

COMS 5360 Interpersonal Communication Theory
Communication Studies
Sam Houston State University
Spring 2012

Location of Class Meeting: University Center
Class Meeting Time: Wednesdays, 6:00-8:50pm
Instructor: Dr. Shuangyue (Shaun) Zhang
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Phone: (936) 294-1835
Office Hours: By Appointment

REQUIRED READINGS

Knapp, M. L., & Daly, J. A. (2011). *The Sage handbook of interpersonal communication* (4th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

Additional readings, if any, will be posted on Blackboards.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Shorter Literature Reviews (2 x 15% = 30% of grade)

You need to write two 6-7-page-long literature reviews on a topic in interpersonal communication to demonstrate your proficiency in citing/referencing using APA style.

- 1) For each paper, you need to cite at least 10 academic journal articles.
- 2) Highlight the parts in the original article where you cited.
- 3) You need to submit all the referenced journal articles, along with your papers.
- 4) Do not use secondary sources unless necessary.
- 5) If you cite from books, photocopy the pages in which you have cited. Turn them in with your papers.

Longer Literature Review (30% of grade)

For this assignment, you will write a 20-25-page-long literature review on a relatively specific topic within interpersonal communication. You are expected to do an extensive research on the topic and propose some research questions or hypotheses. Detailed instruction of this paper will be discussed in class.

Your papers will be evaluated based on Dr. Paul Mongeu's five criteria including completeness, organization, clarity, validity, and mechanics. **Completeness** refers to the extent to which you provide an adequate description of the literature and methods (if applicable). This will include the extent to which you describe the existing research and theory development relevant to your topic. **Organization** refers to the extent to which your various ideas flow together. Sentences should blend effectively into paragraphs, while paragraphs should blend well in the major sections of your paper. **Clarity** refers to the extent to which you present your ideas in an understandable

manner. This would include the extent to which you word your own (and other researchers' and theorists') ideas clearly. **Validity** refers to the extent to which the arguments you provide follow in a clear and organized manner. **Mechanics** refers to the technical (or stylistic) aspects of the paper. A well-written paper should be devoid of grammatical errors, typographical errors, misspellings, punctuation errors, sentence fragments, and so on.

Exams (2 x 10% of grade)

Two take-home exams will be given during the semester. Each exam will include four or five essay questions. Exams are due one week after they are distributed.

Discussion Questions (20% of grade)

For each week, you need to submit a list of questions before class. You need to have at least three questions from each assigned reading. Make copies for each member of the class.

Dr. Mongeu's 12 Criteria of Good-Quality Questions

GOOD DISCUSSION QUESTIONS...

1. Are open-ended. Closed-ended (e.g., yes-no) questions do not give the class any room to discuss ideas (e.g., "do you agree?" "Does this make sense?"). Closed-ended questions can be useful if you have more of an open-ended as a follow-up (e.g., asking "why" after a "do you agree" type question).
2. Are clear. Do not use vague terms. Do not use terms from outside class that other students will not know (unless you spend the time to explain them).
3. Are simple. Short questions tend to be clearer than long questions. One thing that can make for unnecessary complexity is that you ask two (or more things at once). Make sure that you are asking only one thing at a time.
4. Do not have objective, verifiable, answer to the question (particularly from the reading). Do not ask questions where the answer is likely to be someone reading from the text (unless you have a good, open-ended follow-up). Good questions are those that give the class a number of directions that they could go.
5. Attempt to identify (and/or challenge) implicit assumptions in a particular piece. These questions force students to look beyond what the authors have to say.
6. Relate back to earlier readings from class. Again, this forces students to go beyond what the authors have to say and to start making connections between concepts and theories. Do not be afraid to bring in concepts from other classes or from your own experience (but be prepared to explain that material or experience).
7. Potentially keeps the discussion on track. There will be times when the focus of discussion meanders from the reading. A good question takes the class from the new topic back to the reading (though sometimes you have to bring the class' attention to the reading more abruptly).
8. Assumes that students have read and understood the reading. Be prepared, however, to discuss basic issues (e.g., definitions).
9. Might ask for applications of theoretical positions (or theoretical explanations for applied issues).
10. Are questions. Do not make a statement, state an opinion, or read a passage without including a question to accompany it. If you do not ask a question, the class may not know how to respond.
11. Can be answered by more than one person. Do not fall into the pattern of: question, answer, question, answer...

12. Either specific or general. Neither specific nor general questions are always preferred. All of one kind (especially specific) gets somewhat tedious. Make sure that there is some combination of specific and general questions.

Americans with Disability Act:

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, then the student is encouraged to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how best to deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.

Religious Holidays

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

"Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

Visitors in the Classroom

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

This policy is not intended to discourage the occasional visiting of classes by responsible persons. Obviously, however, the visiting of a particular class should be occasional and not regular, and it should in no way constitute interference with registered members of the class or the educational process.

Instructor Evaluation

Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

Weekly Schedules

Dates	Topic	Reading	Assignments Due
1. Jan 18	Introduction	Chapter 1	
2. Jan 25	Methods	Chapters 2 & 3	
3. Feb 1	Biological Perspectives	Chapter 4	
4. Feb 8	Personality	Chapter 5	
5. Feb 15	Knowledge Structure	Chapter 6	
6. Feb 22	Language	Chapter 7	Paper One
7. Feb 29	Nonverbal Signals	Chapter 8	
8. Mar 7	Emotions	Chapter 9	Paper One
9. Mar 14	Spring Break		
10. Mar 21	Social Support	Chapter 10	Test One
11. Mar 28	Networks and Social influence	Chapters 11 & 12	Paper Two
12. Apr 4	Conflict	Chapter 13	
13. Apr 11	CMC	Chapter 14	
14. Apr 18	Workplace and Skills	Chapters 15 & 16	
15. Apr 25	Intercultural Perspective	Chapter 17	
16. May 2	Romantic and Family Contexts	Chapters 18& 19	
17. May 9	Paper Three Presentation		Paper Three/Test Two