

Arizona State University
Hugh Downs School of Human Communication

Syllabus for:

Communication 310 – #70388

Relational Communication

“Fall” Semester 2013

1:30-2:45 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays

Stauffer Hall A315

Instructor:	Dr. Paul A. Mongeau
Office:	A335A Stauffer Hall
Mailbox:	412A Stauffer Hall
Phone:	480.965.3773
E-Mail:	Mongeau@ASU.edu
Office Hours:	11:00 – 12:00 Wednesdays and Thursdays AND BY APPOINTMENT

Course Overview and Goals

This course examines major theoretical perspectives and concepts relevant to interpersonal communication in close personal relationships. Using a lecture-discussion format, this class focuses on the development and testing of interpersonal communication theory through empirical research. Given this focus, previous coursework in interpersonal communication, statistics, and/or research methods (although not required) would assist in understanding course material. This will NOT be a course filled with exercises and simulations.

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Define relational communication and differentiate it from other related terms.
2. Distinguish the various approaches to studying interpersonal communication.
3. Discuss, differentiate, and apply the major theories of relational development.
4. Identify various approaches to defining and studying love.
5. Discuss the various ways of maintaining a relationship and why they are important.
6. Discuss the causes and effects of interpersonal conflict.
7. Discuss the need to balance self-disclosure and communicative privacy.
8. Discuss the cognitive and relational aspects of relational dissolution.

Requirements and Grading

Students must complete all assignments to pass this class. Put another way, no one may receive a grade of D or better without completing all assignments.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Points Each</u>	<u>Total Points</u>
Examinations	3	100	300
Application/Reaction Paper	1	60	60
Relationship Paper	1	80	80
Research Paper	1	100	<u>100</u>
			540

Examinations will include both short-answer essay and multiple-choice items. Exams (including the final) are not cumulative. Each examination covers approximately one-third of course material and attempts to determine understanding (rather than application) of lecture and reading material. The writing assignments provide students an opportunity to apply course concepts to their lives. Descriptions of writing assignments appear later in this syllabus.

There will be a total of 540 points available in this course. The number of points you accumulate through the semester determines your final grade. The following scale determines final grades.

534.6 – 540	= A+	[99.0 – 100%]
502.2 – 534.5	= A	[93.0 - 98.9%]
486.0 – 502.1	= A-	[90.0 – 92.9%]
469.8 – 485.9	= B+	[87.0 – 89.9%]
448.2 – 469.7	= B	[83.0 – 86.9%]
432.0 – 448.1	= B-	[80.0 – 82.9%]
415.8 – 431.9	= C+	[77.0 – 79.9%]
378.0 – 415.7	= C	[70.0 – 76.9%]
324.0 – 377.9	= D	[60.0 – 69.9%]
0.0 – 323.9	= F	[0.0 – 59.9%]

Readings

Guerrero, L. K., Andersen, P. A., & Afifi, W. A. (2014). *Close encounters: Communication in relationships* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

I also recommend that you have easy access to a copy of:

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). (2010). Washington, DC; American Psychological Association.

Policies

Attendance - Although no portion of your grade comes directly from attendance and class discussion, this does not mean that classroom attendance is an unimportant determinant of your grade. Exams will be developed from both lectures and text. Because a majority of exam material comes from lectures/discussions, attending class is probably the best way of preparing for exams. Studying the PowerPoint slides without attending class will likely provide a less than ideal understanding of course material. [Keep in mind, though, that about a third of each exam will also come from the textbook that we don't discuss in class.] In addition, active participation in class discussions will make this class more interesting to everyone and will assist students' understanding of course material.

Late Work - It is not fair to those students who complete material on time that late work is accepted without penalty. Therefore, deductions will be taken from all late work. The extent of the deduction will depend upon the degree of lateness, the reason provided, and the particular assignment that is late. Make-up exams will be given only in the case of a documented family, medical, or other sort of emergency. It is your responsibility to notify me, at the earliest possible time, in the case of such an emergency.

Incomplete– The instructor gives a mark of “I” (incomplete) only when a student who is otherwise doing acceptable work is unable to complete a course because of illness or other conditions beyond the student's control. The mark of “I” will be granted only when the student

can complete the unfinished work with the same instructor. However, an incomplete ("I") may be completed with an instructor designated by the school director if the original instructor later becomes incapacitated or is otherwise not on campus. Any student requesting an incomplete is required to complete the appropriate form and receive the instructor's signature *before the end of the semester*.

