

Instructor:	Jillian Pierson, Ph.D.	I encourage you to connect with me outside of our regularly scheduled class meetings!
Office Hours:	Wed 10-12 Thurs 12:45-1:45	These are my official Zoom “office hours” but if they aren’t convenient for you, I’d be glad to meet you at other times. Check Blackboard for an office hours sign-up link, and email me if you’d like to set up alternate times.
Phone:	323-610-6820	I give you my cell phone number in case you want to send a quick text or would like to meet by phone. But for content or assignment-related issues, email is the best way to connect with me.
Email:	jilliank@usc.edu	

Course Description

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

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.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, you should be able to define the terminology used by interpersonal communication scholars; explain the major concepts, issues and theories of this field; and recognize and apply the course concepts to mediated depictions and to real-world situations where these ideas are at play.

Required Course Materials

Guerrero, L. K., Andersen, P. A., & Afifi, W. A. (2021). *Close encounters: Communication in relationships* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard and are noted on the course calendar with the authors’ last names and dates. These readings are subject to change as I may update to titles that are tailored to our class.

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 are listed on this calendar as GAA and they represent the bulk of your readings. The articles are posted on Blackboard and additional links may be added so please check our site frequently.

	Date	Topic	Assignments due before class	Read after class
1	Aug 18	Course introduction		
	Aug 20	Defining Interpersonal Comm		GAA Ch 1
2	Aug 25	Identity & Self-Presentation		GAA Ch 2
	Aug 27	in "real life" and online		Ellison, Heino & Gibbs 2006
3	Sept 1	Interpersonal Comm Theories		GAA Ch 4
	Sept 3	(cont.)		GAA Ch 6 Afifi & Olson (2005) Donovan et al. (2017) Nuru & Wang (2014)
4	Sept 8	Attraction		GAA Ch 3
	Sept 10	& mate selection		Hall & Compton 2017 Oltmanns et al. 2016
5	Sept 15	First Exam	Exam	
	Sept 17	Relational development		GAA Ch 5
6	Sept 22	phases and stages		GAA Ch 15
	Sept 24	Love and Attachment		GAA Ch 8
7	Sept 29	styles and preferences		Horan et al (2015)
	Oct 1	Affection & Immediacy	Assignment 1	GAA Ch 7
8	Oct 6	Relational Maintenance		GAA Ch 10
	Oct 8	Communicating about Sex		Goodboy et al. 2010 Kelly, Duran & Miller-Ott 2017
9	Oct 13	& Sexual Health		GAA Ch 9
	Oct 15	Second Exam	Exam	
10	Oct 20	Conflict &		GAA Ch 11 Aloia & Solomon (2015) Merrill & Afifi (2017)
	Oct 22	Deception		GAA Ch 13 Elphinstone et al. (2013)

11	Oct 27	Presentations	Presentations	Markovitz & Hancock (2018)
	Oct 29	Presentations		
12	Nov 3	Presentations		
	Nov 5	Presentations		
13	Nov 10	Power & Influence		GAA Ch 12
	Nov 12	Healing & Apologizing		GAA Ch 14; Carr et al. (2015)
	Nov 17	Third Exam 2 – 4 pm	Exam	

Course Policies

Respectful conversation: We may touch on topics that some students feel sensitive about during class. If you find yourself having an emotional response, please reach out to me. Know that I want everyone to feel comfortable engaging in productive, open conversation, including at the times we don't agree with one another. If I get something wrong, I'd like to hear from you in a respectful way; I have an open mind and like most people, I am still learning and evolving.

I also hope you'll be mindful that we all come to the classroom from a variety of backgrounds and life experiences. We can't truly understand another person's perspective, but we can listen with acceptance and empathy.

Attendance and Participation

1. To get the most out of this class, you must show up for our meetings. While it is normal to miss a few times during the course of a semester, you cannot "take" this class without attending regularly.
2. Some students may have to miss class because of a significant time difference, or illness, or for other reasons. If you have to miss several classes, I would appreciate your letting me know what is going on, so that I don't worry about you.
3. If you miss class, please view the Zoom recording and complete any alternative "participation" activity provided.

