

WAYLAND BAPTIST UNIVERSITY
PLAINVIEW CAMPUS
SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS

Wayland Mission Statement: Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused, and distinctively Christian environment for professional success, and service to God and humankind.

Course Title and Number: Interpersonal Communication (COMS 3310)

Term: Fall 1st 8-Week VC 2025

Name of Instructor: Yahui Zhang, Ph.D.

Office Phone and Email Address:

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Office Hours, Building, and Location:

Hours: F 9:30 – 12:00 pm via Zoom or phone

Office: Harral Arts Complex, room 113

Class Meeting Time and Location:

Blackboard

Catalog Description:

Communication theories and skills needed for success in personal relationships. Emphasis on verbal, nonverbal, and listening skills needed for building and maintaining productive relationships in intimate and social situations.

Course Description:

This course is designed to help you communicate confidently and competently in all your interpersonal relationships (e.g., romantic partners, friends, families, and coworkers) and to introduce you to the examination, analysis, and application of communication theories and variables of interpersonal communication. It focuses on defining the nature of the communication processes that occur within the context of close relationships. It is organized around three general topic areas: (1) developing relationships, (2) maintaining satisfying relationships, and (3) coping with relational challenges over time. Learning about how communication functions in close relationships can be an exciting and beneficial enterprise to improve the quality of your relationships throughout your life. The knowledge and skills that you gain from this class will help you understand yourself and your relationships.

Prerequisites: COMS 1301 or 2303; and 3306, or with consent of instructor

Required Textbook and Resource Materials:

Guerrero, L., Anderson, P., & Afifi, W. (2021). *Close encounters: Communication in relationships* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Optional materials:

Lewis, C. S. (1960). *The four loves*. New York: Harcourt Brace.

Schultze, Q. J., & Badzinski, D. (2015). *An essential guide to interpersonal communication: Building great relationships with faith, skill, and virtue in the age of social media*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Course Outcome Competencies:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Define and use a vocabulary of relational communication terms.
2. Enhance understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of the study of personal relationships.
3. Become acquainted with major research findings associated with each empirical theory of interpersonal communication.
4. Apply major theoretical concepts in the field of relational communication to real world relationships.
5. Analyze one's own role in interpersonal relationships in a family, professional, friendship, interracial/intercultural, or intimate context.
6. Apply both practical and theoretical knowledge to increase one's own competency in relational communication skills.
7. Evaluate the effectiveness of an interpersonal relationship.
8. Focus on issues that are central to describing and understanding close relationships.
9. To effectively share in writing, research, and orally, one's understanding about interpersonal communication.

Attendance requirements: Class attendance is mandatory. Three unexcused absences will result in the loss of a letter grade. Any student who misses 25% or more of the regularly scheduled class meetings will receive a grade of 'F' in the course.

An excused absence include illness, family emergency or funeral (call or email the professor to let her know what is happening), attendance at an approved WBU event such as athletic team competition or academic conference (bring the notice from the appropriate sponsor), or unavoidable company travel for full-time employees. No absence will be excused without the professor's approval.

Statement on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: Wayland Baptist University observes a zero tolerance policy regarding academic dishonesty. Per university policy as described in the academic catalog, all cases of academic dishonesty will be reported and second offenses will result in suspension from the university.

Generative AI tools usage is encouraged and may be assigned in coursework.

- Use of generative AI tools for assignments in brainstorming, content understanding, or revision to work is perfectly acceptable if cited and referenced properly in any submitted work for the course.
- Use of generative AI is encouraged as long as students understand the use of generative AI in the course is to be an assistance tool and not the generator of assignments and submitted work. Ultimately, all submitted work must still reflect student's own work, understanding, and analysis.
- Any use of generative AI tools outside of the approved instructor parameters will be considered a form of plagiarism and academic dishonesty.

Disability Statement:

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. The Coordinator of Counseling Services serves as the coordinator of students with a disability and should be contacted concerning accommodation requests at (806) 291- 3765. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria:

Papers (40%): There will be two papers throughout the semester. The first paper is an application paper using one interpersonal communication theory to analyze your personal life. It is worth 10%. The second paper is a relationship paper focusing on providing relational advice to a selected realistic popular culture interpersonal problem (e.g., conflict in cohabiting couples, friends with benefits relationships, gossip and friendship, date rape and alcohol, cyberbullying, stalking/relational intrusion and relationships, STD/HIV prevention, infidelity, etc.) from a magazine or newspaper article, relationship documentary, or a reality television series. You will need to identify the problem and provide analysis and suggestion using credible evidence from WBU's database. At least 5 journal articles should be used. These papers must be typed and properly referenced using APA style. Paper 1 should be at least 3-pages long and Paper 2 5/6-pages long. Paper 2 is worth 30%.

Book Presentation (15%): You are to read "An essential guide to interpersonal communication" or "The four loves." Then choose one chapter from one of the books to prepare a 6-minute presentation based on the subject covered. In addition, you are required to find at least 3 Bible verses and one research article to enrich our understanding of the subject.

Theory Workshop (20%): You will select a communication theory or communication model to help solve a communication problem that can be useful to learn about in class. You will focus on developing and leading a short interactive demonstrative workshop and discussion over a realistic relationship problem to foster guidance on how to cope with the selected relational problem using credible resources. Your job is to be creative, educational, and audience centered. Please develop an effective workshop for your classmates. You must provide the class with handouts. You are responsible for using credible material learned in class and also 2 journal articles that were not covered in class.

Participation on Discussion Board and attendance (25%): Besides the assignments described above, there will be 8 Discussion Board assignments. All discussions should be completed by 9:00 AM Central time on the following Monday. Your answer to each question should be at least 80 words long and in complete sentences following the convention of good writing (5 points); and demonstrate level-two or level-three thinking (5 points) – you have to show your competency in applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating. Please also read and comment on at least one fellow classmate's post to help create a conducive learning environment.

***** For Book presentation and Theory Workshop, you are required to use VidGrid to videotape yourself and embed your video on the designated Discussion Board forum.**

Tentative schedule:

Week	Topic	Assignments
1	Introduction <i>Some tentative axioms of communication</i> <i>I and Thou</i> Ch. 1: Conceptualizing relational communication	DB 1
2	Ch. 2: The social self Ch. 3: Forces of social attraction	DB 2
3	Ch. 4: Uncertainty and expectancy violations Ch. 5: Changing relationships	DB 3
4	Ch. 6: Self-disclosure Ch. 7: Communicating closeness & <i>Four loves</i> by C.S. Lewis	DB 4 Book Presentation
5	Ch. 8: Styles of love and attachment <i>Lecture on Friendship</i> Ch. 9: Communication sexually	Paper 1 & DB 5
6	Ch. 10: Maintaining relationships Ch. 11: Conflict	DB 6
7	Ch. 12: Dominance and power play Ch. 13: Relational transgressions	DB 7 Theory workshop
8	Ch. 14: Relationship repair and reconciliation Ch. 15: Ending relationships	Paper 2 & DB 8

Additional Information:

Academic Honesty: University students are expected to conduct themselves according to the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, forgery, or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one's own work.)

Email: Your Wayland email address is the official line of communication between you and the university. You must make sure your email address is established, functioning and is also **monitored at least once a day** as you will receive important information about your classes, financial aid, billing, emergency situations, etc. through this email.