

# RHET 3315: Interpersonal Communication

## Spring 2022

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**Office Hours:** TR 9:30-11:00; MWF will vary.

*What are office hours?* A chance to get questions answered, a time for me to get to know you a little better, a place to discuss careers, graduate school...and other things too. I tend to be around a lot more than "official" hours. So if these hours don't work, let me know. We'll figure out some better times. I encourage you to stop by!

### Course Description:

A study and application of basic communication concepts and theories in interactive communication situations from the personal to the organizational level.

### Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Explain behaviors that both hinder and foster interpersonal communication.
2. Be able to identify key suppositions when it comes to different theories of interpersonal communication.
3. Show how interpersonal communication theories can be applied to your own life.
4. Practice effective interpersonal communication behaviors.
5. Articulate research questions that apply to the study of interpersonal communication.

### Readings and Textbook:

The good news is that this class will cost you \$0 for your textbook! Some of your readings will come from a free textbook:

Wrench, Jason S., Narissra M. Punyanunt-Carter and Katherine S. Thweatt. *Interpersonal Communication: A Mindful Approach to Relationships*. Open SUNY books, 2020.

We'll also supplement that book with some journal readings. I want you to be able to know where some of the key theories come from, and we'll look at some articles that move beyond where our textbook goes. If I had to estimate the number of pages per week, I'd estimate that you'll be reading somewhere between 50-80 pages per week. You'll find the full bibliography at the end of the syllabus, and links to the textbook and the readings in Georgia View.

### A few words to the wise... which I know you are!

- Do you want to know how your professor thinks? Read the syllabus!
- Do you hate pop quizzes? I do too. Do you want to know how to avoid pop quizzes? Read the material and come prepared to talk about that material in class.



I reserve the right to change the syllabus if I find that y'all aren't reading the material and to add pop quizzes (I've been known to do that in the past). Class will be a lot more fun if you have done the readings... then we get to do a lot more application!

## What else should you know about this class, and the way we'll conduct it?

- **What's said in this class stays in this class.** Given the nature of the material we cover, I know that not everyone will feel comfortable with disclosing personal and sensitive material. We need to appreciate the contributions that each other makes, and recognize that not everyone is in the same place when it comes to the various topics we do discuss.
- That said, I'll try to strike a balance between personalizing and generalizing the topics we discuss. You may not have gone through the same things that the people in some of our case studies have gone through, but my hope is that you'll learn enough to be able to speak into those situations. I'll give you opportunities to demonstrate participation inside and outside of class.
- You'll find this course to be a combination of theory and practice. As an upper-level class, you should expect that we'll get into journal articles and more detailed discussions. But, because this is a Rhetoric class, I know that not all of you have had statistics, or our Theory and Research course. So don't worry if you don't get everything from some of the articles -- I'm here to help you determine the important ideas from the articles, and to get you thinking about how you might translate those ideas into situations that you or those around you may encounter.
- I don't have all the answers. And that's OK - interpersonal communication sounds very simple, but it's incredibly complex. We'll talk about how others have tried to raise important theoretical questions, and what we know and don't know when it comes to various kinds of communication styles.
- By the very nature of how media and communication have changed over the years, some of your experiences will be very different than mine. That's OK too.

## More of what you really need to know: can I skip this class? (Also known as the class attendance policy)

Our predominant mode of learning will be through class discussion. This class will succeed to the extent that everyone comes to class ready to discuss and through our various activities. I want to strike a balance between too much grace and being too strict. And since we don't know what will happen with COVID or other diseases, I also want to balance safety with your attendance. Accordingly, here is my attendance policy (note: if you had me last semester, this is VERY different):

