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COMX 102.50: Interpersonal Skills in the Workplace

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Hemphill, Cassandra J., "COMX 102.50: Interpersonal Skills in the Workplace" (2016). *Syllabi*. 4022.
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**THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
MISSOULA COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED ARTS AND SCIENCES
SPRING SEMESTER, 2016**

COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE

COMX 102-50 (CRN 30389), Interpersonal Communication in the Workplace

COURSE DATES

Monday, January 25, 2016 through Sunday, March 13, 2016 (7 weeks)

SEMESTER CREDITS

1 credit

PREREQUISITES

No prerequisites

INSTRUCTOR

Cassie Hemphill, Ph.D.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Email: cassandra.hemphill@mso.umt.edu

Office: HB 02 (the “Fishbowl”), in the Health and Business (HB) building on the East Missoula College Campus (909 South Avenue West).

Phone: None.

Office Hours: By appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces you to the theory and application of interpersonal communication in the workplace. You will learn effective communication strategies that help you be more successful in your professional and personal relationships.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Understand relational meaning of what we express verbally and nonverbally in work situations.
2. Practice skills in listening reflectively, attentively, and more empathetically.
3. Recognize passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive and assertive behaviors and learn how to deal more effectively with them through conflict management skills.
4. Understand how the quality of communication directly affects the quality of relationships and ultimately the quality of life.
5. Identify practical skills for effective communication in the workplace.
6. Apply interpersonal communication skills to technological environments.

GRADING

Graded Activities and Point Value:

7 Online Discussions (Participation) worth 2 pts each =	14 points
6 Online Exams worth 5 pts each =	30 points
6 Written Assignments worth 6 pts each =	36 points
1 Final Project worth 10 points =	<u>10 points</u>
Total points you can earn =	90 points

Online Discussions (Participation). Each week you will participate in online discussions among the students and instructor. Your instructor will post a discussion question on Monday at 8:00 am. Your response to the initial question is due each week on Wednesday at 11:00 pm. Your second response is due each week on Saturday at 11:00 pm. You are encouraged to post additional responses each week any time between Monday at 8:00 am and Sunday at 11:00 pm.

Your responses must have substance, be meaningful, and demonstrate critical thinking. They should be relevant to the content, add value, and advance the discussion. Comments such as “I agree” and “ditto” do not add value. Support your position with examples drawn from the readings or videos supplemented with examples from your own experience.

Your grade for each week’s Online Discussion will be based on the following: using correct spelling, capitalization and grammar suitable for a professional workplace (0.5 points); responding to the instructor’s questions and follow-ups (1.0 points); and adding new insights, pose new questions, and advance the conversation (0.5 points).

Online Exams. Online exams are due each week on Sunday at 11:00 pm (except the final week, when you will complete a Final Project instead). The exams are open book and open notes. They are not timed. You may choose to read the chapter first and then take the exam, or read the chapter as you take the exam. The exams are designed to cover the most important concepts in the textbook, videos, and other materials. Exam questions include true/false, matching, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer.

The points you earn for each question on an exam will be totaled and then weighted to arrive at the actual points you earn. This calculation is done in Moodle.

Written Assignments. Written assignments are due each week on Sunday at 11:00 pm (except the final week, when your Final Project is due). These assignments include newsletter-type articles, PowerPoint presentations, essays, and other common forms of writing used in the workplace and in college courses. You will prepare the assignments in Word or PowerPoint, both of which are free to students and can be downloaded to up to 5 devices. Word and PowerPoint are also available on all campus computers. You will submit these assignments in Moodle as attachments. You also will have some assignments that you will write directly in

Moodle. The written assignments are designed for you to demonstrate your learning and to reflect on the skills you are building.

Your grade for the Written Assignments will be based on the following: using correct spelling, capitalization and grammar suitable for a professional workplace (worth 1 point); citing specific examples from the assigned readings, videos or other activities (worth 2 points); and demonstrating critical thinking and analysis, self-/other-awareness and application of learning (worth 3 points).

Final Project. The final project is a 3–7 page written essay due on **Sunday, March 13** at 11:00 pm. The project allows you to reflect on and apply your learning about interpersonal communication in the workplace. You will self-evaluate your own interpersonal communication competencies against five theories or concepts introduced in your textbook. You will also incorporate information from the other readings and videos used in the course.

Your grade for the Final Project will be based on the following: using correct spelling, capitalization and grammar suitable for a professional workplace (worth 1 point); discussing specific examples from the assigned readings, videos or other activities (worth 4 points); and demonstrating critical thinking and analysis, self-/other-awareness and application of learning (worth 5 points).

Grading Scale:

90–100	=A
80–89	=B
70–79	= C
60–69	= D
0–59	= F

Grading Rubrics. Grading rubrics are the standards used by your instructor to fairly and accurately grade your work. The standards are linked to the objectives of the class and expectations for student learning in a 100-level, 1-credit course. Grading rubrics for your written assignments and the final project are provided as part of the instructions for those items. Exams are graded objectively according to a pre-determined set of answers that has been prepared by your instructor. For the online discussions, your responses for each week will be assessed holistically. Your grade will be based on the quality and quantity of your responses.

Grades of "Incomplete." The policy for incompletes is provided in the UM Catalog at <http://www.umt.edu/catalog/acad/acadpolicy/default.html>. Read the policy and discuss the consequences with your advisor before you ask your instructor for an incomplete.

