

CMN 4765

Communication in Families

Fall 2019
3 credits

Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth Gill
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Office hours: MWF 11:15 – 12:45

Textbooks

Arnold, L. B. (2008). *Family Communication: Theory and Research*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Turner, L., & West, R. (2013). *Perspectives on Family Communication* (4th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Course Description: This course provides an examination of communicative structure, function, and process among family members. The family system as a whole and major sub-systems (parent-child, siblings, spouses) are explored. Emphasis is on the role of communication in the construction, maintenance, and change of family relationships throughout the family lifecycle.

Course Objectives: After completing the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the nature of family systems and their subsystems
2. Understand the internal and external functions of the family
3. Understand the central role communication plays in the structure and function of family relationships
4. Critically analyze communicative encounters between family members
5. Develop useful and theoretically sound explanations for familial communicative encounters
6. Understand their own family relationships and the impact communicative behaviors have on those relationships
7. Develop skills necessary to engage in effective family encounters

Course Policies:

Safe Learning Environment and classroom etiquette

This class is a safe space for communication, learning, and the sharing of ideas. Each of us will need to be conscious of our role in providing a place where every class member, given our differences, will feel safe and function as a part of our learning community. Inclusive language is important to maintain a safe class environment – no language will be tolerated that demeans, belittles, or marginalizes someone because of their gender, race, ethnicity, class, age, sexual orientation, ability, etc. Such language will not be accepted in your classroom communication, written work, or your oral presentations. If you disrupt the

safety of our learning community, you may be asked to leave. It is perfectly acceptable to disagree with one another, but each of us will need to argue our positions respectfully.

Respect for yourself, for the instructor, and for your peers is a MUST in this class! Listening to and appreciating the viewpoints of others requires our honest attention and consideration. Please silence cell phones, avoid conversations unrelated to the course, refrain from surfing websites unrelated to the course, and behave in ways that promote everyone's learning. Failure to comply with the above will result in your being asked to leave the class.

The nature of this course is such that certain discussion material may be sensitive to many of you. I expect that you will learn a lot about yourself and about your family, both good and bad. And while I want to encourage you to share and participate freely in class, please remember that none of us are licensed therapists. Our purpose is to discuss and understand family communication issues from a research perspective, not to offer personal counseling. Therefore, please use discretion before offering certain disclosures. That said, you will never be forced to offer any information that you are not comfortable sharing.

Preparation for Class

Read assigned materials prior to class and be prepared to discuss them in class. The assumption that you have completed the assigned readings forms the basis of class. Students are responsible for ideas expressed in the book but not covered in class. Please ask questions about material you have read that you do not understand. Students are accountable for instructional materials including readings, discussion content, lecture material, handouts, video content, etc.

Assignments & Due Dates

Complete all papers, assessments/quizzes, exams, etc. on the dates assigned. Assignments, except for those completed during class, are due at the beginning of the class session. (Work submitted at the end of class is late.) A late paper will receive a grade reduction of one letter grade for *each day* (not class session) it is late.

**If you plan to be absent on a day an assignment is due, you must hand in the assignment early in order to avoid a grade deduction.

Short daily assignments, quizzes, and activities

These activities are conducted in class and may not be made up, except under special circumstances. To receive a grade, the student must be present for the entire class period. Brief written assignments, quizzes, and activities generally will be unannounced and cover the reading for that session. These assignments help you monitor your comprehension of the course material. Any short in-class assignments given will contribute to your participation grade.

Arrive on Time

Late arrivals are disruptive and detract from the learning in the class. Class will start and end on time. You will be given two "free" late arrivals and for every time you are late after that you will receive a 1% deduction from your final grade. Please do not make me enforce this. Show up on time.

Attendance

No attendance will be taken. You are expected, however, to attend each class meeting. Attendance is important in this class because learning is highly interactive. Prior notifications of impending absences are not required, but understand that absences may result in a loss of points because you will be missing daily in-class assignments and/or unannounced quizzes which cannot be made up.

If you miss class, you are responsible for getting notes and assignments from another student. It is not the instructor's responsibility to remind you that you were absent or to re-present material or handouts to you. It is your responsibility to stay informed and to keep up with class assignments. Remember you may not make up missed daily assignments.

Written Assignments

Written assignments are due on the date announced. Use APA style for all written assignments. A useful website providing links to information about citation styles is <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>. Submit your best work. **Edit and proofread your work.** The quality of your writing factors into your grades on assignments. Late written assignments will receive a letter grade deduction for each *day* they are late. Assignments may be e-mailed using .doc or .rtf format if you plan to be absent.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>) Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Plagiarism and/or cheating are specific instances of academic misconduct. In addition to being reported to Student Standards, such infractions will result in a "0" for the assignment and probable failure in the course. Plagiarism includes activities such as the following: copying word for word, paraphrasing without citing its author, and failing to attribute information to its original source (including failing to cite ideas, organizational arrangements, quotes, etc.). Submitted assignments should be your original work and not presented in another class. Cheating includes activities such as using unauthorized materials or assistance, using other students' ideas and works within your own paper, copying from other students, misrepresenting and/or falsifying data, and not completing your own work.

