COMM 578
Seminar in Interpersonal Communication

Required Texts:


Course objectives:
1. Develop a framework for organizing knowledge in the field of interpersonal communication.
2. Increase awareness of interpersonal research.
3. Provide students with an opportunity to examine interpersonal communication theories and to apply these theories to different relationships and contexts.
4. Identify mainstream issues to guide individual scholarship.

Attendance Policy:
Attendance is required. Excessive absences will affect your participation grade in this class. You are always responsible for all material distributed in your absence. In the event of extra-ordinary circumstances necessitating your absence, please speak to the instructor IN ADVANCE and be prepared to provide documentation of your excuse. Also, please remain in the ITV classroom and avoid distractions including cell phones.

All presentations, assignments, and exams must be completed on the date assigned.
If you are unprepared or do not come to class on an exam day, you will receive a ZERO for that assignment unless an alternate due date has been previously approved or documentation has been provided for extreme circumstances. If a problem arises contact the instructor prior to class.

Participation:
Class members are expected to contribute to the class by asking questions, participating in discussions and taking part in class activities. Please take an active, interested, and respectful role in the class in order to assist your own learning in addition to your classmates. The course will be broadcast through ITV to two different locations (I am located in Bowling Green). Class participation from the distance locations is important both to the individuals there as well as the students in the Bowling Green location. I encourage all class members to participate.

Academic Dishonesty:
Academic dishonesty is a very serious matter and will result in automatic failure of this class, and referral to the proper university officials. Academic dishonesty includes: handing in another’s work or part of another’s work as your own, turning in one of your old papers for a current class, turning in the same or similar past or current paper for two different classes, and purchasing or otherwise obtaining research or papers written by another and turning that work in as your own. Using unauthorized notes or study aids or otherwise obtaining another’s answers for an examination also represents a breach of academic integrity.
Plagiarism means intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another person as your own. This includes quoting or paraphrasing from published sources without acknowledging/citing the source of your information or presenting quoted material as your own words. Students who are unfamiliar with how to cite sources should purchase a style manual such as APA (American Psychological Association). Claiming lack of knowledge about standards for writing is not an acceptable excuse for committing plagiarism. Come to a faculty member for help if you have questions. Plagiarism will result in failing the course.

Assignments:
Schedule subject to change based on Instructor’s discretion.

Exams
There will be two exams, a midterm and a final. The exams will assess your understanding of communication concepts and theories, as well as your application and integration abilities. The exams will be in essay form; you will get a list of possible questions ahead of time. (200 points total)

Major Project
You may choose from one of the following options for your major project. Please feel free to discuss each option with me before making your decision. You will submit a 1-2 page proposal indicating your choice (option) and what you plan to do. The proposal can be informal, but should provide enough information so that I will understand the choice selection and topic area. This is due no later than Nov. 8.

A. Teaching Unit (200 points)
This project involves developing a micro-unit of instruction for a workshop or classroom situation. The micro-unit is to be limited to the equivalent of three fifty minute class periods maximum of instructional time (this does not include any major assignment-test which would take place later in the semester).

Major decisions include selection of the interpersonal content (theory, concept, etc), the overarching and individual daily teaching objectives, method(s) you plan to use to teach the unit (pedagogy), and how you will assess what you have taught. Each decision should be supported with a rationale and justification (supported by research).

The assignment calls for an intact instructional unit (objectives, assigned readings, activities, lectures, assessment tools, assignments) as well as a paper which includes rationale/justification for the unit (10-15 pages, 10-15 sources including both interpersonal and educational/instructional sources).

Your paper should include at the very minimum:
1. a set of objectives that provide criteria for success
2. what instructional strategies will be used to teach the objectives you have developed
3. a lesson plan (procedures and content) to actually teach the micro-unit based on the objectives you chose
4. an assessment package to determine the effectiveness of the unit
B. Literature review (200 points)

This option involves completing an in-depth literature review (using primarily communication journals) on an interpersonal communication topic. Be sure that your topic is centered on communication and that your focus is on communication which is related to the interpersonal context. Your paper should organize, synthesize, and report on the research in the area you selected. Please organize your review by topic (I highly suggest creating an outline before you write the paper). Please use headings and subheadings according to APA format. Your job is to organize the literature and report on information from the articles, synthesizing together by topic. Rather than quoting excessively, please put ideas into your own words whenever possible. Look at sample studies for format and approach.

Your review and analysis should be as exhaustive as possible and should lead to specific conclusions about what we know and understand about the topic. The paper should include a rationale, including why it is an important area for interpersonal communication scholars to study. Also, create a general purpose statement for your reader. You may develop an overarching research question to guide your literature review, but this is not required. Your paper should assess strengths and weaknesses of the existing literature as well propose future research questions which need to be explored. Also, summarize and discuss the implications of the literature on your topic. In other words, critique the literature. Assess what we know and do not know about the topic you selected. The paper should not exceed 20 pages plus bibliography (minimum of 20 sources; a majority should be data-based studies).

