

## COM 410 INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION THEORY & RESEARCH

**Instructor:**

**Office:**

**Office hours:**

**E-mail:**

NOTE: Email is the best way to contact me. When sending an email, include your course number (312) in the subject line. Plan ahead and be patient: It will probably take more than 24 hours for me to get back to you. If you do not receive a reply within 48 hours (longer on weekends), assume that your email was not received and try again.

**Read this syllabus carefully. By remaining enrolled in the class, you have accepted the conditions and requirements of the course.** The requirements and rules indicated in this syllabus are non-negotiable. You should drop the class immediately if *any* aspects of the course, its rules, and/or requirements are not acceptable to you.

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**Student responsibility:** You must meet all GPA and prerequisite requirements to remain in this class. If you do not meet the GPA or prerequisites, the Hugh Downs School retains the right to remove you from the course whether or not you have completed any assignments, exams, or work. You will be removed administratively if you do not withdraw from the course on your own. Prerequisites include COM 308; minimum cumulative ASU GPA of 2.50.

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### **COURSE COMPONENTS:**

As a 400-level class with a comparatively small enrollment, we will take a “seminar” approach for the semester. The goal is to collaborate on exploring cutting-edge issues in interpersonal communication, and the role of theory in understanding and explaining those issues **NOTE: Self-motivation is essential in this class.**

In many ways, this class will be constructed as we go, and adapted where possible to the interests of the students in the class. General components include but are not limited to study of both popular and academic sources; conducting theory-driven observations; collaborating with other students in critical analysis of interpersonal communication challenges; and providing oral and written reports (individually and in collaboration with others).

Our first few classes will be devoted to jointly developing our areas of interest and potential graded assignments. Details of all graded assignments will be provided in ample time to prepare. A Course Calendar will be developed with due dates, which will be posted in Blackboard.

**READINGS:**

Braithwaite, D. and Schrod, P. (2014). *Engaging theories in interpersonal communication: Multiple perspectives* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc. ISBN: 9781452261409

Other sources (such as hand-outs, online academic articles, and website references) will also be part of your readings.

**Course Objectives:** This course examines research topics, paradigms and theories in interpersonal communication.

**CLASS OBJECTIVES:** The focus of this class will be on the development of critical thinking skills as applied to current research and theory in interpersonal communication. You will

1. gain increased knowledge of theories and topics in interpersonal communication.
2. have an improved ability to read and critically analyze interpersonal communication research.
3. improve your ability to critically and creatively apply communication skills in your daily life.
4. increase your critical thinking skills.

**PARTICIPATION** will include frequent short, ungraded reports on current readings and research. Other participation includes but is not limited to short homework assignments, daily discussion participation, ungraded presentations, attendance and punctuality.

The exact point value of attendance and of any given participation assignment will depend on the number and nature of the participation assignments over the course of the semester. Participation assignments are pass/fail. *Participation assignments cannot be made up.*

**COURSE GRADING:**

**Graded assignments and point value will be determined in consultation with the class.**

The Hugh Downs School uses the +/- system in all classes.

A+	= 100%
A	= 93-99.9
A-	= 90-92.9
B+	= 87-89.9
B	= 83-86.9
B-	= 80-82.9
C+	= 77-79.9
C	= 70-76.9
D	= 60-69.9
E	= 0-59.9%

Grades will be posted in Blackboard in a timely manner.

*Note that grades are NOT rounded up.*

**I do not “give” grades. Grades are *earned*** based on your performance over the semester. Individual graded assignments do not determine your final grade. Consistent work over the entire semester is totaled to determine a final letter grade based on points earned. Extra credit assignments generally are NOT offered.

**IMPORTANT:** Knowing and properly applying American Psychological Association (APA) style is required for the major written assignments in this course. We will NOT use class time to teach you APA style.

### **BLACKBOARD:**

**Online/Blackboard Component:** Several aspects of this class will be conducted online through the course Blackboard.

**Course Contact:** Periodically, I will post announcements and/or send out individual and class emails with updated information about the class. All email sent via Blackboard is automatically sent to students’ asu.edu accounts. Therefore, you must regularly check your ASU email. Of course, you can forward your ASU email to another account if you wish. Note, though, that ASU has good firewalls. It’s best to use your ASU email to contact me.

**Feedback:** I welcome feedback about the course. If we wait until university evaluations at the end of the semester, I cannot make changes that will help you. I regularly ask the class for feedback and suggestions. Please share your thoughts with us in an open and constructive manner during the semester. You can make suggestions in class, with either of us privately during office hours, or via email.

