January, 2015

COMM 480:
Nonverbal Communication

ANN L116
9:30 to 10:50 AM Tuesday and Thursday

Michael J. Cody, Ph.D.
326C Annenberg
Office hours: Thursday 2 to 5

cody@usc.edu, 213-740-3936 (office)

Course description

The purpose of this course is to teach theories and present research in Communication and Nonverbal Communication to the students who are interested in learning theory and research in nonverbal communication that can be applied to work or business settings. Our emphasis is on the intersection of theory, important daily and work contexts, and digital settings / digital applications. By “applied” to work or business settings we mean that you are interesting in applying theory and research to an applied setting or question like:

- **Legal communication** (detecting deception [Who can spot a liar? How effective are polygraph machines and vocal stress machines?], or witness preparation [How do you prepare witnesses to be more credible in court?];
- **Online settings** [How can one teach “empathy” on Facebook? Knowing more about nonverbal communication, can we improve match-making on dating sites?], [How are photographs and other visuals [non-verbal displays used to present a “self” to the public?] And, [How is self-presentation influenced by personality types – like Narcissism?],
- Addressing **social justice issues** [Do judges “leak” attitudes of bias in front of jurors?], [How do we cope with “microaggressions” (verbal and non-verbal)?], Or deal with any “leaked” biases [leaked nonverbally];
- Addressing issues of **cultural differences** [Can we improve intercultural communication by understanding cultural rules, etiquette and rules about touch and hand gestures?] [Think about training for Peace Corps members, Diplomats, members of the State Department.]
- **Improving relationships** and **friendships** at work [“Mistakes in flirting vs. How to be a successful flirt” [sounds non-academic and silly, but a beauty salon called “Benefit” used this when expanding operations 10 years ago]; Or, [“Changing rules of etiquette at work”]
- **Improving on skills** (improving on medical doctor or nurses listening skills, which includes any number of nonverbal components)
- What nonverbal communication behaviors are important in employment interviews?
- What are the **elements of voices** that reflect fear, anxiety, worry, and can we train machines to process these emotional states correctly?
- Do men and women reveal “affection” differently – even today in 2015? Do we need to
improve men’s ability to show affection? …. There are actually health reasons that reveal the benefit of being affectionate!

- **Improving** public images online and throughout media outlets;
- Is there any validity to pheromones and/or certain orders / fragrances?
- Is there any validity to “intuition?”
- Can people in “platonic relations” at work control (conceal) feelings if they prefer more than being platonic?

Text books

There are no text books ordered for this class. Given new technologies in the last several years, the nature of nonverbal communication is constantly changing and text book are both dated and backyard looking (and expensive). Also, nearly everything needed for this class can be located online on websites and in libraries. Further, several documents to be shared with the class are quite large and Dropbox is preferable to using Blackboard.

However, the book listed below is now available online if you log on through the USC Library System:


Since this class requires each student to focus on one particular content area, and several of these chapters will be useful in exploring certain topics. Chapters 1 through 5 provide basic information about the fundamentals).

The following chapters offer some useful information on selected contexts or issues; most, like chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 provide information on Detecting Deception. A few others (chapters 14 and 16) focus on empathy and communication skills. Most are very brief chapters.

Chapter 6, Deception. By Mark Frank and Elena Svetieva
Chapter 7, Aviation Security and Nonverbal Behavior, by Carl Joseph Maccario
Chapter 8, A Cop’s Nonverbal Journey: From Gut to Mind, by Joseph Ennett
Chapter 9, Anomalies and Nonverbal Behavior, by Paul M. Moskal
Chapter 10, Understanding Body Language and the Polygraph, by Daniel H. Baxter
Chapter 11, Nonverbal Behavior in the Courtroom, by Scott Brownell
Chapter 12, Persuasion, Negotiation and the Law, by Clark Freshman
Chapter 13, Negotiation and Nonverbal Communication, by Andrew Boughton
Chapter 14, Interpersonal Skills and Nonverbal Communication, by Steve Longford
Chapter 15, Nonverbal Communication in Consumer Research, by Nick R. Harrington
Chapter 16, Nonverbal Communication in Medical Practice, by Robert Sheeler
Chapter 17, Nonverbal Behavior and Psychiatric Observations, by Michael R. Privitera

I will also be loaning out copies of books to the class, on interpersonal communication,
deception, flirting and communication affect.

