

COMM 395: Communication in Close Relationships (CRN 25128)

Spring 2018

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Christine Bacon
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OFFICE HOURS: After Class and by appointment
CLASS TIME: Tuesday/Thursdays 11:00 to 12:15
LOCATION: BAL 2070

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Discover keys to enhance and maintain your close relationships with friends, family and especially romantic interests. Taught from a practical, hands-on-approach, learn how to apply the Super Couple Formula, explore your relational gifts, and determine what hinders you from attaining the relationship of your dreams. This course will hone your communication and listening skills while strengthening your relationships. Students will gain greater insight into systems, dialectic and social exchange theories. In addition, gain understanding of various conversational styles and languages of apology along with many other topics.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Bacon, C. (2016) *The Super Couple: A Formula for Extreme Happiness in Marriage*. Virginia Beach, VA: Koehler Books.

Chapman, G. & Thomas, J. (2013) *When Sorry Isn't Enough*. Chicago, IL: Northfield Publishing.

Guerrero, L., Andersen P. & Afifi, W. (2018) *Close Encounters: Communication in Relationships*. 5th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

RECOMMENDED READING: (For Papers & Presentations)

Barker, L., & Watson, K. (2000). *Listen up: How to improve relationships, reduce stress, and be more productive by using the power of listening*. NY: St. Martin's Press.

Bostrum, R. (2011). Rethinking conceptual approaches to the study of 'listening.' *The International Journal of Listening*, 25, 10-26.

Chapman, G. (2012) *The Four Seasons of Marriage*. Carol Stream: IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Cloud, H. & Townsend, J. (2015) *When to Say Yes; How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life*.

Nashville, TN: Zondervan.

Francis, J. (2014) *You Are Beautiful: A Journey of Discovery*. Eugene, OR: Trusted Books.
 Griffin, E. (2009). *A First Look at Communication Theory*. (7th Ed.) Boston: McGraw Hill.
 (ISBN # 978-0-07-338502-0)

Larimore, W. (2008) *His Brain, Her Brain*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

LeClaire, A. (2010). *Listening below the noise*. NY: Harper Perennial.

Matsumoto, D., and Hwang, H. (2011). Reading facial expressions of emotions. *Psychological Science Agenda*. Available:
<http://www.apa.org/science/about/psa/2011/05/facial-expressions.aspx>

Nelson, Audrey & Damken-Brown, Claire. (2012). *The Gender Communication Handbook: Conquering Conversational Collisions Between Men And Women*. San Francisco: Pfeiffer.

Remland, M. (2009). *Nonverbal Communication in Every Day Life*. (3rd Ed.) Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
 (ISBN #9780205582198)

Rosenberg, M. (n.d.) interpersonal empathy (video):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ltr_JUkXiA

Smalley, G. (2005). *Keys To Loving Lasting Relationships DVD Series*. (Available in ODU's Library)

Smalley, G & Trent, J. (2005). *The Two Sides of Love*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale.

Tannen, D. (2011). *That's Not What I Meant! How Conversational Style Makes Or Breaks Relationships*. New York: NY: HarperCollins Books.

Tannen, D. (2006). *You're Wearing That? Understanding Mothers & Daughters in Conversation*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.

Thompson, K., Leintz, P., Nevers, B., & Witkowski, S. (2010). The integrative listening model: An approach to teaching and learning. In A. Wolvin (Ed.), *Listening and human communication in the 21st century* (pp. 266-286). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Treasure, J. (2011). 5 ways to listen better (Ted.com talk). Available:
http://www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_5_ways_to_listen_better

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- **Create** authentic, growth-oriented relationships with peers through class discussion to foster encouragement, perspective and accountability.
- **Demonstrate** competency of systems, dialectic and social exchange theories.

- **Demonstrate** understanding of meta-communication and apology styles as keys to repairing relationships.
- **Demonstrate** comprehension of key theories within the field of communication through weekly class discussion, quizzes and papers.
- **Apply** theoretical concepts to everyday situations, through application journals, in-class discussion, and research papers.
- **Demonstrate** commitment by consistently investing time and effort preparing for class sessions.
- **Analyze and apply** a theory in-depth by examining it in a real-life context and through research.

