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### COMX 115S.01: Introduction to Interpersonal Communication

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## COMX 115: Introduction to Interpersonal Communication Spring 2022

**Class meetings:** Monday, Wednesday & Friday, 12-12:50 a.m.  
**Professor:** Heather Voorhees, Ph.D.  
**E-mail:** [heather.voorhees@mso.umt.edu](mailto:heather.voorhees@mso.umt.edu)  
**Office:** Liberal Arts 356  
**Office hours:** Mondays & Wednesdays, 10-11 a.m.

**Required text:** Floyd (2020). *Interpersonal Communication*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. McGraw Hill.  
*Can be purchased through the [U of M bookstore](#), or [online](#).*

“Communication” is often noted as a key component of successful projects and relationships, while “miscommunication” is almost always blamed for failures of all sizes. What is “communication” and why is it so important? What does it look and sound like? How can we do it more skillfully?

Strong communication skills can help you get a great job, build others’ trust in you, make you the go-to person for important opportunities, enhance your friendships and romantic relationships and strengthen your family. But before you master the art of communication, you must understand the basics.

This course will cover three major areas of interpersonal communication—or communication between individuals: 1) the nature and outcomes of communication, 2) fundamental interpersonal communication skills, and 3) interpersonal communication within relationships. You will not only learn the fundamentals, but will have opportunities to practice and sharpen your skills.

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- understand how self-concept and identity influence our communication
- identify how our and others’ perceptions affect the process of communication
- recognize the role of emotions in interpersonal communication
- understand the basic tenets of non-verbal communication, and how it enhances (and detracts from) verbal communication
- learn the importance of listening within the process of interpersonal communication
- recognize the role that communication plays in creating, maintaining, and dissolving personal relationships
- understand how communication can manage and deflate personal conflict
- practice your written and verbal communication skills
- apply course concepts to work effectively and successfully in a small group

### **How To Succeed In This Class**

1. Get yourself to class (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday).
2. Do the work. Each week, you’ll read a chapter from your textbook, complete a 10-point content quiz (addressing concepts from class AND the textbook) via Moodle, and finish some sort of activity that engages with the week’s material.
3. Put in the time. Study for and try hard on three exams (50 points each).

4. Don't be a jerk. Communicate and engage with your final project team (50 points).
5. Watch your email. I will send you reminders and updates throughout the semester. Be sure you're paying attention.

**When are assignments due?**

The weekly class assignments (including class content quizzes) will be due by noon Sunday unless otherwise noted.

**Right, sure, cool. But when are things *actually* due?**

Seriously, finish stuff by noon Sunday. There is no late work policy. If you don't complete an assignment by the deadline, you simply don't get those points.

**This stresses me out. How can I make my semester easier?**

To succeed in this course, I recommend that you:

- Complete readings and assignments *before* the last minute. Give yourself a grace period in case something comes up. Why stress out unnecessarily by pushing the deadline?
- Inform me of any academic or personal issues that may affect your schoolwork *as soon as possible*.
- Ask for help early and often. If you are confused about anything, ask via email or in class.
- Make the effort to get to know your classmates as much as you can, through online posts, small group discussions, and video class sessions.
- Learn how to navigate Moodle. Do you know how to find assigned readings? Do you know how to check your grades? The U of M offers a free, quick Moodle tutorial—log into your NetID account and [access the Moodle 101 course](#).

**Classroom Etiquette**

This class may dive into difficult topics, including family conflict and relationship issues. I ask that you respect others' experiences while also exploring your own. Do not make fun of others, do not create a hostile environment for learning, and do not try to silence anyone. Also, I encourage you to ask questions (even tough ones that I may not know the answer to). I will do the same.

**But, Like, What Do I Have to Actually Do?**

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Total Points Possible</u>
Content Quizzes (12 total; lowest score dropped)	110 points (10 points each)
Activities (12 total)	60 points (5 points each)
Attendance (randomly awarded 10x)	30 points (3 points each)
Exams (three total)	150 points (50 points each)
Final Project (small-group work)	50 points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>400 points</b>

ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE BY NOON ON SUNDAY AFTER THEY WERE ASSIGNED. For example, the content quiz for Week 1 (assigned Jan. 19-21) is due by noon Sunday, Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>. You will not be able to turn in assignments after the due date.

**Content Quizzes (10 points)**

Almost every week, you will read a chapter in your textbook, then take a 10-question quiz on that material, and on the material I present in our online lectures. These are timed quizzes, and you will only get one attempt (i.e. you cannot stop halfway and come back later). Questions will be multiple-

choice, short answer, or fill-in-the-blank. Each quiz is worth 10 points, will be available beginning at noon on Thursday, and is due by noon on Sunday.

**Activities (5 points)**

Each week, besides taking your content quiz, you will also complete a brief assignment that helps you apply course concepts to “real life.” This may be an in-class small-group activity, short reflection essay, a review of a podcast or YouTube video, or something else entirely. Some weeks, we will conduct this activity in class, and there will be no way for you to make it up. Other weeks, I will assign it for you to complete on your own time.

**Attendance (3 points each)**

Ten times throughout the semester, I will randomly take attendance. If you are present, you will automatically receive 3 points. You cannot make up these points at another time—either you’re present and you get them, or you’re not and you don’t.

**Exams (50 points)**

There will be three exams testing your knowledge of health communication concepts. Exams will be comprised of true/false, multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Before each exam, I will conduct a review session and hand out study guides. Each exam will only cover material from what we’ve covered since the last exam (thus, these tests are not cumulative). Exams are timed, and are worth 50 points each.

