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COMX 115S.01C: Introduction to Interpersonal Communication

Kimberly S. Reiser

University of Montana - Missoula, Kim.Reiser@mso.umt.edu

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
MISSOULA COLLEGE
APPLIED ARTS AND SCIENCES DEPARTMENT
SPRING 2015, COURSE SYLLABUS**

COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE: COMX 115S, Introduction to Interpersonal Communication

SEMESTER CREDITS: 3

PREREQUISITES: None

PROFESSOR NAME: Kimberly Reiser

E-MAIL ADDRESS: kim.reiser@umontana.edu

It is my preference we schedule face-to-face appointments or discuss minor course issues via email; this is the easiest way to reach me. It is essential you use your university email for this communication. If necessary, you may leave messages for me at 243-7839.

OFFICE LOCATION: HB 02, or the fishbowl, on the East College of Technology Campus in the Health and Business Building

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday 1-2, Wednesday 1-2, or By Appointment

COURSE RATIONALE

Beebe, Beebe and Redmond (2014) write that "communication is at the core of our existence... Most people spend between 80 and 90 percent of their waking hours communicating with others" (p.2). Beebe et al. explain that "it is through these interactions with others that we develop interpersonal relationships" (p.2). Our communication encounters create our identities. In addition, communication defines our relationships with friends, family, loved ones, and colleagues. Furthermore, Beebe et al. (2014) write that communication affects the quality of our physical and emotional health. Therefore, our understanding of interpersonal communication and the role we play in it will not only contribute to our sense of well-being and success in personal relationships, but to our success in work relationships as well. In fact, supervisors recognize the importance of considering the communication skills of prospective employees. In a 2013 *Job Outlook* report, the National Association of Colleges and Employers lists the ability to communicate with people in and outside the organization as the top skill an employer considers when hiring an employee. Second on their list is the ability to work well in a team structure. Interpersonal Communication is particularly useful as a foundational general education course as it helps students develop a skill that promotes success in a number of occupational fields.

COURSE PURPOSE

The purpose of this course is for students to become aware of their present communication styles and decide what is effective and what can be improved in order to build healthier relationships on an interpersonal level. Students will learn skills to help them manage conflict both in personal relationships and professional relationships. Communication will be viewed from both a verbal and nonverbal perspective. Communicating more clearly and listening more effectively will be addressed as well as the following topics: creating identities through communication, communication and emotion, interpersonal conflict management, creating healthy communication climates, gender communication, and cultural diversity and communication.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Recognize communication patterns from family of origin.
2. Understand relational meaning of what we say both verbally and nonverbally, and the effect this has on relationships personally, professionally and in an educational capacity.
3. Practice skills in listening reflectively, attentively, and more empathetically.
4. Recognize passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive and assertive behaviors and learn how to deal more effectively with them through conflict management skills.

5. Understand how the quality of communication directly affects the quality of relationships and ultimately the quality of life.
6. Identify practical skills geared towards improving communication in the workplace, in personal relationships, and in the family.
7. Understand the role emotions play in communication.

GRADING:

Exams (3) – 45% of grade

Journal – 35% of grade

Interpersonal Relationship Paper – 20% of grade

GRADING SCALE: 100-90 (A), 89-80 (B), 79-70 (C), 69-60 (D), 59 and Below (F)

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

It is my belief that what you gain from a course is dependent on what you put into it. Attendance will determine a student's level of success. If you miss a class, you will miss a learning opportunity. Students with fewer than two absences during the semester will see their final grade increased by 5%. Students with more than three absences may lose their privilege for a makeup should an emergency arise.

***Students who sleep, leave early/come late, or work on other assignments during class will not be counted as present.**

Test makeup policy: I believe the classroom setting should be treated like any other professional setting. Employers and coworkers tend to be forgiving of a person's absence for an important meeting or engagement if that person has proven to be dependable in the past. My policy follows this principle. If the following conditions are met, you may be given an opportunity to make up a test:

1. You must be in good standing in the class. This means fewer than four absences, no late assignments and passing grades on all completed assignments.
2. You must notify me prior to missing the test that you will be unable to attend that class period, and provide an explanation for your absence. Personal illness, family emergencies and unexpected events are acceptable reasons for rescheduling a test. You may be asked for documentation of verification of your excuse.
3. Within 24 hours of missing the test, you must schedule an appointment with me to make up your test.