PROGRAM GOALS

At the conclusion of the program, students will be able to:

- **Demonstrate** understanding of close communication skills and apply them in-class and in real-life settings.
- **Categorize and utilize** varying levels of communication and listening styles to better facilitate authentic close relationships.
- **Evaluate** from among communication research methodologies—qualitative, quantitative, and critical—and interpret and apply results to audiences.
- **Analyze** and **practice** good communication behavior--verbal and non-verbal.
- **Criticize**--aesthetically, rhetorically, ethically--varying forms of close relationships.
- **Apply** communication theory to interpersonal relationships at home, school and workplace.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Journaling Activities (10%)

You will be asked to respond to various topics via short 300-400 words reaction papers during the semester. Your reactions should be complete, as assigned, and written in a style that incorporates attention to mechanics of writing. Up to 5 of these will be assigned randomly based on class discussion. There will be no makeup papers allowed.

2. Tests (30%)

There will be three tests during the semester. Each will be comprised of multiple-choice, true-false, and possibly 1-2 short essay questions. Class discussions as well as assigned reading are a substantial part of these tests and should assist you in preparing for each of them. Keeping up with reading, writing, and scheduled assignments on a weekly basis will assure you maintain good grasp of course content.

3. Attendance & Participation (10%)

Participation is encouraged. In-class activities allow students to practice their skills in a structured and safe environment. All communication is to be carried out respectfully and confidentially.

4. Papers (30%)

You will complete 2 research papers. Instructions will be distributed preceding due dates.

5. Super Couple Interview and Presentation (20%)

You will interview a Super Couple (interview questions will be distributed in class) and present your findings in class. Guidelines will be distributed in class.

GRADING SCALE

Final Grade Letter Grade Grade Points

93-100	A	4.00	
90-92.9	A-	3.70	NOTE: ALL
87-89.9	B+	3.30	COMMUNICATION
83-86.9	B	3.00	MAJORS/MINORS
80-82.9	B-	2.70	MUST EARN A
77-79.9	C+	2.30	GRADE OF C
73-76.9	C	2.00	OR BETTER.
70-72.9	C-	1.70	(DEPT. POLICY)
67-69.9	D+	1.30	
63-66.9	D	1.00	
60-62.9	D-	0.70	
BELOW 60	F	0.00	

ACCOMMODATIONS

A. Students with Disabilities: In order to receive accommodations for this class, please present a letter from Disability Services to me as soon as possible. If you have a disability that may in some way interfere with your ability to perform at your highest level in this class, or that may require some modification of class assignments, please present this letter during the first two weeks of the term so we can work out the appropriate arrangements.

B. Athletes: If you are an ODU athlete, or are a part of University team events and will be missing class due to off-campus events, please speak to your athletic or program advisor and provide me a letter along with an events calendar/schedule that details such absences away from campus.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is MANDATORY since this is deemed an activity and participation course. You will act as presenter, speaker, listener, and evaluator. Please note that regular attendance means not only being in class but arriving on time, participating actively, and remaining for entire class. If you are weak on attendance and believe you won't change, it might be wise to select another course. If you are tardy more than 3 times, they will begin to count as absences.

If you are regular in attendance and participation, you will earn the 10% participation contribution to your final grade. If you are irregular in attendance (more than 3 absences), that grade will be docked. **Per school policy, more than 7 absences result in failure or withdrawal from the course.**

ABSENCES & INCOMPLETES: Evaluation periods and assignment deadlines are fixed.

Documented illnesses, deaths in the family, car accidents, or other traumatic occurrences call for flexibility and good judgment on the part of the student and instructor. These situations are rare and are handled individually. An incomplete ("I") will only be given if 1) the student has completed $\frac{3}{4}$ or more of the course requirements with a C or better, 2) there is a legitimate deficiency due to the illness or emergencies deemed acceptable to the instructor, and 3) there is not neglect on the student's part. If you are unable to make it to a presentation or exam, you **must contact the instructor** or SPEAK to the department secretary. Sending emails, voice-mails or texts **after the fact is not acceptable**. If an emergency calls you away, there should be phones wherever you are.

