

# COM102 – Interpersonal Communication Course Syllabus

Western Nevada College  
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**OFFICE HOURS:** I have no office therefore, no office hours. I am usually available the hour before class in the classroom or in a nearby area and will stay after class as long as possible if you need help. All students are encouraged to Email me with questions, requests for assistance and general information. As long as the system is working (or I don't fry my computer) I will try to reply within 24 hours.

A syllabus is a “contract” between the student and the instructor. It describes what the instructor expects from the student so that he/she can learn the subject and earn an appropriate grade. It also describes what the student can expect from the instructor to give him/her the best possible opportunity to learn the subject. Additionally it contains information a student may need to know beyond the strictly academic needs of the course. What follows is our contract. Learn its contents as your grade and skill at the end of the term are based on what it contains.

**TEXT:** There is currently no text selected for this class. The information we will be discussing has a basis in at least nine different textbooks. When I feel it is necessary I will post information on my web page for everyone to print and read or I will provide handouts of the material.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course is an introduction to the field, principles and concepts of interpersonal communication. This study of human communication will begin with WORLD VIEWS then get into INTRAPERSONAL communication. Once we know ourselves the path will take us through sessions that cover most, if not all of the following: INTERPERSONAL, INTERCULTURAL, GROUP, PARALANGUAGE and ORGANIZATIONAL communications. As we enter each area of communication, in the first week we will discuss its definition in order that we all have the same understanding of what to expect then design the research/homework assignment that we will discuss the following week. Each of these parts of our communication events will allow us to learn more about how to better use our skills in both everyday communication and conflict resolution. There will be one or two in-class activities designed around types of communication we have covered. Participation is

mandatory. The formation of two to three groups needs to take place during the third week to facilitate one of the activities. The groups will develop themselves as we learn about the different aspects of communication.

**Disability Support Services:** If you have a disability for which you will need to request accommodations, please contact the Disability Support Services office (Bristlecone building, Room 103) at (775) 445-3266 or 445-3275 as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** The work that you do for this class must be your own or your group's. If you use the ideas or exact words of someone else (or someone outside your group) you must give that person credit. Failure to do so is **plagiarism** and is a serious academic infraction that will not be tolerated. I reserve the right to fail any student in the course for academic dishonesty. See the WNC Academic Integrity Policy for more details.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:** To understand the ways humans communicate in their daily lives it is important to learn about, grasp the basics of and practice the various facets of human communication. The class is designed in a manner that presents the ways we communicate with others and ourselves in two-week segments. Missing a class means that you have either not had the chance to learn one of the ways we communicate or you are not able to present your ideas and experiences to the rest of the class. **Your attendance becomes extremely important to yourself and the other students in the class. Consequently, if you miss two classes your highest possible grade is "B," three classes "C," four classes "D," and five or more classes means you will receive an "F" unless you officially drop the class yourself.** This policy takes precedence over whatever score you may have earned during the semester; for example, if you have a score of 90 but you have been absent three times your grade will be a "C."

**STUDENT BEHAVIOR:** Under most circumstances people are considerate of others. This becomes very important in the classroom environment because of the number of people trying to learn various subjects. In this context it is important to remember that disruptive behavior cannot be tolerated. Western Nevada College has established a Student Behavior Policy with which every student and instructor should become familiar. Violation of this policy in my classes will result with the student(s) being told to leave the class and not return until he/she (they) can behave in a courteous and considerate manner.

**USE OF ANY ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS DEVICE IN THE CLASSROOM DURING CLASS HOURS IS PROHIBITED:** This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, Cell phones, Smart phones, iPads, etc. Texting is specifically prohibited. The use of computers for anything other than taking notes (no internet connections allowed) is included in this prohibition. **Anyone caught using an electronic communications device will be told to leave**

the class and will be counted as absent for that class meeting and this includes students who forgot to turn off their device and it activates during class. If the device is used during an examination the student may also be expelled from the college for violation of the WNC Academic Integrity Policy.

Unless you are a certified emergency worker (medical, fire or law enforcement personnel) or a military member on watch and are REQUIRED to be immediately available by cell phone, your communications device must be turned OFF prior to the start of the class session. Persons who are on emergency recall must let me know before the class session starts. Those persons who are required to be on call must place their phones in the vibrate/manner/silent mode.

For family emergencies have the caller contact Campus Security at 427-6212. Make sure the caller gives Security your name and classroom number.

**GOALS:** Students will recognize and demonstrate an understanding of the various parts of human communication covered in the class. By participating in discussions and, completing written homework assignments, they will provide examples of each communication type defined in the class. The students will successfully pass a two part (individual/group) written examination based on a class activity.

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:** By the completion of the course the students will be able to demonstrate increased abilities to recognize how the various communication types are based on the foundation of clear interpersonal communication, are used in everyday living and utilize that understanding to better communicate with others outside of this classroom context. Specific evaluations of performance will take place during group, intercultural and organizational speaking events. Participation in the specified speaking events and class discussions is MANDATORY.

**GRADING POLICY:** Grades will be based on a scale of 0 to 100. Points will be earned as listed in the TENTATIVE SCHEDULE. Grades will be earned as follows:

A = 90-100 pts.      B = 80-89 pts.      C = 70-79 pts.      D = 60-69 pts.  
F = 59 pts or less

#### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

(This may be modified depending on how many class meetings are actually available during the semester and how many students are in the class.)