Learning Objectives

Expected learning outcomes for students are listed below.

Knowledge and Application of Theories of Nonverbal Communication in relationships, online friendships and business relationships, spanning disciplines (Communication, Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology)

- Explain the elements and theories of communication processes at the individual, interpersonal and in social settings, and understand how these theories impact on communication outcomes.
- Apply theories using a variety of channels (language, nonverbal systems) and contexts (digital and face to face).
- Evaluate the success and failure of applying theories in practice.
- Conduct academic research using a variety of library resources.

Course work, Assignments and Grading

The professor’s role:

The instructor will (1) provide a broad-based exposure to research and theory in the area of communication and social science research, providing examples along the way; (2) advise and assist students in their paper projects, library research and proposals (described below); and (3) provide feedback on papers and proposals that so there is an integration between theory, current research trends and applications.

The student’s role:

Other than keeping up with the readings, each student enrolled in this class will make a decision to specialize in a content area, one discussed in class from interpersonal, business or online contexts or one proposed by the student and meeting the professors’ approval. Select one content area you will spend the semester exploring. The content area you select can be in

Communicating liking, affection and “interest” in others (flirting).

Creating and maintaining a public image online or within a community, including communicating expertise and skills (self-promoting)[the topic is “impression management” or “self-presentation]

Improving on communication effectiveness in public speaking, legal settings, debate (credibility, dominance status, etc.

Improving intercultural or inter-ethnic (or race-related) communication.
Improving the detection of deception publicly, face to face or online.

You may select a topic about which you are passionate – just ask.

NOTE: After selecting a topic, talk with the instructor about the literature to be reviewed, and which disciplines and journals that might be useful to conduct and finalize a bibliography on published articles, websites, chapters and even books which might be used in writing a classic review of literature.

Submit a Working Bibliography in APA format on the fifth week of classes (Tuesday, February 17. (If you have been writing papers using MLA or some other format, you may submit it in the format you know best – as long as you correctly use ONE formatting system.). This is worth 10% of the class grade.

You will submit a classic paper that is a Review of Literature five weeks later (Tuesday, March 24). I’ll have more to say about writing a “Review of Literature” later in class. You do not have to write a position paper or make an argument or a claim. You simply want to review what the published literature says about your topic. This paper is worth 30% of your course grade – I want this to be the best paper you have written as an undergraduate.

You will submit a paper five weeks later where you will “apply” the literature you reviewed to solving a problem or addressing an issue in society (see above), improving communication, avoiding problems; or a “manual” on how to improve relations among co-workers, etc. This paper (or a product) is worth 30% of your course grade. You may be creative, practical, or make a video critique of a situation you see that needs changing. Think about some of the videos on Youtube on relationships…..

After receiving feedback on these papers, you will later make a Final Presentation to the class (and possibly guests) during the last weeks of the semester. These should be viewed as “mini-lectures” where each student educates classmates on the topic selected – (a) what the published literature says and (b) how the theory / research is or can be used in daily life. I anticipate these to be highly educational, but they can include some humor.

Grading: One Assignment, 2 papers, one presentation

Bibliography of Relevant Materials 10% of course grade
Paper 1. Review of Literature (Published in any credible format) 30% of course grade
Paper 2. How this Line of Research Informs Societal Changes 30% of course grade
Oral Presentation – Student Mini-lecture 30% of grade

January 14. Day 2. The human face – What is beauty?