Each student is ultimately responsible for all lectures, readings, assignments, and in and out of class activities; it is the student's obligation to stay connected to course requirements, even when absent. It is expected that all members of our class will behave in a conscientious and courteous fashion, and that each individual will be accountable for all behaviors and decisions made and expressed.

STUDENT CONDUCT: Please realize in a classroom setting, the audience's behavior has a great impact on the speaker; similarly, the classroom atmosphere is created by its members. Therefore, please be mindful of any behaviors that could be interpreted as distracting to a speaker, to the instructor, and to peers.

During class:

- Make sure all cell phones are off.
- Refrain from eating, drinking, rifling through your bags or doing other work.
- If the end of class is nearing, please refrain from packing up early.

Please just use your judgment as to what would be supportive behavior during a person's presentation and during class lecture/discussion, and what would not be.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS: Assignments are due in class on the date assigned. Suggestion: provide "lead time" for yourself so that you are not pressed for time at the last minute. Excuses such as, "My computer broke", "My alarm didn't go off and I overslept", "I didn't get back from our road trip on time", "I was called in to work at the last minute", "I had another presentation due that day", etc. are really inexcusable. Instructor reserves right to refuse any assignment not handed in on time.

E-MAIL REQUIREMENT: Each student enrolled in COMM 395 is required to have an O.D.U. e-mail account to use for this class. The syllabus, various requirements, assignments, and announcements, as well as grades, will be posted on the university's Blackboard system; to access Blackboard, students must log in, using their e-mail name and password (Blackboard can be accessed via the university's home page, <http://web.odu.edu>, under Current Students, then Academic Resources). Students are expected to regularly check announcements on Blackboard.

PLAGIARISM

All academic work submitted by you to fulfill a course requirement is expected to be the result of your own thought, research, and self-expression. You will have committed plagiarism if you reproduce someone else's work without acknowledging its source. Examples of sources which must be acknowledged include: published articles, book chapters, computer programs, research papers,

graphic representations and any other coursework not so generated as part of public domain.

THE HONOR SYSTEM

Please note that as a student of Old Dominion University, you have signed a pledge accepting responsibility to abide by the honor code. This is an institutional policy approved by the Board of Visitors and enforced in this class. Your work is expected to be original, reflecting your own thought, research, and expression. You will have committed plagiarism if you reproduce someone else's work without acknowledging the source. In presentations, you must verbally account for your research data. You are involved in academic dishonesty if you present a paper written by someone else, if you present concepts gained through research as if they were your own, or if you present work presented in another class unless you have the instructor's approval.

COURSE SCHEDULE

- 1-09 Course Introduction/Syllabus/Activity
- 1-11 Chapter 1 Conceptualizing Relational Communication
- 1-16 Chapter 2 Communicating Identity
- 1-18 Chapter 3 Drawing People Together
- 1-23 Chapter 4 Making Sense of Our World
- 1-25 Chapter 5 Changing Relationships
- 1-30 **TEST 1** (Chapters 1-5)
- 2-01 Chapter 6 Revealing and Hiding Ourselves
- 2-06 Chapter 7 Communicating Closeness
- 2-08 Chapter 8 Making a Love Connection
- 2-13 Chapter 9 Communicating Sexually
- 2-15 Chapter 10 Staying Close (**Love Paper Due**)
- 2-20 **TEST 2** (Chapters 6-10)
- 2-22 No Class**
- 2-27 *The Super Couple* by Christine Bacon
- 3-01 (Guest Speaker: Super Couple TBA)
- 3-06 Spring Break**
- 3-08 Spring Break**
- 3-13 Chapter 11 Coping with Conflict
- 3-15 Chapter 12 Influencing Each Other
- 3-20 Chapter 13 Hurting the Ones We Love
- 3-22 Chapter 14 Healing the Hurt
- 3-27 *When Sorry Isn't Enough* by Gary Chapman
- 3-29 Chapter 15 Ending Relationships (**Forgiveness Paper Due**)
- 4-03 SC Presentations**
- 4-05 SC Presentations**
- 4-10 SC Presentations**
- 4-12 SC Presentations**
- 4-17 SC Presentations**
- 4-19 ***TEST 3***** (Chapters 11-15, Bacon and Chapman)