



HDFS 3313: Interpersonal Relation
Department of Educational Psychology
University of North Texas
Fall 2026

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Office Hours: Mondays 1-5 PM; Tuesdays/Thursdays 4-5 PM

Classroom: BLB 260

Meeting Time: TuTh 2:20PM - 3:40PM

Phone: 940-565-3962

Required Textbook:

Knapp, M. L., Vangelisti, A. L., & Caughlin, J. P. (2020). *Interpersonal communication and human relationships* (8th ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing.

Additional required readings will be posted on Canvas

Course Description

The study of interpersonal relationships and communications in a variety of contexts, such as parent-child relationships, romantic relationships and peer relationships.

Course Objective

The overall objective of the course is to develop students' understanding, appreciation, and knowledge of issues which influences relationships and individual well-being as they appear in social interactions and setting. After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Recognize stabilizing and destabilizing behavior patterns related to relationship longevity and health.
- Identify sources of stress and support in relationships.
- Explain and discuss how aspects of individual development influence personal interactions.
- Compare and contrast the effectiveness and utility of different strategies for developing and maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships.
- Describe how social contexts influence interpersonal relationships.
- Evaluate information about relationships and families present in popular culture and media sources as well as the implications for relationship development, expectations, and functioning.

Course Requirements/Methods of Assessments

Exam 1	20 points
Exam 2	20 points
Exam 3	20 points
Relationship Interviews	20 points
Book presentation and peer responses	20 points

100 Points

Grades

Here's how your grade will be calculated ... Your score out of 100 will be divided by 100, yielding a percentage. For example, if your points add up to 93, you would have earned a 93%.

A: 90-100%, B: 80-89%, C: 70-79%, D: 60-69%, F: below 60%

Only percentage equal or greater than 0.5% will be rounded up (e.g. 79.5% will be rounded up; 79.4% will not)

Course Requirements

- ***Attendance***

Regular attendance is expected. **Since this is not an online class, attending class virtually (e.g. via Zoom) WILL NOT be an option** unless an accommodation has been arranged through Dean of Students Office. We cover a lot of material in class, and it will be much easier for you to keep up if you attend class regularly. Research has shown that students who attend class regularly are more likely to be successful. You should attend every class unless you have a university **excused absence** as stated in the [Student Attendance and Authorized Absences Policy \(PDF\)](https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.039_StudentAttendanceandAuthorizedAbsencesPolicy.pdf) (https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.039_StudentAttendanceandAuthorizedAbsencesPolicy.pdf)

An absence may be excused for the following reasons:

1. religious holy day, including travel for that purpose;
2. active military service, including travel for that purpose;
3. participation in an official university function;
4. illness or other extenuating circumstances;
5. pregnancy and parenting under Title IX; and
6. when the University is officially closed.

Accordingly, **24 hours written notice (email) AND supporting documents** are required for any excused absence (e.g., doctor's note).

I understand occasional tardiness and absences may occur. If you are late to class, please drop me an email to let me know the circumstances. If you must miss a class, please let me know **prior to your absence** (AND provide a supporting document for the absence to be considered excused). If you have a problem that will affect your attendance, please come to me immediately to discuss it.

- There are 3 exams in this class. Exams consist of true/false, multiple-choice, and short answer questions. They are expected to be taken on assigned dates on **October 1** (tentative), **November 5** (tentative), and **December 3**. **All exams are due by 6:00 PM** on the dates listed above. Exams cover material presented in lectures, textbook readings, supplemental readings, and media presentations. Each exam is worth 20% of the final grade.
 - Missing exams without a valid reason will receive a grade of zero (0). Legitimate reasons for missing exams include serious medical, judicial, or serious personal events that prohibit you from taking the exam. If you miss any exam, you will be required to provide written notice AND supporting documents by the end of the next business day (e.g. if you miss the exam on **October 1**, the written notice AND supporting documents should be provided by **October 2**)
 - You get only one attempt for each exam. Opening the exam counts as using your one attempt, even if you do not finish it. No retakes or do-overs will be allowed for any reason, including technical problems such as computer crashes, internet loss, or power outages.
- **Relationship Interviews:** Choose two individuals (one within the family, one outside of the family) to interview that you share a close relationship with. More information and a grading rubric will be posted on Canvas. The relationship interviews are due on **November 1 @ 6 PM**. The relationship interviews are worth **20%** of your final grade.
- **Book Presentation and Peer Response Assignment:** Includes Oral presentation + Written report + Peer responses

Each student is responsible for presenting a book (novel, autobiography, self-help book etc.) which primarily focuses on a specific type of relationship, such as parent-child, romantic, peer, professional etc.,

- **Step 1:** You must **email me** the book title **and** your preferred presentation date for approval.
- **Step 2:** After you receive my approval for both the book title and the date, you must post the approved title on the discussion board.

