

Syllabus for COMM 210-50 – Interpersonal Communication

At a Glance: Students in this class will learn about the field of interpersonal communication research. This class will require reading original research in addition to the textbook. At the end of the course you will be able to describe several influential social scientific theories in interpersonal communication, and will have completed a literature review in one area of personal interest.

There are no prerequisites for this course, but **students who are not ready to take ENGL 110 will find this course significantly more difficult.**

Course Description

COMM 210: Interpersonal Communication: This course examines the current theory and research traditions in the areas of interpersonal communication. Topics in the course will include scripted and role-based interaction, intimate relationships and relationship development, deception, verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication.

Philosophy

Interpersonal communication is a complicated process. Although we have all been engaged in interpersonal communication from our first moments, much of that process occurs beneath our conscious awareness. The social scientific study of interpersonal communication is an interesting area of research which touches on our day-to-day lives perhaps more than any other area of communication research. This class gets students engaged with social scientific research and theory in interpersonal communication in a wide variety of contexts.

Goals

At the end of this class, students will have developed improved competencies in the following major areas:

- Identify with intellectual specialization(s) in the Communication discipline
- Explain, Synthesize, and Apply Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts
- Recognize individual and cultural similarities and differences
- Appreciate individual and cultural similarities and differences
- Adapt one's communication in diverse cultural contexts

How to be Successful

The keys to success in this class are similar to most other classes. If you want to ensure that you pass:

1. Read all assigned readings.
2. Turn in all of your assignments by the deadline.
3. Participate in class.
4. Talk to me if you are having trouble.

I have taught hundreds of students. I have never seen a student do all four of these things and fail.

If you want to get at least a B:

1. Do everything in the first list.
2. Take notes, including a short paragraph summary at the end of each class.
3. Review these notes when you get home.
4. Review the notes again right before we start the next class.
5. Work on your assignments before the day that they are due.
6. Read the directions on assignments and ask for help if you aren't sure how to follow them.
7. Work ahead. Do not wait to start an assignment until the current assignment has been turned in.

I have *rarely* seen a student do all seven of these things and not be satisfied with their final grade.

Course Information

COMM-210-50 (9266)	Interpersonal Communication
Block:	5
Starts:	2018-03-12
Ends:	2018-05-05
Meets every:	Monday, Thursday
Meets between:	12:30 PM – 3:30 PM
Building:	Meen Center for Science and Math
Room:	005

Instructor Contact Information

Kurtis D. Miller, PhD

- Office: Virginia 311
- Office Hours:
 - 9:00 am – 11:20 am, Mondays
 - 9:00 am – 11:20 am, Thursdays
 - also by appointment
- kdmiller@tusculum.edu
- kurtismiller.com
- 423-636-7300 Ext. 5783

Required Materials

Checklist:

- Textbook
- Writing utensils
- Access to a modern computer and common software
- Access to the Internet

Required Textbook: This course requires you to have access to “Interplay: The Process of Interpersonal Communication” (Adler, Rosonfeld, & Proctor). 13th or 14th edition are both acceptable. Copies are available at the campus bookstore and online through a number of retailers, including [Amazon](#). You will need access to this textbook in order to successfully complete the course.

Required Technology: You will need access to a modern computer which is capable of running software that will allow you to view PDF documents, and software to create and modify written documents. Software commonly used for this task include Adobe Acrobat and Microsoft Word, which are available in the computer labs on campus. If you would like to use other software, please speak to me about it first. See the section on [technology issues](#) below for details about preparing and submitting files.

Assignments and Grading¹

Grading in this class comes from a mix of class discussion, content knowledge, and written research.

Coursework

Fishbowl Discussion: Students will select one research paper cited in the chapter for that meeting and present as part of a panel of students. [Fishbowl Discussions](#) are graded on a contract basis.

Peer Reading Questions: When students participate in a fishbowl discussion, they will also submit Peer Reading Questions.

Quick Tests: A “mega reading quiz” using questions drawn from the instructor and from student-submitted [peer reading questions](#) drawn from assigned chapters. These tests are open-book, open-notes,

open-friends, take-home tests, but must be turned in no later than the due date.