E-Mail

The Department of Communication Studies requires each student to use their university address for any class, department, college, or university email correspondence. Students have the responsibility to recognize that certain communications may be time critical. "I didn't check my e-mail," is not an acceptable excuse for missing department/course communication sent via email.

Technology Use

Do not use cell phones during class time and do not place them on desks. Inform the instructor if an emergency requires the use of such devices and take precautions to minimize disruption. Students wishing to photograph or record class sessions should discuss this with the professor since all class material is the intellectual property of the faculty member. You will receive a final grade deduction of 10 percent for each infraction of this policy.

University Cancellations

If the university cancels classes due to snow, severe weather, power outages, or other emergencies, students should assume that the assignments due on the day of the cancelled class are due on the next class meeting. Be sure to check your e-mail for messages concerning the next class session following a closure.

Religious Observances

It is university policy to respect the faith and religious obligations of students, faculty, and staff. Students with classes that conflict with their religious observances should notify the instructor well in advance to make accommodations.

Incompletes

Granting a grade of incompletes occurs only under very stringent conditions (e.g., serious illness or accident). Students who experience an extended absence should investigate withdrawal from the university.

Students with disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call [217-581-6583](tel:217-581-6583).

The Student Success Center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (www.eiu.edu/~success) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call [217-581-6696](tel:217-581-6696), or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

Course Assignments:

Additional details for each major assignment will be posted on d2l.

- 1. Discussion Leader:** Each of you will pair up with a partner and will be responsible for one class period's discussion of the assigned reading (indicated on the schedule as "group discussion"). You'll need to bring at least 5 critical questions to share with the class for that day's reading. Discussion leaders will lead the discussion, ask discussion questions and additional follow-up questions, and incorporate any additional activities, cases, or research you may have on the topic. You will be responsible for the entire class period. Your focus should be on leading discussion and related activities, not lecturing the class. On this day you will also present your self-help/pop culture analysis (see below).
- 2. Personal development/popular culture analysis:** You and your partner will choose an example of personal development ("self-help") or pop culture discourse that relates to your discussion topic. You will analyze this piece based on what you have learned from theory and research about family communication. This analysis will be presented at the end of your discussion (see above). This should be 8 to 10 minutes in length. You may utilize PowerPoint for this portion of the class period (unlike the rest of your discussion day, this portion will be formatted as a formal presentation – be sure you leave enough time for it!)
- 3. Family Story Project: Five-Part Assignment**

Part 1: Family Genogram & paper

You will start this project by diagraming your family's structure and relationships through a family genogram. You will utilize the genogram symbols provided in the assignment details on d2l. The genogram should include all past and present family relationships for a minimum of three generations. You will also write a 2- to 3-page reflection paper discussing what you learned about your family through the genogram process.

Part 2: Family Network Analysis & paper

Next you will observe and analyze the direction, flow, and characteristics of communication within your family. You will map the communication network for your family of origin based on this analysis. You will also write a 2-to 3-page paper discussing this analysis.

Part 3: Family Interviews

For the next portion of this project, you will need to collect your family story. This requires that you develop a list of questions you'd like to know about your family to

better understand your family, its history, and your family's communication. Then interview a minimum of three generations (4 or 5 generations if available to you) within your family. You should plan to conduct face-to-face interviews with your participants or collect written stories from them. Your participants can be your mother, father, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. You will interview *each person* to collect their version of your family's story (I realize this may require the use of email or social media if some family members live far away).

Part 4: Analysis Paper

Based upon the data you gather in the family interviews, you will write a 5-7-page analysis describing what you learned about your family and your family's communication. What you learned should be related back to material we have discussed in this course.

Part 5: Presentation

Your project will culminate with a creative and professionally presented metaphoric analysis that is 6 to 8 minutes long.

4. Final Exam

The exam will be cumulative, as this will be the only exam for the semester. A comprehensive study guide will be provided. The exam may include multiple choice, true false, short answer and/or essay questions.

5. Class Participation:

Your active participation is essential to your own and your peers' intellectual development. Class engagement and participation will be determined by the following: your degree of involvement and engagement, your completion of in-class assignments and group work, your contributions to the class and to class discussions. **Note: this will include your informed contributions to your classmates' discussion questions on the days that they lead discussion! In other words, be sure you have read!**

Point Distribution:

Assignment:	Points:
Discussion Leader	50
Personal Development analysis	50
Family Story Project	
Family Genogram & paper	50
Family Network analysis & paper	50
Family History Interviews	25
Analysis Paper	100
Presentation	50
Final Exam	100
Participation	25

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59% and below = F

Total: **500**

Final Evaluation:

90% and above= A

80 – 89% = B

70-79% = C

60-69% = D

Tentative Course Schedule

Blue Book= Arnold, L. B. (2008). *Family Communication: Theory and Research*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Red Book= Turner, L., & West, R. (2012). *Perspectives on Family Communication* (4th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

