

**COM 286 Interpersonal Communication**  
**(Online Course)**  
**Fall 2009**

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**Required Text:**

Adler, R. B., Rosenfeld, L. B., & Proctor II, R. F. (2010). *Interplay: The process of interpersonal communication*, (11<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

**Course Description:**

Communication with others is an activity we all do with a fair amount of expertise. However, there are many times when communication creates feelings of dissatisfaction, confusion, misunderstanding, hurt, or other unexpected outcomes. Improving the way we manage such situations often requires that we develop a sixth sense, an “uncommon” sense that allows us to see communication in new ways. That is the aim of the course: to better understand interpersonal communication situations, and thus to improve the ways we manage them. We will examine basic concepts, theories, research findings relevant to initiating, developing, maintaining, and terminating relationships (be it romantic relationship, family relationship, friendship, or co-worker relationship) with an eye of the role communication in the process.

**Objectives:**

1. Develop an awareness of the role communication plays in everyday life.
2. Understand and recognize how communication process works.
3. Understand the role context plays in communication.
4. Increase both verbal and nonverbal communication skills.
5. Increase communication competence by recognizing communication options.

**CLASS POLICIES**

1. It is **your** responsibility to read this syllabus carefully and keep all the due dates in mind. **No make-ups** are given for any missed assignments/tests. Please find all the due dates on the last page of this syllabus under “Weekly Schedules.”
2. All interactions of this course will be computer-mediated. I will NOT hold any face-to-face or telephone conversations during the course of the semester.
3. All written submissions *should be carefully proofread* to reflect your high level of care and diligence.
4. All the assignments/tests/discussions will be posted on Blackboards one week before their due dates. Don’t expect to work ahead. I will not make assignments of Chapter One available until sometime on Sunday before class starts and the other assignments

periodically after that.

## ASSIGNMENTS/EVALUATIONS

### Short Answer Questions (SAQs, 40% of grade)

For each of the 12 chapters, you will be given six to eight short-answer questions. You can directly find answers from the textbook. However, try NOT to use the exact words from the textbook. Use your own words to summarize or paraphrase. Questions for each chapter will be put on the Blackboards under “*ASSIGNMENT*” for a whole week period. **This assignment is due by Midnight each Sunday.** Please see the “Weekly Schedules” for specific due dates of each chapter. There is **NO make-up** for missed assignments.

Although this assignment is called “short” answers, **your responses should be comprehensive and accurate.** You are advised to finish reading the chapter before you answer the SAQs. Do not copy and paste from the textbook. You have to use your own words to summarize what you have learned from the textbook based on your understanding.

### Group Discussions (20% of grade)

There are four group discussion activities of class materials throughout the semester during **Weeks 3, 7, 11, and 13.** The topics of each discussion activity will be posted on the Blackboards under “*Discussion Board*” for a whole week period. In general, the discussions focus on analyzing and applying concepts or theories that relate to your personal experience. For each discussion, you will receive a maximum 5% of grade.

The class will be divided into four groups:

Group **One**: Last Names A to D

Group **Two**: Last Names E to H

Group **Three**: Last Names I to P

Group **Four**: Last Names R to Z

You will be evaluated **on clarity of writing and the relevance of your examples.** You are expected to respond thoughtfully to other group members in relation to the course content. In order to receive full credit, **you are expected to post twice:** One initial response to the topic, and one later reaction to the group discussion. Please see the “Weekly Schedules” for specific due dates of each discussion. There is **NO make-up** for missed discussions.

### Relationship Analysis Papers (10% of grade)

You will submit **TWO** 2-3-page papers on your interactions with ONE specific person. This person may be your romantic partner, your best friend, a family member, a co-worker, your roommate, or someone you interact with often and you feel close to. In each paper, you are asked to demonstrate your interpersonal communication experiences with this person. You **MUST** incorporate terminologies or concepts from the textbook in your papers to show your understanding of them. The interpersonal communication experiences can be anything that

is happening between you and this person. For example, in the textbook, there are discussions on how outside forces influence our personal relationships. In the paper, you can elaborate on how your personal relationships with your romantic partner are influenced by social network members such as friends and family members, and how your relationship beliefs are shaped and modified by media models. In other words, for this assignment, try to relate your personal experience to the concepts that are discussed in the textbook, and vice versa.

**Exams (30% of grade):**

Three tests are given during Weeks 5, 10, and 16. Each test will consist of 20-30 multiple-choice questions. You may work from notes and your textbook, but you will be limited to 20-25 minutes. You can take each test **only once**.

**GRADE SCALE**

[Finals Grades Based on Percentages]

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 90-100      | A |
| 80-89       | B |
| 70-79       | C |
| 60-69       | D |
| 59 or lower | E |

Always remember that you **EARN** a grade, and that you are not given a grade.

### Weekly Schedules

| Week              | Topics     | Due Dates (by <b>Midnight</b> of the Specific Day)   |
|-------------------|------------|--|
| 1. Aug 24-30      | Chapter 1  | Short Answer Questions (SAQs) of Chapters 1 due on <b>Aug 30</b>                             |
| 2. Aug 31 –Sept 6 | Chapter 2  | SAQs <b>due by Sept 6</b>  |
| 3. Sept 7-13      | Chapter 3  | SAQs and <b>Group Discussion #1</b> due by <b>Sept 13</b>                                    |
| 4. Sept 14-20     | Chapter 4  | SAQs Due by <b>Sept 20</b>   |
| 5. Sept 21-27     |            | <i>Test 1</i> (Chapters 1-4) and <b>Relationship Analysis Paper #1</b> Due by <b>Sept 27</b> |
| 6. Sept 28 –Oct 4 | Chapter 5  | SAQs <b>due by Oct 4</b>   |
| 7. Oct 5-Oct11    | Chapter 6  | SAQs and <b>Group Discussion #2</b> due by <b>Oct 11</b>                                     |
| 8. Oct 12-18      | Chapter 7  | <b>SAQs due by Oct 18</b>  |
| 9. Oct 19-25      | Chapter 8  | SAQs due by Oct 25   |
| 10. Oct 26-Nov1   |            | Test 2 (Chapters 5-8) and <b>Relationship Analysis Paper #2</b> Due by <b>Nov 1</b>          |
| 11. Nov 2-8       | Chapter 9  | SAQs and <b>Discussion #3</b> due by Nov 8   |
| 12. Nov 9-15      | Chapter 10 | SAQs due by Nov 15   |
| 13. Nov 16-22     | Chapter 11 | SAQs and <b>Group Discussion #4</b> Due by <b>Nov 22</b>                                     |
| 14. Nov 23-29     |            | Thanksgiving   |
| 15. Nov30-Dec 6   | Chapter 12 | SAQs due by Dec 6  |
| 16. Dec 7-13      |            | Test 3 (Chapters 9-12) due by Dec 13   |