



## **Course Syllabus: Interpersonal Communication**

**College of Fine Arts**  
SPCH 2423 Section 101  
Fall 2020

### Contact Information

Instructor: Prof. Christopher P. D'Amico, M.S.  
Office: Fain College B 108  
Office hours: Virtual by appointment  
Office phone: (940) 397-4396  
Cell Phone: (203) 278-4253 (leave a message)  
E-mail: christopher.damico@msutexas.edu

### **Course Description**

This course is intended to develop your understanding of the interpersonal communication process. This course will provide you with some of the conceptual and research tools necessary for the study of interpersonal communication as a social science. We will concentrate on developing a systematic understanding of the process of interpersonal communication.

### **Primary Course Learning Objectives:**

- Terms critical to analyzing interpersonal communication behaviors and communication
- Theories and principles of interpersonal communication
- Skills needed to be a successful team-member and presenter in groups
- Skills necessary to enhance your critical thinking, researching, and writing

## SPCH 2423: Interpersonal Communication

### **Textbook**

Wood, Julia T. Communication Mosaics: An Introduction to the field of Communication 8<sup>th</sup> ed ISBN: 9781305403581.

Note: The textbook is your responsibility. You are to keep up with the readings in the textbook as we progress through the course.

### **Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures**

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

Clear cases of academic dishonesty will result in an F for the course. Plagiarism is (1) the use of source material of other persons (either published, including the Internet) without following the accepted techniques of giving credit or (2) the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given. If a student in the class is caught plagiarizing, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. The Student Creed developed and adopted by the MSU Student Government reinforces the discouragement of plagiarism and other unethical behaviors. The first statement of the Creed reads, "As an MSU student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else to do so." Plagiarism is lying cheating and stealing.

### **Grading**

Assignments	Points
Self Paper	20
O&R Paper	20
Video Journals	30
Group Presentation	30
Total Points	100

Grades will be determined on as follows: A, B, C, D, and F.

**The Self Paper (3 pages minimum/maximum)**

This paper, which is reflective and analytical in nature, focuses upon your self-concept and interpersonal communication style. In your self-evaluation, consider the following:

First, how do you view yourself? To adequately address this viewpoint, reflect upon your self-concept. From where does your image of self emerge? What roles do you play? What is your life script? Consider self-identifying statements ("I am..."), evaluative ("I like..."), or behavioral ("I have done..."). What does this reveal about your self-concept?

Second how do you interact and communicate with others? In answering this question, describe how culture and gender may influence your communication style. Consider and discuss the use of language, non-verbal cues, listening skills, etc. In verbal strategies, do you use techniques such as paraphrasing, and seeking and/or providing feedback? In what situations do you tend to self-disclose vs. avoid self-disclosure? How does face management come into play? Identify communication behaviors and discuss how your behavior in different situations has impacted others.

Third, how do others view you? Interview at least three people (family, friends (not in this class), colleagues, professors, employers) and gather their observations and feedback in terms of how you interact and communicate. Focus on behaviors and be sure to include specific examples that capture their perceptions.

Fourth, compare and contrast your self-view with others perceptions of you. Discuss similarities or differences in perception. Were there any discrepancies or gaps that surprised you? If so, what factors would account for the gaps in perception.

Finally, make some suggestions for the improvement of your interpersonal communication competence. Consider the results of various interactions (both positive and difficult). What would you change? What are some issues (related to communication behavior, self-concept, and cultural awareness) you want to work on within yourself?

Use the text to help you analyze and explain your interpersonal communication style and self-concept. Employ specific references (paraphrasing, terminology, and quotations) concepts, and theories, correctly citing.

### **Observation & Research Paper**

You are expected to write and submit one observation & research paper this term. This paper needs to be at least 2-4 pages in length. You are to follow the appropriate format as outlined in this syllabus. This paper is intended to allow you to begin to contemplate material relevant to the theories we discuss in class. Explain and apply some of the ideas and concepts covered in the first four chapters of our texts after observing a couple you know for a half hour. Watch carefully for all the ways, both verbal and nonverbal, the partners control and influence one another. How do they differ from each other in terms of control? How do they seek and react to feedback attempts? What inferences can you make about their relationship?

