

COMM 1318.001 – Interpersonal Communication
Spring 2026
Course Syllabus

Instructor:	Joseph Velasco, Ph.D.
Office Hours:	MW, 10-11am, TTh 2-4pm, or by appointment
Office Location:	LH 307
Telephone:	432-837-8370
Email Address:	jvelasco@sulross.edu
Class Schedule:	9:30-10:45am, TTh
Classroom Location:	LH 303
Required Texts:	Floyd, K. (2024). <i>Interpersonal communication</i> (4 th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
Required Equipment & Software (if online)	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 lookout

Lobo Pass

Introduction

How do people maintain their romantic relationships?

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 discipline of Communication Studies, interpersonal 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 interpersonal communication has mushroomed, making it one of the largest and most vibrant areas in the discipline. Reflecting the intellectual maturity of the academic discipline, communication theory and research offer rich insight into the impact of interpersonal communication on individual identity and personal, social, and professional relationships.

Healthy interpersonal relationships are central to our happiness and well-being, and effective communication is critical to good relationships. Thus, this course, unlike many others you may take in your lifetime, pertains directly and immediately to your lives. In my experience, most students who enroll in the introductory course enter with a high level of motivation to learn how to communicate more effectively in their personal and professional relationships. This course is designed to address such motivation and interests, taking an approach to teaching which combines a *skills approach* and a *theoretical approach*.

Section I. Course Objectives

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

1. Identify and explain various theories in the field of interpersonal communication.
2. Demonstrate, through class discussion, a critical approach to learning.
3. Analyze your communication and the communication of others.
4. Effectively write a summary of relevant academic journal articles.



Section II. Program Learning Outcomes

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

The graduating student will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Competently deliver public presentations, including the use of presentation technology such as presentation software, video, and audio.
2. Analyze communication content for argument, including identification of major elements, such as claims, warrants, data, etc.
3. Complete appropriate discipline specific writing assignments.
4. Apply communication theory to the analysis of communication situations appropriate to each degree specialization.
5. Demonstrate competent use of media technology including video, audio, and internet-based technology.

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>
Discussion Boards (6)	300
Midterm Exam	200
Article Summaries (3)	300
Final Exam	200
Total	1000

Grade Description (Points)

A = 895-1000
B = 795-894
C = 695-794
D = 595-694
F = < 595

Discussion Boards. Thirty percent of your grade is dependent upon your contribution to our Blackboard discussion board. For each discussion question that I post, you are asked to contribute one response (25 points) and a reply (25 points) to one of your peers.

Article Summaries. Throughout the course, you are required to search the online database (provided by the library) and find three scholarly journal articles that both interest you AND relate to the field of interpersonal communication 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 to 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.

Midterm Exam. The midterm exam will cover all course reading materials and lectures up to that point.

Final Exam. The final exam will be a comprehensive exam that may include a combination of multiple-choice, short answer, and essay questions.

Section IV. Policies

Basic Class Expectations: It is expected that you spend at least a few hours each week to complete the course readings and assignments. If you are taking this class at a distance, 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.

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 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.

(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.

[Texas Senate Bill 17](#), the recent law that outlaws diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at public colleges and universities in Texas, does not in any way affect content, instruction or discussion in a course at public colleges and universities in Texas. Expectations and academic freedom for teaching and class discussion have not been altered post-SB 17, and students should not feel the need to censor their speech pertaining to topics including race and racism, structural inequality, LGBTQ+ issues, or diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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 SRSU's Accessibility Services Director or Ronnie Harris, LPC, Counselor, at 432-837-8203 or email 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. **Please note that instructors are not permitted to provide classroom accommodations to a student until the appropriate verification has been received.**

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 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/texshare/ 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.

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. 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.

[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 (aka the library) 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. They look forward to helping you succeed!

Course Calendar
(This calendar is subject to change)

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Due or To Do:
Part 1 – Fundamentals of Interpersonal Communication				
One	Jan 15	Course Introduction		Introductions
Two	Jan 20 Jan 22	Why we communicate & Establishing definitions	Chapter 1	DB1
Three	Jan 27 Jan 29	Culture & Gender The Research Landscape	Chapter 2	DB2
Four	Feb 3 Feb 5	The Self & Communicating the Self How to write an Article Summary	Chapter 3	
Five	Feb 10 Feb 12	Perception & Attributions (continued)	Chapter 4	DB3
Part 2 – Interpersonal Communication Skills in Action				
Six	Feb 17 Feb 19	Article Summary 1 Article Summary 1		Article Summary 1
Seven	Feb 24 Feb 26	Language Work on Article Summary – No Class	Chapter 5	
Eight	Mar 3 Mar 5	Nonverbal Code & Culture Midterm Exam	Chapter 6	Midterm Exam
Spring Break	Mar 10 Mar 12	<i>Spring Break – No Class</i> <i>Spring Break – No Class</i>		
Nine	Mar 17 Mar 19	The Listening Process Communication & Emotion	Chapter 7 Chapter 8	DB4
Part 3 – Dynamics of Interpersonal Relationships				
Ten	Mar 24 Mar 26	Article Summary 2 Article Summary 2		Article Summary 2
Eleven	Mar 31 Apr 2	Relational Maintenance	Chapter 9	
Twelve	Apr 7 Apr 9	Romantic & Family Relationships (continued)	Chapter 10	
Thirteen	Apr 14 Apr 16	Interpersonal Conflict	Chapter 11	
Fourteen	Apr 21 Apr 23	Deceptive Communication Article Summary 3	Chapter 12	Article Summary 3
Fifteen	Apr 28 Apr 30	Article Summary 3 Dead Day – No Class		
Sixteen	TBA	Final Exam - TBA		Final Exam + DB6