

COMM 210, Interpersonal Communication

Kurtis D. Miller

Course Description: This course examines the current theory and research traditions in the areas of interpersonal communication. Topics in the course will include scripted and role-based interaction, intimate relationships and relationship development, deception, verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication.

There are no prerequisites for this course, but students who need to complete ENGL 110 will find this course significantly more difficult.

Instructor Information

Kurtis D. Miller, PhD.

- Office: Garland Library, Room 126
- Office Phone: 423-636-7300 Ext. 5783
- Email: kdmiller@tusculum.edu
- Online: kurtisdmler.com

Email is the primary and preferred method of communication for most student issues. I do not accept assignments by email. I typically check email once daily during business hours Monday to Thursday. Additional information is available below in my [email policy](#)

Virtual Office Hours via Zoom at <https://tusculum.zoom.us/j/95312191625>. Contact me by email to set up appointments outside of drop-in hours.

Drop-in	By Appointment
M, 2:30 - 4:30 pm	M, 10:00 - 11:00 am
	W, 10:00 - 11:00 am
	W, 2:30 - 3:30 pm

COVID-19 Statement: This course format is subject to change with little notice should conditions related to COVID-19 differ from those in place at the beginning of the semester. This includes, but is not limited to, such elements as required assignments, grading requirements/scales and the course calendar. Updates specific to this course will be communicated through the Canvas announcement system.

Required Texts and Materials

The textbook for this course is “Interplay: The Process of Interpersonal Communication” (Adler, Rosenfeld, & Proctor). 13th or 14th edition are both acceptable.

General Education Student Learning Outcomes

1. Writing: Students will structure evidence to convincingly support their arguments. This outcome will be assessed in the [Literature Review](#).
2. Public Speaking: Students will create messages appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context. This outcome will be assessed in the [Fishbowl Discussion](#).
3. Public Speaking: Students will evaluate personal communication strengths and weaknesses. This outcome will be practiced in Exam 1 and Exam 2. This outcome will be assessed in the Final Exam.

Other Learning Outcomes

1. Students will employ interpersonal communication theory. This outcome will be assessed in the [Literature Review](#).
2. Students will understand the location of interpersonal communication as a field within communication studies. This outcome will be assessed in Exam 1.

Course Assignments and Grade Determination

Content Knowledge (55%)	Fishbowl Discussions (30%)	Participation/Professionalism (15%)
10% First Exam	15% Best Discussion	4% Phase 1
10% Second Exam	10% Middle Discussion	4% Phase 2
15% Final Exam	5% Worst Discussion	4% Phase 3
20% Literature Review		3% Phase 4

Content Knowledge

Content knowledge contributes a total of 55% of your final grade. The largest graded component in the class is the [Literature Review](#), which is worth 20% of your final grade. Exams are worth a total of 35% of your final grade. You will take three exams, one at the conclusion of each of the content phases of the class. The final exam will have about twice as many questions as the first and second exam. Approximately half of the questions on the final exam will come from the first and second exam.

Fishbowl Discussions

[Fishbowl Discussions](#) contribute a total of 30% of your final grade. You will have the opportunity to participate in three [Fishbowl Discussions](#): one during each of the content phases of the class. The discussion grades will be weighted according to how well you do on each of them. Your highest scoring discussion is worth 15% of your final grade, the middle discussion is worth 10% of your final grade, and the lowest discussion is worth 5% of your final grade.

Participation and Professionalism

Participation and Professionalism contributes 15% of your final grade. Displaying basic [Professionalism](#) is an expectation in this class and one of the most useful skills to have when you graduate. Class activities are designed to help you understand the class content and to help you develop your prepared presentations. These class activities include example activities, drafts, and being an involved audience member during [Fishbowl Discussions](#). All participation and professionalism activities can be fully completed without in-person attendance. Your participation and professionalism will be evaluated at the end of each phase of the class.¹

Students must self-certify their health every day using the Healthy Together App or the paper form. Any student who must miss class due to COVID, whether based on a positive test or a required quarantine due to exposure or symptoms, should notify Student Affairs and the instructor as soon as possible. Attendance will be recorded in this class. Attendance records will be maintained and reported to the extent required by law and university policy. Students are *not* graded based on their attendance. Students who require an alternate deadline for any work, including class activities, should see the section on [Alternate Deadlines](#)

Final Exam Policy

A final exam is a required part of this course. For Fall 2020, final exams will be administered online only during Final Exam Week and may not be taken early for any reason. Consult the syllabus and the Tusculum website to determine when your exams will take place and do not make travel, family, or any other plans that conflict with any of your final exams. If you see that there will be an unavoidable conflict, drop this course before the Add/Drop period concludes and sign up for a different section or course.

