

**COM 120N – INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION (Online)
Spring 2011 (February 7, 2011 – May 7, 2011)**

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Virtual/Telephone Office Hours: As Needed

Please contact me anytime through your student email with any questions or concerns. Email is strongly preferred, but if you need to talk to me on the phone, please call between 10:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. EST (M-TH). Leave a message including: 1) Your name, 2) that you are in my COM 120 course, 3) your phone number, and 4) brief explanation of your request. Please help me to better help you. Before you contact me with a question, please make sure that you have referenced the syllabus. If the answer is not there, then see if a classmate has the answer by raising the question on a discussion board. If anything remains unclear, then please do not hesitate to contact me. I have over 200 students in my classes this semester, so please be patient. I will respond as quickly as possible, but I have to rest and sleep sometime too. ☺

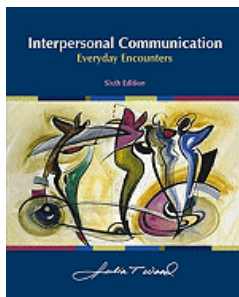
COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course introduces the practices and principles of interpersonal communication in both dyadic and group settings. Emphasis is placed on the communication process, perception, listening, self-disclosure, speech apprehension, ethics, nonverbal communication, conflict, power, and dysfunctional communication relationships. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate interpersonal communication skills, apply basic principles of group discussion, and manage conflict in interpersonal communication situations. This course has been approved to satisfy the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement general education core requirement in speech/communication.

PURPOSE OF COURSE

This course focuses student attention on communication in relationships. Students will discuss, analyze, and participate in varied communication contexts in an effort to understand better personal differences through discussion and sharing and effectively interacting with the world around them.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Wood, Julia T. *Interpersonal Communication – Everyday Encounters*. (6th Ed.). Boston: Wadsworth, 2010. (ISBN #978-0-495-56764-6)



STRONGLY RECOMMENDED:

A flash drive or other external computer data storage product.



INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Lecture (via instructor notes and PowerPoint presentations), class discussion on textbook readings and assignments via Blackboard Discussion Board, as well as student participation in quizzes and assignments.

COMPUTER ACCESS/PROBLEMS

By virtue of the fact that you have signed up for this online course, it is assumed that you have access to a reliable computer with Internet access. It is imperative that you have available to you a computer and Internet connection sufficient to view and hear multimedia files, such as videos and PowerPoint presentations. If you use a public access computer, then you may be required to have your own headphones to hear the audio. You will be required to view movie clips, video clips of speeches, etc., and will have assignments based on them.

Please be advised that a broken or ill-functioning computer, or the inability to retrieve, produce, or submit your assignments from a computer will NOT be accepted as a valid excuse for missing an assignment deadline. Students are advised to back up all electronic files to a flash drive, CD-R, or other external data storage device. This way, if your computer malfunctions, you have the option of taking the storage device to another computer to retrieve and submit your documents.

DROPPING A COURSE

If a student desires or needs to drop the course, it is the student's responsibility to complete the necessary paperwork, or the student runs the risk of receiving a failing grade at the end of the semester. **IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO COMPLETE THE DROP FORM IF THE STUDENT DECIDES TO STOP PARTICIPATING IN THE CLASS.** If the student stops participating in the course and does not complete the necessary paperwork, then the student will receive an F as the final grade. A "W" is not an option when the student does not complete the paperwork. Also, if you receive financial aid, then you are responsible for paying back the course's tuition if you drop the class or possibly fail.

EVALUATION AND GRADING TECHNIQUES

Grades are earned, not given. Final grades will be based on a standard 10-point grading scale (100-91 = A, 90-81 = B, 80-71 = C, 70-61 = D, 60-0 = F) and calculated by dividing the total points possible by the total points earned throughout the semester from five (5) components: weekly readings from the text, periodic assignments, quizzes over the weekly readings, attendance/participation and the semester project. The amount each component counts toward your final grade is:

Discussion Forums	30%
Reading Quizzes	20%
Semester Project.....	20%
Final Exam	20%
Periodic Assignments.....	10%

WEEKLY READINGS & QUIZZES

Students are expected to have read each chapter *prior* to the week of the discussion and quiz on it. The chapter quizzes will be posted every Monday morning and can be completed anytime before Friday at 11:59 p.m. (EST). The quizzes consist of 21 questions. The first question of each quiz will ask whether or not the chapter was read. It is up to the student to answer

truthfully. No partial credit will be given. The remaining 20 questions will be a combination of true/false and multiple-choice. Students will have two chances to select the correct answer for each question. If you give an incorrect answer the first time, then you have the opportunity to reference the text and choose a different answer. (Yes, that means you are guaranteed to get the true/false questions correct. My purpose is to have you learn the material, not to have you learn to take tests.) Reading the assigned chapter each week is essential for engaging in group discussion and succeeding in this course.

