

COMM 2020.001: Spring 2026

Interpersonal Communication

W 9 – 10:20 am, WH 222

Professor: Dr. Lori Byers

Email: Lori.Byers@unt.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays after class and by appointment

Teaching Assistants:

Morgan Benham: Morgan.Benham@unt.edu

Recitation 204: Monday 9:00 – 10:20 am, LANG 323

Recitation 201: Monday 10:30 – 11:50 am, LANG 216

Office Hours: Monday 8 – 9:00 am & Wednesday 10:30 am – 12:30 pm in GAB 322 and by appointment

Talaiya Munson: Talaiya.Munson@unt.edu

Recitation 203: Wednesday, 10:30 – 11:50 pm, WH 321

Office Hours: Monday 4 – 5:30 pm & Wednesday 12:00 am – 1:30 pm in GAB 322 and by appointment

Required Text:

Floyd, K. (2021). *Interpersonal communication* (4th edition). McGraw Hill. ISBN: 126-082-2885 or 978-126-082-2885.

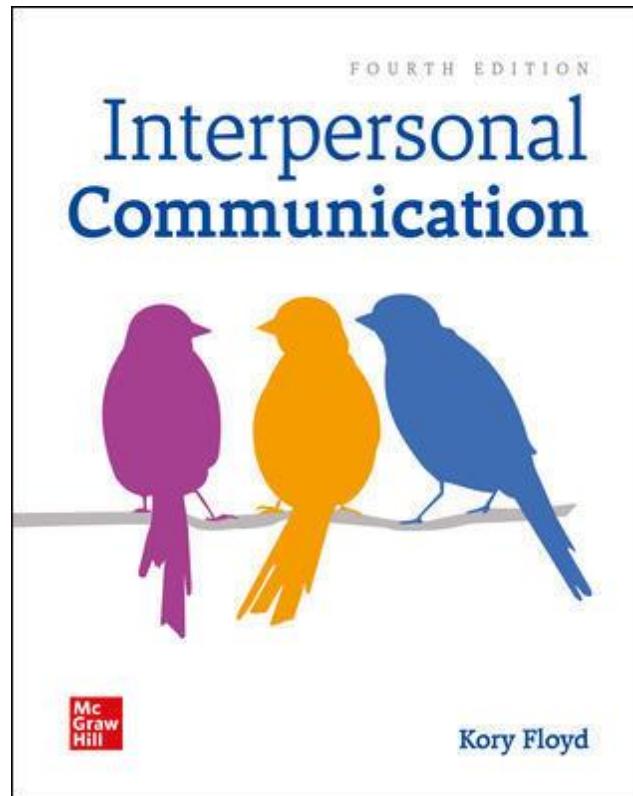
Course Description:

Managing the complexities of interpersonal relationships across the many contexts of our lives is a defining part of the human experience. We all require interpersonal relationships, and successful interpersonal relationships require effective communication.

The goal of this course is to increase your interpersonal communication competence. The course aims to achieve this goal by teaching foundations of interpersonal communication theory, providing examples of theory in everyday relationships, and exploring dimensions of interpersonal communication across a broad array of communication contexts. Lecture, discussion, engagement exercises, activities, and applied research assignments will be used to increase student knowledge and communication skills.

Learning Objectives:

- Develop an awareness of the role communication plays in everyday interaction;
- Recognize the characteristics of competent communication in dyadic interactions;
- Demonstrate skill in selecting and using a variety of communication strategies and responses based on situational contexts and goals;
- Understand the influence of perception and the importance of perception-checking;
- Evaluate listening habits and demonstrate effective listening skills;
- Understand the influence of context in communication situations;
- Effectively demonstrate both verbal and nonverbal communication skills;
- Demonstrate effective interpersonal conflict management principles;
- Apply interpersonal communication theory to real-life situations.



Distractions

Turn off all screens and place them out of sight during class unless you have accommodations or you are actively taking notes.

Attendance and Participation (COMM 2020):

Learning is a social process. For this class to be successful, your attendance and participation are imperative. We will conduct this class as a seminar, performing the roles of teachers and learners simultaneously. This is possible only if everyone prepares in advance for class by giving thoughtful attention to the assigned readings, assuming a constructive role in class discussions, asking questions, thoughtfully attending to the ideas of others, and sharing your own insights.