**Final Project (50 points)**

Working in a small group (3-4 students), you will complete a project that will require you to cite academic research articles, employ college-level writing skills, use creativity to apply your knowledge to real-world situations, and demonstrate your understanding of course terms and ideas. Details on the project will be revealed as the semester progresses. This project is worth 50 points; group members all receive the same grade unless you are not an active participant in your group (in which case, you will receive a lower grade than your groupmates).

**Extra Credit (0 points – there is no extra credit)**

Beyond a few “extra” questions on exams, no extra credit will be offered in this class.

**Grades in This Class Work Exactly How You Think**

Final grades are what you have earned. Therefore, extra credit will not be given at the end of the semester to boost your grade. You will have ample opportunity to increase your grade throughout the semester with in-class activity and assignment grades.

Grades will be based on the following scale:

A+	97-100%	B-	80-82%	D	63-66%
A	93-96%	C+	77-79%	D-	60-62%
A-	90-92%	C	73-76%	F	59% and below
B+	87-89%	C-	70-72%		
B	83-86%	D+	67-69%		

**Only Losers Cheat. Don’t Be a Loser.**

**Academic Integrity**

As a student of the University of Montana, you are bound by the following Code of Academic Conduct: <http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/community-standards/student-code-of-conduct-2020-pdf>. Academic misconduct includes:

- Plagiarism (see below)
- Misconduct during an examination or academic exercise
- Unauthorized possession of examination or other course materials
- Tampering with course materials
- Submitting false information
- Submitting work previously presented in another course
- Improperly influencing conduct, such as influencing an instructor to unfairly change your grade
- Substituting for another student during an examination
- Facilitating academic dishonesty, or knowingly helping another person commit academic dishonesty

### **What is plagiarism?**

All course work should be original and unique for this class (i.e., do not use work from other courses even if it is your own). Plagiarism is defined as quoting or paraphrasing from other sources without acknowledging/citing the source of your information, or presenting quoted material as your own words.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- Cutting-and-pasting material, or paraphrasing ideas, from an academic source without properly citing it
- Using portions of something you wrote in a previous class in an assignment in this course (yep, you can plagiarize yourself!)
- Reviewing a friend's assignment, then using a couple sentences of hers in your own assignment
- Purchasing essays from an online service (if someone else wrote it, but your name is on it, it's plagiarism, PLAIN AND SIMPLE)

Students who are unfamiliar with how to cite sources should consult a style manual guide, such as <https://owl.purdue.edu/>. If you have questions concerning what constitutes plagiarism, please discuss this with me. Not knowing the definition of plagiarism does not excuse you from the consequences.

### **Breaking the Code of Academic Conduct Integrity**

If I suspect you of breaking the Code of Academic Conduct in any way (including plagiarism):

1. I will first request a private conversation with you to discuss the issue. It *will* be awkward.
2. If, after that meeting, I still have suspicions and/or proof of inappropriate behavior, I will report the matter to the department chair and/or the college dean.
3. If the dean decides to open an investigation, you are entitled to dispute the claim, and appeal any decision made in your case. Please view the [U of Montana's Student Code of Conduct](#) for more details.

4. Consequences for breaking the Code of Academic Conduct can include, but are not limited to: failing the assignment; failing the course; suspension or expulsion from the University; or the University's refusal to grant a degree.

### **Important Other Stuff to Read**

#### **Writing Center**

The University's Writing and Public Speaking Center offers one-on-one assistance with written assignments and oral presentations, available on a drop-in or by-appointment basis. They can provide feedback on written assignments, as well as help develop strategies for re-writes. Information on these services can be found at [www.umt.edu/writingcenter/](http://www.umt.edu/writingcenter/).

#### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

It is the policy of the University of Montana to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with Disability Services for Students, at [dss@umontana.edu](mailto:dss@umontana.edu) or (406) 243-2243.

#### **COVID-related rules**

We are living in interesting times, and a global pandemic requires special rules. Please make special note of the following requirements:

- If you are feeling ill, contact the Curry Health Center at (406) 243-4330 to report your symptoms.
- If your illness causes you to fall behind in coursework, contact me directly ASAP to discuss. We can work together to figure out a modified plan for you. Just like for any medical issue, you will need to provide evidence that you sought medical help and were assessed by a licensed doctor.
- Up-to-Date COVID-19 Information from the University of Montana is available at the UM Coronavirus Website: <https://www.umt.edu/coronavirus>

#### **Student Resources:**

You cannot learn if your basic needs are not covered. If you are having a hard time securing food, finding safe housing, or accessing health care, please contact ME or any/all of these resources:

- Food Pantry Program. UM offers a food pantry for students, open Tuesdays from 9 to 2, and Fridays from 10-5. The pantry is located in UC 119 (in the former ASUM Childcare offices). For more information about this program, email [umpantry@mso.umt.edu](mailto:umpantry@mso.umt.edu), or visit the pantry's website (<https://www.umt.edu/uc/food-pantry/default.php>).
- ASUM Renter Center. The Renter Center has compiled a list of resources for UM students at risk of homelessness or food insecurity here: <https://medium.com/griz-renter-blog>. Students can schedule an appointment with Renter Center staff to discuss their situation and receive information, support, and referrals.
- TRiO Student Support Services. TRiO serves UM students who are low-income, first-generation college students, or have documented disabilities. TRiO services include a textbook loan program, scholarships and financial aid help, academic advising, coaching,

and tutoring. <http://www.umt.edu/triosss/apply.php#Eligibility>.

- Curry Health Center: Curry Health Center provides dental, medical and mental health care for all students at the University of Montana. They offer appointments and online screening tools, and same-day appointments: <http://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/>.