- You get **2 free absences** for which you don't have to provide any reason.
- If you're sick, let me know. Email/call/etc. I'm like most professors: if you let me know ahead of time, I'll probably move mountains to help you. But if you wait until several weeks after the fact, well, I'm probably not going to be as accommodating. If you let me know right away, I'll consider the absence excused as long as it's not habitual. In other words, if you're absent 8 days in a row, I'm probably going to ask for some kind of medical documentation. But if you have a fever and can't make it to class, or if you're showing some kind of symptoms, then just tell me that ASAP. Those absences won't count toward the 2 free absences, provided you let me know in a timely way.
- **Official Georgia College activities are considered excused.** If you're in a sport or other officially sanctioned activity, just have one of your coaches or advisor send me your schedule.
- If there's something else that's going on, let me know. I'll let you in on a couple of secrets: (1) *Honesty is the best policy. If you're straight with me, I'll be much more amenable to err on the side of grace.* (2) *If something comes up, and you're sitting at your 2 absences, again - let me know ahead of time.* Things happen, and I'm much more likely to work with someone who tells me what's happening as opposed to someone who I haven't seen in weeks.
- Anything after the 2 free absences could result in a 2% penalty on your final course average. For example, missing 5 times *without letting me know* = 2 1/2 weeks of the semester. That means you're not available to be a part of the class discussion nearly 20% of the time, which impacts how you're able to participate in the class and ultimately what you can learn in the class.

## Assignments and Class Weighting:

The class will be weighted as follows:

- **1/3 (33%) Participation and Journaling**
- **1/2 (50%) Papers**
- **1/6 (16%) Final Project/Exam**

Here's how the different items will work as far as the class is concerned:

### Participation/Journaling:

*I believe in both pre-class and post-class discussion. I've refined my thoughts over the years, but here's how I think about this topic: as professors and teachers, we typically have you read an assignment, then file it away and go on to something else. That just teaches you how to check items off a list. You'll find that I'm a very big proponent of what's called "spiral learning" -- we may talk about something at the beginning of the semester in a small amount of detail, and then come back to it with progressively more depth later on. Part of what makes a class interesting is how you make connections between items that we discuss throughout the semester, and how you make sense of what we do in this class in conjunction with what you do in other classes. So I don't consider each class day "one and done." So you'll find on occasion post-class discussion topics on Georgia View.*

*However, I have found that students have sometimes abused this policy, and have waited until the very last week of the semester to turn in discussion posts. That's not spiral learning. That's just procrastination.*

Accordingly, here's my new policy: if you have responded to the initial question(s) in the post-discussion in a timely way (within two class periods after the initial question), you can then add on to your discussion afterwards.

In some cases, they'll be regular discussion board posts open to a full class discussion. In other cases, they'll be questions you submit to me. Expect that I'll regularly provide you opportunity to bring up questions that you have about the readings -- after all, for many of you, this will be a way of approaching communication that you've not really done before, and I figure there will be lots of questions. And I encourage you to come to me individually as well, whether it be through office hours, email, before/after class, or other ways.

I'll let you know in class if we'll have post-discussion forums, and let you know where to find them as well.

The journals are basically my equivalent of in-class pre-writing. Use them as a place to ask questions, make notes or comments about the readings, argue with the readings, give yourself some idea of what you want to talk about, etc. If there's something that's unclear, the journals would be a great place to put your questions (plus, there's always office hours, in-class questions, etc.).

What I plan to do is to look over the journals before each class so that I can see if you have items that I should incorporate into our discussion. Provided that the journals are longer than a sentence or two, I'll generally give you credit. **If you do journals on 90% of the class days, that's an A, 80% is a B, 70% is a C, and 60% is a D.** However, to give me time to look these journals over, I need to have them by **2:00 p.m. each day**

## More about the class assignments: Papers

You'll have 3 papers to complete. The papers themselves will vary in terms of content and approaches. Here's how they'll work:

**Paper #1:** This particular paper will be more of a "take-home test" kind of paper. During week #3, I will give you several questions based on our class discussion and your readings. I'll then give you one week to complete the paper, which will be turned in on February 3.

**Paper #2:** You'll pick a particular area that you would like to study in more detail. There's a bit of flexibility on this paper - essentially, you'll pick some topic within the area of interpersonal communication and write a 2-4 page paper on that topic. We'll talk about this more in class. The paper will be due on March 3.