Extra Credit

Students can earn up to a maximum of a 4.5% bonus on their final grade. Students are encouraged to propose extra credit opportunities. When deciding whether to offer extra credit, my primary considerations are the ability of all students to participate if they choose and how students are able use the activity as a way to demonstrate their understanding of the course material. Extra credit opportunities will be announced as they become available. Extra credit may not be turned in after the last regular class meeting.

¹Keaton, A. F. (2015). Teaching students the importance of professionalism. *Teaching Professor*, 29(6). <https://www.magnapubs.com/newsletter/the-teaching-professor/114/Teaching-Students-the-Importance-of-Professionalism-13541-1.html>

Grading Scale

The total score recorded in the grade book shows what your grade would be if you did nothing else in the class. A projected final grade will be posted in Canvas at the end of each phase of the class based on your scores on assignments up to that point. Final grades are allocated according to the table below. I round up any hundredths to the next tenth of a percentage point (examples: 92.39% would round to 92.4% and remain an A-, but 87.43% would round to 87.5% and become a B+).

Total Points	Grade
92.5-100%	A
89.5-92.4%	A-
87.5-89.4%	B+
82.5-87.4%	B
79.5-82.4%	B-
76.5-79.4%	C+
72.5-77.4%	C
69.5-72.4%	C-
67.5-69.4%	D+
62.5-67.4%	D
less than 62.5%	F

Course Policies

Please review the [Tusculum University Policies and Support Systems](#). These support systems and policies apply to all courses at Tusculum University.

Appropriate Behavior Policy

We are a community of learners, and your classmates are entitled to the standard professional courtesies. Each student is required to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times. Show respect for every person in the class. Complete your assigned work on time. Be ready for discussion and activities. Ask questions. Be supportive audience members. Racist, sexist, or other offensive or discriminatory language will not be tolerated. Keep all devices (phones, tablets, laptops, headphones, etc.) out of sight, unless their use is required for a classroom activity. Unprofessional behavior in and out of the class, including online, will result in penalties to your [Professionalism](#) grade. Any member of an activity group should be prepared to present the work of the entire group.

Email Policy

Email is the primary and preferred method of communication for most student issues. I do not accept assignments by email. I check and respond to my email once daily during business hours, however I dedicate my Fridays to research and larger projects. I typically do not see emails sent late on Thursday or during the day Friday until Monday the next week.

Engaging in professional communication with your professors and the university staff is important. I am unlikely to respond to emails that do not contain any questions. Brief emails asking questions which are already answered in course documents (syllabus, calendar, assignment descriptions, etc.) will typically receive brief replies referring to course documents. Some students benefit from the below email template, which comes from a post I wrote to help students with [writing professional emails](#). Whether you are in my class or any other class at the university, this template should work well. Just replace the information in brackets as needed:

Subject: [class number and section]: [your issue]

Dear [Title Last Name – if you can't find out, use "Professor" to be safe],

I am in your [time] [class name] class on [days class meets]. I have checked the [syllabus/assignment instructions/rubric/textbook/class resources] for an answer, but it does not adequately answer my question. I need some additional help with [your issue].

[Second paragraph explaining your question. Describe where you looked for answers, what you found, and how that information is not enough for you to have a clear answer to your question. You may also include other relevant aspects of your situation.]

[OPTIONAL third paragraph where you propose answers or next steps.]

Thank you,

[Your First and Last Name]

Grade Dispute Policy

If you believe that you have been graded unfairly, wait 24 hours after receiving the grade, review the rubric, and schedule a meeting to discuss it with me. Come to this meeting prepared to provide *evidence* supporting the need for a grade change. Grades are considered final one week after they are posted in Canvas. The privacy of student educational records is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). I will not respond to any communication about a student which does not come from an official school email address, and I will not discuss your grades publicly.

Late Work Policy

Late work may be turned in up to 1 calendar day after the deadline. No late work is accepted after the last class meeting. Late work will lose 10% of the available points. Presentations (including [Fishbowl Discussions](#)) may not be turned in late. Using technology is a basic expectation of students at this level of study – issues with technology are not an excuse for late or missing work. If you need assistance with technology, contact [Information Services](#).

Alternate Deadlines

In some cases an emergency may require you to miss class and turn in work after the assigned due date. These situations are handled on a case-by-case basis and, depending on the situation and

documentation, this work may be assigned an alternate deadline. Coursework assigned an alternate deadline is graded for full credit, but will not receive feedback.

Alternate deadlines will not be assigned for absences that can be planned for – this includes school-sponsored events, such as athletics.