

COM 691i: The “Dark Side” of Interpersonal Communication
Fall 2012 TTh 12:00 to 1:15pm

Professor

Dr. Laura Guerrero
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Office Hrs: Tu 1:15 to 2:00pm; Th 9:30 to 10:30am; and by appointment

Seminar Assistants

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COURSE OVERVIEW

This seminar focuses on research and theory addressing the “dark side” of interpersonal communication, especially as it occurs in close relationships. Paradoxically, some of life’s most joyful and painful moments occur within the context of close relationships among lovers, friends, and family members. Some types of “dark side” communication also have a bright side-- they help people better understand themselves and their relationships so they can renegotiate rules and improve their relationships. As Cupach and Spitzberg (2011) argued, “there are often positive silver linings in seemingly dark relational clouds. The dark side embraces and promotes the need to integrate dark and bright aspects of relationships in order to reveal a more nuanced understanding of human interaction.” Of course, some forms of “dark side” communication, such as violence, have no bright side.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this seminar are for students to:

(1) better understand the processes related to the dark side of relationships by reading and discussing seminal works on various dark side topics, as well as facilitating sophisticated and intelligent class discussion on a given day,

(2) be able to apply research and theory in ways that might help people better cope with dark side events, in part by writing a “how to” type article that might appear in a respected magazine such as *Psychology Today*, and

(3) be able to analyze and extend dark side research by reading and participating in class discussion, as well as reviewing and critiquing an area of research related to the dark side.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Seminars provide graduate students with unique opportunities to participate in and shape their own learning experiences. A seminar is a better learning experience when students come prepared to participate and share their ideas. Therefore, it is essential that readings are completed before class. Discussion questions for each week will be posted on Blackboard by noon on Friday to help facilitate preparation and participation. Please look at the discussion questions before reading and think about how you would answer each question if it was on an exam. Your participation grade will be based on both the quality and quantity of what you contribute to class discussion.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is required of all Arizona State University students. Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated and can result in failing an exam or the entire course, as well as disciplinary action at the college or university level. In addition to “traditional” forms of cheating and plagiarism, it is unacceptable to turn the same paper into two classes. If you have not received the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication’s document regarding plagiarism and academic integrity, please see the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication website: <http://hdshc.asu.edu/academic/acadintpol.html>.

GRADES

Grades will be based on points as follows:

Application Papers (2 @ 75 points each) -----	150 pts.
State-of-the-Art Literature Review-----	200 pts.
Seminar Session Leadership -----	150 pts.
Participation in Class Discussion -----	100 pts.
Presentation of Research Paper-----	50 pts.

Final grades will be calculated based on the following scale (total points possible= 650)

602-650	A	520-535	B-
585-601	A-	504-519	C+
569-584	B+	455-503	C
536-568	B	390-454	D

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic and Core Readings</u>
Th 8/23	Welcome to the Dark Side (Course Overview)
Tu 8/28	Fatal Attraction and Disillusionment (Lecture) Femlee, D. H. (1998). Fatal attraction. In B. H. Spitzberg & W. R. Cupach (Eds.), <i>The dark side of close relationships</i> (pp. 3-31). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. Niehuis, S., Lee, K., Reifman, A., Swenson, A. & Hunsaker, S. (2011). Idealization and disillusionment in intimate relationships: A review of theory, method, and research. <i>Journal of Family Theory & Review</i> , 3, 273-302.
Th 8/30	Fatal Attraction and Disillusionment (Discussion) Facilitator: _____
Tu 9/4	Uncertainty (Lecture) Knobloch, L. K. (2007). The dark side of relational uncertainty: Obstacle or opportunity? In B. H. Spitzberg & W. R. Cupach (Eds.), <i>The dark side of interpersonal communication</i> (2 nd ed., pp. 31-59). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
Th 9/6	Uncertainty (Discussion) Facilitator: _____
Tu 9/11	Unrequited Love and Obsessive Relational Intrusion (Lecture) Bratslavsky, E., Baumeister, R. F., & Sommer, K. (1998). To love or be loved in vain: The trials and tribulations of unrequited love. In B. H. Spitzberg & W. R. Cupach (Eds.), <i>The dark side of close relationships</i> (pp. 307-326). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. Cupach, W. R., & Spitzberg, B. H. (1998). Obsessive relational intrusion and stalking. In B. H. Spitzberg & W. R. Cupach (Eds.), <i>The dark side of close relationships</i> (pp. 233-263). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
Th 9/13	Unrequited Love and Obsessive Relational Intrusion (Discussion) Facilitator: _____
Tu 9/18	Transgressions and Hurtful Events (Lecture)

Vangelisti, A. L. (2007). Communicating hurt. In B. H. Spitzberg & W. R. Cupach (Eds.), *The dark side of interpersonal communication* (2nd ed., pp. 121-142). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Metts, S., & Cupach, W. R. (2007). Responses to relational transgressions: Hurt, anger, and sometimes forgiveness. In B. H. Spitzberg & W. R. Cupach (Eds.), *The dark side of interpersonal communication* (2nd ed., pp. 243-274). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Th 9/20 Transgressions and Hurtful Events (Discussion)

Facilitator: _____

Tu 9/25 Infidelity (Lecture)

Tsapelas, I., Fisher, H. E., & Aron, A. (2011). Infidelity: When, where, why. In W. R. Cupach & B. H. Spitzberg (Eds.), *The dark side of close relationships II* (pp. 197-216). New York: Routledge.

