Instructor Information:

Instructor: Steven J. Tyrell, sjtyrell@mtu.edu
Office Number: 487-2212
Office Hours: By appointment, call 487-2212 and schedule an appointment with me via a staff member in the Office of Student Affairs.

Required Textbook:


Other supplemental readings may be provided throughout the course. These materials will be on reserve at the Library.

Some advice:

You will need to keep up with the readings in order to participate in the class activities to follow. In addition, this class is designed to build one concept on top of another. So, if you fall behind on one of the earlier segments, it will be difficult to engage those concepts discussed in the latter part of the class.

The “general concepts” map of the class (and the readings) will be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why we communicate?</th>
<th>“We got needs!”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition of interpersonal communication</td>
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Four Critical Components to Interpersonal Communication:

- Self-esteem/Self-image/Perceptions
- Language/Verbal messages
- Nonverbal Communication
- Listening

(Midterm Exam)

Stages of Relationship Development

- Conflict resolution/Group Roles

Gender Communication

Putting it all together: Skits Presentations!

(Final exam)
Course Goals:

Interpersonal Communication is a class that intends to increase your understanding and implementation of effective interpersonal communication behaviors and skills.

- Throughout the term we will examine basic verbal and nonverbal elements affecting communication between individuals in family, peer group, and work contexts.
- This course requires you to participate in activities designed to develop interpersonal communication skills and will actually improve the quality of your life if you keep an open mind and actively participate! So, in order to succeed in HU 321, you must read materials and come prepared to participate in class discussions and class activities.
- Face-to-face interaction, a critical component of interpersonal communication is also a necessary aspect of class activities. Half of class time will be (a) class discussion with me or (b) participation in activities and discussions with your peers. All class activities also require a de-briefing segment so that we may analyze what we observed and learned in the activity.
- Segments of the course will include: an introduction to interpersonal communication, self-image, nonverbal communication, listening, verbal messages, gender communication, group dynamics, relationship development, conflict resolution and if time permits cross-cultural communication issues.
- The class allows you to evaluate the intricacies of interpersonal relationships and the communication issues surrounding human interaction in various contexts. You have to think critically in order to develop a high proficiency of the course materials. You will also be encouraged to be creative in the completion of a final group project.

What are your goals of the course? What did you expect in taking this class?

Instructional Modes:

This course combines lectures by the instructor, class discussion of assigned textbook readings, group work, oral presentations by the students, exams, and classroom activities which all contribute to your overall understanding of interpersonal communication. Out-of-class work can include written exercises (personal journals) and observations of the communication climate outside of the classroom. Assigned chapters should be read before class so that you will be able to make a contribution to the class discussions and activities and perform well on the exams.

General Class Requirements:

You are expected to:

1. Be on time for all class meetings. Class attendance is taken for every class. So, you need to be here when the class begins. If another instructor delays you in getting to my class, have them write you a note that they ran over and bring it to me. You should not be penalized for class attendance based upon another’s instructor’s delay.

2. Interact productively in class discussions and small group activities.

3. Be prepared daily for discussions by reading all assigned material BEFORE the day it is listed on the course schedule.

4. Successfully deliver an interpersonal skit (including script, learning components and performance of skit).
Classroom Civility?

There are certain basic standards of classroom civility that should be adhered to, particularly in a communication course. Civility does not eliminate appropriate humor, enjoyment, or other features of a comfortable and pleasant classroom community. Classroom civility does, however, include the following:

1. Displaying respect for all members of the classroom community, both your instructor and fellow students. We will have, at times, exciting and controversial debates, of which we need to encourage a difference of opinion without being disrespectful. If disrespect occurs, we will need to find a way to address it and bring resolution. Anything less would be hypocrisy in the intent to learn about interpersonal communication. So, you can challenge others ideas, including the instructor. You must also be prepared to defend your response in the context of class concepts....

2. Attentiveness to and participation in lectures, group activities, and other classroom exercises.

3. Avoidance of unnecessary disruptions during class such as private conversations, reading campus newspapers, and doing work for other classes. You may write in your class journals during class.

These features of classroom civility do not constitute an exhaustive list. Rather, they represent the minimal sort of behaviors that help to make the classroom a pleasant, exciting and challenging place for all concerned.

Reasonable Accommodation

If you have a special need that may require an accommodation or assistance, please inform me of the fact as soon as possible or contact Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Student Affairs at 487-2212, (gbmelton@mtu.edu) for assistance.