Due to the time constraints of this course, you are allowed 3 unexcused absences this semester. With each additional absence, 5 points will be deducted off your final grade per absence. Any student absence from class is considered *unexcused* except for the following: personal or family illness requiring physician assistance/hospitalization, UNT school-sponsored activity, religious holy day, or death of a family member.

Documentation must be provided within 1 calendar week after the return to class. A verbal explanation is appreciated but will not suffice as sufficient documentation for consideration.

Attendance Policy (UNT):

Students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for the course. It is important that you communicate with the professor and the instructional team prior to being absent, so you, the professor, and the instructional team can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your attainment of course learning goals. Please inform the professor and instructional team if you are unable to attend class meetings because you are ill, in mindfulness of the health and safety of everyone in our community.

Assignment Policies:

You are responsible for turning work in on time. **Late work will not be accepted** without a *documented* "authorized absence" as defined by UNT. You may not make up missed daily activities.

All assignments must be typed and submitted via Canvas. I usually allow a few extra hours until the next morning after an assignment is due at midnight to allow you a brief grace period.

After a graded assignment has been returned to you, you must wait a minimum of 24 hours before contacting your instructor about a possible grade dispute. After a graded assignment has been returned to you, you have a maximum of 1 week to contact your instructor regarding a possible grade dispute.

NOTE: We are not legally allowed to discuss grades via email. All grade and other private discussions must happen face-to-face.

Academic Integrity Policy:

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Cheating. The willful giving or receiving of information in an unauthorized manner during an examination, illicitly obtaining examination questions in advance, using someone else's work or written assignments as if they were your own, or any other dishonest means of attempting to fulfill a requirement of this course.

Plagiarism. The use of an author's words or ideas as if they were your own without giving proper credit to the source, including but not limited to failure to acknowledge a direct quotation. Exact wording from a source must be identified by quotation marks and citation of the author. Concepts and ideas from sources should also be identified by citation of the author. Rules for citing quotes and ideas can be found in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th edition. *Intentionality is not a factor in determining plagiarism and its consequential penalties.* Students are responsible for making themselves aware of the parameters and provisions of plagiarism.

Plagiarism includes the use of A.I. software or apps to write, edit, or paraphrase text for your paper, as you did not author these words or ideas. The professor of this course will use automated methods to search student papers for A.I.-generated text. Students will be assumed to the author of all submitted text and assignments. As such, students may be asked to explain portions of their papers or to defend arguments presented in their papers verbally. This verbal explanation can then factor into a student's paper grade, influencing the final grade for that paper up to and including the assignment of a 0% or grade of F for the assignment. The penalty for the first use of A.I.-generated text will be a zero for the assignment. The penalty for the second use of A.I.-generated text will be a grade of "F" for the course.

Ethical use of A.I. for academic papers. For this class, clearly state when you have used A.I. and describe how you employed it. What prompts did you use? What were the results of your query? If you do want to use A.I. for ethical purposes, such as the creation of ideas for a potential paper topic, you must declare that you used the A.I. tool and also provide a copy of the results generated by A.I.. Keep a record of all original work, prompts entered, and text generated by A.I. for each assignment. **Remember that for this class, the expectation is that all actual writing will be done by you without the assistance of A.I.** Use of A.I. to create written portions of any assignment is strictly prohibited and considered plagiarism.

Policy on Incompletes

An “Incomplete” will be awarded only in cases where 75% of the coursework has been completed and the grade is warranted by an exigent reason (e.g., medical, military). Inability to complete coursework in a timely fashion does not constitute an acceptable reason for receiving an incomplete.

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 will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student 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. Visit UNT’s [Code of Student Conduct](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) to learn more. Please know that I have never had an issue with a student.

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Survivor Advocacy

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students 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). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Access to Information – Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to your Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail: eagleconnect.unt.edu/

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. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Academic Support & Student Services:

Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- [Student Health and Wellness Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center>)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- [UNT Care Team](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care>)
- [UNT Psychiatric Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry>)
- [Individual Counseling](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling>)

Chosen/preferred Names

If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let us know.