Engagement and Note-taking

The best online class meetings will occur when everyone is focused and engaged. This can be challenging in the Zoom environment, but I ask you to make a decision to be focused on our class during our meetings. I recommend you turn off your notifications and put aside your cell phone while we are together.

I also recommend that you take notes by hand. Most students work on laptops which means you have a relatively small screen. Have a notebook and pen by your side so you can write

notes while listening and participating during class. Current research shows that taking notes by hand is more effective than typing them.

Communication

Please be sure to read your USC emails and Blackboard announcements daily on weekdays.

I reply to my emails within 24 hours (although on the weekends I may take longer). If you don't hear back from me promptly, feel free to send me a follow-up after a day has gone by.

Timely submission of work: If your assignment 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, it falls to the bottom of our stack of things to do and will most likely not be returned to you in a very timely manner.

Sometimes a student has a true emergency. Please contact me as soon as possible if something prevents you from submitting your work on time.

Accidentally uploading the wrong assignment or using a format not accepted by Blackboard is not an excuse for a late submission.

Back up your work: Computer failures are sadly not uncommon. Please cover yourself by regularly saving your work to cloud storage and to an external storage device.

Electronic submission of assignments

Please upload your assignments to Blackboard only. If you have trouble with Blackboard, reach out to Blackboard support directly for help—service is available 24/7 at 213-740-5555. Blackboard submissions that have uploaded successfully automatically generate an email to the student who submitted them. If you don't get the email, you haven't submitted your assignment.

If Blackboard has a problem, you may email your assignment as proof that you completed it by the deadline. However, we can only grade in the Blackboard environment so you will still need to upload there as soon as the system is functioning.

Zoom policies

Ideally, all students will attend class with their camera on, wearing classroom appropriate clothing. I of course understand and accept that sometimes it's not possible to keep a camera on due to bandwidth or other issues.

Please keep your microphone off during class, except when you're asked to unmute for discussion or questions.

You are welcome to use virtual backgrounds but please select only classroom-appropriate images.

Zoom recordings

Zoom recordings are for our internal class purposes only. Lecture content is considered intellectual property, and the privacy of students is guaranteed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). It is your responsibility to keep our Zoom recordings private; you may not save, distribute or share the recordings or transcripts with anyone.

Grading:

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. 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. Consider connecting with USC’s Writing Center early in the semester for help with your writing. 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.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Comm analysis paper	20%
Investigation presentation	20%
Homework & in-class work	15%
Exam 1	15%
Exam 2	15%
Exam 3	15%

The grading scale for this class will be that an A is equivalent to 94 or above; A- is 90-93; B+ is 87-89; B is 84-86; B- is 80-83; C+ is 77-79; C is 74-76; C- is 70-73; D+ is 67-69; D is 64-66; D- is 60-63; and F is 59 and below.

Assignments

Much more information will be forthcoming—this is just an idea of what to expect.

Comm Analysis Paper

You will write a 5-7 page paper that demonstrates your understanding and application of course concepts.

Investigation Presentation (15%)

This will be an opportunity to investigate an interpersonal comm topic that interests you and share it with the class.

Homework & In-Class Work (10%)

You will get credit for some in-class participation activities and short, independent assignments.

Exams (three at 15% each)

The exams assess if you are able to apply what you have learned through class meetings and readings. Prepare for a series of rigorous multiple choice questions on the midterms. If you know yourself to be someone finds these kinds of tests particularly challenging, check my posts on Blackboard and seek help early in the semester.

Please note that you are responsible for both the material presented in the readings and in class. The two do not always overlap. If you miss a class, be sure to watch the recording. Since some of our work will be done in breakout rooms which Zoom does not record, you should probably also get notes from a couple of other students regarding what you missed.

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 should reflect that knowledge base.

Looking Ahead

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

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Integrity Policy:

The School of Communication maintains a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found responsible for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards and may be dismissed from the School of Communication. There are no exceptions to the school's policy.

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

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, without approval of the instructor.

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. See the university's site on **Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness**.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/additional-funding-resources>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

Course Bibliography (subject to change)

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- Oltmanns, J. R., Markey, P. M., & French, J. E. (2017). Dissimilarity in physical attractiveness within romantic dyads and mate retention behaviors. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 34, 565-577.