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### COMX 115S.03C: Introduction to Interpersonal Communication

Patrick K. Marx

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**Missoula College UM**  
**Arts and Applied Science**  
**Syllabus**  
**Spring Semester 2015**

**Course:** Interpersonal Communication

**Course number, section, time and place:**

- ComX 115S 03C (CRN 34308) 10:10 a.m. to 11 a.m., MWF, AD 05
- ComX 115S 02C (CRN:34307) 3:40 p.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday/Thursday, HB 07

**Semester Credits:** 3

**Prerequisites:** None

**Instructor:** Patrick Marx, Harvard University, MPA (1998). University of Minnesota, AB. Graduate-level certifications in the Art and Practice of Leadership Education, Harvard Kennedy School (2004) and Immunity to Change Program (2009) facilitated by Harvard Graduate School of Education Professors Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey, certified and licensed to practice in 2010.

**E-mail:** [patrick.marx@umontana.edu](mailto:patrick.marx@umontana.edu)

**Office Location:** HB 02, Missoula College UM, East Campus

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Required Text:** *Interpersonal Communication: Everyday Encounters*, Julia T. Wood, Cengage Learning, 7<sup>th</sup> edition.

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**Course Rationale**

Interpersonal communication is ubiquitous – central to everyday life at home, work and in community. Research indicates that most people spend between 80 and 90 percent of their waking hours communicating with others (Beebe, Beebe and Redmond, p 5, 2002). Our communication encounters create our identities. In addition, communication defines our relationships with friends, family, loved ones, and colleagues. 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. Furthermore, Beebe et al. (2002) write that communication affects the quality of our physical and emotional health. In fact, supervisors recognize the importance of considering the communication skills of prospective employees. Grice and Skinner (2004) write, “In a 1999 report, the National Association of Colleges and Employers listed characteristics employers consider most important when hiring an employee. At the top of the list was communication skills” (p.4).

Breakthroughs in neuroscience confirm that interpersonal competence is vital to biological emotional, intellectual, and social, community health and well-being. Daniel Goleman, an authority on the new discipline of human relationships says that “Neuroscience has discovered that our brain’s very design makes it sociable and, he concludes “we are wired to connect...thus how we connect has unimagined significance.”

Interpersonal communications is the means by which we conduct everyday encounters with others – sometimes commonplace, sometimes decisive, but large or small, always with some consequence.

“We communicate to develop identities, establish and build relationships, coordinate with others, have impact on issues that matter to us, and work out problems and possibilities,” according to Julia T. Wood, author of *Interpersonal Communication: Everyday Encounters*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition.)

### **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 in personal 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.
8. Recognize important communication terms, applications and theory

### **Grading**

Success in this class requires active participation in class discussions and dialogue; team-based and individual exercises and presentations; and finally, reflective journaling which is measured on a 400-point scale:

- Mid-term presentation/exam = 75 points
- Final presentation/exam = 150 points
- Reflective journals/participation = 175 points

### **Grading Scale**

100-90 (A), 89-80 (B), 79-70 (C), 69-60 (D), 59 and below (F)

### **Attendance**

Attendance is especially important to student success because active participation in course activities is the essential grading and success factor. Attendance and participation will be closely monitored.

Personal illness, family emergencies and unexpected events are acceptable reasons for absence. You may be asked for documentation of verification of your excuse.

Assignments turned in a day or later without advance permission will be graded at half credit and will not be accepted after one week unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.

### **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.)

### **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 the instructor 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\***

The official policy for dropping a class is provided in the UM Catalog. For the timelines consult the official Catalog at <http://www.umt.edu/catalog/acad/acadpolicy/default.html>.)

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

### **Email and MOODLE**

You must have and check your official University email account daily for assignments, readings, lectures, and on-line instructional materials. It is imperative that you have access to and the ability to use MOODLE, the University's on-line instructional system.

### **Schedule**

First day of class: MWF -- Monday, January 26  
T/Thursday -- Tuesday, January 27  
Holiday: Monday, February 16, President's Day  
Spring Break: Monday, March 30 to Friday, April 3. Classes resume Monday, April 6  
Final day of class: T/Thursday – Thursday, May 7  
MWF -- Friday, May 8  
Final Exam: To be scheduled for week of May 11 through May 15.

Detailed Class Schedule will be provided second week of semester.

Patrick Marx/1/19/2015