Academic Dishonesty –Academic dishonesty could take on several forms in this class. Perhaps the three most common forms are collusion, cheating on an exam, and plagiarism.

Collusion (two students working together) includes one student copying another student's work. Collusion on an exam would include (although this is not a comprehensive list) copying another student's answers, exchanging information during an exam, and other similar activities. Evidence of collusion is generally evidenced by two students handing in identical papers or exams with identical sets of answers. By placing this statement into my syllabus, I do *not* want to eliminate study groups or several individuals working together on assignments. What I do *not* want is for one person to do the work and more than one person to hand it in.

Cheating on an exam (see also collusion on an exam, above) would include a sidelong glance at a fellow student's work, the preparation and use of a "crib sheet", stealing a copy of the exam, arranging for a substitute to take an exam, and talking during an exam.

Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas without proper credit being given to that source. A paper given to an instructor by a student is assumed to be in the student's own words and to represent his or her ideas, unless certain words and ideas are specifically credited to a proper authority. A paper bearing a student's name that does not do this is plagiarized and reflects misrepresentation and dishonesty.

Plagiarism can also occur in many forms. Word-for-word copying of another work without the use of quotation marks or citing that source, paraphrasing another person's ideas without proper citation of that work, providing a misleading citation, and handing in another student's work, and submitting a paper written for another class would all be considered plagiarism.

Definitions of, procedures for reporting, and penalties for academic dishonesty are outlined in the university's policy available at: <https://provost.asu.edu/index.php?q=academicintegrity>

When your instructor suspects academic dishonesty these regulations will be followed. It is strongly recommended that you become familiar with these guidelines.

Students registered with the Disability Resource Center who would benefit from accommodations to complete course assignments should notify me during the first two weeks of the semester. I will gladly work with you to accommodate such needs.

Final Examination - The final examination for this course is scheduled for Thursday, December 12th at 12:10 p.m.

COM310 (70338) – RELATIONAL COMMUNICATION – FALL SEMESTER 2013
TENTATIVE SEMESTER SCHEDULE

<u>WEEK</u>	<u>DATES</u>	<u>TOPIC(S)</u>	<u>READINGS</u>
1	<i>August 22</i>	Introduction to the Course	
2	8 – 27, 29	Communication in Relationships	GAA Ch. 1
3	September 3, 5	Relational Development	GAA Ch. 5
4	9 – 10, 12	Relational Development	GAA Ch. 3
5	9 – 17, 19	Relational Development	GAA Ch. 4
6	9 – 24 , 26	Review, EXAM 1	

EXAMINATION 1: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

7	October 1, 3	Relational Maintenance	GAA Ch. 9
8	10 – 8 , 10	Equity and Exchange	GAA Ch. 10

RELATIONSHIP PAPER DUE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8TH

9	10 – 17	Conflict	GAA Ch. 14
---	---------	----------	------------

No Class: Tuesday, October 15th: Fall Break

10	10 – 22, 24	Sexual Communication	GAA Ch. 8
11	10 – 29 , 31	Review, Exam 2	

EXAM 2: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29

12	<i>November 5, 7</i>	Relationship Transitions	GAA Ch. 11
13	11 – 12 , 14	Love and Relational Communication	GAA Ch. 7

RESEARCH PAPER DUE: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12th

NOTE: GAA = Guerrero, Andersen, & Afifi

COM310 TENTATIVE SEMESTER SCHEDULE (Cont.)

<u>WEEK</u>	<u>DATES</u>	<u>TOPIC(S)</u>	<u>READINGS</u>
14	11 -19	Transgressions and Forgiveness	GAA Ch. 13

No Class: Thursday, November 21. National Communication Association

15	11 – 26	Transgressions and Forgiveness II
----	---------	-----------------------------------

No Class: Thursday, November 28, Thanksgiving

16	<i>December 3, 5</i>	Relational De-escalation Wrap-Up and Review	GAA Ch. 15
----	----------------------	------------------------------------------------	------------

REACTION/APPLICATION PAPER DUE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3rd

FINAL EXAMINATION: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12th, 12:10 P.M.

NOTE: GAA = Guerrero, Andersen, and Afifi

COMMUNICATION 310 (70388) – FALL SEMESTER 2013
RELATIONSHIP PAPER ASSIGNMENT
DUE TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8TH

The relationship paper assignment involves analyzing an interpersonal relationship (current or terminated) that you experienced (or observed) using theories of relational development discussed in class. You may use any relationship type (e.g., romantic, friendship, family, or coworker), however, it *must* be an interpersonal communication relationship as defined in class.

