

## CONFLICT & NEGOTIATION COM 312

**Instructor:**

**Office:**

**Office hours:**

**E-mail:**

**Teaching Assistant:**

**Office:**

**Office Hours:**

**E-mail:**

NOTE: Email is the best way to contact us.

When sending an email, include your course number (312) in the subject line. Plan ahead and be patient: It will probably take more than 24 hours for us to get back to you. If you do not receive a reply within 48 hours (longer on weekends), assume that your email was not received and try again.

**Read this syllabus carefully. By remaining enrolled in the class, you have accepted the conditions and requirements of the course.** The requirements and rules indicated in this syllabus are non-negotiable. You should drop the class immediately if *any* aspects of the course, its rules, and/or requirements are not acceptable to you.

### READINGS:

**Text:** Cahn, D. D., & Abigail, R. A. (2014). *Managing conflict through communication*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Other sources (such as hand-outs, online academic articles, and website references) will also be part of your readings.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course examines the nature of interpersonal conflict, how it occurs, and how to manage it. This is very much an *applied* communication class; it combines lecture, discussion and activities to focus on how you can translate communication research into knowledge and skills that will influence the quality of your relationships now and in the future.

**IMPORTANT:** Knowing and properly applying American Psychological Association (APA) style is required for the major written assignments in this course. We will NOT use class time to teach you APA style. Consequently it is important that you are already familiar with APA, or that you take the time to learn it before these assignments are due.

### BLACKBOARD:

**Online/Blackboard Component:** Several aspects of this class will be conducted online through the course Blackboard. To succeed in this course it is essential that you have regular and reliable online access to Blackboard, that you be familiar with and able to use the Blackboard system, and that you regularly (*i.e.*, daily) check the Announcements in the course Blackboard.

**Course Contact:** Periodically, we will post announcements and/or send out individual and class emails

with updated information about the class. All email sent via Blackboard is automatically sent to students' asu.edu accounts. Therefore, you must regularly check your ASU email. Of course, you can forward your ASU email to another account if you wish. Note, though, that ASU has good firewalls. It's best to use your ASU email to contact us. Email from accounts other than your ASU account may not reach us.

**Deadlines:** *Deadline for all assignments is 11 p.m. on the due date.* Computer and/or system problems do NOT excuse late work or missed quizzes.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you have computer problems using Blackboard, *do NOT* contact the instructors for help. If you have computer, internet or Blackboard-related problems, you should immediately contact 1-855-278-5080 or visit the My ASU Service Center ([my.asu.edu/service](http://my.asu.edu/service)) to get personalized support through 24/7 live chat or by submitting your request online. You can also get computer assistance week days by visiting the technology studio next to the main entrance at the Computer Commons.

**Feedback:** We welcome feedback about the course. If we wait until university evaluations at the end of the semester, I cannot make changes that will help you. I regularly ask the class for feedback and suggestions. Please share your thoughts with us in an open and constructive manner during the semester. You can make suggestions in class, with either of us privately during office hours, or via email.

**CLASS OBJECTIVES:** The focus of this class will be on the development of critical thinking and general skills related to conflict and negotiation. You will

1. increase your knowledge and understanding of the many aspects of interpersonal conflict.
2. enhance your appreciation of the complex nature of relationships, especially your own relationships.
3. improve your ability to critically and creatively apply communication skills in your daily life.
4. increase your critical thinking skills.

## **CLASS POLICIES**

**We hold these truths to be self-evident...**

1. You will at all times be prepared for class.

The interactive nature of this class means any failure to prepare will impact everyone in the class, not just the student who is unprepared. My expectations are high in this regard.

Students who require special assistance or accommodation as arranged through Disability Resources, and students participating in university-sanctioned absences (including religious holidays), should let me know within the first week of class. Students with university-sanctioned travel generally will need to complete assignments and exams in advance.

No late work will be accepted without *advance* arrangements made with the instructor or *extensive* documentation of an emergency situation. No late submissions will be accepted after the last regular class day.