Cumulative Final Exam: The final exam is cumulative, and will use the same pool of questions as the Quick Tests.

Student Investment: Students whose verbal and nonverbal behavior in class clearly communicates lack of involvement in the subject matter or a lack of respect for other students may have up to 100 points deducted from their final grade. If you have better things to do than take this class, you shouldn't be taking this class.

Extra Credit: Students may be able to earn up to 50 points maximum of extra credit. Students may earn 10 points of extra credit each time they participate in a debate team practice session, up to a total of 30 points. Additional extra credit opportunities may also be announced as they become available. **Extra Credit may not be turned in after the last class meeting.**

Coursework	Points
Fishbowl Discussions	300
Quick Tests	80
Cumulative Final	120
Extra Credit	50
Total	500

Point ranges for your total coursework letter grade are based on the number of quality points Tusculum awards for each letter grade.

Coursework Points	Letter Grade	Quality Points ²
465+	A	4.0 per semester hour
450+	A-	3.7 per semester hour
440+	B+	3.5 per semester hour
415+	B	3.0 per semester hour
400+	B-	2.7 per semester hour
390+	C+	2.5 per semester hour
365+	C	2.0 per semester hour
350+	C-	1.7 per semester hour
340+	D+	1.5 per semester hour
315+	D	1.0 per semester hour
less than 315	F	0.0 per semester hour

Final Grades¹

Your final grade for the class will be determined by averaging your total coursework letter grade and your [literature review](#) letter grade. For example, a student who earns an A- as a total coursework letter grade and a "B" as a literature review letter grade will finish the class with a "B+".

If your coursework total letter grade is an "F" OR if your literature review letter grade is an "F", you will fail the course.

Late Work

No late work of any kind is accepted in this class. Absences that can be planned for do not excuse students from coursework due dates. This policy includes absences for school-sponsored events.

Day/Date	Topic	Due	To prepare...
M, 3/12	Syllabus, Course Structure, Attendance, Moodle, Website, Grading, How to Succeed	-	-
↓	How to Read Scientific Research, Interlibrary Loan	Discussion Sign-up	-
R, 3/15	How to Read Scientific Research (Revisited)	Annotated Copy of Assigned Article	-
↓	Why Study Interpersonal Communication?	Final Topic Sign-up	-
M, 3/19	Interpersonal Process	Fishbowl Discussion 1	Read Topic Chapter
↓	Culture and Interpersonal Communication	Fishbowl Discussion 2	Read Topic Chapter
R, 3/22	Interpersonal Communication and the Self	Fishbowl Discussion 3	Read Topic Chapter
↓	Perceiving Others	Fishbowl Discussion 4	Read Topic Chapter
M, 3/26	Student Conference 1	Student Conference 1	Expanded Bibliography and Scholarly Outline
↓	-	Quick Test 1	Study
R, 3/29	Language	Fishbowl Discussion 5	Read Topic Chapter
↓	Nonverbal Communication	Fishbowl Discussion 6	Read Topic Chapter
M, 4/02	Listening: Receiving and Responding	Fishbowl Discussion 7	Read Topic Chapter
↓	Emotions	Fishbowl Discussion 8	Read Topic Chapter
R, 4/05	Student Conference 2	Student Conference 2	Uploaded Sources and First Draft
↓	-	Quick Test 2	Study
M, 4/09	Dynamics of Interpersonal Relationships	Fishbowl Discussion 9	Read Topic Chapter
↓	Communication in Close Relationships: Friends, Family, and Romantic Partners	Fishbowl Discussion 10	Read Topic Chapter
R, 4/12	Communication Climate	Fishbowl Discussion 11	Read Topic Chapter
↓	Managing Conflict	Fishbowl Discussion 12	Read Topic Chapter
M, 4/16	Student Conference 3	Student Conference 3	Revised Draft of final paper
↓	-	-	-
R, 4/19	Student Selected Content	-	-
↓	Final Review	-	-
M, 4/23	Final Exam	Final Exam	Study
↓	-	Final Draft	-
R, 4/26	Literature Review Presentations	Literature Review Presentations	-
↓	-	-	-
M, 4/30	No Class	-	-
↓	-	-	-

Course Policies

Bottom Line Up Front: You are an adult. I will expect you to act professionally and respectfully to other students and to me.