ASSIGNMENTS TURNED IN A CLASS DAY LATE WILL BE GRADED OUT OF HALF CREDIT. BEYOND THIS DATE, ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. IF YOU MUST MISS A CLASS PERIOD WHEN AN ASSIGNMENT IS DUE, PLEASE USE YOUR UNIVERSITY EMAIL ACCOUNT TO EMAIL ME YOUR ASSIGNMENT BY MIDNIGHT ON THE DAY THAT IT IS DUE.

***USE MY MAILBOX AT YOUR OWN RISK. IT IS NOT MY RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE SURE ASSIGNMENTS PLACE IN MY BOX GET TO ME.**

STUDENT CONDUCT:

Please conduct yourself in a way that promotes learning for all students in the classroom (i.e. do not use language that might offend others, use laptops for note taking only, avoid disclosing too much personal information, turn off cell phones, absolutely no text messaging, and avoid monopolizing class discussion).

DISABILITY STUDENT SERVICES:

Eligible students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course when requested in a **timely** way. Please speak with me after class or in my office. Please be prepared to

provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator.

For students planning to request testing accommodations, be sure to bring the DSS testing form to me **in advance of the two-day deadline for scheduling in ASC.**

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

All students must practice academic honesty. Cheating and/or plagiarism will not be tolerated. Specifically, you are not allowed to give or receive assistance on assignments or tests. All your work must be completed independently, unless it is group assigned. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://www.umt.edu/SA/VP/SA/index.cfm/page/1321>.

DROP POLICY:

"Beginning the 46th day (i.e. April 8, 2014) of the semester through the last regular class day (i.e. Friday) before Finals Week, "students may drop courses only by petition. Note that not all petitions are approved and documentation is required. Some examples of documented circumstances that may merit approval are accident or illness, family emergency, or other circumstances beyond the student's control. Instructors and advisors have the right to indicate that they do not recommend the drop"- the UM's Academic Policies and Procedures (see <http://www.umt.edu/catalog/acad/acadpolicy/default-print.html>).

*COURSE POLICIES ARE APPLIED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE INSTRUCTOR.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Wood, J. T. (2013). *Interpersonal communication: Everyday encounters* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

*This print text can be purchased at the Missoula College bookstore. However, it can also be purchased as a print, rental, or electronic textbook through our publisher at <http://www.cengagebrain.com/micro/1-1T7RE8P> .

An online Moodle page will also be utilized for this course.

COURSE OUTLINE:

The following readings, journal deadlines, and tests are due on the day they are listed. If two class dates are devoted to a chapter, make sure you have read that chapter by the first class date for which it is scheduled. Journal assignments will be announced in class and posted on Moodle at least one week prior to their due date.

January

- 27 Introductions
- 29 Introduction to Chapter 1 and Interpersonal Communication

February

- 3 Chapter 1 Continued
- 5 Chapter 2
- 10 Chapter 2 Continued
- 12 Chapter 3
- 17 Intro to Research, Chapter 3 Continued, JOURNALS 1 and 2 DUE

- 19 EXAM #1 (Ch 1-3)
- 24 Chapter 4
- 26 Chapter 4 Continued

March

- 3 Chapter 5
- 5 Chapter 5 Continued
- 10 Nonverbal Video and Discussion
- 12 ABSTRACT DISCUSSION AND JOURNALS 3 and 4 DUE
- 17 Chapter 6
- 19 Chapter 6 Continued
- 24 EXAM #2 (Ch 4-6)
- 26 Chapter 7
- 31-April 3 SPRING BREAK

April

- 7 Relationship Paper and Citing Research Lecture, Assertiveness Discussed
- 9 MOVIE
- 14 MOVIE
- 16 Chapter 7 Continued
- 21 Movie Paper Discussion, Chapter 8, JOURNALS 5 and 6 DUE
- 23 Chapter 8 Continued
- 28 Chapter 9
- 30 Chapter 9 Continued
RELATIONSHIP PAPERS DUE

May

- 5 Chapter 10-12 Highlights
- 7 Wrap Up

EXAM 3 (Ch 7-9) WILL BE DURING OUR PRESCRIBED FINAL TIME, THURSDAY, MAY 14, 8-10 a.m.

