via email. I normally check my email daily (except on weekends), so if you do not hear back from me within two business days, please assume that I did not receive your email and email me again. Also, please note that **I do not accept assignments via e-mail.**

Description of Graded Assignments:

Weekly Exams (325 points)/Final Exam (75 points)

There will be **thirteen weekly exams each worth 25 points**. These exams will cover material from the text and in-class discussions. Exams will be **multiple-choice**, so you will need to bring a Scantron sheet with you to class each week. Exams will be given at the beginning of class each week, so *please be on time or you will not be able to take the exam.*

There will be **no midterm**; however, there will be a **final exam worth 75 points**. The final exam will be **multiple-choice and comprehensive**. You will need to bring a Scantron sheet for the final exam.

All exams are listed on the class schedule.

Reflection Papers (80 points)

You will be required to write **four, 2-page Reflection Papers**. For the first two of these papers, you will view online materials by Dr. John Gottman and/or The Gottman Institute (Simply Google “John Gottman and view the short clips of your choosing). You will then integrate what you view there with concepts from the text and your own personal experiences and write about them. For the last two reflection papers, you will simply

integrate concepts from the text and in-class discussions with your own personal experiences and write about them. These papers must be **2-pages minimum**, typed in double-spaced 12 pt. Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins all the way around, and page numbers on every page. All papers **must be stapled**. Correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar are expected.

Participation Points (20 points)

You are expected to participate in class. This means you must come to class having completed the assigned readings prior to each class period. It also means that you will be expected to engage in class discussion (make comments, ask questions, etc.). There will also be several in-class activities in which you will be expected to participate. *I do not award participation points to those who do not participate. If you want participation points you MUST participate. And please note that 20 points is usually the difference in a letter grade.*

I strongly encourage informal networks in class. It is a good idea to exchange email addresses with one or more students. Do NOT rely on the instructor to provide you with class lecture notes or homework assignments if you are unable to attend class.

Note: I reserve the right to change this syllabus at any time during the course, so please bring your syllabus with you to every class to note any changes made.

Grading Scale

I do not “give” grades; you earn them. Generally, in the course, “excellent” work earns “A” grades, “good” work earns “B” grades, “average” work earns “C” grades, “below average” work earns “D” grades, and “unacceptable” work earns an “E” grade. Due to course policy, I cannot offer extra credit.

A+	= 100%	= 500 points
A	= 93-99.9%	= 465-499.5 points
A-	= 90-92.9%	= 450-464.5 points
B+	= 87-89.9%	= 435-449.5 points
B	= 83-86.9%	= 415-434.5 points
B-	= 80-82.9%	= 400-414.5 points
C+	= 77-79.9%	= 385-399.5 points
C	= 70-76.9%	= 350-384.5 points
D	= 60-69.9%	= 300-349.5 points
E	= 0-59.9%	= 0-299.5 points

The following outline will help you keep track of your graded assignments so that you are able to assess your grade.

Course Points and Grade Requirements**Weekly exams (25 points each, 325 points total)**

Ch. 1 Exam points earned_____

Ch. 2 Exam points earned_____

Ch. 3 Exam points earned_____

Ch. 4 Exam points earned_____

Ch. 5 Exam points earned_____

Ch. 6 Exam points earned_____

Ch. 7 Exam points earned_____

Ch. 8 Exam points earned_____

Ch. 9 Exam points earned_____

Ch. 10 Exam points earned_____

Ch. 11 Exam points earned_____

(Skip Ch. 12)

Ch. 13 Exam points earned_____

Ch. 14 Exam points earned_____

Final exam (75 points) points earned_____

Reflection Papers (20 points each, 80 points total)

Gottman Reflection Paper #1 points earned_____

Gottman Reflection Paper #2 points earned_____

Reflection Paper #3 (on any topic in the text) points earned_____

Reflection Paper #4 (on any topic in the text) points earned_____

Participation Points (20 points) points earned_____

Total points earned_____