COMMUNICATION SKILLS
Ms. Gregory
Office Hours: 7:50am-8:15am 3:25p-4:00pm
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Please feel free to make an appointment if my office hours conflict with your schedule!

COURSE DESCRIPTION
We engage in interpersonal communication every day. We all typically communicate with others in order to achieve our goals. Most of the time our communication goes smoothly, so we just take it for granted without really thinking about what we’re doing. The only time we really pay attention to communication is when it becomes problematic for us. We then tend to blame the problem on our communication partner (e.g., “He never listens to me!”) or the message (e.g., “The topic is just too boring!”). This course encourages students to explore interpersonal communication in general, and spend time consciously examining their own interpersonal communication skills in particular, in order to identify communication behaviors that are productive, and not so productive, and move toward effective and appropriate (i.e., competent) communication skills. Conscientious study and attendance during this quarter should provide students with the following:

1. An understanding of interpersonal communication concepts and theories, including those related to perception, verbal channels, nonverbal channels, listening, and relationships;

2. An opportunity for students to examine their own relationships and communication habits in order to identify those that work and those that may be causing problems

3. A safe environment in which to develop and practice new interpersonal communication skills.

This course helps develop, through study and practice, many habits of mind and heart. We will engage in a review of the research findings in interpersonal communication, a subject which crosses traditional disciplinary boundaries as it synthesizes findings in psychology, sociology, biology, and communication. Throughout the course we will incorporate diverse cultural perspectives into our discussion of interpersonal communication, to improve understanding of cultural influences on how we communicate and how we interpret the communication of others. The course project will allow you to gather and analyze information relevant to an area about which students wish to gain self-knowledge and direction. Students will make a plan for self-improvement, and through self-reflection, work to put the plan into action. Students will then
assess their own improvement.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Final @ 100 points
100 points Individual Improvement Project Gathering info and making a plan
100 points Self-reflection
50 weekly participation/discussion points
10-20 points daily in class assignments

The exam will be composed of a mixture of limited choice (e.g., multiple-choice, matching) and open-ended (e.g., short-answer, essay) questions. If you are not present for a final exam, for any reason, you will have to schedule a time with me to take a make-up exam. This arrangement needs to be made before the end of the quarter.

The Project

I really like this project because each person gets to work on something of importance to her/him. And it shows how you can USE the information in this course to help you make changes you want to make in your life. It also shows you how to identify a problem, implement a solution, and evaluate the results of your solution, which are skills that will be useful regardless of your future career field. This is a three-part project that will aid you in learning how to identify a problem, plan a solution for improving the situation, implement the solution, and evaluate your progress. Here is an overview. Specific instructions will be available on google classroom.

1. Identify an interpersonal communication behavior that you wish to improve. Gather information about the behavior (3 expert sources) and write a short paper that summarizes your research and outlines a specific plan for improving the behavior.

2. Keep a record of your progress in the form of a journal. Each entry should describe your active efforts to improve your chosen interpersonal skills. Be specific! Include an assessment of how well you accomplished your objectives. Be sure to include successes and non-successes in your journal entries. After the description, suggest reasons why you might have been more or less successful in the situation. These entries will provide the “data” for your final paper.

3. You will write a short evaluation of your progress and the project. This course is designed as an “active-learning” course. We will spend a great deal of class time applying course concepts, rather than simply reading and hearing about them. In order to be an active learner you must do the following:
   a. come to class
   b. read the assigned readings and complete any assignments prior to coming to class
   c. take an active role in class discussions and completing individual and group activities.
POLICIES

Academic Integrity. All work in this course should be the individual work of the student who submits it, unless I have indicated otherwise. It is my assumption that you have read and understand the student handbook. Disciplinary action will be taken against any student found to have cheated, plagiarized, or otherwise violated the student honor code. Offenders will be reported to the Dean of Students.

Class Attendance. Much of our class time will be devoted to activities that involve interpersonal communication within our learning system. If you are not present, you cannot contribute. You are expected to attend and participate in all activities and discussions. Each person will be allowed two free absences. For each absence beyond two, your final grade will be reduced 2% (20 points). Excused absences will be counted as “free absences.” If you foresee missing more than two classes, you should see me immediately.

Excused Absences. An excused absence is an absence that is the result of an occurrence that is beyond the student’s control, such as an illness severe enough to require medical assistance (but not a routine office visit which could be scheduled outside of class time), a family death, or a bona fide religious holiday as set forth by law. Students absent for an excused reason must make up the work in the manner that I designate.

Late Papers. Occasionally, students will be assigned written assignments/discussion questions or assessments. My late-work policy is as follows:

1. I will accept a late assignment ONE day late for 80% Credit.
2. I will not accept late work after one day week deadline. Students will need to come talk to me about anything that is late after one day and make special accommodations within 24 hours of the due date or receive a zero.

Classroom Courtesy. Our aim is to create a safe environment where each student feels welcome to explore issues important to him or her. Therefore, the golden rule applies--You should treat others as you would like to be treated. Focus on descriptions of behavior and ideas, not evaluations of people! Don’t say, “You’re so stupid to think that!” Rather, explain why you don’t agree! Also, what is said in class stays in class. There is no need to discuss what a peer has confessed in class to others not involved in class. There will be zero tolerance for bullying or making fun of someone at their expense.
Electronic Devices. Electronic devices are potential distractions to the learning of your colleagues. Cell phones, PDAs, MP3 players, etc. should be turned off and stowed out of view before coming into the classroom and remain as such for the duration of class. Failure to do so will result in the loss of your day’s points for contributions to the learning community. Exceptions to this policy are by individual instructor permission only. You may not answer or check your phones or other electronic devices during class or exams. Violation of this rule during an exam will result in your receiving a zero on the exam. There are assignments that will require the use of electronic devices and I will be clear about when that use is appropriate.

GRADING PROCEDURES:

Standards are the same as in Parent/ Student Handbook:

A = 90 – 100
B = 80 – 89
C = 70 – 79
D = 60 – 69
F = Below 60

Students will be graded by a TOTAL POINT SYSTEM.

Please scroll down to the Signature Page to Print, Sign, and Return.
Student & Parent Signature Page.

Please print the Signature Page, sign and date it, return to Ms. Gregory by Due Date for the student to receive 25 point credit.

Print Student Name: ________________________________________

Student Signature: ___________________________ Date__________

Print Parent Name: _________________________________________

Parent Signature: ____________________________ Date__________

Parent Email:_____________________________________________