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS

There will be one or two special assignments during the semester that will be practical applications of things discussed in class.

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION

Although this is an online course, "attendance" still counts. Blackboard keeps track of when and how often students log onto the course, what pages they view, and how much time they spend. You are expected to log onto the course *at least* once a day for three days each week.

You will not pass this course if you do not spend adequate time (2-4/hrs. per wk. minimum) logged onto the course reading class notes, viewing PowerPoints, accessing links to other Internet resources referenced in the course materials, taking quizzes, and participating on the discussion board. The time you spend reading your text does NOT count.

CLASSROOM CAFÉ

A separate discussion board called the Classroom Café will be open throughout the semester. This is the place to post any thoughts or questions that you want to share or discuss outside of class. Different topics will appeal more to some students than others. Interest may arise in some topics that are not directly related to the course or the particular discussion board topic of the week. Rather than clutter the discussion board with dozens of such posts, where everyone is required to read the posts, you may invite classmates to join you in the Classroom Café to discuss things further. Just as you might be told in a physical classroom setting, "That's a good question, but we really have to move on." I may contact you at some point and ask you to move a question or discussion over to the Classroom Café.

DISCUSSION BOARD

The Blackboard Discussion Board provides the virtual space for classroom discussion. It is a critical component to online learning. Each week a new discussion board topic will be posted and remain active for three weeks. After three weeks, students may access the discussion board, but they will not be able to post to it or make any responses.

At a minimum, students are required to post an answer to discussion questions posted by the instructor in Blackboard each week, to read the answers of their classmates, to post one comment/question to three classmates (please not the same three every week and go beyond simple statements like: "I agree," "I disagree," "Good answer," etc.), and to respond to the comments/questions that you receive. This way everyone is both sending and receiving some feedback and good class synergy can develop. Comments and questions should be thoughtful and engaging.

Having both taken, as a student, and taught, as an instructor, many online courses, I have put together the following guidelines to make our discussion board experience a more rewarding experience. These guidelines pertain only to discussion board posts and assignments. Participation in the Classroom Café is not required and at the users' discretion.

Rules for Discussion Board Posts:

1. Type your posts in a word processor with grammar and spell check, and then copy and paste them into Bb. This may help you not only on your grade by reducing grammatical mistakes and typos, but it may also save you the time and headache of losing text from accidentally closing a window, hitting the wrong button, or the loss of internet connection, etc.
2. Be respectful. Our class is to be an open and safe place for everyone to share ideas, raise questions, and engage in critical thinking. We will be rich in diversity. We will be from different backgrounds with varied social, political, religious, and philosophical views. We will have different types and levels of education and experience. There will be **zero tolerance** for any disrespectful behavior, rude comments, or cyber bullying of any kind. You are free to disagree and engage in scholarly debate, but keep the focus of the debate centered on propositions and not the people who make them.
3. Use proper language and grammar. This is a college class, not a social networking site. Texting acronyms (e.g., JK, BFF, WTH, LMAO, TTYL, etc) are not acceptable for use on the discussion board. All posts should incorporate complete, correctly spelled words in complete, properly punctuated sentences. This is part of your grade!
4. Be brief. Unless otherwise indicated, all posts should be limited to two paragraphs or less. This might be a challenge for those of us who have the gift of gab,
5. Be specific. If you quote or reference the text, then provide the page number(s). If you quote from another source, then provide the link or bibliographic information.
6. Give proper identification. You must attach your name to every post either at the beginning or end of your post and identify the recipient (s) of your post, if you are responding to someone else's post. When you respond to a post, always begin your response by typing the name of the person(s) to whom you are replying. With 30+ students in class, the threaded discussions can become a tangled web without following.
7. Keep focused. The discussion board is for discussions about the content of the course. Please do not clutter it with personal notes or discussions unrelated to the posted topic.
8. Sleep on it. You do not have to reply to every post or comment, and you never have to reply or post immediately. Let your posts reflect thoughtfulness and introspection.
9. Do not use ALL CAPS or overdo exclamation points (!) or **bold type**. Computer mediated communication is devoid of presence and nonverbal cues and, therefore, more susceptible to miscommunication.
10. Emoticons. Do not overuse emoticons or get too complex with them. Not everyone understands their meanings and they do not always translate from text to symbol in Bb. It is better to limit the use of emoticons to simple smiley faces and to indicate any emotion beyond that with arrow brackets, e.g., <smile>, <laughing>, <just kidding>.

