

9-2013

COMX 414.50: Communication in Personal Relationships

Christina M. Yoshimura

University of Montana - Missoula, christina.yoshimura@umontana.edu

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi>

Recommended Citation

Yoshimura, Christina M., "COMX 414.50: Communication in Personal Relationships" (2013). *Syllabi*. 842.
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/842>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Course Syllabi at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

COMMUNICATION AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

FALL 2013

Instructor: Dr. Christina G. Yoshimura

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

E-mail: christina.yoshimura@umontana.edu

“A MAN IS A BUNDLE OF RELATIONS, A KNOT OF ROOTS, WHOSE FLOWERS AND FRUITAGE IS THE WORLD”
-RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Man or woman, all of humanity is caught up in relations with one another, and these relations affect our lives in real, concrete ways. This course seeks to better familiarize you with the basic communication processes that occur within the context of close relationships. In order to facilitate this process, we will draw information from a variety of disciplines, including family studies, social psychology, and of course, communication. The focus of this course will reflect that of the research that has been done to date; namely, romantic relationships. However, we will also discuss friendships, family relationships, and general research and theory that can be applied to both intimate and nonintimate relationships.

Course Objectives:

1. Develop an understanding of how communication is used to initiate, maintain, and terminate personal relationships.
2. Study specific communication patterns and issues that occur in personal relationships; such as attraction, self-disclosure, conflict, relational investment, jealousy, power, etc.
3. Become competent in utilizing library and other resources to find and interpret scholarly research on communication in personal relationships.
4. Complete a comprehensive investigation about a socially and theoretically significant question pertaining to personal relationships, in order to determine what answers have been provided, what answers must still be sought, and what study can be designed to further explore this question.

Required Readings:

-  Guerrero, Andersen, and Afifi's *Close Encounters: Communicating in Close Relationships*. 4th Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Course Format:

Our course objectives are met entirely over the Internet. This is an exciting opportunity for you to interpret and internalize information on your own time, and in a space that is comfortable for you. By removing many of the constraints of time and location, this course has the potential to fit your unique needs in a way that many traditional courses are not equipped to do. Over the course of this class, you will read the text and outside readings, interpret and analyze these readings, visit websites, write papers, and observe interactions.

- The online format may be new for many of you, and you should expect to take some time to get used to the format, above and beyond the time you might usually spend on a class.
- This course will be conducted entirely online; you may communicate in this course via our website and e-mail. Please always put COMM 410 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.

Personal Statement:

I am committed to the endeavor of teaching, whether that is online or in a classroom atmosphere. I believe that I can meet my goals for teaching this course and you can meet your goals in taking this course, even though this will not occur in a traditional classroom setting. In my eight years of online teaching experience, I have found that the more connections students make with the more successful they are in the course. Thus, it will be my goal throughout this course to encourage you to interact and to engage in this course as fully as possible.

I am also 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 you choose to continue in the course.

Policies:

Deadlines: Although many of the constraints of time have been released for you in this course, deadlines are still inevitable. To keep you caught up in the course there are deadlines by which each assignment must be completed. Assignments may always be completed earlier than the deadline, but any assignment that is not up-loaded to the website by 5:00 p.m. (Mountain Standard Time) cannot be accepted. Since I have no wish to debate the various time orientations each of us in this course may hold, the deadline of 5:00 holds firm – 5:01 *is* considered late. Please plan to turn in assignments at least a few minutes early so that you do not miss this deadline. If you are the type of person who is often last-minute in getting things done, or you know that you have a work schedule that will make this difficult, do yourself a favor and write down each deadline as existing two days before it actually is written in the syllabus. That way, you have already bought yourself a two-day extension! Do your very best to get assignments in as early as you complete them, and communicate with me immediately any difficulties you foresee in meeting a deadline. If you require any different testing/writing/deadline accommodations than listed here due to work with DSS or due to taking this course for graduate credit, be sure to contact me and make me aware of this within the first week of the course. **LATE WORK may be submitted in this course up to a week past the due date, accruing a 10% deduction for each 24 hr period past the deadline.**

