

COMM 4305.001 – Relational Communication
SPRING 2025
Course Syllabus

Instructor:	Joseph Velasco, Ph.D.
Office Hours:	MW, 9:50-10:50am & TTh 2-3pm, or by appointment.
Office Location:	LH 307
Telephone:	432-837-8370
Email Address:	jvelasco@sulross.edu
Class Schedule:	12:30am-1:45am, TTh
Classroom Location:	LH 303
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)

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

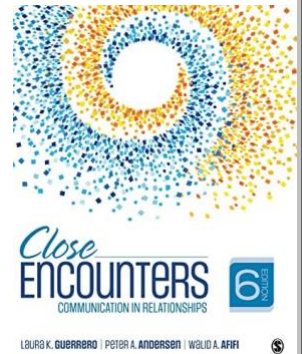


How do people maintain their romantic relationships?

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>	Grade Description (Points)
Attendance & Participation	200	
Article Summaries (4)	400	
Literature Review Draft	100	
Final - Literature Review	300	
Total	<hr/> 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 1st**, 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 Thursday, April 29th 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. I also expect that you check your university email at least once a day. For students who do not reside in Alpine or those who have received permission to join at a distance, it is also expected that you have reliable internet service. I recommend 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.

Classroom Demeanor: Communication topics 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.

Academic Integrity. Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students should submit work that is their own and avoid the temptation to engage in behaviors that violate academic integrity, such as turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden. Students should also avoid using open

AI sources *unless permission is expressly given* for an assignment or course. Violations of academic integrity can result in failing assignments, failing a class, and/or more serious university consequences. These behaviors also erode the value of college degrees and higher education overall.

Late Work: All 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 Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the 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. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mrs. Mary Schwartze Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director or Ronnie Harris, LPC, Counselor, at 432-837-8203 or email mschwartz@sulross.edu or ronnie.harris@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine. Texas, 79832.

Counseling. Sul Ross has partnered with TimelyCare where all SR students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. You can learn more about this 24/7/365 support by visiting [Timelycare/SRSU](https://www.timelycare.com/sulross). The SR Counseling and Accessibility Services office will continue to offer in-person counseling in Ferguson Hall room 112 (Alpine campus), and telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students and RGC students.

SRSU Student Responsibilities Statement. All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the [Student Handbook](#) and the [Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog](#) and for abiding by the [University rules and regulations](#). Additionally, students are responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all federal, state and local laws and is expected to familiarize themselves with the requirements of such laws.

SRSU Distance Education Statement. Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as 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 a secure login. 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.** Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

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

SRSU Library Services. The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend in Alpine offer 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

logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or by phone (432-837-8123). No matter where you are based, public libraries and many academic and special libraries welcome the general public into their spaces for study. SRSU TexShare Cardholders can access additional services and resources at various libraries across Texas. Learn more about the TexShare program by visiting library.sulross.edu/find-and-borrow/txshare/ or ask a librarian by emailing srsulibrary@sulross.edu.

Mike Fernandez, SRSU Librarian, is based in Eagle Pass (Building D-129) to offer specialized library services to students, faculty, and staff. Utilize free services such as InterLibrary Loan (ILL), ScanIt, and Direct Mail to get materials delivered to you at home or via email.

The Graduate Student Center Computer Lab (BAB 300) provides:

- A Mac and PC graduate computer lab with MS Office and Adobe software
- Graduate program specific software available on many lab PCs
- Wireless internet
- A nearby conference room that can be reserved for group study or meetings, student presentation rehearsals and workshops.
- A nearby graduate faculty and student media studio
- Equipment that can be checked out for field work in remote locations
- A networked printer/copier/scanner for student use

FMI on any of their services, use the following: gradcenter@sulross.edu or call (432) 837-8524

Tutoring Center

[The Lobo Den Tutoring Center](#) offers FREE tutoring support to help you excel in your courses. Whether you need assistance in Writing, Math, Science, or other subjects, we're here to help!

Important Information:

- **Drop-in and Scheduled Appointments:** Flexible options to fit your needs.
- **Hours of Operation:** Monday–Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM.
- **Workshops:** Attend our regularly hosted academic workshops on STEM topics and professional development, often in collaboration with specialized faculty.
- **Location:** BWML Room 128.
- **Contact Us:** For more information or to book an appointment, email tutoring@sulross.edu or call (432) 837-8726.

Looking for additional support?

- Tutor.com offers FREE 24/7 online tutoring in over 200 subjects, including specialized support for ESL and ELL learners with native Spanish-speaking tutors.
- Access Tutor.com via Blackboard: Log in to your Blackboard account to get started anytime, anywhere.

Take advantage of these valuable resources to boost your confidence and performance in your classes. We look forward to helping you succeed!

Course Calendar

(This calendar is subject to change)

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Due or To Do:
One	Jan 14	No Class - Semester Starts on 1/15		
	Jan 16	Course Introduction Conceptualizing Relational Communication	Chapter 1	
Two	Jan 21	Communicating Identity	Chapter 2	
	Jan 23	Attraction & Drawing People Together	Chapter 3	
Three	Jan 28	Managing Uncertainty	Chapter 4	
	Jan 30	Relational Changes	Chapter 5	
Four	Feb 4	Article Summary 1		Article Summary 1
	Feb 6	Article Summary 1		
Five	Feb 11	Privacy and Disclosure	Chapter 6	
	Feb 13	Communicating Closeness	Chapter 7	
Six	Feb 18	Article Summary 2		Article Summary 2
	Feb 20	<i>Independent Work on Literature Review</i>		
Seven	Feb 25	Article Summary 2		Article Summary 2
	Feb 27	Making a Love Connection	Chapter 8	
Eight	Mar 4	Communicating Sexually	Chapter 9	
	Mar 6	Article Summary 3		Article Summary 3
Nine	Mar 11	Article Summary 3		
	Mar 13	Staying Close	Chapter 10	
Ten	Mar 18	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS		
	Mar 20	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS		
Eleven	Mar 25	Coping with Conflict	Chapter 11	
	Mar 27	Managing Conflict	Chapter 11	
Twelve	Apr 1	Influence & Dominance	Chapter 12	Draft of Lit. Review
	Apr 3	Hurting the Ones We Love	Chapter 13	
Thirteen	Apr 8	Article Summary 4		Article Summary 4
	Apr 10	Article Summary 4		
Fourteen	Apr 15	Healing the Hurt	Chapter 14	
	Apr 17	Ending Relationships	Chapter 15	
Fifteen	April 22	<i>Family Crisis Symposium</i>		
	April 24	<i>Family Crisis Symposium</i>		
Sixteen	April 29	Course Wrap-up		Final Draft of Lit. Review
	May 1	DEAD DAY – NO CLASS		
Seventeen		Final Exam – TBA		