Additional Student Support Services

- [Registrar](https://registrar.unt.edu/registration) (<https://registrar.unt.edu/registration>)
- [Financial Aid](https://financialaid.unt.edu/) (<https://financialaid.unt.edu/>)
- [Student Legal Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services>)
- [Career Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center>)
- [Multicultural Center](https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center) (<https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center>)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- [Pride Alliance](https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance) (<https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance>)
- [UNT Food Pantry](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry>)

Academic Support Services

- [Academic Resource Center](https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources) (<https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources>)
- [Academic Success Center](https://success.unt.edu/asc) (<https://success.unt.edu/asc>)
- [UNT Libraries](https://library.unt.edu/) (<https://library.unt.edu/>)
- [Writing Lab](http://writingcenter.unt.edu/) (<http://writingcenter.unt.edu/>)

ADA Statement

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students 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 ODA website at disability.unt.edu

Disclaimer

This syllabus is not a contract. This syllabus is an initial agreement between the instructional faculty member teaching a course and the students enrolled in that course. The syllabus establishes the instructional faculty member's expectations, providing students with an overview of course content and explanations of course guidelines, procedures, and requirements. Consistent with UNT Policy 15.2.20, Academic Freedom and Academic Responsibility, instructional faculty have the academic freedom to design the course and present the syllabus as they wish, and instructional faculty have the academic responsibility to include specific items to fulfill state and institutional requirements.

Assignments (700 points total)

Reading Quizzes & In-Class Activities (100 points total)

(12 quiz/activity opportunities often via iClicker, drop 2, 10 points each)

You will have many opportunities this semester to demonstrate your superior understanding of the course material and readings through unannounced quizzes and in-class activities during class. If you complete each day's readings, you should excel.

Quizzes and in-class activities cannot be made up if they are missed. If you are late to class and miss the quiz or activity, that quiz or activity cannot be made up. Quizzes are given to make sure you are keeping up with the reading. Some quizzes will consist of short answer questions, while others may include multiple-choice questions. Quizzes and activities may occur in either lecture or recitation.

Interpersonal Analysis Assignments (300 points total)

(3 assignments, 100 points each)

Assignment #1: Communication in Music (100 points)

This assignment asks you to analyze music lyrics using concepts from the course. That is, analyze the lyrics using communication concepts. First, choose a song whose lyrics you want to analyze. Then, analyze the song using concepts from Chapter 3 (Communication & the Self) and/or Ch. 4 (Perception) that are illustrated in the song lyrics. For example, you might find that the lyrics illustrate *reflected appraisal, social comparison, reference groups, face, facework, face threats, autonomy face, fellowship face, competence face, interpretation, stereotypes, perceptual accuracy, recency effect, egocentrism, attributions, or self-serving bias*. Finally, elaborate on the lyrics' connection to the concept(s), and discuss your interpretation of the overall meaning of the song. Assignments should be typed, single-spaced, 12-point font, and 1 full-page in length. Please include a copy of the lyrics you selected at the end of the assignment.

Assignment #2: Nonverbal Communication Analysis (100 points)

This assignment asks you to analyze interpersonal interactions using concepts from nonverbal communication. For this assignment, select one relationship you currently interact with (i.e., friend, parent, romantic partner, sibling, co-worker). Then, analyze your communication with this person using concepts from Ch. 6 (Nonverbal Communication). You can analyze a specific interaction, or you can analyze your communication patterns with this person as a whole. Use concepts from Chapter 6 for your analysis (e.g., "turn-taking signals," "expressing emotions nonverbally," "immediacy behaviors," "kinesics," "haptics," etc.). Then, briefly analyze the effects of each nonverbal behavior on your communication and satisfaction with the relationship. Finally, provide concrete suggestions for how your communication approach could improve for similar instances in the future. Assignments should be typed, single-spaced, 12-point font, and 1 full-page in length.

Assignment #3: Culture & Gender Analysis (100 points)

This assignment asks you to analyze mediated communication using concepts from Chapter 2 (Culture & Gender), e.g., “individualistic culture,” collectivistic culture,” “monochronic,” “polychronic,” “uncertainty avoidance,” “gender roles,” expressive talk,” “instrumental talk,” affectionate communication,” and so forth.