This paper should contain three major parts. In the **first part**, you are to describe the nature of the relationship. Who are the participants? What is the setting? What type of relationship (e.g., romantic, friendship, family, or coworker)? In this part of the paper, you must also describe the *development* of the relationship using Miller and Steinberg's levels of analysis and Knapp and Vangelisti's Stage Model of Relational Development. Be sure to describe any important changes in the nature of the relationship and tie these changes to the concepts discussed in class.

In the **second major part** of the paper, you are to apply *at least two* of the theoretical positions discussed in class to your relationship. Your task in this part is to *explain* the development of the relationship in terms of these theories. How do these theories describe/explain the changes in your relationship? Were the predictions that each theory makes consistent with what occurred in your relationship? If you use *both* uncertainty reduction and predicted outcome value, try to show how their different predictions are relevant to your relationship.

In the **third and final** (and typically shortest) **part** of the paper, you are to evaluate the theories discussed in your paper. The major evaluative criterion should be how easy or difficult you found it to describe or explain the changes in your relationship using that theory. Are the theories easy or difficult to apply to an actual relationship? In addition, are the theories' predictions consistent with what went on in your relationship? If not, is this a problem with the theory? What kinds of changes would you recommend the developers make to their theory (if any)?

This paper is worth a maximum of 80 points. Grading will focus on the extent to which you achieve the goals of each of the three parts of the paper. Evaluation centers, first, on the completeness of the description, application, and/or evaluation. This represents the extent to which you describe theoretical positions accurately, and the extent to which you effectively integrate course material into the descriptions or evaluations. In addition, the overall presentation of the paper (i.e., spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.) will be evaluated. For more information, see *Mongeau's general criteria for evaluating papers* that appears on pages 11 and 12 of this syllabus.

Relationship papers must be double-spaced, use standard margins (i.e., 1 inch on all sides), use 12-point Times New Roman (or equivalent) font, and should not exceed 10 pages in length (not including tables, figures, graphs, references, etc., if any). Given the nature of the assignment, it does not seem that this paper could be less than 4 or 5 pages and still be complete. I expect that relationship papers will generally be in the 6–8 page range. A SafeAssign folder will be established for each paper to facilitate submission and evaluation.

COMMUNICATION 310 (70388) – FALL SEMESTER 2013
RESEARCH PAPER ASSIGNMENT
DUE: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12th

For your research paper, you are to perform a literature review (i.e., describe the nature and results of specific Relational Communication theory and research) and apply it to a situation or relationship that you have experienced or been able to observe. This paper must come in two parts. In the **first part** of the two-part paper, you are to research, in some depth, a topic relevant to interpersonal communication in relationships. That is, you are to describe what we know from social science theory and research about your topic. You may use the readings and lecture from the course as a *starting point*, however, not as your primary reference source(s) for this paper. In the first part of the paper, your task is to review the social scientific literature on the topic of your choice. In the **second part** of the paper, your task is to apply the material in your literature review to some situation or circumstance in your life (or something you were able to closely observe). Your task is to describe your experience clearly and explicitly link your experience to the material reported in the literature review.

Feel free to choose a topic that has been of particular interest to you in this class, other classes, or your past personal experience. The topic of your paper, however, must fall in the realm of interpersonal communication (even though the research you find might be performed and published in a related discipline such as social psychology, sociology, or family studies). Essentially, your task is to explain as clearly as possible, what we know (and what we do not know) about the topic. In the literature review section, you should:

- Define the key terms used in this area.
- Explain why your topic is important.
- Review original research performed on your topic.

Research papers should have, *at a minimum*, six references beyond the textbook. I expect most papers to have around 10 references if not more. The specific number of references you should have depends on your topic. It is important that you focus on primary sources in developing your paper (i.e., original research reports in journals or chapters in edited books) rather than using secondary sources such as textbooks, popular press books, and magazines. The books and journals you cite need not be from the communication discipline; the important thing is that your topic be *related to* interpersonal communication. Textbooks are generally secondary sources (i.e., do not present researchers' original words or work), but could help you find original work (typically academic journals and books). Moreover, popular magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health* are not credible sources (even though they might have articles relevant to your topic). Many times these articles summarize (and over-summarize at that) social science research you will likely find in books and journals.

Research papers must be double-spaced, use standard margins (i.e., 1 inch on all sides), and a 12-point Times New Roman (or equivalent) font. I expect most papers will be in the 8-12 page range, however, cannot exceed 16 pages. The citation of sources and reference list for this paper should be consistent with the APA (American Psychological Association) Style Manual.

