

**COMM 5304.003 – Relational Communication
 SPRING 2023
 Course Syllabus**

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| Instructor: | Joseph Velasco, Ph.D. |
| Office Hours: | MW: 10-11am (in MAB 301), 2-3pm; TTh: 2-3pm; & Fri (web) 1pm-5pm |
| Office Location: | LH 307; Online Classroom via Blackboard Collaborate |
| Telephone: | 432-837-8370 |
| Email Address: | jvelasco@sulross.edu |
| Class Schedule: | 12:30am-1:45am, TTh |
| Classroom Location: | MAB 301 |
| Required Texts: | Guerrero, L. K., Andersen, P. A., Afifi, W. A. (2020). <i>Close encounters: Communication in relationships</i> (6 th ed.). London: Sage. |
| Required Equipment & Software | Internet connection; computer with webcam & microphone; Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint (available free to SRSU students via Office 365) |

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| RESOURCES |
| Bookstore |
| Graduate Student Center |
| Human Resources |
| Library |
| Lobo lookou |
| Lobo Pass |
| Office 365 |

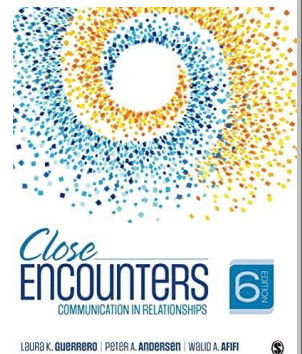


How do people maintain their romantic relationships?

How are some relationships different from others?

Why do we form friendships and why am I more close to some friends and not others? In what ways do people develop closeness with friends, siblings, parents, etc.?

How can I communicate more effectively when in conflict with others?



A field within the diverse academic discipline of communication studies, relational communication is a well-established intellectual area, complete with a base of knowledge, theories, and research developed by communication scholars. In recent years, interest in relational communication has mushroomed, making it one of the largest and most vibrant areas in the discipline. Reflecting the intellectual maturity of the field, communication theory and research offer rich insight into the impact of relational communication on individual identity and personal, social, and professional relationships.

This course offers an in-depth examination of human relationships which goes beyond understandings of human communication typically found in introductory interpersonal courses. This course, then, extends our knowledge of interpersonal communication while also refocusing our examination with what we will call a *relational perspective*.

Section I. Student Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to meet one or more of the student learning outcomes applied to all Communication majors:

SLO 1: Students will be able to analyze communication content for argument, including identification of major elements, such as claim, warrants, and data.

SLO 2: Students will be able to effectively construct messages appropriate to audience, purpose, and context; including electronic media technologies.

SLO 3: Students will be able to apply Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts to the analysis of communication situations.

Section II. Course Learning Objectives

The general objectives for this course are to *further enhance your competence and knowledge of human communication in many interpersonal and relational contexts*. As a student, your learning objectives are to:

1. Identify and explain various theories and concepts in the fields of relational and interpersonal communication.
2. Analyze your communication and the communication of others.
3. Synthesize concepts from multiple readings in conversation with other students.
4. Develop proficiency with academic and reflective writing.
5. Effectively summarize relevant academic journal articles.

Section III. Marketable Skills

This course offers you the opportunity to develop the following skills:

- Informative and Persuasive Speaking
- Audience-centered Writing
- Critical Analysis
- Research
- Effective Message Construction Using Technology

Section IV. Course Requirements, Assignments, and Grading

| <u>Assignment</u> | <u>Points Possible</u> |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Attendance & Participation | 200 |
| Article Summaries (4) | 400 |
| Literature Review Draft | 100 |
| Final - Literature Review | 300 |
| Total | 1000 |

Grade Description (Points)

A = 900-1000
B = 800-899
C = 700-799
D = 600-699
F = < 600

Attendance & Participation. I will take role every day and note your level of contributions to our discussion. You will need to demonstrate that you are keeping up with the readings through our discussions. I will not count excused absences against you.

Article Summaries. Throughout the course, you are required to search the online database (provided by the library) and find four scholarly journal articles that interest you, relate to the field of relational or interpersonal communication, represent primary research, and come from a peer-reviewed Communication journal. For each journal article, you will write a one-page summary which adheres to a format which is posted on Blackboard. You will submit a Word document through our Bb Assignments link, and you will also post a copy in the designated discussion board so that your peers can view your work and respond to it. Basically, your summary will teach the class about the content of the article, informing us of any key concepts, the methods employed, the findings, and discuss the implications of the study. In addition, you will need to prepare two discussion questions to pose to the class concerning your topic. All of this should be included in your handout.

Literature Review (and draft). You will choose a topic that interests you and can be understood from a family communication perspective. You will then survey the relevant literature written about your topic (primarily in the academic discipline of Communication Studies and its journals) and then organize it thematically. As you review your literature and themes emerge, you should be thinking about what gaps exist and where you might go in your research. On **Tuesday, April 4th**, you will submit a draft on Blackboard (saved as a Word document) of your literature review so that I can give you feedback a month in advance of the due date. The draft is worth 100 points. **Your literature review is due on Tuesday, May 9th by 5pm.** Additional guidelines will be provided in class.

