

COMST 218: Conflict Management

Communication Studies Program

Fall 2017 Course Syllabus

Instructor & Course Information

Instructor: Dr. Katherine Rafferty

Email: rafferty@iastate.edu

Office Location: 354 CARVER

Office Hours: 1:00-2:00pm, T/R (or by appointment)

Time of Class: 8:00-9:20am, T/R

Room Location: Carver Hall, Room 232

Communication Studies Program

The Communication Studies program is the primary academic unit at ISU that advances the understanding of human communication with a particular focus in the areas of interpersonal, small group, organizational, and intercultural communication. Through our courses we teach students how to think critically and develop and implement evidence-based research strategies to address complex communication issues. We provide students with opportunities to apply their learning through serving the community and collaborating with faculty to produce new knowledge. In keeping with the focus of the program, faculty conduct nationally recognized research to advance the understanding of human communication. Faculty communication expertise is shared both in the classroom and through training and consultation with University and community organizations.

Course Purpose & Objectives

In this course we will examine the nature of interpersonal conflict. Course concepts will be explored through lectures, readings, in-class discussions, videos, quizzes, written assignments, and exams. Some lectures will be based on material directly from the text; however, in order to provide you with a broader base of knowledge, most lectures will not be entirely redundant of textbook content. The **specific learning objectives** for this course include:

- Gain knowledge about the different approaches to handling interpersonal conflict
- Apply concepts and principles from interpersonal communication theories to the study of interpersonal conflict
- Understand communication concepts that facilitate in effective conflict interaction, including forgiveness and reconciliation
- Develop analytical, writing, and critical thinking skills

Required Course Materials

It is imperative that you **complete all required readings before the start of class**. It's very important that you stay on top of your readings in this class. Doing so will help you keep yourself on track and avoid confusion during class (and also get the most out of this course). Additionally, you should always bring your textbook and a hard copy of the additional readings to class so you can highlight important points as we discuss each day's topics. The course exams and assignments will assess your knowledge of the readings, as well as class notes and discussions.

Textbook: Cahn, D. D. & Abigail, R. A. (2014). *Managing conflict through communication* (5th Ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Personal Journal

Course Expectations & Policies

Attendance

Attendance is vital for passing this class. It is expected that you will attend class and be on time. If you need to miss class, it is your responsibility to meet with me or talk with a fellow classmate about missed notes and assignments. Please keep in mind that absences may negatively impact your in-class quiz and homework assignment grade since there are *no make-up opportunities and I will not accept emailed work*. In short, please attend class and be on time and we will have no issues. ☺

Professional Conduct

We, as a class, have a strong commitment to the development and maintenance of an instructional climate that supports equality of opportunity and respect for differences based on sex, gender, religion, culture, race, ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation. Your enrollment in this class assumes that you will treat your fellow students and me with respect. Part of that respect includes that **you will NOT use your laptop, cell phone, or iPod in this class.**

Technology Use in the Classroom

Students are NOT permitted to use laptops in class. Over the years, I have found that laptops only present distractions from participating in class and actively engaging with the course material. I acknowledge that this may be challenging for some students who use their laptops to take notes; however, *researchers have found that taking notes via pen and paper is far better for students' comprehension compared to taking notes on the computer*. In short, there are learning comprehension benefits for not being distracted by the presence of your laptop. **In addition to your laptop, I expect that cell phones and iPods will be turned off and not used during class time.**

Deadlines and Late Work

No late assignments or exams will be received or graded; they will receive a score of zero. NO EXCEPTIONS!

Written Work

Any written assignment for this course must be typed using **12 point Times New Roman font and double-spaced with 1" margins**. Please know that all written work will be evaluated and graded based on clarity and grammatical correctness. Please see the Writing Center (<http://www.wmc.dso.iastate.edu>) to help you become a stronger writer.

Extra Credit

It is possible (but not guaranteed) that extra credit will be made available. Specific point values will be determined on a case- by-case basis.

Participation by Students with Disabilities

If you need special accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible, preferable at the beginning of the semester. Do not wait until the day an assignment is due or the day of an exam. Also, prior to our conversation, please request that a Disability Resources staff send a SAAR form verifying your disability and specifying the accommodation(s) that you will need. Information about Student Disability Resources may be found at <http://www.sdr.dso.iastate.edu>.

Incomplete Policy

An incomplete is seldom granted in this course. If a problem arises that will prevent you from completing class requirements you must contact me immediately. To be considered eligible for an incomplete you must provide written, verifiable, and acceptable proof that an incomplete is justified. The Department Chair and I will evaluate your claim to determine whether an incomplete will be granted and how/when the course material will be completed.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to comply with University policies dealing with student misconduct. **Any evidence of cheating, plagiarism, or misrepresentation of work will result in a failing grade on the assignment or exam.** Additionally, any evidence of academic misconduct will be immediately reported to the Department Chair and Dean of Students for disciplinary action. The University's policies on Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct are outlined here: <http://www.dso.iastate.edu/ja/academic/misconduct.html>.