- **Important:** Both steps (Step 1 and Step 2) must be fully completed **by August 30 at 6:00 PM**. This means I must have received your email, approved your book and date, and **you must have posted the approved title on the discussion board by that time**.
- Failure to complete the entire process by August 30 at 6:00 PM will result in a zero for the oral presentation AND written report components (0 out of 17 points). Posting a book title without my approval will result in the same consequence. The peer-response component is graded separately.
- Presentation dates will be distributed across the available presentation period. Students may request a preferred date, but preferred dates are not guaranteed and will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. The instructor reserves the right to assign or adjust presentation dates to ensure that presentations are distributed appropriately throughout the semester.
- After receiving approval of their book choice and posting it on the discussion board, students will write a one-page book report, be assigned to one of the dates listed on the course calendar, and give a 10-minute presentation. A grading rubric will be posted on Canvas. The Book Presentation and Peer Response assignment includes three components, and is worth 20% of the final grade: the oral presentation is worth 12%, the written report is worth 5%, and the peer-response component is worth 3%.
 - Failure to present on the assigned date will result in a zero point in BOTH oral presentation grade and written report grade (i.e. 0 out of 17% of the final grade). The written report will only be graded and counted toward the final grade IF the presentation is delivered in person on the assigned date.
 - Alternative delivery methods, such as a pre-recorded presentation, are not available unless approved as part of an Office of Disability Access accommodation.
 - The written report is due at **6:00 PM on the same date as your presentation**
 - The peer-response component is worth 3% of the final grade. Students may earn up to 3 points based on their six highest-scoring peer-response forms, each worth 0.5 points.
- **Peer Response Forms:** To encourage active listening and engagement during classmates' presentations, each student must complete **at least six peer-response forms on six different presentation days. Students may submit additional peer-response forms on additional presentation days, but no more than one form per presentation day. Only the six highest scores will count toward the peer-response grade, for a maximum of 3 points.** Students must be physically present in class for the presentations addressed in the form. Peer-response forms must be submitted through Canvas by **6:00 PM on the same day** as the presentations addressed in the

form. Forms submitted after 6:00 PM will not be accepted. Students may complete a form on the day they present, but they may not review their own presentation.

- On each form, students will select one presentation delivered that day and briefly identify one specific idea, recommendation, or takeaway from that presentation. They will identify a specific course concept, explain the connection in two or three sentences, and provide one respectful question, comment, or practical takeaway. Peer responses affect only the reviewing student's grade and will not be used to determine the presenter's grade. Feedback may be shared with presenters without identifying the reviewer.
- **Peer-response grading:**
 - 0.5 point: The form is complete, specific, and clearly demonstrates attentive listening and an appropriate connection to a course concept.
 - 0.3 point: The form is submitted and shows some attention, but one section is incomplete, overly general, or does not clearly explain the course connection.
 - 0 points: The form is not submitted, is substantially incomplete, identifies the wrong presenter or presentation topic/book, is unrelated to the presentations, is copied from another student, or contains only vague comments such as "good presentation."
- Because students will have multiple opportunities to complete peer responses, individual make-up peer responses will not be offered. Students who experience an extended university-approved absence should contact the instructor.
- A copy of the peer-response form is available through Canvas
- **Extra Credits:** We will complete extra-credit activities in class throughout the semester, and the dates will NOT be disclosed in advance. Only those showing up **in-person** (i.e. not through zoom) AND participating in activities will receive extra credits. This means that **even if you have an excused absence on the day of an activity, you won't be eligible for the extra credit.** These are bonus credits, not mandatory components of the course. The in-class activities offer a chance to enhance your grade but will not negatively impact your grade should you miss the day of an activity.