Section V. Policies

Basic Class Expectations: It is expected that you spend at least a few hours each week to complete the course readings and assignments. Since this is an online course, it is also expected that you have reliable internet service and that you check your university email at least once a day. It is also recommended that you set up course notifications in Blackboard to receive a text alert when I post announcements, grades, or other course-related items. See instructions in Blackboard.

Online Classroom Demeanor: Communication issues tend to be emotionally charged. It is highly unlikely in a class this size that everyone will share your personal values, beliefs, and opinions. Believe it or not, this is a good thing! The presentation of varying perspectives will help all of us to learn. This can be accomplished if ideas, beliefs, and opinions are presented in a respectful way. I will be expecting all students to follow basic ground rules for online discussion. These are included at the end of the syllabus

Academic Integrity. Doing and/or taking credit for someone else's work, presenting the ideas and work of others as your own, and/or not citing your sources when you utilize the ideas of others are all violations of academic integrity. It is your responsibility to read and understand the university's stance on academic dishonesty in the SRSU Student Handbook (p. 80), as all violations will be taken seriously and handled through the university judicial process.

Late Work: All of the assignments for the entire course will be posted and available as soon as the course is open. It is expected that all assignments are completed by the stated deadlines. Please plan your time carefully. If something does come up, prompt and clear communication will facilitate an accommodating response.

Section VI. Notes on University Programs and Policies

ADA. SRSU Disability Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Alpine students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mary Schwartz Grisham, M.Ed., LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203, or email mschwartz@sulross.edu Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall – room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

SRSU Distance Education Statement: Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as Smarthinking, library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. **Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course,** as outlined on the SRSU website.

Technical Support. SRSU 24/7 Blackboard Technical Support: Toll Free: 888.837.6055.
Email: blackboardsupport@sulross.edu

SRSU Library Services. The Sul Ross Library offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu. Off-campus access requires your LoboID and password. Check out materials using your photo ID. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or phone (432-837-8123).

The **Graduate Student Center**, located in BAB 104, provides resources and services for all SRSU graduate students. There is a computer lab with desktop computers and a networked printer/copier/scanner; laptop computers which can be checked out; a projector and screen for rehearsing student presentations; and a conference room for group study. Both Alpine and distance education students can receive writing and thesis assistance by contact lbutler@sulross.edu or calling 432-837-8015.

Course Calendar
(This calendar is subject to change)

| Week | Date | Topic | Reading | Due or To Do: |
|----------|------------------|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| One | Jan 17 Jan 19 | Dr. MLK Day - No Class Course Introduction | | |
| Two | Jan 24 Jan 26 | Conceptualizing Relational Communication No class due to funeral – <i>Find first Journal Article</i> | Chapter 1 | Library Research |
| Three | Jan 31 Feb 2 | Communicating Identity Attraction & Drawing People Together Managing | Chapter 2 Chapter 3 | |
| Four | Feb 7 Feb 9 | Article Summary 1 & Uncertainty Article Summary 1 & Relational Changes | Chapter 4 Chapter 5 | Article Summary 1 |
| Five | Feb 14 Feb 16 | Privacy and Disclosure Communicating Closeness | Chapter 6 Chapter 7 | |
| Six | Feb 21 Feb 23 | Article Summary 2 Independent Work on Literature Review | | Article Summary 2 |
| Seven | Feb 28 Mar 2 | Making a Love Connection More on Love | Chapter 8 Chapter 8 | |
| Eight | Mar 7 Mar 9 | Communicating Sexually Article Summary 3 | Chapter 9 | Article Summary 3 |
| | Mar 14 Mar 16 | SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS | | |
| Nine | Mar 21 Mar 23 | Article Summary 3 Staying Close | Chapter 10 | |
| Ten | Mar 28 Mar 30 | Coping with Conflict Managing Conflict | Chapter 11 Chapter 11 | |
| Eleven | Apr 4 Apr 6 | Influence & Dominance Hurting the Ones We Love | Chapter 12 Chapter 13 | Draft of Lit. Review |
| Twelve | Apr 11 Apr 13 | Article Summary 4 Article Summary 4 | | Article Summary 4 |
| Thirteen | Apr 18 Apr 20 | Healing the Hurt Article Summary 6 | Chapter 14 | |
| Fourteen | Apr 25 Apr 27 | <i>Family Crisis Symposium</i> <i>Family Crisis Symposium</i> | | |
| Fifteen | May 2 May 4 | Ending Relationships Ending Relationships (continued) | Chapter 15 Chapter 15 | Course Evaluations |
| Sixteen | May 9 May 11 | Course Wrap-up DEAD DAY – NO CLASS | | Final Draft of Lit. Review |
| | May ? | Final Exam – TBA | | |