Email Policy

Email is the primary and preferred method of communication for most student issues. I check and respond to my email once each day, except weekends and holidays. If I have not replied after a few days, please re-send the message. You should plan to check your official student email account on a similar schedule.

You need to use your official student email. I typically distribute class announcements through the news forum on Moodle, which forwards to your student email address. Additionally, the privacy of student educational records is very important to me, and is covered by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). As part of my commitment to protect student privacy, I will not respond to any communication about a student which does not come from an official school email address.

I do not accept assignments by email. Submit all assignments through the course management system or in print as directed, unless you are given specific instructions to do something else.

Emails asking questions which are already answered in course documents will not receive a reply. I have spent a lot of time working on these documents to help support your learning, and I work to continually improve them. Please check these resources first before sending an email.

Engaging in professional communication with your professor important. It is a good habit and it helps ensure that they have a good impression of you. Many students have difficulty using email effectively. If you are having trouble figuring out how to put together an email to your professor, you can't go wrong with the template below, which comes from a resource I put together to help [students write professional emails](#). Whether you are in my class or any other class at the college, this template should work well. Just replace the information in brackets as needed:

Subject: [class number and section]: [your issue]

Dear [Title – if you can't find out, use "Professor" to be safe] [Last Name],

I am in your [time] [class name] class on [days class meets]. I have checked the [syllabus/assignment instructions/rubric/textbook/class resources] for an answer, but it does not adequately answer my question. I need some additional help with [your issue].

[Second paragraph explaining your question. Describe where you looked for answers, what you found, and how that information is not enough for you to have a clear answer to your question. You may also include other relevant aspects of your situation.]

[OPTIONAL third paragraph where you propose answers or next steps.]

Thank you,

[Your First and Last Name]

Access

All students have the right to an accessible environment and to be able to focus on their learning to the greatest degree possible. Students who think they would benefit from accommodation (seating placement, arrangements for examinations, exceptions to policies, etc.) should inform me at the beginning of the course and coordinate with the [Academic Resource Center](#) so appropriate arrangements can be made. Act early, because it is not possible to make accommodations retroactively.

Campus Emergencies

There are two predominant types of emergencies: evacuation and shelter-in-place. I am familiar with the proper course of action in both cases, so please follow directions as appropriate.

Class Cancellations, Delays, and Early Dismissals

Outside events may require changes to the course, including assignments, grading, and schedules. Inclement weather or other events may result in the cancellation or delay/early dismissal of classes at one or more of the Tusculum College sites. Should any event result in the alteration of class meeting times, content, or other changes, instructors will communicate to their students a plan for completing missed classes. Location-specific schedule changes will be communicated through the Tusculum College Pioneer Alert System and local media outlets as soon as possible. After an emergency or inclement weather, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control. Information about course changes related to campus emergencies can be accessed through email and on the class schedule.

Grade Checks

Prepare your grade check form. If you need a signed grade check form, you need to prepare the form before class, filling out any and all information which is readily available to you as a student. This includes information such as the number of absences and current grade based on information available to you through course management systems.

I only sign grade check forms in-person, immediately after class is dismissed. I will not sign grade check requests brought to me prior to class, during class, or during a class break. I will not meet with you to sign a grade check request. I will not respond to grade check requests sent by email.

Grade check forms are not binding. Final grade estimates for classes in progress are based on incomplete information, and may change as assignments are turned-in and graded. FERPA restrictions also prevent me from looking up your grade in front of other students. This means that I must rely on my memory of how students are doing in the course and project a final grade based on that performance. It is not possible for me to perfectly track and recall an estimated final grade for all of my students.

