Course Title:
Seminar in Relational Communication

Course Number:
COMM 6970-102

Course Description:
Communication 6970 is designed to take a detailed look at specific theories within the sphere of relational communication. This course will explore various theoretical approaches including a range of socio-emotional and nonverbal theories useful in understanding human interaction in close interpersonal relationships where trust and psychological knowledge are essential. In addition, the following specific topics will be covered: family; friendships; the formation, maintenance, and dissolution of intimate relationships; love; sex; passion; deception; and the dark side of intimate relationships.

Class Dates, Location and Hours:

- Dates: May 14 – 20, 2012
- Hours: Mon-Fri 6:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m.; Sat 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sun 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
- Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: April 15, 2012

Site Director:
Steve Watson. Assistant: Carrie Grabil Church. 2189 Crystal Plaza Arcade, Arlington, VA, 22202. Phone: 703-418-4800; Fax: 703-418-2730; E-mail: apwashington@ou.edu

Professor Contact Information:

- Course Professor: Claude Miller, Ph.D.
- Mailing Address: University of Oklahoma
  Department of Communication
  Norman, OK 73019
- Telephone Number: (405) 325-0861
- Fax Number: (405) 325-7625
- Cell Phone Number: (336) 406-1036
- E-mail Address: chmiller@ou.edu
- Professor availability: The professor will be available via e-mail to students before and after the class sessions. On-site office hours are half an hour before and after each class session, by appointment.

Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:

Student materials are available at the Follett/AP Bookstore located in the Oklahoma Memorial Union, 900 Asp Ave., Norman, OK. Orders can be placed online at www.oklahomaunion.bkstr.com or by telephone at 866-369-9713 (toll free in the U.S.) or 405-325-5960 (outside the U.S.). E-mail orders may be sent to oklahomaunion@bkstr.com. Representatives are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. CST Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST on Friday. Summer hours: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. CST. Faxed orders may be placed 24 hours a day to 866-223-5607 (toll free in the U.S.) or 405-325-7140 (outside the U.S.).


3. A collection of readings will also be made available via Desire2Learn (D2L) or email at no charge. These readings will be made available at least 30 days prior to the first day of class. Email me if you would like to get an earlier jump on these electronic readings: chmiller@ou.edu. Access D2L at http://learn.ou.edu; enter your OU NetID (4+4) and password, and select course to access material. Please contact your local Site Director if you require assistance.

Note: The Follett/AP Bookstore is the Advanced Programs contractual textbook provider. Should text changes become necessary after publication of the course syllabus, Advanced Programs will facilitate text returns/refunds only for texts purchased through the Follett/AP Bookstore.

**Course Objectives:**

A primary goal of this course is to present a detailed picture of the traditional and current thinking in the field of relational communication, in an attempt to understand how people’s thought processes, emotions, mood states, feelings, and interactive behaviors function in various personal contexts.

**Schedule:**

There is an expectation that all members of the class will participate actively in all class discussions. Participants are therefore expected to come to each class having thoroughly prepared for the topics to be covered during that class session. The following is a guide; it may be modified slightly as the seminar progresses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Readings (*supplemental)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14-May</td>
<td>Introductions, Orientation, Emotion in close relationships, basic concepts, Intro to relational communication</td>
<td>*Dillard (1998); *Guerrero, Anderson &amp; Trost (1998); G,A,&amp;A, Ch 1; * Parkinson (1998)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16-May</td>
<td>Deception; Impression &amp; identity management</td>
<td>*Buller &amp; Burgoon (1998); *Haselton et al (2005); G,A,&amp;A, Ch 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-May</td>
<td>Politeness Theory &amp; Facework, Attraction; Gender differences</td>
<td>*Lim &amp; Bowers (1991); G,A,&amp;A, Ch 3; *Wood (1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-May</td>
<td>Uncertainty reduction; Expectancy violation; Interpersonal adaptation</td>
<td>G,A,&amp;A, Ch 4; S&amp;C, Part II; *Burgoon et al (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-May</td>
<td>Relationship initiation; Social penetration, Sexual desire; Psychological sex differences; Social exchange &amp; Relationship maintenance;</td>
<td>G,A,&amp;A, Ch 5; S&amp;C, Part II; *Metts et al. (1998); *Buss, D. (1998); G,A,&amp;A, Ch 8; Ch 9; S&amp;C, Part V; G,A,&amp;A, Ch 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-May</td>
<td>Mortality and close relationships; Death, love &amp; attachment</td>
<td>*Goldenberg et al. (2000); *Mikulincer et al., (2003); *Taubman-Ben-Ari et al. (2002) [Final if necessary]</td>
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**Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:**