SEMESTER PROJECT

Each student is required to do a semester project in the form of a typed report of 8-10 pages, not including title page or works cited page (Double-spaced and following the format and style guidelines of *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed.) related to interpersonal communication. Students may choose between four project options based on individual preferences. The semester project is an essential component of this course and takes the place of a final exam, so please choose wisely.

Project Option #1. Write a critical review comparing and contrasting two approved books that address the topic of interpersonal communication. You may choose dating/relationship advice books, books that focus on communication in families, books that focus on business communication, health communication, non-verbal communication, intercultural communication, etc. Your paper should do the following: (1) Identify and evaluate the credentials of each author as an expert on the subject; (2) Summarize communication principles advocated in the books; (3) Relate communication principles and theories covered in this course to those advised by the authors; and (4) Evaluate the value of each book.

Project Option #2. Interview a minimum of three couples engaged in long-distance dyadic communication (e.g., a romantic couple in a long-distance relationship, friends or family members separated by school, work, military duty, etc.). You must interview both individuals of the dyad. Interviews should take an average of 15-30 minutes each and focus on the communication challenges and strategies they use to sustain their relationships. At least two of your interviews must be conducted face to face; the rest can be done by phone or Internet. In your paper, you should summarize what you learned about challenges and strategies. In addition, your report should show how couples' experiences reflect or extend principles covered in your textbook and reference at least four academic journal articles.

Project Option #3. Keep an interpersonal communication journal. Make five entries of a paragraph or more per week for weeks 4-9 of the class (total of 30 entries). Journal posts should analyze interpersonal communication lessons and experiences related to class readings and assignments. Weekly journal assignments will be posted in Blackboard to guide students in this project. Final journals must be typed, double-spaced and with proper grammar, format and style. The final journal must also include a summary of 2-3 pages to note any recurring themes or patterns and lessons learned. Journals will be graded after the deadline, but students are responsible for keeping their journals current and typed. The instructor will periodically ask for journals to be turned in and points will be deducted for any missing entries.

Project Option #4. Write a research paper on a topic of interest related to interpersonal communication using a minimum of 10 academic sources. Students are free to develop any research question to explore, as long as the question relates to interpersonal communication and the instructor judges there to be sufficient scholarly sources available to use. An example of research question could be: What are the effects of social networking sites on the interpersonal communication habits of users?

Project Option #5. Choose any of the films listed below as an item for analysis. In the paper, students should apply what they learned in class to evaluate the strengths and limitations of the communicative choices the characters made as well as offer concrete recommendations for improving their communication. Students will need to watch their selected films multiple times and incorporate academic sources (minimum of six journal articles or books) in their papers. Columns 1 -12 represent the 12 chapters of your textbook. An “X” in the column indicates that the movie relates to lessons from the corresponding chapter(s).

Film	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>The American President</i>		X								X	X	X
<i>An Affair To Remember</i>							X				X	X
<i>As Good As It Gets</i>										X	X	X
<i>Beaches</i>							X	X	X	X		
<i>Bicentennial Man</i>		X										
<i>Birdcage</i>			X	X	X						X	X
<i>Cast Away</i>	X				X							
<i>Days of Thunder</i>				X								
<i>Do the Right Thing</i>			X	X		X	X	X	X			
<i>Everyone Says I Love You</i>							X				X	X
<i>A Few Good Men</i>	X		X	X	X		X	X		X		
<i>Grease</i>				X	X			X	X	X	X	X
<i>Grumpy Old Men</i>									X	X		
<i>Jerry Maguire</i>			X							X	X	X
<i>Liar, Liar</i>			X	X	X			X	X			
<i>The Man Without a Face</i>	X		X					X		X		
<i>An Officer and a Gentleman</i>	X		X	X	X		X	X		X		
<i>One Fine Day</i>	X							X				
<i>Philadelphia</i>	X										X	X
<i>The Preacher's Wife</i>			X		X	X					X	X
<i>Rear Window</i>			X		X	X		X				
<i>Sister Act</i>		X	X	X	X	X		X		X		
<i>Sweeney Todd</i>		X	X					X				
<i>Terms of Endearment</i>						X	X	X				
<i>A Time to Kill</i>	X		X	X						X		
<i>What Women Want</i>				X							X	X
<i>With Honors</i>	X						X			X		
<i>Workplace</i>								X				

MAKEUP WORK/BONUS POINTS

It is not conducive to good health or success in this course to put off readings and assignments until the last minute. “By the inch, it’s a cinch; but by the yard it’s hard!”