**Paper #3:** This paper will adopt more of a case study approach. You'll be helping to design a training session for a company who is experiencing a particular type of interpersonal communication issue. Using your notes and class discussion, as well as books and articles, you'll develop a particular plan for that company. Think of this paper as the proposal for what you'll do for the company. This will be due on April 7.

### The final exam:

You'll be given a scenario from one of your classmates, which will come in the form of a "Dear Abby" type of letter. Using your notes and books/articles, you'll then develop a response to that scenario, which we'll then discuss during the final exam period. You'll turn in a copy of the scenario as well as your response to me during the final. We'll have each person talk about their scenario and response for about 3-4 minutes. You'll turn in the scenarios first, which will give me time to look them over before I assign them to your colleagues. When you turn in your scenario, you'll also suggest what you think might be a possible response. You'll then get about a week to mull over the scenario and to write your response letter, which will be turned in on the final exam day.

Scenarios will be due on April 19.

You'll receive the scenario for which you'll write a response on April 26.

LOS ANGELES TIMES

### PEANUTS CLASSICS By Charles M. Schulz



## **Georgia College Official Policies...**

### **Religious Observance Policy**

Students are permitted to miss class in observance of religious holidays and other activities observed by a religious group of which the student is a member without academic penalty. Exercising of one's rights under this policy is subject to the GC Honor Code. Students who miss class in observance of a religious holiday or event are required to make up the coursework missed as a result from the absence. The nature of the make-up assignments and the deadline for completion of such assignments are at the sole discretion of the instructor. Failure to follow the prescribed procedures voids all student rights under this policy.

### **Assistance for Student Needs Related to Disability**

If you have a disability as described by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, you may be eligible to receive accommodations to assist in programmatic and physical accessibility. The Student Disability Resource Center can assist you in formulating a reasonable accommodation plan and in providing support in developing appropriate accommodations to ensure equal access to all GC programs and facilities. Course requirements will not be waived, but accommodations may assist you in meeting the requirements. For documentation requirements and for additional information, we recommend that you contact the Student Disability Resource Center located in Russell Library 109 at 478-445-5931.

### **Academic Honesty**

The integrity of students and their written and oral work is a critical component of the academic process. The submission of another's work as one's own is plagiarism and will be dealt with using the procedures outlined in the GC Catalog. Remember that allowing another student to copy one's own work violates standards of academic integrity.

### **Student Rating of Instruction Survey**

Given the technological sophistication of Georgia College students, the student opinion survey is being delivered through an online process. Your constructive feedback plays an indispensable role in shaping quality education at Georgia College. All responses are completely confidential and your name is not stored with your responses in any way. In addition, instructors will not see any results of the opinion survey until after final grades are submitted to the University. An invitation to complete the online opinion survey is distributed to students near the end of the semester. Your participation in this very important process is greatly appreciated.

### **Student Use of Copyrighted Materials**

As a student your ability to post or link to copyrighted material is governed by United States copyright law. The law allows for students to post or link to copyrighted materials within the course environment when the materials are pertinent to course work. Students are expected to adhere to the stipulations of the Georgia College Honor Code, which addresses plagiarism. Violations are subject to disciplinary action. Policy recognizes that exclusive rights of copyright holders are balanced by limitations on those rights under federal copyright law, including the right to make a fair use of copyrighted materials. The absence of a copyright notice or symbol on a work does not denote a lack of copyright. Failure to comply with this policy, including federal copyright laws, may result in restriction or loss of university network access and/or disciplinary action through the Office of Student Life. For questions involving copyright issues, please consult the GC Office of Legal Affairs. Refer to the USG Policy on the Use of Copyrighted Works at <https://www.usg.edu/copyright>.

## Georgia College Official Policies... continued

### Electronic Recording Policy

Electronic video and/or audio recording is not permitted during any class unless the student obtains permission from the instructor and every student present. If permission is granted, any distribution of the recording is prohibited. Violation of this policy is grounds for removal from the class and referral for disciplinary action. Students granted specific electronic recording accommodations from Disability Services do not require special permission; however, the instructor must be notified. Any distribution is prohibited.