Grades Posted. Your final grade will be posted on Moodle March 20, one week after the end of this course. Your grade will not appear in Cyberbear until after Spring semester ends, when the Registrar posts all grades for the semester.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Even though this class is online, you are expected to “attend” class at least twice – and preferably more often – each week. You “attend” an online class by logging in to the Moodle page, reading the information posted by the instructor, participating in the online discussions, submitting your assignments, and completing the exams. You cannot complete this course all at once, just before the final deadline. The course is just 49 days from beginning to end. If you miss just 1 week, you will miss 15% of the class!

DUE DATES

Notify your instructor ahead of time if work or personal reasons will prevent you from meeting a due date. **No extensions will be given for the Online Discussions (Participation).** Even though the discussions are asynchronous (students and the instructor aren’t online at the same time), they are interactive. Just as a face-to-face conversation between two people cannot happen when one person is absent, so too an online discussion cannot take place if you aren’t there to participate.

The instructor may, at her discretion and on a case-by-case basis, extend a due date for a written assignment, an online exam or the final project. An extension is more likely to be granted if the instructor is notified well in advance of the due date. Except in extraordinary circumstances (such as medical emergencies), no extensions will be granted after the due date has passed.

DROP POLICY

The policy for dropping a class is provided in the UM Catalog at <http://www.umt.edu/catalog/acad/acadpolicy/default.html>. Discuss the consequences with your advisor before sending the instructor a drop slip. Drops can be completed via email but you must provide a scanned copy of your completed drop slip. Allow up to 2 business days from the time you email the drop slip to your instructor.

TECHNOLOGY

Online courses require good computer and writing skills. You will complete your exams online in Moodle. You will prepare written assignments using Microsoft Word or Microsoft Powerpoint. You will submit written assignments as file attachments in Moodle or type them directly into Moodle. You will stream videos on your computer. You will complete online surveys. Some of your readings will be posted as Adobe Acrobat files. You will communicate with the teacher online via Moodle Forums and email. You will do a lot of typing, because this is how you will communicate with your teacher and classmates.

If you are not comfortable using computers, Microsoft products, or Moodle, or you do not have good typing and writing skills, this may not be a good class for you. You may prefer to take this course face-to-face as a 2-day weekend workshop. Your advisor can help you switch to that course, if that is a better fit for your skills.

HELP FOR STUDENTS

You are encouraged to take advantage of the many resources available to you as a student. Here are a few resources that can help you with common challenges:

- **Moodle.** For help with Moodle, contact UMontana Technical Support at 406-243-4999 (toll-free at 866-225-1641) or email them at umonline-help@umontana.edu.
- **Email.** For help with your UMontana email account, contact IT Central at 406-243-4357.
- **Writing and Computer Use.** For help with your written assignments, the Learning Center on the East Campus provides many resources, including free writing tutors. The writing tutors can help you improve your assignments so you can maximize your grades.
- **Online Resources in Mansfield Library.** For help locating an appropriate peer-reviewed article from a communication or related journal, visit the Mansfield Library at the East Campus or log into Mansfield Library from your computer and use the Chat feature.

DISABILITY STUDENT SERVICES

Eligible students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course when requested in a timely way. Please contact the instructor to discuss accommodations. Please be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at <http://www.umd.edu/dss/> or call 406.243.2243 (voice/text).

STUDENT CONDUCT

Expected standards of behavior for all students, including academic conduct and general conduct, are described in the Student Conduct Code, which is posted at http://www.umd.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php. You are expected to practice academic honesty at all times. Academic misconduct is defined as all forms of academic dishonesty, including:

- **Plagiarism** (representing another person's words, ideas, data, or materials as your own).
- **Submitting work previously presented in another course.**

COURSE TEXTS

Hamilton, C. (2013). *Exploring Interpersonal Communication in the Workplace, COMX 102*. Mason, OH: Cengage Learning. ISBN 978-1-285-89309-9.

- The primary text is a custom publication for Missoula College. It contains only four chapters -- Chapters 1, 3, 4, and 5 -- of a longer textbook.
- You can buy the textbook at the East Campus Bookstore.
- A copy of the text is on reserve in the Mansfield Library on the Missoula College East Campus. You must use the reserve copy in the library.
- We will start using the textbook **Week 2**.

Additional readings, videos and resources will be posted on the course Moodle page.

CHANGES TO SYLLABUS

The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus and assignments as needed based on faculty, student, and/or environmental circumstances. The syllabus will be dated. The most current version will be posted on the course Moodle page.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The detailed course schedule is posted on Moodle. For planning purposes, the readings in the textbook are listed below.

- Week 1: Orientation to Interpersonal Communication in the Workplace
 - Readings and video online
- Week 2: Listening in the Workplace
 - Chapter 4 in the textbook; additional resources online.
- Week 3: Nonverbal Communication in the Workplace
 - Chapter 5 in the textbook; additional resources online.
- Week 4: Interpersonal Relationships in the Workplace: Communication Styles and Conflict Management
 - Chapter 3 in the textbook; additional resources online.
- Week 5: Online Communication in the Workplace
 - Reading and additional resources online.
- Week 6: The Interpersonal Communication Process in the Workplace
 - Chapter 1 in the textbook; additional resources online.
- Week 7: Final Project, Wrap-up
 - All online resources including all chapters in the textbook