2. You will respect that your classmates are here to learn.

When the instructor is speaking, you should *not* be speaking, in this or any other class. Even if you are not interested in what is being said, you have classmates who are. Respect their investment in their education.

Because communication courses by their very nature cover personal topics, it is important that we work together for an atmosphere of respect and support. Please respect the privacy of your classmates outside the classroom. It can be a very small world.

In addition, you are expected at all times to be respectful (in both language and behavior) to your classmates regardless of sex, race, age, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, religion, or personal opinions. An important part of your development as a scholar is learning how to disagree without being disagreeable.

Note that *any* form of disruptive behavior can result in loss of participation points. Verbal or physical aggression before, during or after class will result in permanent removal from the class and notification of the proper authorities. See the Arizona Board of Regents Policy Manual Chapter V – Campus and Student Affairs: Code of Conduct.

3. You are here to learn and will focus all of your attention on the class during all of each session. **NOTE:** Students sometimes have the view that entering and leaving the classroom at will is acceptable. It is disruptive to the instructor and to the people around you. **You may NOT leave the room during class for any reason.** Plan your bathroom/snack/phone breaks for outside of class time. If you need to leave, *do not return* during that class period, and you will be considered absent from class that day. The only exceptions are those with documented medical needs, which you must communicate to me at the start of the semester.

**FAIR WARNING**

**USING ELECTRONIC DEVICES:** For the duration of class all electronic devices – including laptops – will be turned off, put away, not handled or used in any manner without my express permission.

***PENALTY for use of ANY unauthorized electronic device:***

**1st offense: Loss of that day's participation points.**

**2nd offense: Loss of half a letter grade for the course.**

**3<sup>rd</sup> (& each subsequent) offense: Loss of an additional letter grade.**

The presence of electronics in the classroom distracts you, those around you, and the instructors. It reduces our sense of community as a class. In addition, research has found that students distracted by electronics earn significantly lower grades.

*You are expected to take class notes in longhand.* According to a UCLA study, students taking notes in longhand perform significantly better on exams than those who use computers. Their findings were featured in the *Journal of Psychological Sciences*. (Read about it at <http://chronicle.com/blogs/wiredcampus/taking-notes-by-hand-benefits-recall-researchers-find/51411>)

4. You can and will attend all classes.  
Your input is valuable to your classmates, to the instructor, and to your learning. You cannot participate if you are not present.  
We will start promptly; be on time. Expect the class to last the full period.  
Class time is NOT a review of the textbook. You are expected to have thoroughly read and understood the text *before* attending class. Lectures will elaborate and add to the course material; we will also conduct numerous activities to improve your understanding and your communication skill.  
Attendance will *not* be taken. However, participation activities are an important part of your grade. See the “Participation” section for details. Arriving late and/or leaving early will reduce your participation points. Participation cannot be made up.  
If a class is missed, you are responsible for getting any notes *from your classmates*. Most handouts and major announcements made by the instructor will be posted on the class Blackboard.  
Makeup exams or deadline extensions will be considered ONLY for those who prior to or immediately *upon return to class* provide extensive written documentation of severe illness,

or death in the *immediate* family. Regularly scheduled doctor [or other] appointments do NOT constitute an emergency situation. Final deadline for providing documentation, and arranging makeup work, if allowed, is two weeks following your return to class. No assignments can be turned in after the final class session.

This is NOT an online course and failure to attend regularly and consistently will result in me asking you to drop the course.

5. You will maintain high standards of personal civility.

What you learn in this class is highly relevant to today's workplace and marketplace. We will model ourselves on standards of behavior reflecting professionalism and respect. This means foul language is not appropriate. Actions or materials that are in poor taste are not appropriate. For a detailed discussion of expected standards, see the Student Conduct section, below.

6. You will maintain the highest standard of 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.

Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, speeches, presentations, academic transactions and records. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification and dismissal. For more information, see <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>.

Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination.

Note that plagiarism is intentionally *or unintentionally* using another's work (including wording, phrases, or original ideas) without giving the person proper credit. This includes representing anyone else's words as your own. Exact words can be used ONLY in clearly attributed quotes. Individual assignments must be your work and solely your work.