### COVID-19

The health and safety of our community will always remain our top priority. Although not required, we strongly encourage students to get a COVID-19 vaccine. Similarly, unvaccinated individuals are also strongly encouraged to continue wearing a mask or face covering in the classroom as well as at social gatherings. Vaccinated individuals may also want to consider wearing a mask or face covering while indoors. Please consult the [university's website](#) for COVID related updates and resources. (Updated January 6, 2022)

### Academic Grievances or Appeals

An academic grievance or appeal is an allegation by a student of substantial and/or unjustified deviation, to the student's detriment, from policies, procedures and/or requirements regarding admission, grading policies, special agreements, instructor's requirements and academic requirements of the University. Students shall have the right to file academic grievances or appeals according to the procedures approved by the University and outlined in the University Catalog.

### Fire Drills

Fire drills will be conducted annually. In the event of a fire alarm, students will exit the building in a quick and orderly manner through the nearest hallway exit. Learn the floor plan and exits of the building. Do not use elevators. If you encounter heavy smoke, crawl on the floor so as to gain fresh air. Assist disabled persons and others if possible without endangering your own life. Assemble for a head count on the front lawn of main campus or other designated assembly area.

### What else should you know about grading, and about me?

- I use the normal 90-80-70-60% grading scale.
- I use the rubric found on the last page of the syllabus as I evaluate written assignments.
- What's the best way to get an "A?" Be present and willing to discuss (in either written or oral form), and make good arguments. It really is that simple.
- You'll find that my approach to this class combines both rhetorical and social scientific approaches to communication. I truly do consider myself a communication generalist.



**Course Schedule: Spring 2022**

***This is our plan for how we'll progress through our material this semester. However, we may change this schedule based on our progress and/or student interest. Also, it's possible that we may have candidates for department faculty positions that may present during our class. Updates to our schedule will be discussed in class and posted on Georgia View.***

*In other words: This is version 1.2 of the schedule, updated on April 11, 2022, and may not reflect our final progress through the course.*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic(s)</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<b>(1) Tuesday, January 11</b>	Introduction to course What do we mean by interpersonal comm? History of interpersonal		
<b>(2) Thursday, January 13</b>	History of interpersonal Survey of types of interpersonal theories	Chapter 2, Wrench book	
<b>(3) Tuesday, January 18</b>	Identity and Intrapersonal Communication	Chapter 3, Wrench book	
<b>(4) Thursday, January 20</b>	Imagined interaction	Edwards, Honeycutt & Zagacki	
<b>(5) Tuesday, January 25</b>	Face theory	Goffman	
<b>(6) Thursday, January 27</b>	Goals theory	O'Keefe	
<b>(7) Tuesday, February 1</b>	Goals theory	O'Keefe (continued)	
<b>(8) Thursday, February 3</b>	Social Exchange theory	Frisby, et al	Paper #1 due
<b>(9) Tuesday, February 8</b>	Social Exchange theory	Frisby, et al (continued)	
<b>(10) Thursday, February 10</b>	Privacy and Self-Disclosure	Petronio	
<b>(11) Tuesday, February 15</b>	Attachment	Chapter 8, Wrench book	
<b>(12) Thursday, February 17</b>	Regents Communication Meeting: Class will not meet in-person.	See Georgia View	See Georgia View
<b>(13) Tuesday, February 22</b>	Review/Catchup/Forecast: What have we discussed, and what's coming		
<b>(14) Thursday, February 24</b>	Rhetoric and Interpersonal	McClish	
<b>(15) Tuesday, March 1</b>	Normative rhetoric and interpersonal	Dillard, Solomon and Palmer	
<b>(16) Thursday, March 3</b>	Expectancy Violation Theory	Burgoon	Paper #2 due
<b>(17) Tuesday, March 8</b>	Expectancy Violation Theory	Burgoon (continued)	
<b>(18) Thursday, March 10</b>	Communication and Narrative	Stewart and Kallas	
<b>March 15, March 17</b>	Spring Break!		