COURSE POLICIES

- Late Work
 - All assignments are due at 6 pm on the date assigned.
 - Late assignments: assignment turned in 30 minutes after the due date will lose 10% of the available points; work turned in after 3 hours will lose 20% of the available points; work turned in after 6 hours will lose 40% of the available points; work turned in after 24 hours will lose 60% of the available points; work turned in after 36 hours will lose 80% of the available points. No late assignments will be accepted 2 days (48 hours) past the due date.
 - The late-work policy above does not apply to peer-response forms. Peer-response forms **must be submitted by 6:00 PM on the same day as the presentations** and will not be accepted after the deadline.
- Missing Exam

- Missing exams without a valid reason will receive a grade of zero (0). Legitimate reasons for missing exams include only those listed on page 2 of the syllabus for excused absences. If you miss any exam, you will be required to provide written notice AND supporting documents by the end of the next business day (e.g. if you miss the exam on October 1, the written notice AND supporting documents should be provided by October 2).
- You get only one attempt for each exam. Opening the exam counts as using your one attempt, even if you do not finish it. No retakes or do-overs will be allowed for any reason, including technical problems such as computer crashes, internet loss, or power outages.
- Missing Presentation
 - Failure to present on the assigned date without a valid reason will result in a zero for the oral presentation and written report components (0 out of 17 points). The peer-response component is graded separately, and any peer-response points earned remain available. Acceptable reasons for missing the presentation include significant medical, legal, or personal situations that prevent you from presenting the book of your choice. If you are unable to attend the presentation, you must submit a written explanation AND supporting documents by the end of the next business day. For example, if the presentation is missed on September 1, the written explanation and supporting documents should be submitted by September 2.
- Regarding Bringing Children (or Other Non-Enrolled Individuals) to Class
 - Only individuals who are officially registered for the course or have received explicit written approval from both the department chair and the dean to audit may attend class sessions. This policy helps maintain an effective learning environment and protects the safety and privacy of all students.
- Course website and Canvas
 - PowerPoint Slides are posted on Canvas website after each class. Grades for all assignments and exams are posted on Canvas. Students should also regularly check their University of North Texas email account for announcements and updates.
- Communications Policy
 - Check for email announcements often
 - Contact me (by email) for questions about the course that cannot be answered by reading the syllabus (i.e., requirements, assignments, exams, or grades). My goal is to respond to messages within 10 hours between 8 am and 6 pm, Monday through Friday. **Please note that emails received after 6 pm might not be addressed until the following day.** While I strive to meet this response time, unforeseen circumstances can arise. If you do not receive a response back within the 24-hour time frame between Monday and Friday, please resend the message as it may have gotten lost in cyber space. I usually reply to emails within 24 hours during the weekend.
- Submission of Assignments
 - All assignments will be submitted via Canvas. Assignments should be submitted prior to the due date to avoid any technical and/or personal issues that may arise.

Computer/internet issues, work/family commitments, or travel plans will not be considered valid reasons for missing the deadlines.

- Assignments should be saved as **.DOC** or **.DOCX** files for access. Please do not submit assignments via email
- **Technology Use (in the classroom)**
 - Using electronic recording or any other communications devices (such as MP3 players, cell phones, pagers, recording devices, etc.) in the classroom to record lectures or take notes via artificial intelligence software without the explicit permission of the instructor is strictly prohibited. If you are caught doing so, you will be asked to leave the classroom and will not be granted points for any assignments or exams that are associated with that day. Exceptions will be made for students that have a note from the Office of Disability Access and consult with the instructor ahead of time. If this policy is violated by more than one student, the use of computers and phones will be prohibited in the classroom altogether.
- **A Grade of Incomplete**
 - A status of incomplete is rarely granted. To receive an incomplete, a student must have an extenuating circumstance, be up-to-date on their coursework, and have a grade of "A" in the class at the time the request for an incomplete is made. To request an incomplete a student must reflectively determine if they meet the criteria previously stated. If the student determines they meet the criteria it is his or her responsibility to write the instructor with a detailed reason and need for an incomplete in the class. The instructor will determine if the student's need is extenuating, if the student is up-to-date in their coursework and if they have a current grade of "A" in the class. If these criteria have not been met, the instructor will decline the request.
- **Inclusive Learning Environment**
 - We (instructor and students) strive to create an inclusive environment where all voices are valued, ideas are welcomed, and a sense of belonging is cultivated.
- Please ask for assistance in a **timely manner** (i.e., not the hour before an assignment is due, and definitely not after the assignment is past due).
I am here to help you....just reach out!

TIPS FOR SUCCEEDING IN HDFS 3313

1. **LOG IN** to CANVAS regularly. <https://unt.instructure.com/> and **CHECK** your UNT email each day. View any/all Announcements each and every day.
2. **READ** the syllabus, the assignment guidelines, and the rubrics carefully. If you read and follow all instructions carefully, you will complete all the major requirements for the course. Everything you need to know about the class is provided in the syllabus.
3. **MEET** all deadlines. This class is more fast-paced than you think! Plan ahead to be sure that your assignments post in advance of the due date/time.
I strongly urge you to get ahead on the assignment. Waiting until the night before an assignment is due to begin working on it is an invitation to trouble.