### **CLASS POLICIES**

*We hold these truths to be self-evident.....*

*1. You will at all times be prepared for class.*

The interactive nature of this class means any failure to prepare will impact everyone in the class, not just the student who is unprepared. My expectations are high in this regard.

Students who require special assistance or accommodation as arranged through Disability Resources, and students participating in university-sanctioned absences (including religious holidays), should let me know within the first week of class. Students with university-sanctioned travel generally will need to complete assignments and exams in advance.

No late work will be accepted without *advance* arrangements made with the instructor or *extensive* documentation of an emergency situation. Routinely scheduled doctor (or other) appointments do NOT constitute an emergency situation.

*2. You will respect that your classmates are here to learn.*

Because communication courses by their very nature cover personal topics, it is important that we work together for an atmosphere of respect and support. Please respect the privacy of your classmates outside the classroom. It can be a very small world.

In addition, you are expected at all times to be respectful (in both language and behavior) to your classmates regardless of sex, race, age, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, religion, or personal opinions. An important part of your development as a scholar is learning how to disagree without being disagreeable.

Note that any form of disruptive behavior can result in loss of participation points. Verbal or physical aggression before, during or after class will result in permanent removal from the class and notification of the proper authorities. See the Arizona Board of Regents Policy Manual Chapter V – Campus and Student Affairs: Code of Conduct.

3. *You are here to learn and will focus all of your attention on the class during all of each session.*

Students sometimes have the view that entering and leaving the classroom at will is acceptable.

**Temporarily leaving the room during class is not acceptable; it is disruptive to the instructor and to the people around you.** Plan your bathroom/snack/phone breaks for outside of class time. If you need to leave, *do not return* during that class period, and you will be considered absent from class that day. The only exceptions are those with documented medical needs, which you must communicate to me at the start of the semester.

**FAIR WARNING**

**USING ELECTRONIC DEVICES:** For the duration of class all electronic devices – including laptops – will be turned off, put away, not handled or used in any manner without my express permission.

***PENALTY for use of ANY unauthorized electronic device:***

***1st offense: Loss of that day's participation points.***

***2nd offense: Loss of half a letter grade for the course.***

***3<sup>rd</sup> (& each subsequent) offense: Loss of an additional letter grade.***

4. *You can and will attend all classes.*

Your input is valuable to your classmates, to the instructor, and to your learning. You cannot participate if you are not present.

We will start promptly; be on time. Expect the class to last the full period.

If a class is missed, you are responsible for getting any notes *from your classmates*. Most handouts and major announcements made by the instructor will also be posted on the class Blackboard.

Makeup exams or deadline extensions will be considered **ONLY** for those who *upon return to class* provide **extensive written documentation** of severe illness, or death in the *immediate* family. It is your responsibility to contact the instructor. Final deadline for providing documentation, and arranging makeup work if allowed, is two weeks following your return to class. No assignments can be turned in after the last class day.

You must attend class to pass. This is **NOT** an online course and failure to attend regularly and consistently will result in me asking you to drop.

Note that non-emergency personal travel plans (e.g., around holidays) **never** excuse you from taking tests, turning in assignments or making presentations at the time scheduled.

5. *You will maintain high standards of personal civility.*

What you learn in this class is highly relevant to today's workplace and marketplace. We will model ourselves on standards of behavior reflecting professionalism and respect. This means

foul language is not appropriate. Actions or materials that are in poor taste are not appropriate. For a detailed discussion of expected standards, see the Student Conduct section, below.

6. *You will maintain the highest standard of academic integrity.*

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication strongly believe in academic integrity; thus, instructors in the College and School do not tolerate cheating and plagiarism.

Note that plagiarism is intentionally *or unintentionally* using another's work (including wording, phrases, or original ideas) without giving the person proper credit. This includes representing anyone else's words as your own. Exact words can be used **ONLY** in clearly attributed quotes. Individual assignments must be your work and solely your work. Also, "self-plagiarism" is not allowed; in no case may you use material you have produced in another class or context without express *written* permission from me.

Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination.

Instructors who find compelling evidence of academic dishonesty will actively pursue one or more of the following actions: assigning a grade of XE ("failure through academic dishonesty") to the student, advocating the suspension or expulsion of the student from the College, and/or referring the student to Student Judicial Affairs. If a student who is charged with academic dishonesty is found to be in violation, then one or more of these disciplinary actions will be taken. For further information, please read the Student Academic Integrity policy and the code of conduct for Arizona State University: <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity/policy>.