For examples and guidelines for literature reviews visit the following link: http://library.ucsc.edu/ref/howto/literaturereview.html

C. Research Proposal (200 points) or Study (250 points)

This option involves a proposal for a research study related to interpersonal communication. This would include everything, but the actual data collection itself. The proposal should include a rationale and method section. You should develop a compelling research question(s)/hypotheses that should be important to interpersonal communication scholars. You should have a detailed methodology section including the research question(s), participants, data collection, and data analysis. You should include all research instruments. The paper should not exceed 25 pages plus bibliography (15-20 sources) and appendices (e.g., interview protocol, survey etc.).

If you chose, you can do a complete study (either qualitative or quantitative). You would do everything you would do in the proposal option, plus carry out the actual study and report the results/conclusions, and implications of the research. The paper should include a rationale, methods section, results, and discussion. I suggest doing an outline for each section of the paper. The rationale and methods sections (10-15 pages) are due no later than October 28th. For the final paper, you will add the results and findings sections. In the results, summarize your findings. Use quotations, statistical analysis, develop tables etc. In the discussion, evaluate and discuss your results. Include issues such as what did you learn from answering the research questions, explain and make sense of the results,
compare your results to existing results etc. Also, address the strengths and limitations of your study, as well as suggest future directions for research. Your paper should not exceed 25 pages and should include at least 15 sources.

*If you chose to do a full study, you do not need to do the application paper.

D. Student Proposed Project
You have the opportunity to propose another type of project (can be a group project), which would be meaningful to you and would allow you to learn about interpersonal communication. This project should be comparable to the other options in scope and amount of effort.

*For options A, B, and C you will find an example posted on Blackboard.

*Projects adapted from Dr. Dawn Braithwaite and Dr. William Seiler

Major Project Presentation (50 points)
Each student will present an oral report of their paper approximately 10 minutes in length. The presentations should be interesting, well-organized, clearly understandable, and fluent. You should prepare a handout for your presentation.

Personal Application Assignment
The purpose of this assignment is to apply an interpersonal communication concept or theory learned in class to the outside world. This should be a 2-3 double spaced page paper discussing how you observed this concept or theory in your everyday environment. Be sure to demonstrate your understanding of the theory/concept and connect it to at least two additional sources (preferably recent communication journal articles). You may also analyze this theory or concept in a movie. Your theory or concept must be different from the one you chose for the major paper. (50 points)

Weekly Journals
There will be a series of journal entries (5) that involve commenting on the readings, raising questions, and providing examples. The journals will be approximately 2 pages (double spaced) and should provide comments, challenge and question the ideas presented in the readings, and provide examples or apply the concepts/theories/ideas presented in the weeks’ readings. Try to synthesize what you find important in the readings and/or focus on one primary area of particular interest to you from the readings. I want you to demonstrate your level of understanding of the reading, but I also want to find out what you struggle with in the readings so I can help clarify. The journals are due at the beginning of class and should be typed. Each journal will be with 20 points (100 points).
Activities/small assignments/participation
There will be a series of in class activities and small assignments that will be completed individually or in small groups. These assignments/activities will focus on specific communication theories and concepts. (50 points)

Grading Policy:
Major Project 200 pts.
Research Class Presentation 50 pts.
Application Assignment 50 pts.
Journals 100 pts.
Participation/activities 50 pts.
Exams 200 pts. Total: 650 pts.

GRADING SCALE:

A 585-650
B 520-584
C 455-519
D 390-454
F Below 389

Class Schedule
Baxter & Braithwaite = B&B
Braithwaite & Wood = B & W

Week 1:
Introduction to interpersonal communication (IPC); History of IPC
Definitions and parameters of IPC.

Week 2:
Foundations of communication, interpersonal communication, and theory

Readings Due:
Introduction to B & W (case studies)
B&B Ch 1 (Introduction: Meta-theory and Theory...)
Week 3:
Communicatively managing privacy and deception

**Readings Due:**
- B&B Ch 23 (Communication Privacy Management)
  - Case study 13

**Journal #1 Due**

Week 4:
Interpersonal expectations and violations

**Readings Due:**
- B&B Ch 14: (Expectancy Violations Theory)
- B&B Ch 17: (Interpersonal Deception Theory)

Week 5:
IPC relationships and technology

**Readings Due:**
- B&B Ch 29 (Social Information Processing Theory)

**Journal #2 due**

Week 6:
Relational Dialectics

**Readings Due:**
- Case study 7
- B&B Ch 26 (Relational Dialectics)
- Baxter and West 2003

**Journal #3 due**

Week 7:

**Readings Due:**
- B&B Ch 5 (Goals-Plans-Action Theory)
- B&B Ch 8 (Relational Framing Theory)

**Week 8: Midterm**
Week 9:
Relationship Development

Readings Due:
- B&B Ch 27 (Stage Theories of Relationship Development)
- B&B Ch 9 (Uncertainty Management Theories)
- B&B Ch 10 (Uncertainty Reduction Theory)

Application Paper Due

Week 10:
Social support

Readings Due:

Case Study 26

Journal #4

Week 11:
Family relationships

Readings Due:
- Braithwaite et. al. 2001: “Becoming a family.”

Case study 11

Project Proposal due by Nov 8th

Week 12:
Diversity and interpersonal relationships

Readings Due:

Journal #5 due

Week 13: No Class: Happy Thanksgiving
Week 14:
Relational conflict and termination

Readings Due:
- Case study 19

Week 15:
Present Major Projects
Major Project paper due

Final Exam: