
USC Annenberg

COMM 304
Interpersonal Communication
Spring 2016 Tu/Th 11:00 – 12:20 ASC 231

Instructor: Jillian Pierson, Ph.D.

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Office M/W 9-10 in ANN 306

If my office hours are not convenient for you, we can try to set a meeting for a different time or we can meet by phone.

Hours: T/Th 9 -9:30 & 12:30-1 in ASC 333

Phone: (xxx)xxx-xxxx [9am-9pm]

Sometimes talking is much more useful than emailing. As long as you're respectful, I welcome your phone calls.

Course Description

This class is an introduction to the field of interpersonal communication, an area of scholarship that looks at communication in relationships. The term “relationships” covers more than romance and friendship; we’ll include a number of contexts including families, health care, and online environments.

Course Goals

This is an academic course so we will work toward increasing your conceptual understanding and critical thinking; we are not focusing on your own personal communication skills. However, many students will find that the understanding we build throughout the semester will enhance their own communication in relationships.

I’d like you to complete this course with an understanding of interpersonal communication:

- major concepts, issues and theories
- research and scholarship
- applications of concepts to real world behavior

Required Course Materials

Guerrero, L. K., Andersen, P. A., & Afifi, W. A. (2014). *Close encounters: Communication in relationships* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Additional required readings, handouts, and links will be posted on our Blackboard site. Please check Blackboard frequently.

School of Communication Academic Integrity Policy

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. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as Communication school administrators.

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

Info for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodation 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 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. Contact information for DSP is 213-740-0776 and ability@usc.edu.

A Note from USC on Stress Management

Students are under a lot of pressure. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency that makes travel to campus 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.

Course Policies

No laptops or electronics.

In order to create the best possible learning environment, I ask you to please turn your cell phones off when you enter our classroom and not to open your laptops or tablets. I completely understand the temptation to multi-task but I ask that you forgo texting, instant messaging, internet surfing, gaming and other distractions during our time together. Please bring pen and paper to class.

SAMPLE ONLY

Late Papers: If your paper is late, it will be marked down by one third of a letter grade for every day it is late. Also, please be aware that if you end up handing a paper in late (thus accepting the automatic deduction), it falls to the bottom of my stack of things to do and will most likely not be returned to you in a very timely manner.

Missed exams: Missing an exam is terrible all around. You would never do that unless you were really, seriously ill. Contact me immediately so we can try to remedy the situation and make sure you do not end up with a zero score.

Participation/Attendance: Our class sessions combine lecture and discussion. Participation (including attendance, promptness, courtesy, attentiveness, involvement in classroom activities, and discussion that clearly demonstrates you have kept up with the course material) may affect your grade by up to one third of a grade.

Missing more than four class periods *regardless of the reason* may result in a failing grade in the course. Arriving late twice or leaving early twice is viewed as equivalent of one absence.

There is no need to discuss with me reasons for your absences since it is reasonable that in fifteen weeks, you would have cause to miss one, two or even three classes. If for some reason you suspect you may miss more than four class sessions, see me immediately to discuss whether or not you will need to withdraw from the course.

When you miss class, please do not ask *me* what you missed. It is your responsibility to seek out that information from other students. Once you have done that, I welcome the opportunity to talk with you and to go over any questions.

Grading: To achieve a “C” or better on written assignments, you must write at a level appropriate for a university student, i.e., with clarity and with correct grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Group investigations	5%
Paper 1	20%
Paper 2	20%
Exam 1	15%
Exam 2	20%
Exam 3	20%

You must complete all assignments to pass the course.

I believe a “B” represents really good work. An “A” represents excellent work. A “C” grade should satisfactorily meet all the requirements of an assignment. If you are disappointed by a grade, I would be happy to discuss your work with you and help you improve for the next assignment.

S A M P L E O N L Y

Tentative Course Schedule, *Subject to Change:*

Assignments are due on the days they are listed; readings can be done after the class meeting on the dates they're listed on. The textbook chapters listed in this calendar represent the bulk of your readings. I will post additional articles and links on Blackboard so please check our site frequently.

Date	Topic	Assignment Due/Exams	Readings
1	Course Orientation Defining Interpersonal Comm		GAA Ch 1
2	Identity & Self-Presentation in "real life" and online		GAA Ch 2
3	Interpersonal Comm Theories: Uncertainty & Expectations		GAA Ch 4
4	More Interpersonal Theories: Self-Disclosure and Privacy		GAA Ch 6
5	catch up / review First Midterm	Exam	
6	go over midterm / assign paper Attraction		GAA Ch 3
7	Relational Development phases and stages		GAA Ch 5
8	Love and Attachment styles and preferences	Assignment 1	GAA Ch 8
9	Affection & Immediacy Relational Maintenance		GAA Ch 7 GAA Ch 10
10	catch up / review Second Midterm	Exam	
11	go over midterm / assign paper Communicating about Sex		GAA Ch 9
12	Conflict & Relational Problems		GAA Ch 11 GAA Ch 13
13	Deception & Power (cont)	Assignment 2	Ch 12 (p. 310-316)
14	Healing & Apologizing (cont)		GAA Ch 14
15	Ending Relationships catch up / review		GAA Ch 15
	Final Exam		

S A M P L E O N L Y

Assignments

I will be assigning two 5-6 page papers that will require you to demonstrate understanding and application of course concepts. Please upload your paper to Blackboard *before* our class meeting on the day it is due.

Consider visiting USC's Writing Center early in the semester for help with your writing. You may also visit office hours with a draft of your paper for assistance. Be sure to check all handouts and links posted on Blackboard.

In class, you will participate in small group discussions, exercises, and investigations. I may also ask you to do other brief assignments.

Exams

The three exams in this class will cover readings and lectures. Prepare for a challenging series of multiple choice and true/false questions.

The final will not be "cumulative" in that you won't have to go back to the earlier chapters and study them in depth. But your knowledge will build and the final exam questions may reflect that knowledge base.

Remember that you are responsible for both the material presented in the readings and in class. The two do not always overlap. If you missed a class, it would be a good idea to get notes and discuss them with at least two other students.

Please see the links I've posted on Blackboard for help with test-taking strategies.

Optional Cumulative Final as "Extra Credit"

I believe you should prepare for and do well on the exams and assignments the first time around. I don't foresee any "extra credit" opportunities.

If your grade falls on a border, I will favorably consider your regular attendance, attention, and participation as well as improvements from the one exam to another or from the first written assignment to the second.

Looking Ahead

Studying communication is an ongoing experience of discovery. I look forward to learning more with all of you this semester.