Session #1: Overview of the syllabus and proposed course schedule, presentation and discussion of worldviews or paradigms. Homework assignment: Each student is to determine the primary, and possibly additional

worldviews he or she holds with examples supporting that/those idea(s) and write a brief statement giving the paradigm(s) and reasons for that determination. Bring that statement to the next class meeting.

Session #2: Discussion of each student's determination of the type of paradigm(s) he or she uses to relate to the world. Turn in your statements relating to your world paradigm (**5 pts.**) Introduction to and discussion of INTRAPERSONAL communication and PARALANGUAGE. Homework assignment: Write a one-day journal covering his or her use of intrapersonal communication and include any paralinguistic items that significantly affected the communication events. Bring the written observations to the next class meeting.

Session #3: Discussion of each student's observation of their use of intrapersonal communication including a written submission of one day's personal observation (**5 pts.**). Establishment of groups for later in-class exercises.

Session #4: Introduction to and discussion of INTERPERSONAL communication. The discussion will include the relationship of the persons involved and the contexts in which these communication events take place and note any paralinguistic items that may have affected the event. Homework assignment: Observe and take notes about two interpersonal communication events between OTHER people and not involving the observer. **One observation needs to be a positive event and one to be a negative event.** Bring the notes to the next class meeting.

Session #5: Discussion of the interpersonal communication events observed by the students. Notes of the observations will be valuable reference for the discussion and submission of them at the end of the class will be required (**10 pts.**) The discussion needs to include relationships and contexts contributing to the events.

Session #6: Introduction to and discussion of INTERCULTURAL communications. The initial portion of the discussion is to discover what items the members of the class consider to be intercultural communication. These items will become the points of reference to be used in your thesis support. The second portion of the discussion will cover similarities and differences in cultures that lead to their style of communication. Homework assignment: Observe and take notes of an intercultural communication event without participating. Use information discussed during the class to be able to support your thesis that it was an intercultural event on at least two points of reference and write notes for use during the next class. Bring the notes to the next class session

Session #7: Discussion of the observations of INTERCULTURAL communication events observed by the students. As noted in last week's homework assignment, each observer must provide a minimum of two points of

reference that support their ideas that what they observed was an intercultural communication event. Notes will be turned in at the end of the class (**5 pts.**)

Session #8: Introduction to and discussion of SMALL GROUP communication. Provide definitions of and forms to the students for assessing Task Process Facilitator, Transactional Process Facilitator and Process Blocker roles. Time permitting, allow for previously established groups to begin discussion of their cultures.

Session #9: Provide each previously established group with a different problem to be solved within a specified time during the class session. Each group problem solving session will be observed by members of the other group(s). Each group will be required to engage in the problem solving session during the class period (**20 pts.**) Collect the observation sheets at the completion of each event (**5 pts.**) Homework assignment: In a maximum of one page, each student is to evaluate his or her role during his or her group's problem solving session.

Session #10: Redistribute the observation forms from the previous class. Compare the individual personal assessments with observed assessments. Discussion will center on any differences between the two assessments and resolution of conflicts between the two to provide guidance for improving each student's SMALL GROUP participation skills in any context. Personal evaluations will be turned in at the end of class (**5 pts.**)

Session #11: Using the skills learned in the SMALL GROUP exercise, each group will be allowed the entire class period to prepare for the INTERCULTURAL event exercise to be conducted during Session # 14. Intermixing of groups is not allowed. A copy of each group's specifics of group communication behaviors will be given to the instructor at the end of the class session.

Session #12: Introduction to and discussion of ORGANIZATIONAL communication types and styles. Homework assignment: Each student will evaluate a type of organization with which he/she is closely associated. Evaluation will include the communication type of organization, position of the student within the organization, and styles of communication within and between the different levels of the organization. The name of the organization should not be mentioned, just the communication type and styles.

Session #13: Discussion of the observations and an evaluation of how communications might be improved within the observed organizations. Time permitting, the groups for the INTERCULTURAL event exercise will finalize their specifics of group communication behaviors and turn in a copy to the instructor at the end of the class session (**5 pts.**)

Session #14: The INTERCULTURAL communication event exercise (**20 pts.**)

Session #15: Basics of PUBLIC SPEAKING presentation skills.

Session #16: Impromptu PUBLIC SPEAKING. (20 pts.)

**NOTE:** Homework assignments will be graded on how well the objectives were achieved referent to the definitions and possible examples discussed in class and the clarity of the statements written by the student. It is important that you know that putting off the writing of the assignments until “the last minute” is an ineffective way to communicate your observations; submissions that are obviously thrown together will be subject to point loss. Keep current with the assignments and be as honest as possible without identifying the other participants or organizations involved.

This is a college class in communication and your ability to present your ideas clearly is paramount. If I am unable to read what you have written or cannot understand what you are trying to say points will be deducted. Be legible, be concise and be brief – no more than one page per 5 points.

## GENERAL CLASS RULES:

Vulgarity is not allowed.

Gender bashing is not allowed.

Personal attacks are not allowed.

Attempts to solve the world’s problems are strongly discouraged.

Speeches and/or discussion based on politics, religion, other “hot” issues and unsupported personal opinion or prejudice are not allowed. Speech topics, if needed, will be provided by the instructor.

Mutual support and cooperation is strongly encouraged.

Humor is strongly encouraged.