Academic Integrity: The University of Montana and the Department of Communication Studies strongly believe in academic integrity; thus cheating and plagiarism are not tolerated. Students will be charged with academic dishonesty for any breach of these standards, including sharing their work (**in any form**) with other students, claiming another individual's work as their own, or attempting to thwart the examination process in any way. No work done for credit in any other class may be turned in for credit in this class (whether it is your own work for this course taken previously, or anyone else's work). The *minimum* consequence for engaging in cheating or plagiarism is failure on the related assignment, but this type of activity usually results in failure in the entire course. At worst, academic misconduct can result in expulsion, denial of your degree, and/or revocation of a degree that has already been awarded. See the Student Conduct Code for definitions and

consequences of cheating and plagiarism. The unabridged student conduct code is located at: www.umt.edu/studentaffairs/policy/code.htm.

Technology: A known fact of technology is that it sometimes fails. Computers crash, Internet connections falter. In order to control for these failures, since the Internet is your **only** main link to the class, your guiding principles should be to think ahead and be prepared. Save your work often, and in several places. Leave yourself time before assignments are due to allow for connection errors, and familiarize yourself with communication resources in your area in case you need to use them as a back-up to complete your assignments.

The only acceptable technology-related excuse for not meeting the requirements of this course is a documented failure of the UM online system – if you find the system is not working, you’ll need to e-mail me immediately to inform me of the time at which you believe the system (not your computer or connection) was at fault. You should then contact the UMonline help desk at 406.243.4999 or 866.225.1641 (toll-free). You should also continue attempting to access the system – any failures in the system are usually resolved within an hour. If documented failures of the system occurred when an assignment was due, we will work together to help you get an assignment in as soon as the system is up again.

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 interactions, personal information may be disclosed. Please do not repeat this information or use it to harm others. Help foster an atmosphere where a priority for education and a respect for all students are valued by engaging in comments that relate to course content and show tolerance (if not acceptance) for opinions different from your own. Please understand that whether it occurs in a face-to-face or online environment, harassment of any kind is both inappropriate and intolerable, and disciplinary action will be taken should it occur.

Contesting Grades: I am willing to go over any assignment or exam with you to discuss your concerns. This is more difficult in an online context than an in-person one, so we’ll have to work with what we’ve got. Please wait 24 hours after receiving an assignment before you contact me. When you do contact me, please write down your specific concerns and your backing for these concerns, and I will research your situation. We’ll take it from there should further discussion need to occur.

Grading and Assignments:

Journal Entries (4 @ 10)	40 pts
Discussion postings (10 @ 10)	100 pts
Justification of paper	25 pts
Revised Justification and Lit. Review	75 pts
Complete Research Paper	100 pts

A= Exceptional work, far exceeds expectations
B= Very good work, results better than average
C= Average work, results meet expectations
D= Flawed work, results less than average
F= Poor work, results far short of expectations

I do not use the +/- system in this class

Total Points	340 pts
--------------	---------

Journal Entries: Throughout this course you will be keeping an online journal. It will be graded, and to receive all of the points you must keep the journal focused mainly on our course concepts and ideas, as you witness them. In addition to simply showing me that you witness our course concepts and theories in action, however, I want to see what you are also learning from the place in which you're grounding this course. I believe we can learn a great deal from place – geographical space, the atmosphere of a place you connect with, etc. It is up to you to choose a public place where people regularly interact, and to spend time in that place regularly

throughout the semester (every week or two). This might be a park, a mall, an airport, a campsite, a trail, etc. It may be the same spot every week, or you may move spots from week to week. I will give you guidelines each time one of these journal entries is assigned as to what I want you to write about specifically.