First, select a movie, YouTube video, or television clip that you want to analyze. The video selected should illustrate or relate to concepts from Chapter 2, Culture & Gender. Then, use concepts from Ch. 2 (Culture & Gender) to analyze the events and the communication between characters in the TV episode or film. For example, to analyze the communication and events in the show, you might use the terms “individualistic culture,” collectivistic culture,” “monochronic,” “polychronic,” “uncertainty avoidance,” “gender roles,” expressive talk,” “instrumental talk,” or “affectionate communication,” and so forth to describe people's behaviors, or to describe the influence of culture on communication. Once you've made the connection between the example from the show and the concept, elaborate on the connection to the course concept(s) you selected by going into more detail in your analysis.

The video or film clip can be from any movie, television show, YouTube video, etc. of your choosing. Focus on finding an interesting clip or show first (it could be a dramatic clip from a TV show such as *Friends*, an episode of *Rick & Morty* where they visit different worlds, an episode of *Queer Eye* on Netflix, a travel/adventure show where they visit a foreign country, or an episode of your favorite TV show, whatever that is). Then, illustrate your knowledge and understanding of course concepts by identifying course concepts in the communication during the show, and by using the terms to analyze the interactions between people or to analyze events in the episode.

For example, you might discuss: How do the people in the video value time (monochronic/polychronic culture)? How are people in the video communicating gender through behaviors and artifacts (e.g., their clothes, jewelry, house decorations). Or you might discuss how two people in a video clip illustrate expressive talk or instrumental talk. Or how a group of characters in a show represent a co-culture or social community. Or how the material components featured in the show reflect the nonmaterial values of the culture and the characters.

You can analyze a specific interaction from the movie, or you can use the course concepts to analyze the movie or video as a whole. Elaborate on the video's illustration or reflection of the course concepts you selected. Finally, discuss how the communicators in the film or video could have improved their communication. Assignments should be typed, single-spaced, 12-point font, and 1 full-page in length.

Exams (300 points)

(3 exams, 100 points each)

The exams consist of multiple-choice and short-answer questions. For each exam, you will be responsible for all material covered in the text and all material covered during that unit. Please note, the exams will be timed, so be prepared to take the test when the exam begins (rather than trying to “find” the answers as you go).

Grading scale:

A: (excellent, clearly outstanding)	630-700	(90-100%)
B: (good, impressive)	560-629	(80-89%)
C: (solid, average college-level)	490-559	(70-79%)
D: (below-average)	420-489	(60-69%)
F: (sub-par)	Below 420	(0-59%)

COMM 2020 Spring 2026 Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings & Assignments <i>Complete readings prior to the assigned date.</i>
Lecture	Unit 1: Foundations	
January 14	Course Introduction Syllabus Overview	Welcome to COMM 2020!
January 21	Interpersonal Foundations	Read: Chapter 1
January 28	Culture & Gender	Read: Chapter 2
February 4	Communication & The Self	Read: Chapter 3
February 11	Perception	Read: Chapter 4 Due Assignment #1: Communication in Music Analysis

February 18	Language	Read: Chapter 5
February 25	<p>Exam #1 The exam covers chapters 1-5 and all material covered in lecture and recitation.</p>	
Unit	Unit 2: Interactions	
March 4	Nonverbal Communication	Read: Chapter 6

March 11: SPRING BREAK

March 18	Gender and Culture	Due Assignment #2: Nonverbal Communication Analysis Reread: Chapter 2
----------	--------------------	--

Date	Topic	Readings & Assignments <i>Complete readings prior to the assigned date.</i>
Unit	Unit 3: Culture	
March 25	Listening	Read: Chapter 7
April 1	Emotions	Read: Chapter 8
April 8	Exam #2 The exam covers chapters 2 and 6-8, and all material covered in lecture and recitation.	
Unit	Unit 4: Relationships	
April 15	Personal & Close Relationships	Read: Chapters 9 & 10 Due Assignment #3: Culture & Gender Analysis
April 22	Interpersonal Conflict	Read: Chapter 11
April 29	TBA	TBA
TBA	Final Comprehensive Exam	