

Instructor:	Jillian Pierson, Ph.D. (213)821-1127 jilliank@usc.edu	Feel free to reach out to me by texting or calling my office phone number. Text for short messages only, please. Longer, content-related questions are best sent via email.
Office hours:	Zoom Fridays 9-11 am Campus office ASC G21 by appt	I encourage you to connect with me outside of our regularly scheduled class meetings! I will have regular office hours Friday mornings from 9 to 11 this semester on Zoom (you can find the link on Blackboard). I am usually in my campus office before and after class and would be glad to meet with you then. If none of these times work well, please email me with several suggested options to set up an alternate meeting time for in-person, Zoom, or phone.

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 Outcomes

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.

Week	Date	Topic	Assignment due before class	Readings for after class
1	Aug 23	Course welcome & introduction		
	Aug 25	Defining interpersonal comm	Student info form	GAA Ch 1
2	Aug 30	Identity & self-presentation	Visual identity	GAA Ch 2
	Sept 1	in "real life" and online		Verduyn et al. (2020)
3	Sept 6	Interpersonal comm theories (cont.)		GAA Ch 4
	Sept 8			GAA Ch 6 Donovan et al. (2017) Nuru & Wang (2014)
4	Sept 13	Attraction	Journal article selected	GAA Ch 3
	Sept 15	& mate selection		Hall & Compton 2017 Neyt et al. (2020) Oltmanns et al. 2016
5	Sept 20	Relational development	Journal report	GAA Ch 5
	Sept 22	phases and stages		GAA Ch 15
6	Sept 27	Love and attachment	Quiz	GAA Ch 8
	Sept 29	styles and preferences		Horan et al (2015)
7	Oct 4	Affection & immediacy	Paper artifact selected	GAA Ch 7
	Oct 6	Relational maintenance		GAA Ch 10
8	Oct 11	Midterm	Midterm exam	
	Oct 13	<i>Enjoy fall recess—no class meeting</i>		
9	Oct 18	Communicating about sex	topic ideas due	Goodboy et al. 2010 Kelly, Duran & Miller-Ott 2017
	Oct 20	& sexual health		GAA Ch 9
10	Oct 25	Conflict	prelim sources due	GAA Ch 11 Aloia & Solomon (2015) Merrill & Afifi (2017)
	Oct 27	Deception		GAA Ch 13 Elphinston et al. (2013) Markovitz & Hancock (2018)
11	Nov 1	Presentations	Presentations/ Peer feedback	
	Nov 3	Presentations		Peer feedback
12	Nov 8	Presentations	Peer feedback	
	Nov 10	Presentations		Peer feedback
13	Nov 15	Presentations	Peer feedback	
	Nov 17	Healing & apologizing		GAA Ch 14

Week	Date	Topic	Assignment due before class	Readings for after class
14	Nov 22	(cont.)		Carr et al. (2015)
	Nov 24	<i>Thanksgiving—no class meeting</i>		
15	Nov 29	Power & influence		GAA Ch 12
	Dec 1	Course conclusion		
	Dec 8	Final exam 2 – 4 pm	Exam	

Please note the date of the final exam is set by USC. The university requires we hold the final during that time period.

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. Of course you may occasionally have to miss class for illness or other reasons. When you are absent, I do not need to hear an excuse. I do not take attendance after the first few weeks of class. However, 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.

No laptops or electronics.

In order to create the best possible learning environment, I ask you to not use your laptops or phones. I completely understand the temptation, but I think we all benefit from focusing without technology. Current research shows that taking notes by hand is more effective than typing them. Read the articles posted on Blackboard for a lengthier discussion of this policy. (Sometimes students have documented reasons for using laptops for note-taking; exceptions are made only for students with such documentation.)

Please bring pen and paper to lectures for note-taking and activities. If you are using an iPad or other tablet instead of pen and paper, that is acceptable as long as you keep your device open to the note-taking app only.

The two exams will require use of a laptop, so they will be an exception to the “no laptop” rule.

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.

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:

Homework & in-class work	10%
Journal article report	10%
Comm analysis paper	20%
Investigation mini-lecture	20%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%

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.

- A Excellent; demonstrates extraordinarily high achievement; comprehensive knowledge and understanding of subject matter; all expectations met and exceeded.
- B Good; moderately broad knowledge and understanding of subject matter; explicitly or implicitly demonstrates good, if not thorough understanding; only minor substantive shortcomings.
- C Satisfactory; reasonable knowledge and understanding of subject matter; most expectations are met; despite any shortcomings, demonstrates basic level of understanding.
- D Marginal; minimal knowledge and understanding of subject matter; more than one significant shortcoming; deficiencies indicate only the most rudimentary level of understanding.
- F Failing; unacceptably low level of knowledge and understanding of subject matter; deficiencies indicate lack of understanding.
- P/ NP To earn a passing grade, you must have a C- or higher. You also may not omit any assignments or exams regardless of your average score in the class.

Assignments

Much more information will be forthcoming and posted on Blackboard. These brief descriptions are just to give you an idea of what to expect.

Homework & In-Class Work (10%)

You will get for short, independent assignments and possibly some in-class participation activities. These will include:

- Student Information Sheet: complete this so I have some info about you
- Visual Representation of Identity
 - Create a collage, digital or on paper, that represents a number of elements of your identity. Be prepared to share these in class (and edit your work with your own privacy needs in mind).
- Practice quiz
- Topic selection for comm analysis paper
- Topic selection for investigation presentation
- Peer feedback/questions on presentations

Journal Article Report (10%)

You will select a recent research article published in a scholarly journal about interpersonal communication. You will write a brief report (2-3 pages) about the article, and present your report in class.

Comm Analysis Paper (20%)

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

Investigation Mini-Lecture (20%)

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

Exams (40%)

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 exams. 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 connect with a couple of your peers to get notes. If you need clarification after getting notes, please come to me with your 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 should reflect that knowledge base.

Campus Resources

Please take advantage of some of the resources your tuition supports. Early in the semester, visit The Writing Center for one-on-one assistance or small-group workshops. (Email writing@usc.edu or call 213-740-3691). If you have difficulty with tests, reach out to the Center for Academic Support (call 213-740-0776 or email them at study@usc.edu).

Honoring Native Lands

Our USC campus is located on the traditional land of the Tongva People. It is a complicated reality that we exist in a space which for many years belonged to the Tongva as well as the Chumash, Tataviam, Serrano, Cahuilla, Juaneno, and Luiseno People. I would like to acknowledge the unjust, violent history that unfolded over many years before the establishment of this university, and to show appreciation and humility toward indigenous communities and the sacrifices they were—and continue to be—forced to make.

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

a. Academic Conduct

Plagiarism

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](#).” Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

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.

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.

b. 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 and 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. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

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 Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

uscса.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/annenberg-scholarships-and-awards>

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.

Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 8/22/22 – 12/2/22)

Link: <https://classes.usc.edu/term-20223/calendar/>

Friday, September 9: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

Friday, September 9: Last day to drop a class without a mark of "W," except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

Friday, September 9: Last day to change enrollment option to audit for Session 001

Friday, September 9: Last day to change a Pass/No Pass to a letter grade for Session 001

Friday, September 9: Last day to purchase or waive tuition refund insurance for fall

Tuesday, September 13: Last day to add or drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund or change to Pass/No Pass or Audit for Session 001

Friday, October 7: Last day to drop a course without a mark of "W" on the transcript for Session 001. Mark of "W" will still appear on student record and STARS report and tuition charges still apply. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the 20 percent mark of the session) to avoid tuition charges.]

Friday, November 11: Last day to drop a class with a mark of "W" for Session 001