Using what you have read in our text, lectures and discussions, you are to backup your conclusions with a primary research article (subjects & methods). What are your reactions to the research? Did you agree or disagree with the study's hypothesis, why or why not? How do you view the results? Any thoughts you have about future communication research? How does the article relate back to your observation? Explain in detail. This paper should be clear concise and to the point!

### **Group Presentation**

You will be assigned to a group with 5 classmates. Your group will be expected to prepare a 60-minute presentation for the class. This needs to be very well practiced because you will ALL lose points if the presentation is too long (65 minutes or longer) or too short (54 minutes or less), Your group's presentation should be an interactive discussion of the material assigned for that week, focusing primarily on one topic in your assigned chapter for the week and one of the case studies assigned for that week. The goal of your presentation is to help the class better understand the material being presented—not just restate it!

Each group will need to provide a detailed outline over the chapters they cover. These outlines will come into play when studying for your final exam. These outlines, if done correctly, will be used to determine final exam questions over chapters.

Your presentations are NOT to be lectures. It is up to your groups to determine an interactive method to help the class better understand the material being discussed and not lecture. Some interactive methods that could be included, but are not limited to, movie clips, short stories (distributed in advance), news articles (distributed in advance), research articles (distributed in advance), small group work (dividing the class up to work on a related project). There are countless ways in which you could engage and involve the class, but it's up to your group to come up with a successful method. Your goal is to help the class better understand the material assigned for that week- so make sure that your presentations sticks to that focus goal.

## SPCH 2423: Interpersonal Communication

To earn a high grade (A or B), every member of the group must EQUALLY participate in the presentations: its preparation and delivery. The group (collectively) will be graded on the content, format, and interactivity of the presentation. Therefore, make certain that everyone in the group is an ACTIVE participant in every phase. Outlines should be in depth and handed out in class on the day of your group's presentation. Please feel free to discuss with me, your group's ideas for class interaction, etc. START PREPARING EARLY & PRACTICE INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLEVITLY!

Note: Grades for the group will be determined based on the group's attainment of the following outcomes objectives:

- All members of the group being expected to know the details of each other's content, research, and analysis well enough to discuss it—when asked by instructor or classmates.
- No more than 3 (3x5) note cards can be used by EACH presenter, talk to the audience, and don't read to us!
- The presentation being well practiced.
- Practice, practice, practice----individually and as a group!
- Avoid lectures and BE CREATIVE in assuring maximum interaction with the audience.

### **Requirements All Submitted Work**

All work submitted in this course should be prepared according to the following guidelines and submitted on D2L. 1) Papers must be typed, double-spaced in 12-point font in Times New Roman, with 1-inch margins. 2) Pages must be numbered in the top, right-hand corner of each page. 3) Papers should have a cover page with a title, your name, course identifier, and date. 4) Papers must include accurate and complete in text citations and a complete reference list. You should follow the guidelines of the MLA or APA style manual.

### **Revision Policy**

I believe all work is in a constant process of revision. Therefore, I invite and encourage you to rework your assignments. A revision, however, means more than just changing some grammar errors and typos. It requires you to rethink, recognize and rewrite your work. As a rule of thumb, I never drop your grade based upon a revision. The lowest grade you will receive is the original grade. There is only a one (1) week window of opportunity for you to revise and resubmit (Example- If I hand back a paper on Thursday, then the revision is due the following Thursday.)

