

# CSS 3311 Interpersonal Communication

Instructor: Jane C. H. Damron, M.A. | Jane\_Damron@Baylor.edu | 254-710-1473

## Course Description

Fundamentally, human relationships are constituted in communication: relationships are formed, shaped, influenced, maintained, and even terminated in and through our innate ability to communicate. As such, this course is designed to strengthen your understanding of exactly why and how our personal relationships are grounded in human communication. Every day, communication constitutes all types of relationships with all types of people – our friends, work colleagues, romantic partners, bosses, neighbors, parents, grandparents, siblings, etc., and in a variety of contexts. As such, we will study the principles of effective human communication in personal, one-on-one relationships.

## Required Text

*Interpersonal Communication: The Whole Story* by Kory Floyd, published by McGraw-Hill.

- ♦ This text is available at the Baylor Bookstore
- ♦ We *will* be using the book, so please find a copy to buy, rent, borrow, or share.
- ♦ Any additional class readings will be posted to Blackboard or provided in hard copy for easy access.

## Course Expectations & Policies

### Attendance

You are required by the Baylor College of Arts & Sciences to attend at least 75% of class periods. If you fail to meet this requirement, you will automatically receive a failing grade in the course. An absence is an absence, no matter what the reason. University-related absences and those due to illness/family emergencies *do count* when tallying absences.

### Late Work/Make-up Work

Students are expected to complete/submit all work on time. All written work should be submitted in hard copy form *in class*, unless otherwise noted. If you fail to bring a hard copy to class for whatever reason, you may email me a copy of your assignment by 5:00 p.m. on the due date, *but be aware* that you will automatically receive 25% penalty.

*Assignments will not be accepted past the due date.* If you miss class on an assignment due date due to university-sanctioned travel, a serious personal illness, or a family emergency, I will allow you to make up work that was missed on that day. However, there are 2 important conditions: (1) You must notify me of your absence *before or during* class (not after) and (2) you must provide me with *official written documentation*. Eligible, *approved* make-up work must be completed no later than 1 week following the normal turn-in date and will not be accepted after that.

### Participation

This is an interactive course and your input is highly valued. I expect you to come to class ready and willing to participate in the class discussion. This includes capably answering/discussing questions I ask, as well as voluntarily adding content to the day's discussion via comments, stories, analysis, critique, personal reflections, etc. *Important question to ask yourself: Does my individual presence add value to this class?*

### Personal Responsibility

As your instructor, I am *always* here to help. But, ultimately, it is your responsibility to take advantage of the resources that are available to you, including my assistance. I wholeheartedly abide by the following philosophy: You are the master of your destiny in this course.

### Classroom Behavior

All students will be expected to treat each other with respect, courtesy, and openness. While it is perfectly acceptable to express opposing viewpoints and provide constructive criticism to each other, it is not acceptable to ridicule, belittle, marginalize, or embarrass anyone else. Should any student act in a manner that is disruptive or disrespectful, I reserve the right to directly address that person on the matter during or outside of class; additionally, disruptive students may be asked to leave the class for the remainder of the course period.

## Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is the act of representing, either directly or indirectly, and without proper source documentation, someone else's work as your own. Plagiarism will not be tolerated; if you are caught participating in any form of academic dishonesty, you will be removed from the course and will receive an "F." For a complete description of Baylor's Honor Code Policy & Procedures, please refer to: <http://www.baylor.edu/honorcode>.

## Coursework

### Readings

You will regularly be assigned to read chapters from the textbook or other supplemental readings; these assignments are listed on the course schedule. Any non-textbook readings will be posted to Blackboard or provided in hard copy.

### Quizzes/Exercises (50 points)

At various points throughout the semester, I will assign quizzes, in-class activities, or homework exercises in conjunction with course content

### Examinations (200 points)

There will be 2 exams over the course of the semester. Exams will consist primarily of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions. The content of the exams will be drawn from readings and lectures. A light exam review sheet will be provided for you.

### The Looking Glass Project (50 points)

Scholars argue that feedback from significant people in our lives acts as a mirror, providing a major source of information about who we are, i.e., our self-concept; others serve as a type of "looking glass," reflecting back to us a picture of the self that we then evaluate, analyze, and respond to. In this regard, our sense of self is grounded in communication and social interaction. As such, this project asks you to put together a photo album of pictures which you believe represent various aspects or "reflections" of you and your life. Each picture should be a snapshot of *a part* of who you are. When combined with your brief analysis of each picture, the finished photo album should paint a holistic portrait of who you are, or at least how you see yourself at this point in your life.

### The Dyad Project (100 points)

In order to promote and analyze interpersonal communication *within* this course, this project will ask you to spend some time outside of class with several other members of our group. For three months of the semester (January, February, March), you will need to have a dyad meeting with one male and one female member of our class (six total meetings). You will spend an hour or more with these classmates doing whatever you wish, talking about whatever you wish, going anywhere you wish. What you do is not important; what IS important is that you spend face-to-face time, in an informal manner, with others in our class. Then, each month, you will write a 6-8 page (double-spaced) reaction paper about your experience with your two dyad partners for that month.

### The Interpersonal Theory Project (100 points)

In order to increase your awareness of *all* the various forms of interpersonal communication that surround us, this final project involves an analysis of ten communicative methods that might be used to express interpersonal theories and ideas: (1) a magazine advertisement, (2) a song lyric, (3) a movie, (4) a poem, (5) a television relationship, (6) a cartoon, (7) a magazine article, (8) a nonverbal symbol, (9) a relationship/self-help (non-fiction) book, (10) a photograph. For each of the items, you will explain the theory in question and discuss your application.

## Grading

### Grade System

This course is graded through use of a system in which you simply accumulate points over the entire semester. Grades are not based on averages, percentages, or weights; all the points you earn (including bonus points) are weighted equally and go into a big "bucket" of points. Your final grade is determined solely by how many points you have at the end of the semester. All grades will be posted to Blackboard and can be accessed by logging in to <http://my.baylor.edu>.

### Grading Scale

A	= 447-500 points
B+	= 432-446 points
B	= 397-431 points
C+	= 382-396 points
C	= 347-381 points
D	= 297-346 points
F	= 0-296 points