I will NOT accept any assignment that is turned in late without PRIOR approval. Any assignment that is turned in past its due date will receive a zero in the grade book. Extensions on assignments may be granted in advance of deadlines only for very good reasons that are both justifiable and verifiable by me. If a student requests an extension for an assignment, and the request is approved by the instructor, the assignment will be penalized by 2% off the final grade

for each day that it is late. Any assignment more than 14 days past its original due date will not be accepted and will receive a final grade of zero.

While I understand students have unique needs and abilities, I also have an obligation to be fair and impartial. Therefore, it is NOT my practice to give makeup work or bonus work to individual students. Everyone has equal opportunity to earn his/her grade throughout the semester. "A lack of preparation on the student's part will not constitute an emergency on the instructor's part." Please do not contact me near the end of the semester asking, "What can I do to bring up my grade?" Everything is laid out clearly at the beginning. Now is the time to ask questions, to understand what is expected of you, and to plan accordingly. I am here throughout the semester to help and encourage you. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or anytime you may feel concerned about your progress. I will do my best to make this course an enjoyable and enlightening experience for us all. I look forward to the insights and contributions that each student will make.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT – IMPORTANT!

Cheating and plagiarism are those processes of utilizing as one's own: another's work, works, or ideas. Those processes are not the mark of a competent college student. Students who cheat or plagiarize are subject to disciplinary action by the college and risk failure in the course. In other words, a student can be expelled from the college if guilty of cheating or plagiarizing. This includes taking works without proper quotations and citations from the Internet, any publications, or having someone else do your work for you. Assignments and papers are expected to be the result of your own work and preparation. Plagiarism and cheating are considered stealing. Any such act(s) will result, at a minimum, in a zero for the assignment(s) or test(s).

You are to follow appropriate documentation citing (follow MLA format) when writing papers. If you quote from an outside source, such as something found on the internet or in a book, then use quotation marks to identify the words as someone else's writing and identify the author and page number where the words were found.

By taking this course, students agree that all assignments are subject to submission to plagiarism checking via SafeAssign, an online plagiarism prevention and detection service in Blackboard. All work submitted will be added to a database of papers. Specifically, this service compares your paper with Internet web pages, articles in databases, and all papers previously submitted from this and any other university. SafeAssign then either confirms the originality of your work or gives the source of plagiarism. Any case of detected cheating or plagiarism will be forwarded to COA Academic Affairs and handled in compliance with COA policies.

DISABILITY SERVICES (ADA) SYLLABUS STATEMENT

College of the Albemarle seeks to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Section 504 is a Federal Civil Rights Law, which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act expands the scope of institutional and service provider responsibility for providing reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities. Elizabeth City or Edenton-Chowan students requesting accommodations based on a disability must register with the Disability Services Director, Andrea Temple (Building A, Room 119) (335-0821 ext. 2277)

(atemple@albemarle.edu). Students attending the Dare Campus should contact Lori Britt (Main Office, Room 108) (473-2264 ext. 223) (lbritt@albemarle.edu).

SAFETY STATEMENT

COA is very concerned about protecting our students, employees, and visitors at all campuses and in all our virtual classrooms. You can help the College to protect everyone by reporting any threats that you receive (or hear about) to your instructor, to security, or to another college official. The College always takes steps to protect anyone who has reason to believe that he/she is in danger. "Together we can help our campus to be a safer place."

CLASS SCHEDULE

(For the purpose of this class, the week begins on Monday and ends on Sunday)

Week 1	Feb. 7-13:	Class Introductions, Chapter 1 discussion & quiz
Week 2	Feb 14-20:	Chapters 2 discussion & quiz
Week 3	Feb. 21-27	Chapter 3 discussion & quiz Semester project proposal due by 11:59 p.m. (EST) on 2/27.
Week 4	Feb. 28-Mar. 6	Chapter 4 discussion & quiz
Week 5	Mar. 7-13	Chapter 5 discussion & quiz
Week 6	Mar. 14-20	Chapter 6 discussion & quiz
Week 7	Mar. 21-27	Chapter 7 discussion & quiz
Week 8	Mar. 28-Apr. 3	Chapter 8 discussion & quiz
Week 9	Apr. 4-10	Chapter 9 discussion & quiz
Week 10	Apr. 11-17	Chapter 10 discussion & quiz Semester projects due by 11:59 p.m. (EST) on 4/17
Week 11	Apr. 18-24	Chapters 11-12 discussion & quiz
	Apr. 25-30	SPRING BREAK (No classes)
Week 12	May 2-7	Discussion of semester projects and final exam