Grade Disputes

You must wait 24 hours after receiving a grade to discuss it with your instructor. This ensures that you have the opportunity to prepare a solid and convincing persuasive argument with evidence if you believe you have been graded unfairly. A meeting outside of the classroom should be scheduled with the instructor to contest a grade.

Contact me in a timely manner. Your grades and scores are considered final unless you initiate contact within one week of their return (or within 2 days of the last class meeting).

Your privacy is important. I will not discuss grades (good or bad) in front of other students, in the classroom before/during/after class, in the hallway, or if you run into me around campus or in town. I will not discuss student grades in the presence of other students, friends, family, etc.

Technology

Please silence electronic devices during class. The sound on my phone will be on during class in order to receive any emergency notifications. Wearing headphones during class will not be tolerated, whether they are in your ears or not.

Use technology only when it is part of an activity. We will often use laptops/tablets/phones or other personal electronic devices for class activities. Outside of these activities, you may not use electronic devices or leave them out. Students using cell phones during class take less detailed notes, and score an average of one full letter grade and a half lower on multiple choice tests.³ Research clearly shows that increases in student cell phone use during class are associated with lower GPAs and lower test performance.⁴

There is no exception for activities as checking the time, taking notes, or accessing copies of readings for the class. Studies show that students remember information better when they hand-write their notes⁵ and that, like second-hand smoke, using laptops in the classroom has negative effects on the

learning of those around you.⁶ Nevertheless, if you will benefit from using an electronic device or require an exception to these policies for other reasons, please see the sections on [Access](#) and [Student Services](#). Additionally, students may have commitments outside of the classroom that require exceptions to classroom rules on electronic devices. Please contact me and the [Academic Resource Center](#) if you require an exception to any course policy.

Technology Issues

Your instructor is not tech support. If you need assistance with technology, contact [Information Services](#).

Issues with technology are not an excuse for late or missing work. Using technology is an expectation of this course. Anticipating, avoiding, identifying, and resolving these issues prior to due dates is your responsibility. Preparing and submitting materials at the last minute significantly reduces your ability to anticipate, avoid, identify, and resolve technology issues for many reasons, including the difficulty in getting assistance outside of normal working hours. For this reason you should not wait until the last minute to complete and submit assignments.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is bad and will not be tolerated in this course. Tusculum has strong policies against academic misconduct. Anyone engaging in academic misconduct will be reprimanded and subject to disciplinary action which can result in a minimum of a ZERO on an assignment, but may include failure of the course, suspension, or expulsion from the college. Students are advised to become familiar with Tusculum's [academic policies](#) on academic misconduct, which provide the following list of examples of academic misconduct:

- 1) Failing to identify direct or word-for-word quotations by use of appropriate symbols and reference to the source.
- 2) Restating in your own words the work (ideas, conclusions, words) of another without reference to the source.
- 3) Presenting as your own the creative work (for instance, music or photographs) of another without proper acknowledgment.

Besides plagiarism, other forms of academic dishonesty include the following:

- 4) Submitting the same work in two or more courses without significant modifications or expansion and without the approval of the instructors involved.
- 5) Submitting purchased, borrowed, copied or specially commissioned work as if it were one's own.
- 6) Knowingly permitting others to submit your work under their names.
- 7) Copying the work of others during an examination or other academic exercise.
- 8) Knowingly allowing others to copy your work during an examination or other academic exercise.
- 9) Using "cheat sheets" or any other unauthorized form of assistance during an exam, quiz or other academic exercise.
- 10) Manipulating or fabricating data to support erroneous conclusions.

NOTE: AUTHORIZED HELP is encouraged and includes:

- attendance at help sessions.
- tutoring received with your instructor's knowledge (responsible tutoring does not provide answers to specific assignments but focuses on general principles, concepts, rules and information, as well as on skills development).
- work with Academic Resource Center or Student Support Services staff done with the knowledge of your instructor.²

Note: Using images in presentations without citation and license is plagiarism and academic misconduct (items 3 and 5). Furthermore, using work without license may be illegal.