Also, "self-plagiarism" is not allowed; in no case may you use material you have produced in another class or context without express *written* permission from me. Even within the class, each assignment must be new; *you may not duplicate graded material across assignments*.

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.

**Remember, *any* academic dishonesty in this course will result in failure of the course**, and could also lead to disciplinary action by the college or university. Unfortunately my personal patience for such things has been far exceeded. I will have no hesitation at all about failing you.

## TESTS

**QUIZZES:** The class will include reading quizzes over the textbook chapters. These will be taken online, generally *prior* to class discussion of the material. They are found under the Quiz tab in Blackboard, and will include multiple-choice and true/false questions. There will be twelve quizzes; your ten highest scores will be applied toward your grade. You will be allowed two attempts on each quiz, 15 minutes per attempt. Only the highest score will count for each quiz. Deadlines for the quizzes

are absolute.

**EXAMS:** You will have a mid-term and a final. These tests will cover ALL class material, including readings, lectures and discussions. Both exams will have multiple-choice and true-false questions; the final may include essay questions.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Bring a valid ASU ID, driver's license, or U.S. passport on exam dates as you will need to show proof of identity to turn in your exam; only these three types of valid ID will be accepted. Your exam will not be graded or counted (i.e., you will receive a zero) if you do not have a valid ID when you turn in your exam.

*Late Arrivals:* No student will be permitted to take an exam if they arrive late to the exam *and* any other student, having seen or finished the exam, has left the room. Parking trouble or other transportation problems are not valid excuses. Be sure to arrive to campus well before the start of class. *Late students will receive a zero for the exam.*

Make up exams may contain different questions and/or be in a different format than the original exam or quiz, including one or more in-depth essay questions.

NOTE: See the course calendar for the final exam date and time. It CANNOT be taken at any other time.

## **ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Details of all assignments will be provided in ample time to prepare.** To give you an overview:

**Self-Assessments:** In the first week of class you will write a short (400-500 word) self-analysis of your own issues and skills related to interpersonal conflict (*see details below*). This will include two briefly described **conflict issues** or situations that you have encountered and would like to be able to handle more effectively in the future. (From these you will choose one as the focus of your Case Study.) At the end of the course you will apply what you have learned over the semester in a *second* self-analysis (400-700 words).

**Personal Case Study:** These assignments combine self-analysis, observation, and identifying and applying relevant recent research. Your instructors are available for consultation on any questions you have regarding what is expected in the assignment. However, as a 300 level course, it is assumed that you have a working knowledge of basic academic research skills and the American Psychological Association style. Consequently we will NOT spend class time on how to research and write an academic paper. Visit the ASU libraries if you need research assistance; visit the Writing Center for any writing questions.

1. An **annotated bibliography** of *three* academic journal articles published 2010 or more recently that relate specifically to your case study. A list of accepted journals will be provided in Course Documents.

2. Applying concepts from the text as well as readings in recent research, you will write a **4-6 page paper** (not including the reference list) on how academic research relates to your chosen conflict issue. You'll *compare and contrast* the studies, and draw conclusions regarding how to more effectively manage the conflict situation. (Note that this will require you to write *concisely* and effectively – a skill much valued outside the academy.) You will also make a very brief informal report to the class on your findings.

**Participation** points will be based primarily on brief ungraded (pass/fail) writing assignments and activity participation reports that will be handed in during class. Often this will be a very short “minute

paper” done at the beginning or end of class (or both). There may also be pop quizzes and short homework assignments. The exact point value of any given participation assignment will depend on the number and nature of the participation assignments over the course of the semester.

Arriving late, leaving early, or packing up your bag before we dismiss the class is impolite and disruptive and will reduce your participation points. Note that non-emergency personal travel plans (e.g., around holidays or breaks) **never** excuse you from taking tests, turning in assignments or making presentations at the time scheduled. *Participation assignments cannot be made up.*

### **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:**

All of the written assignments will focus primarily (but not exclusively) on developing YOUR thinking on conflict-related communication constructs and issues.