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic(s)</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<b>(19) Tuesday, March 22</b>	Communication and Narrative	Kellas, Morgan, et al	
<b>(20) Thursday, March 24</b>	Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication	Chapter 14, Wrench book	
<b>(21) Tuesday, March 29</b>	Communication Accomodation	Riordan, et al	
<b>(22) Thursday, March 31</b>	Nonverbal Communication	Chapter 5, Wrench book	
<b>(23) Tuesday, April 5</b>	Nonverbal Communication and Listening	Chapter 7, Wrench book	
<b>(24) Thursday, April 7</b>	Review/Catchup/Forecast: What have we discussed, and what's coming		
<b>(25) Tuesday, April 12</b>	Reevaluating theories in the light of computer mediated communication		
<b>(26) Thursday, April 14</b>	Conflict	Chapter 9, Wrench book	Paper #3 due
<b>(27) Tuesday, April 19</b>	Interpersonal Argument	Trapp Bevan	Scenarios and creator's solution due
<b>(28) Thursday, April 21</b>	Relationship Framing	Dillard, Solomon & Palmer	
<b>(29) Tuesday, April 26</b>	Class topic to be decided		Scenarios returned
<b>(30) Thursday, April 28</b>	Course wrapup		
<b>Tuesday, May 3, 1:00-3:15 FINAL EXAM</b>	Presentations on "Dear Abby" letters		"Dear Abby" letter due



## List of Articles: Interpersonal Communication

- Burgoon, Judee K. "Expectancy Violations Theory." in *The International Encyclopedia of Interpersonal Communication*. Eds. Charles R. Berger, Michael E. Roloff, Steven R. Wilson, James P. Dillard, J. Caughlin and D. Solomon. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118540190.wbeic102>.
- Caughlin, John P., Sylvia L. Mikucki-Enyart, Ashley V. Middleton, Anne M. Stone and Laura E. Brown. "Being Open without Talking about It: A Rhetorical/Normative Approach to Understanding Topic Avoidance in Families after a Lung Cancer Diagnosis." *Communication Monographs* 78.4 (2011): 409-436.
- Dillard, James Price, Denise Haunani Solomon, and Mark T. Palmer. "Structuring the Concept of Relational Communication." *Communication Monographs* 66 (1999): 49-65.
- Edwards, Renee, James M. Honeycutt and Kenneth S. Zagacki. "Imagined Interaction as an Element of Social Cognition." *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 52 (1988): 23-45.
- Frisby, Brandi N., Robert J. Sidelinger, and Melanie Booth-Butterfield. "No Harm, No Foul: A Social Exchange Perspective on Individual and Relational Outcomes Associated with Relational Baggage." *Western Journal of Communication*, 79.5 (2015): 555-572.
- Goffman, Erving. "On Face-Work." in Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behaviour*. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1967, 5-46.
- Kellas, Jody Koenig, Toni Morgan, Cassidy Taladay, Mikki Minton, Justice Forte, and Erin Husmann. "Narrative Connection: Applying CNSM Theory's Translational Storytelling Heuristic." *Journal of Family Communication* 20.4 (2020): 360-376.
- McClish, Glen. "Some Less Acknowledged Links: Rhetorical Theory, Interpersonal Communication and the Tradition of the Liberal Arts." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 20.2 (1990): 105-118.
- Petronio, Sandra. "Brief Status Report on Communication Privacy Management Theory." *Journal of Family Communication* 13 (2013): 6-14. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2013.743426>.
- Riordan, Monica A., Kris M. Markman, and Craig O. Stewart. "Communication Accommodation in Instant Messaging: An Examination of Temporal Convergence." *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 32.1 (2013): 84-95. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X12462695>.
- Stewart, John and Jody Koenig Kellas. "Co-Constructing Uniqueness: An Interpersonal Process Promoting Dialogue." *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 28.1 (2020): 5-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15456870.2020.1684289>.
- Trapp, Robert. "Interpersonal Argumentation: Conflict and Reason Giving." *Communication Reports* 2.2 (1989): 105-109.

**Rubric for papers and written assignments**

	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Explanation of issues</b>	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.
<b>Evidence Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion</b>	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.
<b>Influence of context and assumptions</b>	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.
<b>Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)</b>	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious.
<b>Control of syntax and mechanics</b>	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language used has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.