1. Students should have read both course texts before the course begins and should be prepared to discuss the assigned readings each class session. This seminar will be conducted at a graduate level. The course professor will act more as a facilitator than a lecturer. This means participants are responsible for providing considered, informed, and active contributions to the discussion.

2. The following written assignment will be due on the first day of class and will be utilized for class discussion on that day. Students should write a seven to ten page, double-spaced, typewritten essay
on one of the following two options. The essay should be rhetorical in nature, i.e., a carefully constructed argument should be designed to persuade the reader to accept an advocated point of view. Each student should come to class prepared to discuss his or her paper in a 15-20 minute oral presentation. For a given option, papers should address and cover each of the points laid out below.

a. Based on your reading of the Guerrero, Andersen, and Afifi text, supplemented by other sources as relevant, create arguments, either pro or con, for the uses of power, identity, social facility (social acumen), and physical attractiveness for purposes of to getting ahead in life. Use examples from your own life, either that you have experienced, or that you have observed in others close to you. **Buttress your case with research reported in the text and journal articles.** Anticipate and address exceptions or possible objections to your position. Frame your essay in terms of the initiation, maintenance, and dissolution of close relationships.

b. Based on your reading of the Spitzberg and Cupach text, supplemented by other sources as relevant, write about one or more episodes—or a related series of incidents—pertinent to the dark side of interpersonal communication and/or close relationships. Recount either what you have personally experienced, or what you have observed in someone close to you. Put your account into context by **citing research reported in the text and in research articles.** Anticipate and address possible justifications and/or objections to your characterization of the “innocent” and “guilty” party(ies) involved. Account for the impact and/or bearing of gender differences on the relationships involved.

3. Each student will act as a topic lecturer, assigned to give a brief oral presentation based on—and scheduled to coincide with—a specific portion of the course content (see below).

4. Each day, beginning with the first day of class, you will prepare a brief reflection, speculation, comment, or question concerning an aspect of the currently assigned reading (see below). You should take at least one concept from the assigned reading and apply it to an incident you have either experienced or observed in your own everyday life. Your reflections must be typed, double-spaced, and no more than one page in length (see attached sample). Reflections must be turned in via the discussion folder on D2L no later than three hours prior to the beginning of the relevant class.

5. **Wikipedia Featured Article:** Teams will prepare a scholarly research article on ONE topic related to relational communication to be submitted for publication on Wikipedia. The goal of the project is to further examine a specific topic and integrate research from scholarly books and communication journals into a polished collaborative effort worthy of the thorough review process conducted by Wikipedia editors to ensure the entry meets their highest standards. Topics are to be approved by the professor. For details visit Wikipedia at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Featured_content](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Featured_content). **This project is due 3 weeks after the last class date (i.e., June 11, 2012).**

6. If necessary, a final exam in the form of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions will be given at the final class meeting. The exam will cover content from the texts, supplemental readings, and class discussions. If students demonstrate by their engagement of the material—through their participation in lively, informed discussion during class—there will be no need for a final exam (in which case, all remaining assignments will count proportionally higher—see grade criteria below).
Grading: This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percent of Grade</th>
<th>Percent without Final</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written Assignment</td>
<td>First class session</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflections</td>
<td>One hour before each subsequent class</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Presentations</td>
<td>During class sessions</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Discussion</td>
<td>During class sessions</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wikipedia Article</td>
<td>June 11, 2012</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Last class session</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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NOTICE: Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.
Sample Reflection:

Reflection #6; Terror Management Theory

Generally, I agree with the basic premises of TMT. Having our own mortality as a salient concept puts humankind in a very unique position. I am quite sure the idea of our own mortality does have a overwhelming affect on our actions and motivation. For instance, if I knew I did not need to worry about my growth as a student and my impending graduation as a prerequisite to getting a job that will put money in my pocket and food on my table for the remainder of my life, I doubt very much I would be very concerned with writing this reaction right now. It is just as likely I would be sitting on a beach in the sunny South Pacific right now taking lots of hallucinogenic drugs and swimming with maco sharks. Okay, maybe that is a bad example, but the point is I certainly wouldn’t be greatly worried about the future and whether or not I was prepared for it without the fear of my own mortality.

