

COMMUNICATION 336: FAMILY COMMUNICATION, FALL 2016

Section 2: TR 11:00-12:20, Armory 255

INSTRUCTOR

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12:30-1:30pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Families can be a source of power, support, pride, and joy as well as tension, difficulty, and conflict. This course is designed to provide students with an overview of the field of family communication. Over the course of the semester, we will examine prominent theories and methodologies used to study communication in families, explore specific communication processes in the context of families, and consider how particular issues facing families can influence and be influenced by communication.

OBJECTIVES

- Introduce prominent theories and concepts related to family communication.
- Demonstrate the analysis of family communication processes using pertinent theories and concepts.
- Provide the opportunity to summarize and critique scholarly research.
- Encourage the application of theories and concepts learned in class to current issues facing families.

COURSE MATERIALS

- *Required Textbook:* Turner, L., & West, R. (2013). *Perspectives on family communication* (4th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- *Additional Required Readings:* Additional readings (book chapters, journal articles, etc.) will be available through the course website. I use Moodle to distribute readings, post grades, and post announcements about class. You are responsible for checking Moodle regularly.
Moodle: <https://learn.illinois.edu/>
- *Materials:* loose-leaf paper for in-class writing activities

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

EXAMS: Three in-class exams will be administered over the course of the semester. Each exam may contain true/false, multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer questions. You should consider all lectures, discussions, readings, and video clips fair game for the exams.

REFLECTION PAPERS: You will complete three reflective writing assignments in this course. For each assignment, you will respond to a prompt asking you to synthesize information from the book/readings, lectures, and your own experiences. You should think of these papers as an opportunity to reflect on the lecture material, summarize the readings, and relate the course material to your own lives.

TERM PAPER: What advice would you give to newly divorced parents about how to co-parent together? What would you tell a friend who is thinking about cohabiting with his or her romantic partner? What is the best way for you to navigate your relationship with your parents on Facebook? For your term paper, you will conduct research on a topic of your choosing, and you will use this research to advise families on specific ways to improve their communication. You will select your topic early in the semester and complete a number of milestones along the way. This will culminate with a term paper and a panel presentation to the class.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION: A portion of your final grade will come from class attendance and participation. To receive full credit, you must attend class regularly AND actively participate in discussions and activities. Participation is about more than just how often you speak up in class. Being alert, attending class regularly, completing the assigned readings before class, asking questions, and showing respect to your peers and myself are also important. This grade will be assessed through in-class writing assignments, take-home assignments, activity participation, discussion contributions, and attendance. See the attendance policy below for more information regarding the penalty for absences.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & POINTS

ASSIGNMENT	POINT VALUE	YOUR SCORE
Exam #1	100	
Exam #2	100	
Exam #3	100	
Reflection Papers	150	
Term Paper	200	
Attendance & Participation	50	
TOTAL POINTS	700	

ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TYPED—handwritten work will not be accepted except for daily writing exercises. Your assignments must adhere to the following: (1) be double-spaced; (2) follow APA style; (3) have one-inch margins; (4) and use 12-point Times New Roman font. You should also proofread all assignments for spelling and grammar. If you need help with your writing, the university offers free assistance through the Writers Workshop. Visit <http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop/> or call (217) 333-8796 to set up an appointment.

GRADING SCALE

This course is graded out of 700 total points. Final scores will be determined using the scale below. Please note that since we use a point system, final grades cannot be rounded up.

Outstanding	Competent
A+ = 700 – 679 points	C+ = 559 – 539 points
A = 678 – 651 points	C = 538 – 511 points
A- = 650 – 630 points	C- = 510 – 490 points
Excellent	Below Average
B+ = 629 – 609 points	D+ = 489 – 469 points
B = 608 – 581 points	D = 468 – 441 points
B- = 580 – 560 points	D- = 440 – 420 points
	F = 419 – 000 points

EXTRA CREDIT

You may be given several extra credit opportunities in the form of research participation or written assignments. Extra credit will not account for more than 2% of your final grade. Extra credit opportunities will not be available on an individual basis.

COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

A significant part of learning in this course will occur through participating in discussion and in-class activities. As such, attendance is very important for performing well and will be recorded at the beginning of each class period. It is your responsibility to sign in each day. Anyone whose name does not appear on the sign-in sheet will be counted absent. Your first three absences are without penalty. Use these absences for illnesses or emergencies that may occur. Each absence thereafter will result in a deduction of 10 points, excluding the following university approved absences: (1) illness documented by a physician; (2) death in the family with requisite documentation; (3) religious observance (approved in advance); or (4) university sanctioned activity (approved in advance). DO NOT sign in for your classmates. If you are caught, your grade will drop one full letter.

It is very important that you understand that attendance includes both *physical* and *mental* presence in class. Students engaging in distracting behaviors such as talking with classmates (outside of class discussions), browsing the internet, texting, sleeping, whispering, etc. will not earn attendance credit.

TARDINESS

Frequent tardiness is very disruptive and disrespectful to your classmates. As such, two tardies are equivalent to one absence. Tardies consist of leaving before class is over and/or arriving late.

TECHNOLOGY

Turn off or silence your phone and put it away before class starts. I encourage you to take notes by hand since this approach is empirically supported to be linked with greater comprehension and recall. If you choose to use a laptop, it should be used for notetaking only. Students engaging in other activities will be marked absent for the day.