Objectives of written assignments:

1. Increase awareness and understanding of current communication research.
2. Foster improved communication skills, particularly in conflict management.
3. Develop critical thinking regarding communication questions.

Graded assignments will be submitted through SafeAssign, in Blackboard. Hard copies may also be required in class. Points will be reduced by 10% for each calendar day an assignment is late, both on SafeAssign and in hard copy.

**NOTE:** Each time you submit an assignment through SafeAssign, *verify that your paper was submitted correctly*. To do this, go to the Grade Center. If you see an icon in the space where your grade will be, then your assignment was successfully received. It is your responsibility to verify this PRIOR to the deadline as no assignments will be accepted and graded that are not successfully submitted through SafeAssign. Submitting the “wrong” paper and/or in the wrong SafeAssign file will result in a lower score.

- We do not accept e-mailed assignments as a substitute for the SafeAssign submission.
- Late, lost, misdirected, misguided, or imaginary emails, and attachments that do not open (or that are unreadable when they do open), do not excuse late or missing assignments.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** “Computer problems” do *not* excuse late work, either online or in hard copy. It is your responsibility to be certain that your available computer and software are compatible with Blackboard, and to do this well ahead of any assignments being due. **In general, you should prepare your work and submit online assignments at least one day ahead of deadline.** Penalties will apply to all late work unless *advance* arrangements have been made with the instructor.

### **Writing Requirements:**

The required format for *all* papers submitted on SafeAssign is .rtf (rich text format), .doc or .docx, NOT .pdf, etc. If you use the SAVE AS feature to change the file type, be sure to check the document before you submit it. All papers must be typed in black 12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced and have one-inch margins. [NOTE: Your computer default setting may not be 1”. Reset it, as needed. Contact the My ASU Service Center if you need assistance.]

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** All papers (except where a cover sheet is required) will include a double-spaced, two-line **heading** in the upper right, with your name and the course number (COM 312), and the name of the assignment.

You are expected to write at a *collegiate* level. Any use of “text message” jargon in a written assignment will result in a 0 for the assignment.

In keeping with our emphasis on professionalism, correct spelling and grammar are required on all assignments. There are invaluable resources available to you, including The Writing Center (<http://studentsuccess.asu.edu/home/writingcenters>). Grades on poorly written assignments will be lowered by *up to 20 percent*. If you have ANY doubts about your writing abilities, I strongly suggest that you seek assistance. Students whose work does not meet acceptable standards may be required to document their use of the Writing Center for *each* assignment.

**NOTE:** Failure to use APA style properly will *significantly* lower your grade. If you are not already familiar with using APA style, you will find information on the ASU Libraries website. I strongly recommend that you obtain a copy of the *Publication Manual for the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). [American Psychological Association (2009). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.] This is an important resource for doing well in upper division communication classes.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** This class (as all others in the Hugh Downs School) is taught in English. If English is not your first language and you have difficulty in speaking, writing, or understanding—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 strong competence in English*.

### **STUDENT CONDUCT:**

The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication strives for a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. In a communication class, it is especially important that we

- (1) display respect for all members of the classroom – including the 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 may be reduced each time you engage in these sorts of behaviors.

Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference by other members of the class. An instructor may withdraw a student from a course when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process under USI 201-10 (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/usi/usi201-10.html>). This includes students who are verbally or physically aggressive towards the instructor or another student before, during, or after class. As noted in this document, "An instructor may withdraw a student from a course with a mark of 'W' or 'E' when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process. Disruptive classroom behavior for this purpose is defined by the instructor." In cases where disruptive behavior does not warrant removal from class, at the instructor's discretion a student's final grade will be lowered by 25% instead.

Students are required to adhere to the behavior standards listed in the Arizona Board of Regents Policy Manual Chapter V – Campus and Student Affairs: Code of Conduct (<https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/codeofconduct>) as well as the ACD 125: Computer, Internet, and Electronics Communications (<https://cfo.asu.edu/bts-computer-usage-policy>).

