

# DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

## SCHOOL FOR NEW LEARNING

### HC 237 EFFECTIVE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN THE WORK PLACE

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Monday 6:00-9:00 p.m.

COMPETENCIES: specific assignments will be handed out in class

- FX : Can demonstrate, in both theory and practice, knowledge of interpersonal communication techniques in the work place
- H-3-A: Can use two or more theories of human psychology to understand and solve problems
- H-3-D: Can effectively employ the skills of negotiation, mediation, and interpersonal communication in the resolution of a dispute or conflict

#### INTRODUCTION:

Often when two people communicate with each other, important aspects of what is going on escape their awareness. Communication and, at times, the health of the relationship is harmed because the parties fail to understand the interpersonal process that is taking place. No where is this more apparent than in the work place. It is estimated that middle level managers spend seventy-five percent of their time in communication with others. Three-fourth of that time is devoted to one-on-one or interpersonal communication. For there to be real communication between coworkers, the same idea must somehow be in the minds of both parties. But interpersonal communication is not merely the transfer of meaning from one mind to another. It is a complex process involving sorting, selecting and sending symbols in such a way as to help the listener construct a similar meaning or set of symbols in her/his mind. When this process fails in the work place, as it some times does, we have miscommunication that, at its worst, can digress to the level of nonproductive conflict.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will help students identify important dimensions of interpersonal behavior and the shapes that two-person relationships can take. Major causes of unhealthy relationships will be examined. And ways interpersonal participants can act to improve the health of their relationships will be considered.

Specifically, this course will examine the role of perception in communication, the uses and misuses of language, nonverbal communication, the dynamics of interpersonal communication, and the management of conflict. The course will be a mix of theory and practice. Major concepts relating to interpersonal communication will be explained by tying them to concrete examples. Along with the required test we will read selected material from psychiatrist Victor Frankl. Three short self-assessment quizzes, covering material from the text, will be given during the term.

Upon completion of this course, all students will:

1. understand what defines interpersonal communication,
2. be able to explain the various components of interpersonal communication,
3. be able to analyze interpersonal communication, identifying problem areas, and
4. be able to apply knowledge gained through this course to their lives in and out of the work place.

FX students will be able to:

\*write complete paragraphs defining the unique aspects of each of the components of interpersonal communication

\*explain and demonstrate how common interpersonal problems can be avoided and/or corrected.

H-3-A students will be able to:

\*demonstrate the use of two or three theories of human psychology to understand and improve interpersonal communication problems. In a six to eight page, double spaced paper (questions to be distributed in class), students will compare Frankl to either Sigmund Freud or Carl Rogers. (If you wish to substitute another theorist for either Freud or Rogers please discuss it with me in advance.)

H-3-D students will be able to:

\*demonstrate a mastery of both theory and practice of interpersonal communication in the mediation of disputes, which have resulted in deadlocked conflict. A six to eight page double spaced paper analyzing cases distributed in class will meet this requirement.

**INSTRUCTOR'S BIOGRAPHY:** Robert Mills holds an M.A. degree from Indiana University in Communication Studies and a Ph.D. degree from The University of Michigan in Communication Studies. In addition to teaching courses at DePaul University he works as a consultant specializing in interpersonal, small group and corporate communication problem analysis.

**ASSESSMENT:** The percentage assigned to each of the course components is as follows: each quiz 10%, class participation 15% and the papers 55%. At all times throughout the quarter, I will strive to ensure that my assessment of and feedback about student performance is as clear, honest and complete as I can make it. Since no two students are exactly alike, I will work to be as flexible and understanding as I can of the challenges individual students face.

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT: Written work will be evaluated as follows:

1. A grade of "A" designates work of high quality; reflects thorough and comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; reflects a clearly identifiable thesis and argument that demonstrates cogent and creative development and support of idea.
2. A grade of "B" designates work of good quality; reflects clearly organized and comprehensive understanding of issues at hand; presents substantive thesis and argument with evident development and support of ideas.
3. A grade of "C" designates work which minimally meets requirements set forward in the assignment; reflects some organization and development of ideas but develops argument in superficial or simplistic manner; may only address part of the assignment or be otherwise incomplete.
4. A grade of "D" designates work of poor quality, which does not meet minimum requirements set forth in the assignment; demonstrates poor organization of ideas and/or inattention to development of ideas, grammar, and spelling. Treatment of material is superficial and/or simplistic; it may indicate that student has not done reading assignments thoroughly.

PLEASE NOTE:

The *DePaul Student Handbook* defines plagiarism as follows: "Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: (a) The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's. (b) Copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with acknowledgement. (c) Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment, which has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency. (d) The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas with out proper acknowledgement." Plagiarism will result in a failure of the assignment or possibly of the course. If you are unsure of how to cite a source, ask!

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Sarah Trenholm and Arthur Jensen, *Interpersonal Communication*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.

Victor F. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*

SUGGESTED READING:

Calvin S. Hall, *A Primer of Freudian Psychology*, Mentor Books, 1979

Carl Rogers, *Client-centered Therapy* (available in most libraries)

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Introduction:

Sept. 14: Trenholm & Jensen, chapters 1 & 2

Sending and Receiving:

Sept. 21: Trenholm & Jensen, chapter 3, Frankl, part I

Sept. 28: “ “ chapter 4, SELF-ASSESSMENT QUIZ (Chapters 1-3)

Oct. 5: “ “ chapter 5

Interpersonal Process:

Oct. 12: Trenholm & Jensen, chapter 6, Frankl, parts II and III

Oct. 19: “ “ chapter 7, SELF-ASSESSMENT QUIZ (chapters 4-6)

Oct. 26: “ “ chapter 8

Nov. 2: “ “ chapter 9

Professional Relationships:

Nov. 9: Trenholm & Jensen, chapter 12

Nov. 16: ALL COMPETENCY PAPERS DUE

Nov. 23: SELF-ASSESSMENT QUIZ (Chapters 7,8,9,12) & Return of papers

PLEASE NOTE:

\*Attendance at all 11 class sessions is suggested. If you foresee problems, please discuss it with me in advance. Your ability to receive a passing grade in this course may be jeopardized by more than two absences.

\*This course will follow the procedures established by the university regarding plagiarism (see explanation above).

\*Incomplete grades are not automatically granted. Students wishing to receive an "I" grade must request it before the 10<sup>th</sup> week of class. A written contract between student and instructor must be executed and a copy is kept on file with the SNL. The contract is available on line under "forms". Generally students have two quarters to complete their work and a grade of "F" is automatically submitted if work is not completed by the end of the contractually stipulated time period.

\*Students wishing to take this course pass/fail should let me know at the beginning of the course. Once committed to taking a course P/F a student cannot switch back to a letter grade.

\* If you want the paper(s) returned to you by mail please include a postage paid envelope with your paper(s). All other papers will be held on the second floor of the SNL.