Discussion Posts: Ten times during the semester you will post to the discussion board. Each of these ten times you must post something substantive that shows understanding and analysis of our course readings (not simply an opinion or example). To receive the full ten points each time you must also respond substantively to the post of one of your peers after you have posted. Replying to people who have replied to your post is encouraged (and is fun!) but is not absolutely required.

Research Paper, 200 points:

Articulate a question about interpersonal communication in personal relationships that has social and theoretical significance (although I anticipate you will brainstorm on your own, you may want to consult with me before settling on your final question). Conduct a comprehensive review of research (mainly in peer-reviewed communication journals, but information from a few other journals or book chapters are also acceptable) to see what answer(s) have already been articulated. Then, construct a paper that organizes the results of your search in a cohesive and integrated paper, and provides an idea for future research. Your paper should have three main sections, which will be turned in to me in increasingly complete sections:

1. Justification of your question – why is the question you’ve selected to research both socially and theoretically interesting? Why is this an important question to answer? You’ll probably find yourself citing current events/popular press coverage as well as citing academic articles to argue why this question is socially interesting. You should look to the articles you’re citing and the readings we’ve done on theory to establish how your question relates to the current state of theory, and to argue for the theoretical significance of your question. Will your review show that the question is primarily answered by one theory? Could be explained by competing theories? Is currently not studied in relation to any particular theory? Remember that you are trying to be both persuasive and factual in making a case for why this question deserves investigation. (This section should run about 2 pages in length)

2. Literature review – what academic research have you found that helps to provide answers to your question? Your library search may meander through innumerable abstracts before you find sources that are of use to you, but be sure you end up reviewing at least 10 articles from peer-reviewed communication journals in this section. Remember that all of the studies you review should say something about the thesis that you have chosen for this paper.

- Specifically, in a literature review such as this you SHOULD:
 - Integrate your sources (synthesize findings when appropriate)
 - Compare and contrast the findings of different research studies
 - Give only brief backgrounds on the studies or opinions you’re reviewing, as necessary to understand the results and implications of the work
 - Put the results or meaning of the study in your own words, as they pertain to your question
- You should NOT:
 - Simply list studies one after another without linking them
 - Give the entire background of a study (the entire set-up of the study, a full description of participants, etc.)
 - Use extensive quotes from the articles themselves

This section should run approximately 8-10 pages in length

3. Research proposal – what further work would you suggest to help answer this question? After having read many research articles in your own research and in class, you will become familiar with the process of proposing research. Although I do not assume that you have all had a research methods course, I do want you to take a stab at setting up a study of your own. You should be sure to articulate:

- Who you will recruit as research participants
- How you will collect your data
- How you will use this proposed research to aid in answering your question

Your question should be central in planning your proposal – don’t discount a research method because you don’t know it well or fear that you couldn’t execute it well. Use your articles from your literature review as well as consultations with me as your guides in creating an idea for this future research. I want you to be as original, comprehensive, and complete as possible in outlining this proposed project. This section should run approximately 2-4 pages in length.

Since, combined, the versions of this paper makes up a large portion of your grade, I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for you to START EARLY on your topic brainstorming and your researching. **No extensions will be given for papers.** I also strongly encourage you to contact me to discuss the progress of your paper with me as you work on it. I am happy to discuss ideas with you and to help you work through your paper. You are expected to be able to write this paper in clear 6th edition APA style at a collegiate level befitting a 400 level class (an APA title page and reference section are necessary; an abstract is not). If you have doubts about your abilities to write this paper, please consider my assistance, or that of the Writing Center on campus. I have high expectations for these papers.

Portions of papers from other classes CANNOT be used for this paper - your research and insights should stem from your original work for this class only. Of course, all work should be entirely your own – any papers containing portions of others’ work will result in failure from the course, at a minimum.