This paper is worth a maximum of 100 points. Several criteria will guide paper evaluation. First, evaluation will center on the quality of the review of the literature. This will include the breadth and depth of the review, the quality of the definitions of the topic(s) under consideration, and the adequacy of the integration of research material. Second, evaluation will consider the relevance of your personal example to the research you describe (and the clarity and quality of that application). Third, evaluation will focus on the organization of the paper. Your ideas should flow logically with signposts and transitions between points. Finally, evaluation will consider the quality of the writing style and presentation (including consistency with APA style regulations). Again, see *Mongeau's general criteria for evaluating papers* for detail on evaluation.

Feel free to choose a topic from any portion of the course, past, present or future or even a topic that we will not discuss, but is of interest to you. I will be available for consultation in case you have any questions about the adequacy of your potential topic or simply want to ask what you should write about. I will give you whatever assistance I can.

Topics that would be of an appropriate scope may include (although by no means is this an inclusive list):

Self-Monitoring	Stages Theories/Models of Relational Development
Uncertainty Reduction/Predicted Outcome Value	Interpersonal Attraction
Attribution Processes and Biases in Personal Relationships	Love
Deception in Relationships	Relational Deterioration and Decay
Communication Competence	Romantic Relationships in Organizational Contexts
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Relationships	The Impact of Divorce on Children
Self-Disclosure and Relational Development	Courtship or Family Violence
Sexual (Mis)Communication	Sex Differences/Similarities in Interpersonal Communication
Communication and Sexual Harassment	Communication and Date Rape
Social Support	Relational Dialectics
Relational Types/Trajectories	Shyness
Attraction/Attractiveness	Sex/Gender Differences in Communication
Communication and Jealousy	Politeness and Facework

Look through Guerrero, Andersen, and Afifi (e.g., table of contents and index) and/or ask your instructor for additional ideas.

COMMUNICATION 310 (70388) - FALL SEMESTER 2013
REACTION/APPLICATION PAPERS ASSIGNMENT
DUE TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3rd

This assignment again allows you to explore, in some detail, how course concepts apply to your experiences and/or to allow you to explore a reaction (or set of reactions) to course material. Therefore, the paper can appear in either of two forms. First, *an application paper* can apply a concept or theory discussed in class to an event, set of circumstances, or relationship that you either experienced or observed. Second, *a reaction paper* can provide and explore a personal reaction to a course topic.

There are going to be times where you have a strong reaction (be it positive or negative) to or personal example or reflection on an idea presented in discussion or readings. This paper assignment allows you to explore and communicate that reaction or application. The reaction/application paper is your chance to reflect upon those reactions or to focus upon how course content relates (or *doesn't* relate) to your experiences and relationships. What you apply or react to is up to you, however, the format of an application paper must differ from the relationship or research paper. That is, you cannot create an application paper that is functionally identical to the relationship paper (described previously)

The reaction/application paper should come in two parts. In the **first part**, start with a discussion of the lecture or reading material that you are reacting to or applying. What are you applying or what was it that you found interesting, insightful, or thought (or anxiety) provoking? Your goal in this part should be to communicate your knowledge of the course material. In the **second part** of the paper, you should describe your reaction to that material or provide your application. How did you feel? What do you think of the topic (passage, article, etc.)? What is the application? Be sure to describe your reaction or application clearly and in sufficient detail that it can be understood and evaluated by someone you do not know well.

The reaction/application paper can be submitted at any time. You might find it helpful to write the paper while the application and/or reaction is fresh in your mind rather than waiting until the end of the semester to describe a reaction you had in class a couple of months earlier. The reaction/application paper is worth 60 points and should be 3-5 pages in length (with an 8-page maximum), double-spaced with standard margins (i.e., 1 inch on all sides) and 12-point Times New Roman (or equivalent) font. The citation of sources and reference list for this paper (if any) should be consistent with the APA (American Psychological Association) Style Manual.

Evaluation will follow several criteria. The first criterion is the quality of the reaction/application. This will include the depth of the reaction or application, the adequacy of the explanation of the course material, and the description of your reaction or application. The second criterion is the quality of the definitions of the topic(s) under consideration. The final criterion is the quality of the writing style and presentation. Again, see *Mongeau's general criteria for evaluating papers* for detail on evaluation.