Criteria for Course Completion

This course consists of several assignments, each of which must be completed. There is one extra credit assignment for those students who desire to increase their class participation grade. Course completion is accomplished when all necessary assignments (Exams, Class Activities/Assignments, Group Skit Presentation) have been completed.

Attendance Policy

ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED. Readings, class discussions, group workshops, and in-class activities increase both your understanding of interpersonal communication concepts and applications. Class attendance and participation are important in accomplishing the goals of this course. If you are going to miss a class it is your responsibility to speak with me PRIOR to the class session you will be missing. If you should have an unanticipated EMERGENCY, please leave a phone message for me at (487-2212) or an email at sjtyrell@mtu.edu.

You will be allowed THREE ABSENCES (this is a total combination of excused and unexcused) during the term. You are responsible for making up work missed in class by speaking with
another student or by appointment/prior arrangement with me. Your attendance is factored into
the class participation grade for the course.

If you are late for a class, it is YOUR responsibility to make sure I have not marked you absent
for the day. This must be done the day you are late. Notice that you are given three free absences
for situations in which you are really sick. Do not use those "freebies" for blowing off the class
and then come to me later (after you have gone over the limit) when you really are sick and
expect an excuse. Three freebies allow you to be sick or compensate for an emergency; please
don't take advantage.

For any officially excused absence you are responsible for presenting official written
documentation for the absence. For university-sponsored absences this notification is
to be given to me prior to the absence; for other excused absences, this documentation must be
presented within two weeks of the absence.

Please arrive to class on time. Tardiness is unprofessional and is not fair to me or to your
classmates. Consequently, if you are consistently late, you can expect to receive
a lowered participation grade. Moreover, do not expect me to cover any missed material.

Class Participation Policy

The quantity and quality of your contributions to class discussions and activities will be evaluated
according to the following criteria:

1. Are you prepared for class discussions (e.g., completed reading, prepared for discussion
   questions)?

2. Are you able to relate your own experiences and observations to class concepts? This is by
   far the best way to prepare for class... (it is also the way the journals are to be kept)

3. Do you respond to statements by others in an appropriate manner?

4. Do you move the discussion along, not derail it?

5. Do you ask questions and/or paraphrase when needed and appropriate?

If you do miss class, please see a classmate regarding class discussions and assignments. NO
MAKE-UP WORK IS AVAILABLE for the group presentation skit, in-class exercises, exams,
unless I approve with PRIOR arrangements or with what I qualify as extenuating circumstances..

Course Requirements

ORAL COMMUNICATION

Since this is an oral communication skills course, we want to provide you with many
opportunities to develop these skills. Aside from general class participation such
opportunities may include the preparation for and performance and evaluation of role-playing
activities, in-class presentations, and briefing sessions and discussions.

WRITTEN WORK

Journals need to be legible. If I cannot read your writing (no one can read mine), then print or
type your journal entries.
Group Skits – scripts are typed with appropriate delineation of concepts presented. Hand-written scripts will not be accepted.

REQUIRED READINGS

Your reading assignments are included in the class calendar. In addition to the textbook, I may, from time to time, require you to read other material that will be put on reserve at the Library. If you do not do the reading, do not expect to benefit substantially from the course. Class sessions are used to supplement rather than to review the reading material assigned.

Exams, Journals and Group Skit Presentation

EXAMS

You will be expected to take a comprehensive mid-term and final exam. These exams will be mostly multiple choice/true-false questions with the possibility of a number of short essay responses. If you read the required readings, and you know how to apply concepts discussed in the class, you will do well on the exams. The questions will review elements of the course included in the conceptual map on page 1.

APPLICATION JOURNALS (Optional)

Interpersonal Communication is a class that focuses on face-to-face interaction. One of the purposes of the class is for each student to build familiarity and skill in practicing aspects of interpersonal communication. However, in all fairness, not everyone is prepared to jump into the middle of a class debate. It involves some degree of risk-taking, of which each of us have different feelings about. Therefore, anyone may by the Tuesday of the second week of class (December 7th) opt to maintain an applications journal as a means to augment their class participation grade. Thus, completion of the application journal can help max out your class participation grade without you having to speak up a lot in class.

You do not have to do the application journal unless you decide to do so...it is not a class requirement, it is an option.

The journal will apply a your own personal experiences to the concepts discussed in the class session. You write about your own personal experiences after the class discussion. There will be an entry for each class, beginning the second week of the term and through the remainder of the term. If you miss a class, you need to speak to someone about the class and then complete an entry.

