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COMM 311.01: Family Communication

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Family Communication COMM 311

Fall, 2012



Instructor: Dr. Christina Granato Yoshimura

Office: LA 358 **Phone:** 243-4244

Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:00-12:00 and Thursdays 10:00-12:00

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(E-mail is the best way to contact me)

- **Format and Philosophy:**

This class will mainly be structured around a class lecture and discussion. Usually, I will give a lecture that incorporates the assigned readings into a broader outline that includes related material. During main points of the lecture we will discuss the relevance and application of these concepts together. Not only is your participation necessary for discussion, but at some points you will be broken down into small groups to teach or discuss with one another. Your learning and the learning of your peers will be based on your own preparedness and willingness to participate.

I am committed to fairness. I generally abide by the ethical system of the categorical imperative – something is just and fair if it can be applied to everyone in the same circumstance. I created the policies in this syllabus to be applied to everyone in the course – I do not grant exemptions, extensions, or extra credit to one person if I cannot do so for the entire class. The entire class is being held to the policies in this syllabus, and the timeline and schedule for this course – please make sure that you are willing to accept this. If not, you will want to drop the course.

- **Course Objectives:**

- To understand definitions and theories of families based on contemporary communication research
- To gain a greater understanding and recognition of the communication practices that are typical in family interactions
- To learn how family relationships are created and constrained by communication norms imposed by religion, government, and culture
- To closely investigate specific communication patterns in a variety of family relationship types

- **Required Materials:**

Turner, L.H., & West, R. (2005). *Family Communication Sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Policies:

Attendance & Participation- Although there are no direct penalties for missing class, you will find that in this class that there are substantial direct and indirect consequences of missing class. Class is conducted in order to share important information. By missing class, you not only are missing out on that information, but the rest of the class is missing out on information that you may have been able to share. If you choose to miss class, you must take responsibility for this choice. I give lectures only once, so you will need to gather the information from class in some other way. Additionally, you may not make up any class activities, so missing class may mean missing out on points for the course. Finally, please be punctual. I will arrive for class on time, and hope that you will make it a point to do so, as well. This will be especially important on exam days - no latecomers may take an exam after the first person has finished on an exam day.

E-Mail - Although you may come meet with me during office hours if you are on campus, many people choose to communicate with me via e-mail. Please always put COMM 311 in the subject of your e-mail, especially if you are not emailing from your grizmail account. Please allow up to 48 hours for me to reply to any email. Generally, I will reply well before 48 hours is up, however, you should not email drafts or questions the night before an assignment or exam. You may or may not receive a reply.

When emailing, please write professionally and courteously. This means forming complete sentences, with appropriate punctuation and capitalization, as well as formulating your questions or requests in a considerate way. I will reply to you in the same manner. If your e-mail deviates too far from these expectations, I will reply by pointing you back to this section of the syllabus and asking you to try again.

Academic Integrity - All students taking this course must adhere to the University of Montana's academic dishonesty policy as presented in the Student Conduct Code (SCC). As noted in the code, students are expected to practice academic honesty. A sampling of the actions for which I will pursue academic and university sanctions include: copying another student's exam, allowing another student to copy from your exam or work, sharing information with another student during testing sessions, acquiring or possessing an exam without the instructor's permission, or tampering with course materials or resources (including library references). You are responsible for reading and understanding the Student Conduct Code - the SCC can be viewed at: www.umt.edu/studentaffaris/sccAcademicConduct.htm#9

Original Work - I expect all the work you do in this class to be completely original. No work that has been done by classmates (current or previous) may be used by you, in whole or in part, for your work in this class. No work that you have done (for any other course, or in this course if you have taken it previously) may be submitted to fulfill the assignments in this class. Finally, absolutely no plagiarism (from the web, from organizations, from any other source) will be tolerated - be sure that everything you write in this class is completely your own creation.

Consideration - The overall atmosphere in the class should be that of respect - for yourself and everyone else in the class. In the course of our discussions, personal information may be disclosed. Please do not repeat this information or use it to harm others. Help foster a classroom where a priority for education is valued by turning off all cellular phones, pagers, or other noise-making devices. Understand that harassment of any kind is both inappropriate and intolerable, and disciplinary action will be taken should it occur. If you need/will potentially need consideration due to travel plans for university-sponsored activities or for university documented disability accommodations, you must let me know within the first week of class.