MONGEAU'S GENERAL CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING PAPERS

The three paper assignments outlined above describe different (though somewhat overlapping) paper formats. Therefore, some of the criteria that I use in evaluating them are specific to the particular assignment. Specifically, evaluation will focus on the extent to which each task outlined in an assignment is fulfilled. On the other hand, while the specific content of the various papers differ, some of the *general* criteria that I use to evaluate them remain pretty much the same. I also use these criteria in grading graduate student writing and work submitted to professional journals. These criteria are not mutually exclusive (e.g., a lack of organization influences perceptions of clarity), however, I hope that this gives you a good idea of the yardsticks I use when I grade papers. I generally use five general criteria in evaluating student papers.

CRITERION 1: CLARITY

The primary criterion that I use when I evaluate a paper (a draft of my own work, a manuscript that I receive as a reviewer for a professional journal, or a student's paper) is clarity. Simply put, are you communicating whatever it is that you are trying to say clearly? It does not matter if you are trying to describe a relationship that you've been part of, a reaction to a lecture, or reviewing the theoretical literature on relationship development, you must do so clearly. Saying something simply is better than saying something using complex, convoluted, language. Don't feel as though you have to use a lot of technical jargon because the research you have read does it. If I consistently cannot understand what you are trying to say, your grade will suffer.

CRITERION 2: COMPLETENESS

I evaluate completeness on two levels. First, I evaluate completeness on a *macro* level. Each paper assignment includes multiple parts. For example, the reaction/application paper requires that you first describe course material and then either apply that material to your life experiences or describe how and why you reacted the way that you did. When I evaluate completeness on the macro level, I am looking for the extent to which you actually perform each of the required tasks. Failure to complete a major part of a paper is a serious error that will result in *substantial* point deductions. Consequently, it is important that I know what you are doing as you work your way through your paper. It is in your best interest to keep me informed as to where you are and what you are doing in your paper. Signposting, headings (and, perhaps, subheadings), and transitions between parts helps immensely in keeping me informed as to what you are doing in your paper.

I also evaluate completeness on a *micro* level. Completeness on a micro level represents the extent to which you adequately tackle each of the tasks required in the paper. The question here is how well did you perform each of the tasks required? In the reaction/application paper, did you completely describe the course material that you are applying or reacting to? How completely you should describe something, of course, depends on the nature and length of your paper. If you are describing Predicted Outcome Value Theory in the relationship paper, it does not make sense to spend 5 pages of your seven-page paper describing the theory. If the primary focus of your research paper, however, is Predicted Outcome Value Theory, however, such a detailed

explication might be necessary. You need to completely perform all parts of each assignment, given the page restrictions.

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATION

The third criterion I use in evaluating papers is organization. There should be a logical development to your ideas. Words should fit together to form phrases. Phrases should fit together to form sentences. Sentences should fit together to make paragraphs. Paragraphs should fit together to form the major sections of your paper. What I do not want is a paper that rambles from point to point without any connection between them. The paper assignments suggest a particular organizational scheme for the major parts of your papers and I strongly suggest that you stick to them. Within major sections, the choice of an organizational scheme is up to you. Let me give one word of advice. Paragraphs of greater than one page in length is typically a sign of some organizational (and, likely, clarity) problems. In all three papers, each part of the paper should contain multiple paragraphs.

CRITERION 4: VALIDITY

The fourth major criterion I use in grading papers has to do with the validity of arguments that are presented. The arguments that you make in your papers must be valid. This means that the conclusions of your arguments must follow from the premises. Further, the premises and conclusions that you draw should be explicit. I should not have to dig through a paper to identify and understand the arguments you are trying to make.

Part of the validity of an argument has to do with the data supporting a particular conclusion. Specifically, all statements of fact need to be properly documented from a reputable primary source. For example, if you are making the claim that men and women communicate differently in some important ways, you need to support that conclusion (or claim) with a reference from a reputable and primary source. [Note that this is likely a more important criterion for the research paper than either the relationship or reaction/application papers.]

CRITERION 5: MECHANICS

My evaluation also focuses on the technical (or stylistic) aspects of the paper. I expect that submitted drafts should be devoid of grammatical errors, typographical errors, misspellings, punctuation errors, sentence fragments, and so on. In this respect, it would be helpful to develop the habit of completing rough drafts of your work and then spending time cleaning and polishing your writing. If you try to write the entire paper the last day or two before it is due, you will almost certainly encounter stylistic problems, not to mention substantive ones.

I will also evaluate the format of source citations and references provided (if any). Source citations and reference lists should be produced in a format consistent with the sixth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. I will provide an APA “cheat sheet” before the first paper is due.