**COMM 1131: Sex, Relationships, and Communication**

*instructor:* Joseph Schwartz, Ph.D.

*office:* 241 Holmes Hall

*e-mail:* j.schwartz@neu.edu

*phone:* 617-373-7277

**Course objectives:**

* To describe the role of communication in close relationships.
* To identify empirically-based communication strategies involved in managing conflict in  close relationships.
* To identify empirically-based communication strategies associated with satisfying  relationships.
* To explain important empirically-based communication-related concepts and theories  relevant to starting, maintaining, and ending close relationships.

**Required textbook:**

*Close Encounters: Communication in Relationships* (5th Edition), by Laura K. Guerrero, Peter A. Anderson, and Walid A. Afifi.

For each class period, I expect that you will do the following, in the order indicated. It is important to keep up with the pace of the class. Please consult the syllabus often.

1. Complete assigned readings.
2. Listen to (and take notes on) the day’s lecture. Lectures are in the “lectures” section of Blackboard.

**Pacing and scheduling:**

It is important to approach this class as you would an “on ground” course. While compared to an on ground course there is more flexibility, the time commitment is the same. To be successful, you will need to stay on schedule. I would recommend setting aside regular times each week to complete the work for the course.

Please note: exams are NOT flexible. They must be completed on their assigned day.

**Class policies:**

*Assignment guidelines* – Written assignments should be double-spaced. Please use a 12-point font.

*Disabilities* – I need to hear from anyone who has a disability so that appropriate arrangements may be made. All disabilities must be documented with the Disability Resource Center (617-373-2675).

*Email* – I will need 24 hours to answer email. Please note: I will not be able to answer email received Saturday or Sunday.

**Communication with the professor:**

Email is the best way to get in touch with me. My email address is: [j.schwartz@neu.edu](mailto:j.schwartz@neu.edu).

I am happy to conference with students over Skype. Please email me to set up a time. My Skype handle is: josephpeterschwartz.

If you are in the Boston area, I am also happy to meet with you in my office (241 Holmes Hall). Email me to set up an appointment time.

**Technology issues**

If you are having issues with Blackboard (e.g., a lecture is not working), please let me know. I will do what I can to fix it. If I am not able to personally handle the technology issue, I will refer you to the NU Help Desk -- 617.373.4357 (xHELP) | [help@northeastern.edu](mailto:help@northeastern.edu).

I have found that oftentimes, problems can be solved by: (1) making sure your browser is up-to-date; (2) restarting your computer; (3) switching browsers (e.g., from Firefox to Chrome).

**Academic honesty and integrity statement:**

The University views academic dishonesty as one of the most serious offenses that a student can commit while in college and imposes appropriate punitive sanctions on violators. The following is excerpted from the University’s policy on academic honesty and integrity; the complete policy is available at http:// [www.northeastern.edu/osccr/academichonesty.html](http://www.northeastern.edu/osccr/academichonesty.html)

*Cheating* – intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in an academic exercise. This may include use of unauthorized aids (notes, texts) or copying from another student’s exam, paper, computer disk, etc.

*Fabrication* – intentional and unauthorized falsification, misrepresentation, or invention of any data, or citation in an academic exercise. Examples may include making up data for a research paper, altering the results of a lab experiment or survey, listing a citation for a source not used, or stating an opinion as a scientifically proven fact.

*Plagiarism* – intentionally representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise without providing proper documentation by source by way of a footnote, endnote or inter-textual note.

*Unauthorized collaboration* – Students, each claiming sole authorship, submit separate reports, which are substantially similar to one another. While several students may have the same source material, the analysis, interpretation and reporting of the data must be each individual’s.

*Participation in academically dishonest activities* – Examples include stealing an exam, using a prewritten paper through mail order or other services, selling, loaning or otherwise distributing materials for the purpose of heating, plagiarism, or other academically dishonest acts; alternation, theft, forgery, or destruction of the academic work of others.

*Facilitating academic dishonesty* – Examples may include inaccurately listing someone as co-author of paper who did not contribute, sharing a take home exam, taking an exam or writing a paper for another student.