EVALUATION OF PAPERS (explanation borrowed from Paul Mongeau)

Evaluation Criteria

The primary criteria used to evaluate your paper will include completeness, organization, clarity, and validity. **Completeness** refers to the extent to which you provide an adequate description of the literature and methods (if applicable). This will include the extent to which you describe the existing research and theory development relevant to your topic. **Organization** refers to the extent to which your various ideas flow together. Sentences should blend effectively into paragraphs, while paragraphs should blend well in the major sections of your paper. **Clarity** refers to the extent to which you present your ideas in an understandable manner. This would include the extent to which you word your own (and other researchers’ and theorists’) ideas clearly. Finally, **validity** refers to the extent to which the arguments you provide follow in a clear and organized manner. Evaluation will also tap the technical (or stylistic) issues including APA style issues.

CRITERION 1: CLARITY

The primary criterion that I use when I evaluate a paper is clarity. Simply put, are you communicating whatever it is that you are trying to say unambiguously? It does not matter if you are trying to describe a relationship that you have been part of, a reaction to a lecture, or reviewing the theoretical literature on relationship development, you must do so clearly. Saying something simply is better than saying something using complex, convoluted, language. Do not feel as though you have to use long sentences or extraordinary vocabulary to make your point. This can often end up confusing your point rather than clarifying. If I consistently cannot understand what you are trying to say, your grade is going to suffer as a result. Use traditional English syntax. Include a subject, verb, and object in each sentence.

CRITERION 2: COMPLETENESS

Most of my paper assignment includes multiple parts. I am looking for the extent to which you actually perform each of the tasks that I require. Failure to complete a major part of a paper is a serious error that will result in substantial point deductions. Therefore, it is important that I know what you are doing as you work your way through your paper. It is in your best interest to inform me where you are and what you are doing in your paper. Signposting and transitions between parts helps immensely in keeping me informed as to what you are doing in your paper. The question here is how well did you perform each of the tasks required? How completely you should describe something, of course, depends on the nature and length of your paper.

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATION

The third criterion I use in evaluating papers is organization. Your ideas should develop in a logical manner. Words should fit together to form phrases. Phrases should fit together to form sentences. Sentences should fit together to make paragraphs. Paragraphs should fit together to form the major sections of your paper. What I do not want is a paper that rambles from point to point without any connection between them. The paper assignments suggest a particular organizational scheme for the major parts of your papers and I strongly suggest that you stick to them. Within major sections, the choice of an organizational scheme is up to you.

CRITERION 4: VALIDITY

The fourth major criterion I use in grading papers has to do with the validity of the presented arguments. The arguments that you make in your papers must be valid. This means that the conclusions of your arguments must follow from the premises. Further, the premises and conclusions that you draw should be explicit. I should not have to dig through a paper to identify and understand the arguments you are trying to make.

Part of the validity of an argument has to do with the data supporting a particular conclusion. Specifically, properly document all statements of fact from a reputable primary source. For example, if you are making the claim that men and women communicate differently in some important ways, you need to support that conclusion (or claim) with a reference from a reputable and primary source. Your papers will largely be arrangement of facts, and EVERY statement of fact must be properly cited.

CRITERION 5: MECHANICS

My evaluation also focuses on the technical (or stylistic) aspects of the paper. I expect that submitted drafts should be devoid of grammatical errors, typographical errors, misspellings, punctuation errors, sentence fragments, and so on. In this respect, it would be helpful to develop the habit of completing rough drafts of your work and then spending time cleaning and polishing your writing. If you try to write the entire paper the last day or two before it is due, you will almost certainly encounter stylistic problems, not to mention substantive ones.

I will also evaluate the format of source citations and references provided (if any). The format of the paper, source citations, and reference lists must be consistent with the sixth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

Submitting Coursework:

Please save all work in a Microsoft Word file, if at all possible. If you do not have access to Microsoft Word, please be sure to save the file in "rich text format," or "rtf" – although your formatting might not come through, this should guarantee that your content does make it to me through cyberspace. Please do not send documents with endings other than .doc, .docx, or .rtf.