### **Disability Service:**

Students needing accommodations in this course due to disabilities must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) before requesting accommodations. Please contact me at the beginning of the semester, as I will be more than willing to make the necessary arrangements. The DRC is located on the first floor of Matthew's Center. They can be contacted at <http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/>. They can also be contacted at 480-965-1234 (voice)/480-965-9000 (TDD).

### **COURSE GRADING:**

When completing your assignments and receiving the evaluation of your work, keep the following criteria in mind:

*A=Superior.* Greatly exceeds the basic requirements by demonstrating high standards of creativity, skill, analysis, initiative and effort.

*B=Above average.* Exceeds basic requirements by demonstrating above average creativity, skill, analysis, initiative and effort. May have technical weakness in some areas.

*C=Average.* Meets basic course requirements but does not demonstrate extra initiative regarding the assignment.

*D=Below average.* Some requirements are deficient. Shows an effort worthy of credit, while not meeting the basic requirements in every respect.

*E=Poor work.* Deficient in most or all requirements.

Grades will be posted in a timely manner in Blackboard. **Grade challenges** must be submitted to the instructor *in writing within one week*.

### POINTS

Self-Assessment I	50
Self-Assessment II	50
<i>Personal Case Study</i>	
Annotated Bibliography	50
Case Study Paper	125
<i>Tests</i>	
Quizzes (10 of 12 counted)	
10 points each	100
Mid-term	100
Final exam	100
Class participation	125
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>700 points</b>

The Hugh Downs School uses the +/- system in all classes.

A+ 679-700  
 A 651-678  
 A- 630-650

B+ 609-629  
 B 581-608  
 B- 560-580

C+ 532-559  
 C 490-531

D 420-489  
 E 0-419

**We do not “give” grades. Grades are *earned*** based on your performance over the semester. Individual graded assignments do not determine your final grade. Consistent work over the entire semester is totaled to determine a final letter grade based on points earned. Thus, the point breakdown listed here will be strictly followed; points are NOT “rounded.”

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** You may be tempted to skip assignments that appear to have a small point value. Be aware that each 0 score creates a major drag on your potential points for the course, and those



deficiencies quickly add up. Extra credit assignments generally are NOT offered.

**Caveat:** I reserve the right to update or change portions of this syllabus in order to make the class a better experience for everyone. This may be in response to suggestions from students, from my own observations, or as the result of requirements by the Department, College, or University. Changes will be posted to the course Blackboard.

### **Self-Assessment One**

Points: 50

Due on SafeAssign no later than 11 p.m. on the due date

Write a **400-500 word** paper assessing your current strengths and weaknesses in handling conflict situations in your life. What types of conflicts provide the greatest challenges for you? (Think across a variety of contexts, such as friends, family, work, classmates.) What knowledge or skills do you anticipate would help you improve your conflict management?

Finally, VERY briefly described *two* interpersonal **conflict issues** or situations that you have encountered and would like to be able to handle more effectively in the future. This means something *between you and another person*, which may be a one-time incident, or an on-going difficulty. Some possible examples--

- My roommate and I can't seem to get along and quarrel regularly about . . .
- I have frequent conflicts with my parents over my choice of . . . .
- In the past I had a conflict at work about . . . . that resulted in losing my job.

**NOTE:** *Internal* conflicts (e.g., personal struggles or difficult choices) are *not* appropriate for this course.

The paper must be typed in 12 point Times New Roman, double-spaced and have one-inch margins. Include a double-spaced two-line heading *in the upper right*, with your name and the course number (COM 312), and the name of the assignment. All papers must be your work and solely your work. You are expected to write at a *collegiate* level.

### **Self-Assessment I, grading rubric**

Points: 50

Necessary components:

- \_\_\_ Clearly identifies personal strengths *and* weaknesses in managing conflict
- \_\_\_ Clearly identifies TWO interpersonal conflict issues
- \_\_\_ Clearly identifies needed knowledge, skills

Overall:

- \_\_\_ Clarity and quality
- \_\_\_ Good writing (spelling, grammar, etc.)
- \_\_\_ Proper format (400-500 words, 12 pt. Times Roman, double-spaced, margins, heading, etc.)