**Submission of work:**

Late assignments are not accepted. All assignments must be submitted through Blackboard. Do not email me assignments.

**Assignments**

*Exams*

All exams are announced; see below. Exams must be completed during their designated time. If an exam is not taken during its designated time, the grade for that exam with be a zero. Exams will be composed of multiple-choice questions and short-answer questions. You will take exam on Blackboard. Exams are in the “assignments and exams” section of Blackboard. Exams are timed.

*Short paper*

You will write a short paper (4 pages, double-spaced) applying a theoretical concept from class to a contemporary text. See the assignment guidelines in the “assignments” tab on Blackboard. You will turn your paper in through Blackboard. Assignments can be reviewed and submitted through the “assignments and exams” section of Blackboard. Late assignments are not accepted.

**Grading**

I do not offer extra credit. I do not “curve” grades. I do not “round” grades.

Exam 1: 200 points

Exam 2: 200 points

Exam 3: 200 points

Exam 4: 200 points

Short paper: 200 points

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| Grade | **A** | **A-** | **B+** | **B** | **B-** | **C+** | **C** | **C-** | **D+** | **D** | **D-** | **F** |
| Points | 940-1000 | 900- 939 | 870- 899 | 830- 869 | 800- 829 | 770- 799 | 730- 769 | 700- 729 | 670- 699 | 630-669 | 600- 629 | <600 |

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| **Week** | **Class material**  This schedule assumes four 100 minute class periods per week. Set aside regular times each week to devote to the course! |
| July 3 – July 8 | Chapter 1 - *Conceptualizing Relational Communication*  Chapter 2 - *Communicating Identity* |
| July 10 – July 15 | Chapter 3 - *Drawing People Together*  Chapter 4 - *Making Sense of Our World*  **EXAM 1 is due July 14 by 9 pm EST.**  **Exam 1 will be posted to Bb July 13 at 9 pm.**  **You must take Exam 1 by July 14 at 9 pm. If you do not, your grade for Exam 1 will be 0.**  **The exam will consist of 30 multiple choice questions and short answer questions on material from Chapters 1 – 4. You will find the exam in the “assignments and exams” tab on Blackboard.** |
| July 17 – July 22 | Chapter 5 - *Changing Relationships: Stages, Turning Points, and Dialectics*  Chapter 6 - *Revealing and Hiding Ourselves* |
| July 24 – July 29 | Chapter 7 - *Communicating Closeness*  Chapter 8 - *Making a Love Connection*  **EXAM 2 is due July 28 by 9 pm EST.**  **Exam 2 will be posted to Bb July 27 at 9 pm.**  **You must take Exam 2 by July 28 at 9 pm. If you do not, your grade for Exam 2 will be 0.**  **The exam will consist of 30 multiple choice questions and short answer questions on material from Chapters 5 – 8. You will find the exam in the “assignments and exams” tab on Blackboard.** |
| July 31 – August 5 | Chapter 9 - *Communicating Sexually: The Closest Physical Encounter*  Chapter 10 - *Staying Close*  **Short paper is due August 4 at 9 pm EST.**  **You must turn your paper in by August 4 at 9 pm. If you do not, your grade for the paper will be 0.** |
| August 7 – August 12 | Chapter 11 - *Coping With Conflict*  Chapter 12 - *Influencing Each Other*  **EXAM 3 is due August 10 at 9 pm.**  **Exam 3 will be posted to Bb August 9 at 9 pm.**  **You must take exam 3 by August 10 at 9 pm. If you do not, your grade for Exam 2 will be 0.**  **The exam will consist of 30 multiple choice questions and short answer questions on material from Chapters 9 – 12. You will find the exam in the “assignments and exams” tab on Blackboard.** |
| August 14 – August 19 | Chapter 13 - *Hurting the Ones We Love*  Chapter 14 - *Ending Relationships* |
| August 20 – 21 | **Final exam due by August 21 at 9 pm. Exam will cover material from chapters 1 – 14. The exam will consist of 40 multiple choice questions and short answer questions.** |