

Interpersonal Communication (Com 200)

Dr. Becker

3 Credits

Class meetings: T & R, 2:00-3:15 p.m. K 111

Office: 209 EKH

Office Hours: W 8-9:50 (K 209); 10-11:30 (UCB 120); 12-12:50 (K209); R 8-9:00 (K209) and by appointment. The best way to contact me for appointments is via email.

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Imagine yourself in a situation where you are alone, wholly alone on earth, and you are offered one of the two: books or people. I often hear [speakers] prizing their solitude, but that is only because there are still [people] somewhere on earth, even though in the far distance. I knew nothing of books when I came forth from the womb of my mother, and I shall die without books, with another human hand in my own. I do, indeed, close my door at times and surrender myself to a book, but only because I can open the door again and see a human being looking at me.

–Martin Buber

Course Overview:

In this course we will read and discuss a variety of works by renowned philosophers, psychologists, teachers, and scholars whose work is relevant to interpersonal communication. We will consider how interpersonal communication influences our identity and the quality of our personal and professional lives. Will engage in activities and discussion designed to help us practice and improve interpersonal communication.

Curriculum:

This course meets a lower-division elective and is required for communication major.

Text:

Interpersonal Communication: Bridges Not Walls, edited by John Stewart, 2006 edition.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to define and engage in interpersonal communication.
2. Students will be able to discuss the relationship between interpersonal communication and identity management, interpersonal ethics, types of love, transformational conflict management, listening, and diversity.
3. Students will be able to recognize barriers to interpersonal communication.
4. Students will be able to facilitate interpersonal communication and engage in dialogue
5. Students will demonstrate sensitivity to perspectives and world views different from their own.

Grades:

Attendance.....	10%
Participation.....	15%
Exams (4) (Lowest dropped)..	45%
Facilitation.....	30%

Attendance/Participation (25):

Attendance:

The above quote by Martin Buber suggests that what is essential about interpersonal communication cannot be learned only from books; it must be experienced. Consequently, this class requires interaction and experiential learning. Therefore, you must come to class having read the assigned chapters, so that we can engage in discussions and exercises that allow us to integrate the ideas in our communication behaviors. **Attendance is essential for your success in this course.** More than three absences will lower your grade by 5 points for each additional absence. Coming late or leaving early lowers your grade by 2.5 points each time.

Please note: Even in the case of documented absences, your participation grade will still suffer unless you successfully find a way to make up for the loss of your presence to the class (i.e. preparing study guides, extra facilitations (as time allows), engaging in service learning projects and sharing your experience the class, writing an essay or paper related to the reading and sharing it with the class, are some possibilities). Make-up proposals will be considered on a case by case basis and must be approved in advance.

Participation:

Throughout the semester, students will be randomly selected to answer the following questions. Your ability to do so will influence your participation grade. To prepare for each session do the following:

1. **Read** the assigned pages and answer the discussion questions.
2. **Consider** how the material you are reading about applies to your life. How do you *feel* about it? What do you find yourself agreeing with? Disagreeing with? *Why?*
3. **Compose** a question that you would like to ask your instructor or your peers if given the opportunity.
4. **Prepare** to *articulate* your observations, reactions, thoughts and feelings in class.

Another factor that will influence your participation grade is your contribution to a supportive environment for interpersonal communication practice. Both your *verbal and non-verbal behaviors* should communicate respect, attentiveness, active listening and tolerance. Turn off cell phone.

Exams (15% Each):

There will be four multiple choice/true-false questions based on the assigned readings and class discussions. The lowest grade will be dropped. Therefore, make-up exams will not be offered.

Facilitation (30%)

Each student will be required to facilitate two discussions related to the readings. Once you sign up for a selection you must facilitate on the day you are scheduled. If you miss your scheduled presentation date, you risk the chance that our schedule will not be able to accommodate a make-up and you're you will receive a zero for this assignment. Your 20-25 minute presentation should include the following:

1. **Introduce** yourself by sharing some unique aspect of who you are. Relate to the material you are discussing personally by applying to analyze a relationship in your life or offering us your reaction to the material.
2. Briefly **summarize** the main points in the reading.
3. **Share** your personal response to the reading. Include the reasons for your response.
4. **Relate** the reading to a reading or concept previously discussed.
5. **Facilitate** an exercise or discussion that will help the class integrate the material.
6. **Compose** five exam questions about the material. Be sure they are not trivial or picky. Attempt to write questions that capture the main ideas illuminated by the author of the chapter.

Do not read your presentations. You may use note cards or an outline to assist you. However, the focus should be on establishing eye contact and connecting with the rest of the class. Please do not chew gum on the day you are facilitating.

If You Have a Disability:

Any student with a documented disability who would like to request accommodations should contact the University Disability Services Office - Hale Kauano'e A Wing Lounge, 933-0816 (V), 933-3334 (TTY), shirachi@hawaii.edu - as early in the semester as possible.

A Note About Advising:

Advising is designed to help students complete the requirement of the University and their individual majors. Students should consult with their advisors if there are any concerns about progress toward graduation, course selections or career opportunities. Although advising is a shared responsibility, students have final responsibility for meeting degree requirements.