Computer/internet issues, work/family commitments, or travel plans will not be considered valid reasons for missing the deadlines.

Working ahead of schedule will prevent you from missing the deadlines.

Deadlines are real; please ensure you complete the tasks on time.

Know the due dates for assignments is the key ingredient for success in this course!

4. CONTACT the UNT help desk with any questions related to Canvas and/or technology.

<http://it.unt.edu/helpdesk>

LINKS FOR SUCCESS

CANVAS: <https://unt.instructure.com/>

UNT Student Help Desk: 940-565-2324; <https://it.unt.edu/helpdesk>

Library: <http://www.library.unt.edu/> If you are unfamiliar with the UNT library system, electronic databases, etc., consider attending a library tour and orientation. Please check the UNT library website for scheduled times: www.library.unt.edu.

Student Counseling Services: <https://learningcenter.unt.edu/> (General)

<http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-testing-services#programs> (Other programs and services)

Student Learning Center: <https://learningcenter.unt.edu/> (General)

<http://learningcenter.unt.edu/studentresources> (Student resources)

UNT Food Pantry: <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry>

Dean of Students Office: <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources> DOS lists a range of resources available to Students, Faculty, Staff, and Parents! Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support.

UNT Writing Center (Sage 150): 940-565-2563 <https://writingcenter.unt.edu/welcome-unt-writing-center>

Opportunities to Learn More About Children and Families

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY): <http://hippy.unt.edu>

Zero to Three: www.zerotothree.org

First3Years: www.first3yearstx.org

National Council on Family Relations: <https://www.ncfr.org/>

Key Dates for the Semester (Add/Drop/Withdraw) can be found here:

<https://catalog.unt.edu/content.php?catoid=37&navoid=4321>

Still reading? Take a deep breath and visualize an A for the semester. Only a few more pages left...

ADDITIONAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Access website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students, who may impose further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; b. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; d. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to: a. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and b. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

ACCEPTABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR. Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be referred to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at atdeanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION & PROCEDURES. UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). The system sends voice messages (and text messages upon permission) to the phones of all active faculty staff, and students. Please make certain to update your phone numbers at my.unt.edu. Some helpful emergency preparedness actions include: 1) know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas in the buildings where your classes are held, 2) determine how you will contact family and friends if phones are temporarily unavailable, and 3) identify

where you will go if you need to evacuate the Denton area suddenly. In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

RETENTION OF STUDENT RECORDS. Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. You have a right to view your individual record; however, information about your records will not be divulged to other individuals without the proper written consent. You are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the university's policy in accordance with those mandates at the following link: essc.unt.edu/registrar/ferpa.html

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING (SPOT). Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available at the end of the semester to provide you with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught.

SUCCEED AT UNT. The University of North Texas endeavors to offer you a high-quality education and to provide a supportive environment to help you learn and grown. And, as a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. Here's how to succeed at UNT: Show up. Find support. Get advised. Be prepared. Get involved. Stay focused. To learn more about campus resources and information on how you can achieve success, go to <https://success.unt.edu/>

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Unit 1 (August 17- October 1)	Topic	Readings
	Introduction & The Nature of the Communicators	Knapp Chapter 3
	Stages of Coming Together & Coming Apart	Knapp Chapter 2
	Relationship Dimensions and Theories	Knapp Chapter 1; Supplemental readings
	Communication: The Basics	Supplemental readings
Book Title and Preferred Date due 8/30		
Exam 1: October 1 (tentative)		
Unit 2 (October 6 – November 5)	Interaction Rituals	Knapp Chapter 6; Supplemental readings
	The Genesis of Dialogue	Knapp Chapter 5
	Intimacy and Commitment	Knapp Chapters 7 & 9; Supplemental readings
Relationship Interviews due 11/1		
Exam 2: November 5 (tentative)		
Unit 3 (November 10 – December 3)	Friendship and Attachment	Knapp Chapter 7; Supplemental readings
	Self-disclosure	Knapp Chapter 8; Supplemental readings
	The Dark Side of Relationships: Lies, Fights and more	Knapp Chapter 8; Supplemental readings
	The Dissolution of Relationships	Knapp Chapter 10; Supplemental readings
	Some Potentially Destructive Patterns of Communication	Knapp Chapter 11
Exam 3: December 3		
Book Presentation: student assigned to one of the dates: between 9/1 and 11/3 excluding exam dates		
Thanksgiving Break - No classes November 23- 29		