Tafoya, M. A., & Spitzberg, B. H. (2007). The dark side of infidelity: Its nature, prevalence, and communicative functions. In B. H. Spitzberg & W. R. Cupach (Eds.), *The dark side of interpersonal communication* (2nd ed., pp. 201-242). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Th 9/27 Infidelity (Discussion)

Facilitator: _____

Tu 10/2 Jealousy and Envy (Lecture)

Guerrero, L. K., & Andersen, P. A. (1998). The dark side of jealousy and envy: Desire, delusion, desperation, and destructive communication. In B. H. Spitzberg & W. R. Cupach (Eds.), *The dark side of close relationships* (pp. 33-70). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Th 10/4 Jealousy and Envy (Discussion)

Facilitator: _____

Tu 10/9 Words that Hurt: Complaints, Criticisms, and Bullying (Lecture)

Cupach, W. R. (2007). "You're bugging me!" Complaints and criticisms from a partner. In B. H. Spitzberg & W. R. Cupach (Eds.), *The dark side of interpersonal communication* (2nd ed., pp. 143-168). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Kowalski, R. M. (2007). Bullying and teasing. In B. H. Spitzberg & W. R. Cupach (Eds.), *The dark side of interpersonal communication* (2nd ed., pp. 169-197). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Th 10/11 Complaints and Criticisms (Discussion)

Facilitator: _____

Tu 10/16 **No Class--Fall Break**

Th 10/18 Bullying (Discussion)

Facilitator: _____

Tu 10/23 Conflict and Aggression (Lecture)

Messman, S. J., & Canary, D. J. (1998). Patterns of conflict in personal relationships. *The dark side of close relationships* (pp. 121-152). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Spitzberg, B. H. (2011). Intimate partner violence and aggression: Seeing light in a dark place. *The dark side of close relationships II* (pp. 197-216). New York: Routledge.

Th 10/25 Conflict (Discussion)

Tu 10/30 Violence and Aggression (Discussion)

Th 11/1 Topic Avoidance and Secrets (Lecture)

Afifi, T., Caughlin, J., & Afifi, W. (2007). The dark side (and light side) of avoidance and secrets. In B. H. Spitzberg & W. R. Cupach (Eds.), *The dark side of interpersonal communication* (2nd ed., pp. 61-92). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Tu 11/6 Topic Avoidance and Secrets (Discussion)

Facilitator: _____

Th 11/8 Disengagement (Lecture)

Amato, P. R. (2010). Research on divorce: Continuing trends and new developments. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 72, 650-666.

Weber, A. L. (1998). Loving, leaving, and letting go: Coping with nonmarital breakups. In B. H. Spitzberg & W. R. Cupach (Eds.), *The dark side of close relationships* (pp. 267-306). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Duck, S. W. (2005). How do you tell someone you're letting go? A new model of relationship breakup. *The Psychologist*, 18, 210–213.

Tu 11/13 Disengagement (Discussion)

Facilitator: _____

Th 11/15 **No Class—National Communication Conference**

Tu 11/20 Forgiveness & Repair (Lecture)

Waldron, V. R., & Kelley, D. L. (2008). *Communicating forgiveness*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (Chapter 4)

Roloff, M. E., & Cloven, D. H. (1994). When partners transgress: Maintaining violated relationships. In D. J. Canary & L. Stafford (Eds.), *Communication and relational maintenance* (pp. 23-43). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Th 11/22 **No Class--Thanksgiving**

Tu 11/27 Forgiveness (Discussion)

Facilitator: _____

Th 11/29 Relationship Repair (Discussion)

Facilitator: _____

Tu 12/4 Final Paper Presentations

Th 12/6 Final Paper Presentations

Tu 12/11 Final Paper Presentations

Tu 12/18 **Final Papers Due**

***** On Discussion Days, two to three additional readings to be assigned by the student facilitator**

ASSIGNMENTS

Seminar Session Facilitator

You will act as seminar facilitator for one of the topics listed in the syllabus. The seminar facilitator is responsible for running one 75-minute class session. Dr. Guerrero (and occasionally Ms. Cole or Ms. Fleuriet) will be responsible for discussing the core readings on the lecture days. On discussion days, the student facilitator will lead an extended discussion that focuses on specific research studies connected to the topic. As seminar facilitator, you are responsible for choosing two or three articles for the class to read. The full citations for these articles, along with 5-6 thought-provoking discussion questions, should be posted on Blackboard NO LATER THAN NOON ONE WEEK BEFORE your discussion date. Please make sure that the articles you choose are available in ASU's electronic holdings. Seminar facilitators are responsible for leading class discussion on their chosen day. Be prepared to talk about the articles, facilitate discussion, and offer carefully-thought out commentary when necessary. You will also compile and distribute an annotated bibliography of ten sources for your topic, as described next.

Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to articles. Each citation is followed by a paragraph that describes and evaluates the source. This paragraph is the "annotation." The purpose of the annotation is to provide information about what the article contains (e.g., brief rationale/theoretical foundation, hypotheses, findings, and conclusions) as well as to assess the article's quality and importance (e.g., what are the main contributions, why is it important, how could it have been improved). This is the main difference between an annotation and an abstract; the annotation contains evaluative statements along with description. You will prepare an annotated bibliography containing ten sources for the day that you are seminar facilitator. Your annotated bibliography should include the 2-3 articles that you post on Blackboard for the class to read as well as 7-9 other articles relevant to your topic (for a total of 10 articles). This assignment is due the day that you facilitate discussion. You need send your annotated bibliography to everyone in our seminar 24 hours before class starts, or you can bring copies to distribute in class.

Application Papers

This assignment involves writing two short application papers that are 5-6 pages in length. These papers should focus on explaining a concept, process, or theory and then offering practical advice based on the topic you discussed. These papers should be written in a style that is highly readable, and would therefore be appropriate for a general audience. Articles such as this routinely appear in outlets such as *Communication Currents*, *Psychology Today*, and *The Psychologist*. This type of work is important because it allows the general public to access helpful information about relationships. For an example of the type of paper I am looking for, see this article by Steve Duck.

http://www.thepsychologist.org.uk.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/archive/archive_home.cfm/volumeID_18-editionID_117-ArticleID_839-getfile_getPDF/thepsychologist/0405duck.pdf

For this assignment, you will choose any two topics from those listed on the syllabus. Your paper will be due the week after the topic is discussed in class. So if your topic is uncertainty, your paper would be due on Thursday, 9/13. Papers should be turned in using Safe Assignment since I will grade them on my computer. *You must turn in at least one application paper prior to Fall Break.*

When writing your article, please follow the following guidelines:

- The text of the paper (not including the title page or references) should be **5-6 pages long**. All papers should be *double-spaced with 1 inch-margins all around*. For consistency in length across papers, please use *Times Roman 12-pt. font*.
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- Summarize the literature on your topic in a “user-friendly” manner so that a general audience can understand the research and put it to practical use. ***This paper is MORE than just a literature review; you need to include practical applications or advice based on the literature you summarize.*** The content of your paper should be based on scholarly research rather than personal opinion.
- Incorporate information from at least five scholarly sources into your article (class material is fine to use) and use APA style.

State-of-the-Art Literature Review

Professors are often asked to write chapters for book on various topics, including “The Dark Side of Communication.” Such a task is more difficult than you might think. Instead of focusing on a specific topic and set of chosen hypotheses, a book chapter is often designed to provide readers with a snapshot of the most important research in a given area. It can be a challenge to provide coverage of a topic that is both fairly comprehensive as well as in depth. This assignment helps you learn how to write such a chapter and demonstrates mastery of a particular content area.

A state-of-the-art literature review provides an in-depth, fairly comprehensive summary of the literature on a given topic. For this class, your literature review can focus on a topic that is in the syllabus, or you can choose another dark-side topic, such as deception or gossip. If you are choosing a topic that is not in the syllabus, please clear your topic with Dr. Guerrero before you get started. This paper should be written as if it was the introduction or concluding article in a special journal issue or book on a particular “dark side” topic. Your state-of-the-art literature review should include a focus on communication. It should also include definitions of important terms and descriptions of concepts and theories relevant to the topic you choose. Moreover, your literature review should lead to some conclusions about your topic, as well as some directions for future research. (Think in terms of some of the chapters you read for this class or chapters from handbooks that you have read for other classes). Your main goal is to demonstrate mastery of a topic by showing familiarity with key concepts and/or theories. This type of project also requires you to synthesize the literature in ways that help readers make sense of the research.

- This paper should be **15- to 18 pages long** (excluding the title page and references), double-spaced with 1 inch-margins all around, using Times Roman 12-pt. font.
- Use APA format. A minimum of 12 sources is required, but most students use more. (Some topics have been researched more than others. Don’t try to cover a broad topic like “conflict,” instead choose something like “demand-withdraw patterns in conflict” or “conflict styles.”)
- You will meet with Ms. Cole or Ms. Fleuriet when you have a draft of your paper together. They can help you think of ways to improve the paper and give you other general feedback. (Of course, this does not mean that you can’t meet with Dr. Guerrero. She is available anytime you need her ☺).

- You will present your state-of-the-art paper in “convention-style” fashion during one of the last class meetings. You will have 15 minutes to present, which is similar to the time you would have if you were presenting your paper as part of a “dark side” panel at a professional conference. The actual paper is not due until the day of our final, but you need to have enough done by the day you present to be able to provide the class with a nice summary of the area of research you choose. Please prepare Powerpoint slides for your presentation and post them on Blackboard before your presentation day.

We will provide more information about these assignments during class. If you have any questions before then, please ask. We hope you enjoy our journey into the “dark side. . .”