GRADE INQUIRIES

Experience and research have shown that careful consideration of one's graded work facilitates useful and meaningful discussions about assignments. Therefore, you must wait 24 hours before contacting me (in person or via e-mail) regarding questions about grades or comments you have received on an assignment. After 24 hours, I will be happy to discuss any assignment with you.

A note about these discussions: If you do choose to talk with me about your grade, I encourage you to think carefully about the purpose of the conversation. If your only goal is to get a higher grade, you will likely leave the discussion frustrated. I put considerable time and effort into grading your assignments; as such, I rarely change grades as a result of students' requests. If, however, you would like clarification or would like suggestions for improvement on future assignments, these tend to be productive and satisfying conversations. To better prepare for these meetings, consider bringing in reading or lecture material that you have questions about.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

If you violate the Student Code on Academic Integrity, you risk a failing grade in the course or even possible expulsion from the university. If you aren't familiar with the Student Code, please visit http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/article1_part4_1-401.html for more information on these policies. Academic misconduct is a very serious offense and will be treated as such in this course. This includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, and helping others commit offenses.

LATE WORK

All assignments are due on their scheduled date and time. Late assignments will be penalized a 10% point deduction per calendar day (not class day), beginning immediately after the assignment is collected. All exams must be taken on their scheduled dates unless the instructor has approved an alternative date for you individually in advance. Make-up exams are not offered except in cases such as those outlined in the student code. All make-up exams will be in an essay format.

DISABILITY ISSUES

Students who require disability-related assistance will be accommodated in accordance with the university policy. To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the course instructor and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 333-4603 (V/TTY), or e-mail a message to disability@uiuc.edu.

EFFORT VS. EXCELLENCE (ADAPTED FROM DR. LANCE RINTAMAKI)

As you work throughout the semester, please keep in mind: you do not receive a grade for how hard you worked, only on the final product. Your writing, exams, presentations, and participation will be graded on the amount of mastery of course content you demonstrate in your work. Of course, hard work often results in a strong product. With that said, you might have "spent a lot of time" on an assignment or "worked all day in the library," this does not guarantee a good grade. You have to study properly and work conscientiously to earn a high grade. I am here to help out however I can along the way, and I always want to see you do well. Do not hesitate to reach out for help, but please do so early in the process.

You have a great number of resources to help you succeed in this class (my office hours, exam review sessions, etc.). It is up to you to use these tools to your advantage. My best advice for you is to use these tools early and use them often, as I absolutely will not consider last minute pleas for grade changes.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Class Outline	Reading Due	Due
Unit One: Foundations of Family Communication			
Week One			
Tuesday August 23	Welcome & Overview of Syllabus	--	
Thursday August 25	Defining Family	Ch. 1 (pp. 1-50)	
Week Two			
Tuesday August 30	Communication Theory & Methods	Ch. 2 (pp. 53-61, 84-88)	
Thursday September 1	Family Systems Theory	Ch. 2 (pp. 67-77)	
Week Three			
Tuesday September 6	Family Roles & Rules Theories	Ch. 3 (pp. 91-121)	
Thursday September 8	Relational Dialectics Theory	Ch. 3 (pp. 77-80), Ch. 5 (183-189)	Milestone #1
Week Four			
Tuesday September 13	Family Development Theories	Ch. 3 (pp. 81-83)	
Thursday September 15	Meaning Making in Families Synthesizing Articles	Ch. 6 (pp. 205-236)	
Week Five			
Tuesday September 20	Synthesizing Articles (continued) Exam 1 Review	--	Synthesis practice Reflection Paper 1
Thursday September 22	EXAM 1		
Unit Two: Family Formation, Development, & Change			
Week Six			
Tuesday September 27	Communication in Courtship & Marriage	Ch. 5 (pp. 171-201)	
Thursday September 29	In-law relationships	Morr Serewicz (2006)	
Week Seven			
Tuesday October 4	Introduction to APA & Outlining	--	Milestone #2
Thursday October 6	The Transition to Parenthood	Theiss et al. (2012)	
Week Eight			
Tuesday October 11	Parenting	--	
Thursday October 13	Family Schemas and Typologies	Brooks (2005)	

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Week Nine			
Tuesday October 18	Siblings and Adult Family Relationships Exam 2 Review	Mikkelson (2006)	Reflection Paper 2
Thursday October 20	EXAM 2		
Unit Three: Challenging Family Interactions			
Week Ten			
Tuesday October 25	Conflict	Ch. 7 (pp. 239-257)	
Thursday October 27	Intimate Partner Violence	Ch. 7 (pp. 269-276)	Milestone # 3
Week Eleven			
Tuesday November 1	Family Stressors and Crises	Ch. 8 (pp. 279-300)	
Thursday November 3	Divorced and Blended Families	Ch. 8 (pp. 301-311)	
Week Twelve			
Tuesday November 8	Openness in Families	Afifi et al. (2009) Kirkman et al. (2005)	
Thursday November 10	NCA CONFERENCE—NO CLASS		
Week Thirteen			
Tuesday November 15	Openness in Families (continued) End of Life Conversations	Keeley (2007)	
Thursday November 17	Term Paper: Peer Review Workshop	--	Milestone #4
Week Fourteen			
Tuesday November 22	THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS		
Thursday November 24	THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS		
Week Fifteen			
Tuesday November 29	Term Paper Presentations	--	Milestones #5/6
Thursday December 1	Term Paper Presentations	--	
Week Sixteen			
Tuesday December 6	Term Paper Presentations Wrap up/Exam Review	--	Reflection Paper 3
Final Exam Period			
TBA	EXAM 3: Date and time TBA		