I do have one critique of Terror Management Theory, however. I believe it should broaden its conceptualization of the “self-preservation” to objects, ideas, or others that the self holds dear. Human beings are capable of remarkable actions that fly in the face of their own mortality when what they know or what they love is threatened. Mothers and Fathers die for their children, patriots die for their country, even some altruists die for complete strangers. Though, granted, in almost any instance I’m sure any parent, patriot, or altruist would prefer to live, they still put themselves in dangerous situations for a cause that they see as higher than their own life. If Terror Management Theory could broaden to include these actions I would find it a more convincing theory.
POLICIES AND NOTICES

Attendance/Grade Policy

Attendance and participation in interaction, individual assignments, group exercises, simulations, role playing, etc. are valuable aspects of any course because much of the learning comes from discussions in class with other students. It is expected that you attend all classes and be on time except for excused emergencies.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution’s policy regarding “I” (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy.

Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any “I” (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on “financial aid probation.” If the “I” grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student’s Financial Aid may be suspended make the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

Academic Honesty

Honesty is a fundamental precept in all academic activities and … [you] have a special obligation to observe the highest standards of honesty. Academic misconduct in any form is inimical to the purposes and functions of the University and is therefore unacceptable and is rigorously proscribed. Academic misconduct includes:

- cheating (using unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise), plagiarism, falsification of records, unauthorized possession of examinations, intimidation, and any and all other actions that may improperly affect the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement; assisting others in any such act; or attempting to engage in such acts.

All acts of academic misconduct will be reported and adjudicated as prescribed by the student code of the University of Oklahoma. All students should review the “Student’s Guide to Academic Integrity” found at http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity

Accommodation Statement

The College of Continuing Education [Advanced Programs] is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your OU Site Director.

Course Policies

Advanced Programs policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are mailed to the professor for the course. Advanced Programs does not provide duplicating services or office supplies.

Copyright

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about Advanced Programs, visit our website at: http://www.goou.ou.edu/
INSTRUCTOR VITA
Claude H. Miller, Ph.D.

Education
- 2000  Ph.D.  The University of Arizona, Major: Communication; Minor: Psychology
- 1986  M.A.  American University, Major: Film & Video
- 1978  B.A.  The University of Florida, Major: Photography

Current Position
- Associate Professor, Department of Communication, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK.
- Advanced Programs Professor since 2003
- Director of Advanced Programs, Department of Communication since 2006

Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses
- COMM 5113  Nonverbal Communication
- COMM 5553  Persuasive Campaigns
- COMM 5213  Interpersonal Communication
- COMM 6433  Seminar in Intercultural Comm
- COMM 5253  Cross Cultural Communication
- COMM 6970  Seminar in Relational Comm
- COMM 5353  Conflict Management
- COMM 6970  Seminar in Social Influence
- COMM 5453  Social Influence
- COMM 6970  Seminar in Affective Processes

Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest
Current Program of Research includes investigative collaborations focusing primarily on emotion, motivation, and social influence theories as they apply to a wide range of health communication settings, including mass media campaigns targeting the counter-initiation of drug, tobacco, and alcohol behaviors among adolescent and minority populations.

Representative Publications and Presentations

**Representative Honors and Awards Received**

- 1999  Top Three Paper Award, Health Communication Division, NCA
- 2000  Top Student Paper, Information Systems Division, ICA
- 2001  Gerald R. Miller Outstanding Dissertation Award, NCA
- 2004  Top Three Paper, Communication & Social Cognition Division, NCA