An entry includes:

1. One of today’s concepts discussed in class was……
2. In a situation I personally experienced (which is not the same as observed, you are a participant in the experience), (explain what happened, what was said)...
3. The way this concept applies to my situation is……
4. How this concept helps me look at this situation similarly or differently....

Entries in the past average a page in length, but there is no expected length by me. These journal responses will be reviewed only by me and will be held in confidence between you and me. The journal entries will be graded on completeness, clarity, introspection and conceptual foundations.
Bring your journals to class everyday. I will collect the journals (unannounced) twice during the term and comment on your responses.

Note: I added this option years ago based upon the request of some students. It is an opportunity that acknowledges that everyone learns differently. The journals are also a great way to prepare for the group skit presentation. Students who completed journals, as a group, also scored higher on the exams in the past.

GROUP PRESENTATION SKIT

The importance of developing your interpersonal communication skills when interacting with other students cannot be overstated. In order to give you practical experience in developing your interpersonal communication competencies, you will design and manage a group skit on specific concepts related to one of the following six major topics:

1. Self-Image, Self-Concept & Self-Disclosure (include at least 3 of 4 Johari Window types)
2. Verbal Messages Management (identify 4 confirming and 4 disconfirming messages)
3. Types of Listening (show all types of listening)
4. Nonverbal Communication (identify 6 non-verbal components and how they are to be presented)
5. All Stages of Relationship Development
6. Conflict and Conflict Resolution

The skit is “somewhat” a real life situation involving all members of the group as actors. The skit will include a number of interpersonal communication relationships. You will have 2 minutes to set it up, 13 minutes to present the skit in its entirety, 5 minutes for class to evaluate it (written portion) and 10 question/answer period.

A typed script will be provided to me prior to the skit presentation. The script is written in a format that (1) indicates who is going to say what and (2) where a particular element of the six major topics noted above would be demonstrated. I recognize that the skit may not be an exact copy of the script provided to me, but it should be close. I recognize that “add-libing” should occur and can make it equally fun. No points will be taking off for ad-lib or fun!

- Skit Quality (including 1-6 major topics, realism) 25%
- Script Quality (degree of closeness to presentation, clear identification of six major components) 25%
- Class Evaluation of Group Skit (your peers will score major topics observed, creativity, and realism) 25%
- Instructor’s Evaluation of Other Group Presentation Qualities (such as time, creativity, participation of groups members) 25%

You will be provided an opportunity to meet as a group during class time. I do not believe you can successfully complete this group assignment by limiting group time to these class moments. You will need to meet as a group outside of class. Groups will be formed the fourth week of class. You will receive your group assignment then.

CLASS PARTICIPATION and IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

During the term we will have several in-class discussions/debates and engage in activities designed to sharpen your interpersonal communication skills. The (a) more intelligent your
comments (for example asking a question that indicates you have not done any of the reading for the day, does not in itself, qualify as high quality class participation), (b) the more prepared you are, and (c) the more willing your are to help make this class a productive educational experience for all, the more you will be rewarded.

**Doing Your Own Work**

I expect that all of the individual assignments you complete are always your own work. We find, however, that many students are not sure exactly what "your own work" means.

**Journals:** You need to complete your journals through personal critical reflection. It means you cannot talk to others about how to complete the journal entry. You can ask me about it.

**In Class/Take-Home Assignments:** Unless otherwise instructed by me, in-class assignments and take-home assessments are to be completed without assistance with others.

**Exams:** Exams are in class. Copying someone's else's work in an exam will result in disciplinary charges. You can get an F for the course or be suspended if you intend to deceive the instructor.

**Group Skits:** You are to work closely together. I expect the script and the skit to be a full reflection of all group members. You are authorized to collaborate with all members of your group. You are not authorized to collaborate with other groups in this class. You need to work independently of each other.

Academic integrity is very important to all of us involved in an educational setting. It is a matter of trust. Academic dishonesty, or a betrayal of that trust, is a serious matter and it will be addressed through the code of conduct system if a complaint arises.

**Grading Criteria**

Scores in three major performance categories will determine the grades for this class: Exams, Individual Performance/Participation, Group Skit Presentation.