Contesting Grades - I am very willing to go over your exam with you to discuss concerns that you might have. I ask that you abide by three guidelines, all of which make it easier for us both to concentrate on your concerns. 1) Wait 24 hours after a test has been returned to you to contact me. 2) write your concerns and your backing for these concerns down so that we can both look them over as we meet. 3) approach me only during an appointment that we've scheduled - discussing your grade in class violates your privacy and doesn't provide an environment where I can adequately focus on your concerns.

Students requesting alternate options - If you require consideration not mentioned in this syllabus (perhaps you are a student athlete, a student working with DSS, etc.) please contact me within the first week of class so that we can see if your needs can be met in this class. I cannot guarantee any alternate options in this class if you do not meet me with documentation during this time period.

Grading:

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Exams (3 @ 100) | 300 points |
| Online quizzes (10 @ 10) | 100 points |
| Strong Families Group Project | 50 points |
| In-class collaboration | 50 points |
| <hr/> Total points available | 500 points |

I do not curve grades, nor do I use the +/- system. I follow the traditional breakdown (A= 100-90%, B=89-80%, etc.) that you earn out of the total points available in the course.

Exams: There will be four, non-cumulative exams in this course. These exams will include multiple choice and/or matching questions. Information to be covered on each exam will be announced prior to the date of the exam, and a study guide will be provided. Your three highest exam scores will be taken to calculate your grade in this class.

Online Quizzes: Ten times over the course of the semester, you will need to go online to our Moodle course supplement at umonline.umt.edu (note that you do not type "www") and take a very short quiz on the assigned readings. There are 20 class periods in which readings have been assigned, you will be graded on the best (or only, if you choose) 10 quizzes that you decide to take. Quizzes will be posted a minimum of three days before the class during which we'll discuss the reading, and you must complete the exam before that class period for it to be

counted (quizzes will disappear 10 minutes before a class period is to begin). You will not be excused or granted make-ups for being ill, out of town, your computer connection failing, or for Moodle down-time/outages, so I strongly encourage you to plan to take the quiz every week, and then if something gets in the way of that happening you won't have to worry that you can't make it to the 10 required quizzes for the course. For questions on how to access Moodle or about these quizzes, please see me in the first week of class.

Strong Families Group Project: Towards the end of the class, you will join a group to create a series of programs for the public that will utilize your expertise in the theory, research, and execution of communication in families. You will outline very specifically a class you would propose to be a part of this series. You will be responsible for choosing courses that you think would be most helpful and practically useful to participants, and also for backing up these courses with theoretical and/or research-based rationale. This will require a synthesis of what we've covered in our course together, as well as the ability to explain these concepts to people unfamiliar with family communication concepts. You will present a portion of this project in class.

In-Class Collaboration: Frequently throughout the semester I will be asking you to work with me in conceptualizing and understanding our readings for the day. This might come about through individual, paired, or group work; these collaborations will occur throughout the semester and although graded, will not be announced in advance.



| Date and Topic(s): | Readings due to done before class: |
|---------------------------|--|
| Aug 28 | Introductions |
| Aug 30 | Family Defined |
| Sep 4 | Theories |
| Sep 6 | Theories, part II |
| Sep 11 | Methodology |
| Sep 13 | Rules and Roles |
| Sep 18 | Exam 1 - #2 pencil and skinny red scantron sheet required |
| Sep 20 | Storytelling |
| Sep 25 | Rituals |
| Sep 27 | Intimacy |
| Oct 2 | Sex and Sexuality |
| Oct 4 | Privacy and Boundaries |
| Oct 9 | Exam 2 - #2 pencil and skinny red scantron sheet required |
| Oct 11 | Power and Discipline |
| Oct 16 | Family Violence |
| Oct 18 | Conflict |
| Oct 23 | Television and Film |
| Oct 25 | Communication Technologies |
| Oct 30 | Exam 3 - #2 pencil and skinny red scantron sheet required |
| Nov 1 | Religion |
| Nov 6 | No class - Veteran's Day |
| Nov 8 | Government/Family Interface |
| Nov 13 | No class - National Communication Association Conference |
| Nov 15 | No class - National Communication Association Conference |
| Nov 19 | Work/Family Interface |
| Nov 22 | No Class - Thanksgiving Break |
| Nov 27 | Family/School Interface |
| Dec 4 | Family/Health Interface |
| Dec 6 | Extended/Nontraditional |

Exam 4 will be held 10:10-11:10 Thursday, Dec. 13
#2 pencil and skinny red scantron sheet required