Discrimination & Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is reprehensible and will not be tolerated in this class or by the University. Harassment is inappropriate, disrespectful, and subverts the mission of Iowa State University by threatening the careers, educational experience, and well being of students, faculty, and staff. Sexual harassment will be reported to the Department Chair and Dean of Students for further action. The University's policies on Discrimination and Sexual Harassment are outlined here: <http://www.policy.iastate.edu/policy/discrimination/#Statement>.

Course Assignments

Throughout this course, you will have the opportunity to *earn* **500 points** based on the assignments described below.

In-Class Activities & Quizzes

You should plan to attend class regularly—preferably every day—and stay in class the entire time. Although you will not lose a set amount of points for any given day that you miss, your preparation, attendance, and participation in class are **ABSOLUTELY** necessary for success (and enjoyment) in this course. I will take notice of your attendance and participation in class and have been known to reward students who are committed to this aspect of the course. Please note that being in class is not synonymous with attending. If you are physically present but are doing other things or disrupting your classmates (see my policy on *Professional Conduct*), then I will deduct points from this area of the course. Certainly, life happens and there are times when you might need to stay home, arrive late, or have an “off” day—but you should generally make it a point to be in class, on time, and ready to begin discussing the day's material.

Instead of taking formal attendance each day, your engagement in the course will be evaluated in terms of your performance on in-class activities and quizzes. In-class activities and quizzes will be based on that day's assigned reading and/or lecture material and will be worth **10 points each**. These will likely be small group problem solving exercises or short quizzes. **All activities and quizzes must be completed and submitted in class the day they are assigned.** If you attend class regularly and come to class prepared, these should be manageable assignments that enrich your understanding of course concepts and prepare you for the exams.

Weekly Conflict Journal

Over the course of the semester, you will be asked to keep a conflict journal that you will write in during class. In this journal you will reflect on how course material and concepts apply to your personal instances of interpersonal conflict. You will submit your conflict journal at the end of the semester. **There will be no make-up opportunities for missed journal entries discussed in class.** If you need to miss a class, please find a fellow classmate who can let you know what the journal entry for that day entailed.

Exams

There will be TWO non-cumulative exams. For each exam the format will be 50 questions that are either Multiple Choice or True/False. **There will be no make-up opportunities for the exams.**

Media Application (MA) Paper

You will complete one written paper (**maximum of four pages double-spaced**) based on media material that you will view on your own during one of the class periods. Your paper must be printed and submitted at the beginning of class on the day that it is due. **Only HARD COPIES submitted IN CLASS will be accepted. No late work is accepted.**

Grading System & Scale

This course is out of **500 total points**. The following is a break-down of the grading system:

ASSIGNMENT				POINTS POSSIBLE
In-class Activities & Quizzes (10 x 10)				/100
Media Application Paper				/100
Exams (2 x 100)				/200
Conflict Journal				/100
TOTAL POINTS				/500
A's	B's	C's	D's	F's
A = 500 – 465	B+ = 449 – 435	C+ = 399 – 385	D+ = 349 – 335	
A- = 464 – 450	B = 434 – 415	C = 384 – 365	D = 334 – 315	F = 299 – 0
	B- = 414 – 400	C- = 364 – 350	D- = 314 – 300	

Course Schedule

Week 1

August 22 Introduction to the Course

August 24 Chapter 1

Week 2

August 29 Chapter 2

August 31 Chapter 2

Week 3

September 5 Chapter 3

September 7 Chapter 3

Week 4

September 12 Chapter 4

September 14 Chapter 4

Week 5

September 19 **NO CLASS:** MA Viewing Day

September 21 **NO CLASS:** Writing Day for MA Paper

Week 6

September 26 Chapter 5/ **MA PAPER DUE**

September 28 Chapter 5

Week 7

October 3 Chapter 6

October 5 Chapter 6

Week 8

October 10 Chapter 7

October 12 Chapter 7/Review for Midterm Exam

Week 9

October 17 **MIDTERM EXAM**

October 19 Review Exam

Week 10

October 24 Chapter 8

October 26 Chapter 8

Week 11

October 31 Chapter 9

November 2 Chapter 9

Week 12

November 7 Chapter 10

November 9 Chapter 10

Week 13

November 14 Chapter 11

November 16 **NO CLASS**

Week 14: Fall Break

November 21 **NO CLASS**

November 23 **NO CLASS**

Week 15

November 28 Chapter 11&12

November 30 Chapter 12

Week 16

December 5 Chapter 13

December 7 Chapter 13/Review for Final Exam/ **SUBMIT CONFLICT JOURNAL**

Finals Week

December 11 **FINAL EXAM AT 8:00-9:30 A.M.**

Note: This course syllabus is a contract of policies. If you do not withdraw from the class, it is assumed that you have read through this entire document and agree to adhere to these policies. This syllabus is tentative; thus, any revisions made will be announced and fully explained in a timely manner.