### **Desire-to-Learn (D2L)**

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into D2L through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

### **Missed Assignments Policy**

If you miss any assignments without being excused, you will fail the course. I reserve the right to determine whether an absence will be excused. In-class assignments may be excused at my discretion; however, all outside assignments must be completed within a reasonable time frame after your absence — no exceptions. In addition, I reserve the right to determine what, exactly, is a “reasonable time frame.” In sum: This is a zero-tolerance policy. I have no time or patience for those who are not going to take this class seriously; thus, “three strikes and you’re out” does not apply. “ONE strike and you’re out” is more applicable. Some past students have flunked the course for this reason. In any case, I tend to be cynical about making up missed assignments, but if you have a legitimate problem, alternate arrangements can be made at my discretion. If you cannot make it a priority to complete every assignment, on time, please drop now so another student, who is more serious, can have your spot. By accepting this syllabus and remaining enrolled in this course, you are indicating that you understand the Missed Assignments Policy.

### **Sports Teams**

Individuals on sports teams, please see me with a copy of your schedule (games and practices) so we can make accommodations for those missing classes. This however must be initiated and followed through by the athlete not the instructor’s responsibility.

### **Missed Class**

It is your responsibility to watch our recorded class on D2L. I recommend befriending another classmate and exchange contact information so you can find out what you missed and not fall behind schedule too.

### **Religious Obligations**

Please notify the instructor of any religious obligations that might conflict with our class schedule at the beginning of the semester.

### **Writing Center**

Begin drafting papers as early as possible and take advantage of the MSU Writing Center, located off the 2nd floor atrium of Prothro-Yeager! Tutoring is available Monday through Thursday from 9am to 4pm; you can also find a tutor at the satellite location in Moffett Library Honors Lounge, Sunday and Thursday from 6pm to 9pm. Writing tutors will not edit your papers for you, but they will provide support and feedback at every stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to drafting, revising to proofreading.

### **Privacy**

Federal privacy law prohibits me from releasing information about students to certain parties outside of the university without the signed consent of the student. Thus, in almost all cases I will not discuss your academic progress or other matters with your parents. Please do not have them call me. Regardless of these important legal considerations, it is my general policy to communicate with the students, not their parents, even when a student has signed a consent form. College students are adults and are expected to behave accordingly.

### **Plagiarism**

Clear cases of academic dishonesty will result in an F for the course. Plagiarism is (1) the use of source material of other persons (either published, including the Internet) without following the accepted techniques of giving credit or (2) the submission for credit of work not the individuals to whom credit is given. If a student in the class is caught plagiarizing, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. The Student Creed developed and adopted by the MSU Student Government reinforces the discouragement of plagiarism and other unethical behaviors. The first statement of the Creed reads, "As an MSU student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else to do so." Plagiarism is lying cheating and stealing.

### **Senior Portfolio Requirement**

Please note that all mass communication majors are required to submit a portfolio as part of their Internship course (Internship is a prerequisite to Senior Production). This requirement is a part of MSU's reaccreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and is non negotiable. Through the portfolio, students are required to demonstrate communication competence through the written word and visual communication; two examples of each competency are required. As you go through this and other classes, you are responsible for saving course work that could be included in your senior portfolio. Please see me, your adviser, the department chair or any mass communication faculty member for handouts with more information ("Mass Communication Portfolio Competencies" and "Mass Communication Portfolio FAQ"). These handouts are also available on our department web page:

<http://finearts.msutexas.edu/masscomm/>.

## SPCH 2423: Interpersonal Communication

### Services for Students With Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to <http://www.msutexas.edu/student-life/disability>.

College Policies Refer to: Campus Carry Rules and Policies

### Notice

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

### Course Schedule

<b>Week</b>	<b>Activities/Assignments/Exams</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Week 1 8/24 to 8/28	<b>Class:</b> Topic: Why study interpersonal communication? Course introduction, policies, and grading  <b>Assignment:</b> Read: Chapters 1 & 2 Work on "The Self Paper"	
Week 2 8/31 to 9/4	<b>Class:</b> Review, lecture & In-class exercises: Chapter 1: A First Look at Communication Chapter 2: The Field of Communication from Historical and Contemporary Perspectives  <b>Assignment:</b> Read Chapter 3 Work on "The Self Paper"	