Accommodations

Tusculum College makes available to qualified students with disabilities those reasonable accommodations or services as are necessary to provide such students with unrestricted access to the learning environment and the opportunity to demonstrate academic achievement. In order to procure services or classroom accommodations, the qualified student is responsible for self-identifying and directing all requests for accommodations or services to the [Academic Resource Center](#) counselors. Contact information: Academic Resource Counselor; 423-636-7300, ext. 5153; Suite 412, Niswonger; learningsupportservices@tusculum.edu; <https://home.tusculum.edu/gps/disability-accomodations/>.

Attendance

Students are responsible for all work from the first day of class and are expected to attend all meetings of the class for which they are registered. Absence for whatever reason, including participation in a college-sponsored event, does not relieve a student from responsibility for any part of the work covered in the class during the period of absence. Students may miss up to three classes per course to participate in college-sponsored events without penalizing their grade. Students who miss more than three classes, without instructor approval, will fail the course. Students should refer to specific course syllabi for additional attendance policies. All students must attend three or more classes to be considered for a refund of any Financial Aid monies if a refund is due.⁷

Research Assignments and Library Resources

To ensure that residential candidates become fluent, competent users of information, faculty develop assignments that incorporate research that requires using the information resources available in the TC Library or from the TC Library website: <http://library.tusculum.edu>. Librarians are available to candidates in their research. Several of the online resources may also be accessed from home with a username and password provided by library staff. For more information, contact: Crystal Johnson, Education Librarian NE & Webmaster, (423) 636-7320; 1-800-729-0256, extension 5801, cjohnson@tusculum.edu. In Knoxville, contact Mary Halliburton, Knoxville Library Administrator, at (865) 693-1177 or (800) 729-0116, extension 5016, mhalliburton@tusculum.edu.

Tutoring

The Tusculum College Tutoring Center is a cooperative venture between the College and the Student Support Services program. The mission of the center is to help students hone academic skills to ensure success in their scholarly pursuits. The Tutoring Center offers a variety of free services including course-specific tutoring in mathematics, writing, laboratory sciences, humanities and social sciences. To deliver high quality services, the Tutoring Center employs degreed and peer tutors who are nationally certified by the National Tutoring Association to provide high quality individualized and group tutoring sessions. Furthermore, the Tutoring Center staff collaborates with faculty members to ensure that services address specific academic challenges so that students successfully master course content. Additionally, the Tutoring Center offers a variety of academic workshops and schedules DSST testing for Tusculum College. The Tutoring Center is located on the top level of the Thomas J. Garland Library and the hours of operation are Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Evening tutoring sessions take place Sunday-Thursday from 7p.m.-9 p.m., on the second floor of the Garland Library, behind the circulation desk. The complete schedule tutoring center can be viewed at <http://web.tusculum.edu/tutoring/>.⁸

End Notes

1. The syllabus for this course is subject to change at any time, including but not limited to required assignments, grading requirements/scales and the course calendar. ↩ ↩² ↩³
2. Tusculum College. (n.d.). *Academic Policies*. Retrieved from: <http://web.tusculum.edu/academics/academic-policies/> ↩ ↩²
3. Kuznekoff, J. H., & Titsworth, S. (2013). The Impact of Mobile Phone Usage on Student Learning. *Communication Education*, 62(3), 233–252. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2013.767917> ↩
4. Bjornsen, C. A., & Archer, K. J. (2015). Relations between college students' cell phone use during class and grades. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology*, 1(4), 326–336. <https://doi.org/10.1037/stl0000045> ↩
5. Mueller, P. A., & Oppenheimer, D. M. (2014). The pen is mightier than the keyboard: Advantages of longhand over laptop note taking. *Psychological Science*, 25(6), 1159–1168. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797614524581> ↩
6. Sana, F., Weston, T., & Cepeda, N. J. (2013). Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers. *Computers & Education*, 62, 24–31. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2012.10.003> ↩
7. 2017-18 Tusculum Catalog, p. 41. ↩
8. 2017-18 Tusculum Catalog, p. 31. ↩