DATE:	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
Monday, Aug 19	Class Introductions, assign group discussions & family story project	
Wednesday, Aug 21	Chp. 1 Defining Family (Blue Book)	
Friday, Aug 23	Chp. 2 Family Type & Structures (Blue Book)	
Monday, Aug 26	Chp. 2 Providing a Theoretical Framework (Red Book)	
Wednesday, Aug 28	pp. 78-85 "Going Away to College: A Family Turning Point" (Blue Book)	Group Discussion
Friday, Aug 30	Chp. 3 Examining Structure. Roles & Rules (Red Book)	
Monday, Sept 2	No Class – Labor Day	
Wednesday, Sept 4	pp. 86-89 "What Does It Mean to Be a Good Father?" (Blue Book) Discuss genogram assignment	
Friday, Sept 6	Chp. 4 Societal Contexts for Family Communication (Red Book)	
Monday, Sept 9	pp. 395-403 "Where are the Mommies?: A Content Analysis of Women's Magazines" (Blue Book)	Group Discussion
Wednesday, Sept 11	Genogram in-class work day	
Friday, Sept 13	pp.291-301 Government and the Family (Red Book)	Genograms due
Monday, Sept 16	Chp. 5 Communicating Intimacy (Red Book)	
Wednesday, Sept 18	pp. 173-179 "Sex and Gender in Relational Maintenance" (Blue Book) Discuss network analysis assignment	
Friday, Sept 20	pp. 180-188 "Family Communication Patterns and the Socialization of Support Skills" (Blue Book)	

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Monday, Sept 23	Chp. 6 Telling Stories & Making Meaning (Red Book)	
Wednesday, Sept 25	Visit with Ranae Waggoner, what story are you telling yourself? What's your family's role in that?	Network analysis due
Friday, Sept 27	pp. 136-146 "Storytelling as a Means to Communicate within the Family—The Orphan Stories" (Blue Book) Discuss interview questions assignment	
Monday, Sept 30	Chp. 7 Expressing Conflict, Power, & Violence (Red Book)	Interview questions due
Wednesday, Oct 2	pp. 217-227 "What Do <i>You</i> Do When Your Teenager Hits You?" (Blue Book)	Group Discussion
Friday, Oct 4	pp. 228-236 "Enacting Conflict as Resistance: Urban Indian Women in Hindu Arranged Marriages" (Blue Book)	Group Discussion
Monday, Oct 7	Chp. 9 Managing Challenging Dialogues (Red Book)	
Wednesday, Oct 9	pp. 298-306 "Communicating About Sex as a Daughter, Parent, and Teacher" (Blue Book) Discuss questions for Amanda Feder	
Friday, Oct 11	No Class – Fall break	
Monday, Oct 14	Visit with Amanda Feder, SACIS	
Wednesday, Oct 16	Chp. 8 Sexuality and the Family (Blue Book)	
Friday, Oct 18	pp. 307-313 "The Social Context of Lesbian Family Identity" (Blue Book)	Group discussion
Monday, Oct 21	Chp. 7 Race, Ethnicity, & Family (Blue Book)	
Wednesday, Oct 23	pp. 254-261 "What Shall I Tell My Daughters that are Black" (Blue Book)	Group discussion
Friday, Oct 25	Joy Luck Club	
Monday, Oct 28	Joy Luck Club	
Wednesday, Oct 30	Joy Luck Club	
Friday, Nov 1	JLC discussion/ graded activity Discuss family analysis paper and presentation assignments	

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Monday, Nov 4	pp. 263-272 "The Mother-Daughter Tug-of-War: Ethnicity's Impact on Connection-Autonomy Dialectic" (Blue Book)	Group Discussion
Wednesday, Nov 6	pp.274-281 "Parenting in the Interracial Family: More Alike Than Different" (Blue)	Group Discussion
Friday, Nov 8	Chp. 8 pp. 279-301 Communicating Under Stress (Red Book)	
Monday, Nov 11	pp.301-311 Communication & Unpredictable Stressors (Red Book)	Group Discussion
Wednesday, Nov 13	pp.44- 51 "Strong Families' Use of Communicative Coping in Postdivorce Families" (Blue Book) pp.90-98 "Dialectic Characteristics and Shadow Realities in Postmarital Relationships (Blue Book)	
Friday, Nov 15	Discuss prison questions	
Monday, Nov 18	Visit with Dr. Jackie Frank, incarceration & the family	
Wednesday, Nov 20	Family systems and health challenges	
Friday, Nov 22	pp. 311-316, Homelessness (Red Book)	Family Analysis Papers Due
Monday, Nov 25	No Class – Thanksgiving Break	
Wednesday, Nov 27	No Class – Thanksgiving Break	
Friday, Nov 29	No Class – Thanksgiving Break	
Monday, Dec 2	Family History Analysis and Presentations	Presentations
Wednesday, Dec 4	Family History Analysis and Presentations	Presentations
Friday, Dec 6	Family History Analysis and Presentations	Presentations
Tuesday, Dec 10, 12:30 – 2:30pm	Final Exam	