**Graded Assignments and Grade Calculation**

- Exams (2) .......................................................... 50%
- Class Participation (attendance, involvement, preparedness) ........................................ 25%
- Group Presentation Skit ........................................ 25%

**Grading Scale:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94 - 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/B</td>
<td>88 - 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82 - 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B/C</td>
<td>78 - 81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>72 - 77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C/D</td>
<td>68 - 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>62 - 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>61 or below</td>
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</table>
Class Schedule/Reading Assignments:

**LOOKING IN at Yourself!**

**Week 1: Overview of Course & Introduction to Interpersonal Communication**

November 30th: Review Course Syllabus, Discuss Communication Needs

Class Activity-Introductions

December 2nd: Definition of Interpersonal Communication (reading Chapter 1: pg. 3-44, key concepts: the process of communication, the transactional view, communication principles/misconceptions, the value of both contextual and qualitative definitions, communication competence)

**Week 2: Communication and the Self**

December 7th: Self-Concept (reading: Chapter 2: pg. 45-85 (with focus on first half of chapter) key concepts: characteristics of the self-concept, reflected appraisal, culture and self-concept, self-fulfilling prophecy, impression management, the ethics of impression management)

Class Activity: One of Two Activities

December 9th: Perceptions (reading: Chapter 3: pg. 87-127, key concepts: perception process, perception schema, influences of perception, perception checking)

Class Activity: Perception Checking Skill

You are not responsible to read Chapter 4 for class discussion. You will, however, find this chapter on emotions, expressing your feelings, irrational thinking, and fallacies important to the development of your group skits. For instance, a good perception check is more than fact-based. It is feeling-derived and substantiates a higher quality and higher risk perception check. It is explains how you might best approach entries into your journals. So, if you are going to utilize the journal option, the nature of the discussion in your journal responses might follow many of the issues discussed in this chapter.
LOOKING OUT (after having looked in)!

**Week 3: Language & Non-verbal Communication**

December 14th: (reading: Chapter 5, pg. 171-223, key concepts: the nature of language, the uses and abuses of language, [we will look at gender communication towards the end of the term, some of the discussion will be based upon pages 206-213, you can read it now or later]).

Class Activity: Language use and abuse

December 16th: Uses and abuses continued. Begin Nonverbal Communication unit (readings: Chapter Six, pg. 226-269, key concepts: characteristics of non-verbal communication, functions of non-verbal communication, types of nonverbal communication,

Happy Holidays!

**Week 4: Non-verbal Communication Continues**

January 4th: No class, Holiday Break is in session

January 11th: Finish non-verbal communication unit, Assignment of Groups for Skits Presentations

**Week 5: Listening**

January 11th: (readings: Chapter Seven, pg. 272-309, key concepts: elements of listening, types of listening, why we don’t listen, active listening (subtracting, equaling and adding (or active) listening responses (not in text- I will supply in class), types of responses.

Class Activity: Rumor Mill

January 13th: Finish Listening Segment, Group Preparation Time

Class Activity: Active Listening Techniques
Week 6: Midterm and Stages of Relationship Development

January 18th: Midterm Exam, Group Preparation Time following the exam

January 20th: Stages of relationship development, "Putting it all together!" (readings: Chapter Eight, pg. 323-336, key concepts; 10 stages of relationship development)

Take-home assignment: Mapping stage in a relationship (from beginning to end).

Week 7: Self-Disclosure in Relationships & Communication Climates


Class Activity: Johari Window

January 27th: Communication Climates (reading: Chapter Nine, pg.366-395, key concepts: confirming and disconfirming responses, preventing defensiveness in others, responding non-defensively to criticism (an example of skit' script can be seen in this chapter))

Note on Group Skits: You should have a rough draft/outline of your skit by this date!

Week 8: Conflict

February 1st: Managing Conflict and Conflict Resolution (readings: pg. 400-449, key concepts, defining conflict, conflict styles, conflict resolution)

February 3rd: Winter Carnival, no class! - Be safe & have fun!

Week 9:

February 8th: Group Roles (not in the readings, a handout will be provided for class of terms and group roles- functional and dysfunctional roles in groups), Group Skit Preparation Time

Class Activity: Welcome to the Club!

February 10th: Gender Communication, Review Elements of Final Comprehensive Exam
Week 10: Group Skits!

February 15th: Group Skits Presentations (3)
February 17th: Group Skits Presentations (3)

Finals Week:

February: Final Examination – Comprehensive
Time: ______

Special thanks to the University of Kentucky for their design of a wonderful syllabus and the guidance and advice of Dr. Patty Sotirin, much which I adopted in this revision of my original syllabus taught at SUNY New Paltz.

Steve Tyrell