All of your assignments will be submitted on our website; not through hard copy, and not through e-mail.

Double check to make sure all of your work is truly submitted and readable. After you've submitted a paper or assignment go back to view it again through the Moodle system and make sure that it shows up as you've intended it.

This sounds harsh, **but you are the one who is solely responsible for making sure you have correctly submitted the correct assignment.** If you mis-submit, or submit the wrong/incomplete assignment, I cannot assign you points for the assignment. This policy is for fairness and to avoid online deception (mis-submitting assignments is a known form of cheating to get extended time in online courses). It is not meant to punish

you. If you have spent quality time writing your assignment, spend the two extra minutes it takes to follow the instructions here and double-check that your assignment has been submitted correctly.

Week 1 – Aug 27-Sept 3

Familiarizing yourself with the course

- READ – The syllabus and course schedule
- READ – Acceptable source guide for the course
- READ – APA example papers and guide sheet
- READ (and EXPLORE!) – the Library Training Unit

Week 2 – Sept 3-9

Expectations and Relationship Basics

- READ – Chapter 1 and lecture notes/slides
- READ – Thayer Chapter
- POST – to discussion board
- WRITE – Journal Entry 1

- READ (optional) - Harlow Monkey link
- LISTEN (optional) podcast from This American Life

Week 3 – Sept 10-16

Research and Theory

- READ – Duck and Ickes online readings and lecture notes/slides
- POST – to discussion board

Week 4 – Sept 17-23

Self and Identity

- READ – Chapter 2, Hecht online reading, lecture notes/slides
- POST – to discussion board
- WRITE – Justification Paper

Week 5 –Sept 24-30

Attraction, Flirtation, Courtship

- READ - Chapter 3, lecture notes/slides, and online Trost & Alberts reading
- POST – to discussion board
- WRITE – Journal Entry 2

Week 6 – Oct 1-7

Uncertainty and Expectancy Violations

- READ – Chapter 4, lecture notes/slides, and online Planalp and Afifi readings
- POST – to discussion board

Week 7 – Oct 8-14

Relational Development

- READ – Chapters 5, lecture notes/slides, online Altman reading
- POST – to discussion board

Week 8 – Oct 15-21

Privacy and Disclosure

- READ – Chapter 6, lecture notes/slides, online Petronio reading
- POST – to discussion board

Week 9 – Oct 22-28

Love and Attachment

READ – Chapter 8, lecture notes/slides

POST – to discussion board

LISTEN (optional) podcasts from Relationship Matters

Week 10 – Oct 29-Nov 4

Communicating Intimacy and Closeness

READ – Chapters 7 and 9, lecture notes/slides, online Cupach reading

WRITE – Revised Justification and Literature Review

LISTEN (optional) podcast from Relationship Matters

Week 11– Nov 5-12

Relational Maintenance

READ – Chapter 10, lecture notes/slides, online Messman and Haas readings

POST – to discussion board

WRITE – Journal Entry 3

Week 12 - Nov 13-18

Power and Conflict

READ – Chapters 11 and 12, lecture notes/slides,

POST – to discussion board

Week 13 – Nov 19-25

Relational Transgressions and Termination

READ – Chapters 13 and 15, lecture notes/slides, online Spitzberg, Lloyd, and Jang readings

WRITE – Journal Entry 4

Week 14 – Nov 26-Dec 2

No Class – Thanksgiving Break

Week 15 – Dec 2-9

Relational Repair and Reconciliation

READ – Chapter 14, lecture notes/slides,

WRITE – Revised Justification, Revised Literature Review, Proposed Study (Full paper due)

All readings/lecture notes from this class are copyrighted materials. You may print one copy for your own use, but you may not reproduce or use them beyond your own academic pursuits.

None of the material on the preceding pages is negotiable.

If you choose to remain in class beyond the first day, you are agreeing to abide by the principles and requirements set forth for this class.