**Remember, *any* academic dishonesty in this course will result in failure of the course**, and could also lead to disciplinary action by the college or university. Unfortunately my personal patience for such things has been far exceeded. I will have no hesitation at all about failing you.

### **WRITING REQUIREMENTS:**

Unless otherwise specified, the required format for *all* papers submitted on SafeAssign is .rtf , .doc, .docx, or .odt, NOT pdf, etc. All papers must be typed in black 12-point Times Roman, double-spaced and have one-inch margins. [NOTE: Your computer default setting may not be 1". Reset it, as needed. Contact the Helpdesk if you need assistance.]

You are expected to write at a *collegiate* level. *Any* use of "text message" jargon in a written assignment will result in a 0 for the assignment.

In keeping with our emphasis on professionalism, correct spelling and grammar are required on all assignments. Grades on poorly written assignments will be lowered by *up to 20 percent*. If you have ANY doubts about your writing abilities, I strongly suggest that you seek assistance. There are invaluable resources available to you, including The Writing Center (<http://studentsuccess.asu.edu/home/writingcenters>).

Individual papers must be your work and solely your work. Also, "self-plagiarism" is not allowed; in no case may you use material you have produced in another class without express *written* permission from me. [See the discussion on Academic Integrity.]

All in-class work is due at the BEGINNING of the class period on the designated day and as scheduled on Blackboard by 11 p.m. on the due date. No late work will be accepted without *advance* arrangements made with the instructor. Computer problems are *not* an excuse for late work. Late assignments lose 10% per calendar day. All “excuses” must be sufficiently documented. Presentations generally cannot be rescheduled.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you have computer problems using Blackboard, *do NOT* contact the instructor for help. If you have computer, internet or Blackboard-related problems, you should immediately contact 1-855-278-5080 or visit the My ASU Service Center ([my.asu.edu/service](http://my.asu.edu/service)) to get personalized support through 24/7 live chat or by submitting your request online. You can also get computer assistance week days by visiting the technology studio next to the main entrance at the Computer Commons.

Each time you submit an assignment through SafeAssign, *verify that your paper was submitted correctly*. To do this, go to the Grade Center. If you see an icon in the space where your grade will be, then your assignment was successfully received. It is your responsibility to verify this PRIOR to the deadline as no assignments will be accepted and graded that are not successfully submitted through SafeAssign. Submitting the “wrong” paper and/or in the wrong SafeAssign file will result in a lower score.

- I do not accept e-mailed assignments as a substitute for the SafeAssign submission.
- In emergency situations, e-mailed assignments may be accepted *in lieu of a hard copy* with advance permission ONLY, and will incur a 5% penalty *in addition* to any penalties for lateness.
- Papers will not be graded until a copy is submitted to SafeAssign.

### **STUDENT CONDUCT:**

The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication strives for a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. In a communication class, it is especially important that we

- (1) display respect for all members of the classroom – including the instructor and students;
- (2) pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities;
- (3) avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading the newspaper, surfing the internet, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, etc.); and
- (4) avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom.

This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, it represent examples of the types of things that can have a dramatic impact on the class environment. Your final grade may be reduced each time you engage in these sorts of behaviors.

Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference by other members of the class. An instructor may withdraw a student from a course when the student’s behavior disrupts the educational process under USI 201-10 (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/usi/usi201-10.html>). This includes students who are verbally or physically aggressive towards the instructor or another student before, during, or after class. As noted in this document, “An instructor may withdraw a student from a course with a mark of 'W' or 'E' when the student’s behavior disrupts the educational process. Disruptive classroom behavior for this purpose is defined by the instructor.” In cases where disruptive behavior does not warrant removal from class, at the instructor’s discretion a student’s final grade will be lowered by 25% instead.

Students are required to adhere to the behavior standards listed in the Arizona Board of Regents Policy Manual Chapter V – Campus and Student Affairs: Code of Conduct

(<https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/codeofconduct>) as well as the ACD 125: Computer, Internet, and Electronics Communications (<https://cfo.asu.edu/bts-computer-usage-policy>).

**Caveat:** I reserve the right to update or change portions of this syllabus in order to make the class a better experience for everyone. This may be in response to suggestions from students, from my own observations, or as the result of requirements by the Department, College, or University. Changes will be posted to the course Blackboard.