SPCH 2423: Interpersonal Communication

<b>Week</b>	<b>Activities/Assignments/Exams</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
<p>Week 3 9/7 to 9/11</p>	<p><b>Class:</b> Groups will form Review, lecture &amp; In-class exercises: Chapter 3: Perceiving and Understanding</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Read Chapter 4 Work on O&amp;R Paper</p>	<p>"The Self Paper" Due 10<sup>th</sup> on D2L</p>
<p>Week 4 9/14 to 9/18</p>	<p><b>Class:</b> <i>Review, lecture &amp; In-class exercises:</i> Chapter 4: Engaging in Verbal Communication</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Work on O&amp;R Paper Read Chapter 5</p>	
<p>Week 5 9/21 to 9/25</p>	<p><b>Class:</b> Review, lecture &amp; In-class exercises Chapter 5: Engaging in Nonverbal Communication</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Read Chapter 6</p>	<p>O&amp;R Paper Due 26<sup>th</sup></p>
<p>Week 6 9/28 to 10/2</p>	<p><b>Class:</b> Review, lecture &amp; In-class exercises Chapter 6: Listening and Responding to Others</p>	
<p>Week 7 10/5 to 10/9</p>	<p><b>Class:</b> Review, lecture &amp; In-class exercises Chapter 6: Listening and Responding to Others</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Group # 1 will present on 13<sup>th</sup> Read: Chapter 7: Creating Communication Climates</p>	

SPCH 2423: Interpersonal Communication

<b>Week</b>	<b>Activities/Assignments/Exams</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
<p>Week 8 10/12 to 10/16</p>	<p><b>Class:</b> Group # 1 will present on 13<sup>th</sup> Review, lecture &amp; In-class exercises: Chapters 7: Creating Communication Climates</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Group # 2 will present on the 20<sup>th</sup> Read Chapter 8: Adapting Communication to Cultures and Social Communication</p>	<p>Group # 1 will present on 13<sup>th</sup></p>
<p>Week 9 10/19 to 10/23</p>	<p><b>Class:</b> Group # 2 Presents on 20<sup>th</sup> Review, lecture &amp; In-class exercises: Chapter 8: Adapting Communication to Cultures and Social Communication</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Group # 3 will present on the 27<sup>th</sup> Read Chapter 9: Communication and Personal Identity</p>	<p>Group # 2 Presents on 20<sup>th</sup></p>
<p>Week 10 10/26 to 10/30</p>	<p><b>Class:</b> Group # 3 presents on 27<sup>th</sup> <i>Review, lecture &amp; In-class</i> <i>exercises:</i> Chapter 9: Communication and Personal Identity</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Group # 4 presents 5<sup>th</sup> Read Chapter 10: Communication in Personal Relationships</p>	<p>Group # 3 presents on 27<sup>th</sup></p>
<p>Week 11 11/2 to 11/6</p>	<p><b>Class:</b> Group # 4 presents 3<sup>rd</sup> Review, lecture &amp; In-class exercises: Chapter 10: Communication in Personal Relationships</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Read Chapter 11: Communication in Groups and Teams</p>	<p>Group # 4 presents 3<sup>rd</sup></p>

SPCH 2423: Interpersonal Communication

<b>Week</b>	<b>Activities/Assignments/Exams</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Week 12 11/9 to 11/13	<p><b>Class:</b>                      Review, lecture &amp; In-class exercises: Chapter 11: Communication in Groups and Teams</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b>                      Read Chapter 12: Communication in Organizations</p>	
Week 13 11/16 to 11/20	<p><b>Class:</b>                      Review, lecture &amp; In-class exercises: Chapter 12: Communication in Organizations</p>	
Week 14 11/23 to 11/27	<p><b>Class:</b>  <i>Review, Lecture &amp; Discussion</i></p> <p>No Class 26<sup>th</sup> – Thanksgiving Break</p>	
Week 15 11/30 to 12/4	<p><b>Class:</b>  <i>Review, Lecture &amp; Discussion</i></p>	