See: section on Facial Symmetry in “Science of Sex Appeals” (I will bring to class)

Power point slides: *The Beauty of the Face, January 15*

In this website, go through the material on Facial Symmetry, Babyfaced Expressions, Morphing Faces, Characteristics of Beautiful Faces and Reformed Faces: http://www.beautycheck.de/english/bericht/bericht.htm

Note: I understand that this is limited to Euro-American / “Western faces” – I cannot find anything comparable from Africa, India, Asia, etc. – Something you should do!


We watch more of “Science of Sex Appeals” – body shapes, movement, voices.


Children are “pre-verbal” but learn social skills early in life, including gestures. Most children learn to be sociable, but autistic children follow a different pathway toward adulthood. Certain emotional expressions are “universal,” but we smile differently in specific contexts.

Power point slides: *Emotional Expressions, January 21*

January 27. Day 5. Escalating Relationships

Power point slides: *Escalating Relationships, January 27*

References made to:


January 29. Day 6. Flirting Styles – There is no “one size fits all”

Power point slides: *Flirting Styles January 29*

Reference is made to:


The data discussed above was based on based on 5,000+ eHarmony subscribers. But you can take the quiz here:

[http://flirtingstyles.dept.ku.edu/#sthash.GvpuoX2r.dpbs](http://flirtingstyles.dept.ku.edu/#sthash.GvpuoX2r.dpbs)

February 3. Day 7. Foundations of Presentation of Self in Everyday Life

Power point slides: *Foundations of Self-Presentation, February 3*

Reference is made to:

Chapter 6 in the Canary, Cody and Manusov book *Interpersonal Communication: A goals approach*. I gave you a copy.


February 5. Day 8. Gender Differences in Self Presentation

Power point slides: *Gender and Self-presentation February 5*

Reference will be made to:


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Power Point slides: Effective Employment Interviews February 10


February 12. Day 10. Personality and Self-Presentation of Self (Face to face and Online)

Power Point slides: Personality and Self-Presentation February 12

Reference will be made to:


Also see online self-presentation in the drop box.

February 17 and 19. Credibility and Persuasive Speaking

Power Point slides: Speaker Credibility February 17

Visuals will follow on February 19

Reference will be made to two chapters (located in the drop box) to the Handbook of Persuasion, one on Nonverbal Influence and one on Persuasion in Legal Settings.

February 24, 26 and March 3. Detecting Deception.

February 24: A lecture: The general case for detecting deception
February 26: We will view visuals and commentaries about detection. We will watch the following and discuss in class:

Ted Talk: http://www.ted.com/talks/pamela_meyer_how_to_spot_a_liar.html

Can you spot a liar from the face:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/humanbody/mind/surveys/smiles/index.shtml

March 3: We will view materials online pertaining to polygraph testing and police interviews.

Regarding deception: Re-read Chapter 3 the Interpersonal book distributed in class (Canary, Cody and Manusov) and read, two chapters from Matsumoto, Frank, & Hwang’s Nonverbal Communication: Science and Applications. Los Angeles: Sage;

Chapter 6, Deception. By Mark Frank and Elena Svetieva
Chapter 10, Understanding Body Language and the Polygraph, by Daniel H. Baxter


And you may want to use materials in the drop box:

Classic readings:


Deception online:


*Toma, C.L. & Hancock, J.T. (2010). Looks and lies: The role of physical attractiveness in online dating: Self-presentation and deception. *Communication Research, 37*, 335-


**March 5 and 10 (Day 16 and Day 17). Nonverbal Communication in Medical Encounters**

Read: Chapter 16, Nonverbal Communication in Medical Practice, by Robert Sheeler, from the Matsumoto, Frank and Hwang book.

**March 10 (Day 12). Why Empathy and Affection are so important**

**March 16 – March 21 SPRING BREAK**

Student mini-lectures will be scheduled later in the semester. We anticipate that we will have 3 student mini-lectures presented each day; we want to be able to have class discussions after each mini-lecture. With 20 students enrolled in the class, this will require 7 class periods.
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Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP:

http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, (www.usc.edu/scampus or http://scampus.usc.edu) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.