

**Family Communication
Fall 2002 Dr. Becker**

Class meetings: Fridays 1:00-4:00 p.m. PB4 101

Office: 209 EKH

Office Hours: T & R 11 am -12:15 pm; M & W 2-2:50 pm and by appointment.

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Text: *Understanding Family Communication by Yerby & Bochner. Second Edition.*

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Family Communication utilizes social construction, family systems, dialectical process, narrative and cultural theories to analyze the ways that families function. Foundational concepts are introduced and communication dynamics within families are explored. There is a focus upon meaning centered approaches. Cultural influences and gender roles are considered. Conditions necessary for optimal family functioning are addressed.

OBJECTIVES:

After completing this course you should be able to:

- 1) Describe the characteristics of a family.
- 2) Discuss the ways that families function and provide meaning for their members.
- 3) Apply communication theories to analyze family dynamics.
- 4) Recognize cultural influences upon gender roles and communication patterns.
- 5) Identify functional and dysfunctional communication patterns in families.

GRADES:

Attendance	10
Preparation	10
Drafts	10
Paper 1	30
Paper 2	30
Presentations	10

ATTENDANCE:

More than two unexcused absences will reduce your attendance grade by 15% for each additional absence. Coming to class late or leaving early (unexcused) will reduce your attendance grade by 5% each time. If you do come to class late, be sure to check with me *immediately after that session* to ensure that you don't get penalized for being absent for the entire session.

PREPARATION:

This course is designed to facilitate dialogue to deepen our understanding about family communication. Each week we will apply the theories and concepts we are studying to analyze a different family. The families we will analyze will be introduced in class. You are expected to prepare by doing the required reading so that you are familiar with the vocabulary we will be using. Your preparation will enrich the experience of the whole class and enable us to spend more time applying the material to the family dynamics we are examining that session.

DRAFTS & PAPERS:

There will be two required 8-10 page papers. You will be given a series of questions to answer at least three weeks before the paper is due. You will have the opportunity to answer the questions that interest you most. You will be provided an opportunity to share your draft with your peers and instructor so that you can revise your papers before you turn them in. Drafts must be brought to class the day they are due, *no late drafts will be accepted*. Your final paper grade will reflect your ability to demonstrate that you understand the questions, the concepts involved, and that you can apply them to analyze family communication dynamics in different kinds of situations. Both the draft and the final essay should be typed and double-spaced. The final essay should also be free of grammar and spelling errors. Grades for late papers will be reduced by 10% each business day.

PRESENTATIONS:

This assignment is designed to encourage dialogue that may deepen our understanding of family communication. On the day that the draft of your paper is due, you will be required to discuss it in class. You will have 5-10 minutes to discuss your paper with the class, including feedback. You do not have to discuss all the material you have written about in your paper. Your presentation should include a definition of one or more key concepts and the way that you have applied them to analyze family communication (i.e. examples).

SPECIAL NEEDS:

If you have a documented learning disability and would like to request accommodation please contact the University Disability Services at 933-0816 (V), 933-3334 (TTY), Campus Center Room 311, early in the semester as possible. If there is anything else I can do to help you succeed in this course, please come and talk with me.