

# Introduction to Interpersonal Communication

## SAMPLE SYLLABUS

“We do not learn from experience, we learn from reflecting on experience.”  
-John Dewey

This document is the answer to most of your questions.  
Print it, bring it to class, and refer to it anytime you need information.  
Transfer the schedule on the last page into your own calendar/planner.  
If you cannot find the answer to your question, feel free to contact your instructor.

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**Course Description:** Welcome to COM 102! This course is an introduction to the field, principles, and concepts of interpersonal communication. It is not a public speaking class. Topics explored in this course include the self-concept, perception, emotions, language, nonverbal communication, listening, conflict, different types of personal relationships and the influence of factors such as sex and gender, online communication and culture on all of these topics. Instructors love to teach this class, (it is my absolute favorite!) and students often find it to be fun and very practical.

**Course Objectives:** As a student in this course, you will participate in course readings, lectures, small group activities, scholarly research and writing assignments in order to gain a better understanding of your own communication style and that of others. This involves becoming a more competent communicator. You will take several self-quizzes for self-discovery and reflection. By the end of this course, you should be able to apply concepts from this class to your own relational communication. Yes, we communicate every day, but there are areas where we can make improvements. In addition to your academic education, consider this class a part of your real-life education at UNLV to help you get an edge both personally and professionally.

**University Undergraduate Learning Outcomes (UULOs):** “The five University Undergraduate Learning Outcomes (UULOs) define what all UNLV students should know and be able to do when they graduate. Because students engage with the UULOs in both their general education and academic majors, the UULOs help make the undergraduate experience intentional and coherent. The UULOs create a purposeful sequence of learning from the first year, to the middle years, to the senior year. Student learning develops through both curricular and co-curricular experiences which expose students to the UULOs in diverse contexts.” <http://generaled.unlv.edu/uulo.html> This class aims to contribute to the Intellectual Breadth and Lifelong Learning, Communication, and Global/Multicultural Knowledge and Awareness UULOs. See webpage for full descriptions.

## Student Learning Objectives:

After completing this course, the student should be able to:

1. Recognize and apply definitions of interpersonal communication and interpersonal communication competence.
2. Recognize social scientific terminology in scholarly readings.
3. Summarize and synthesize interpersonal research in a scholarly article.
4. Differentiate between quantitative and qualitative research methods in social scientific studies.
5. Demonstrate the ability to reflect on personal communication competence and interpersonal communication skills.
6. Analyze interpersonal communication skills including active listening, conflict management, verbal skills, nonverbal skills, and emotion management.
7. Implement effective interpersonal communication skills in real life situations, including active listening, conflict management, verbal skills, nonverbal skills, and emotion management.

**Course format:** You have two instructors, and you will meet one day a week with each instructor in two separate class rooms. **One day of each week you will meet in large lecture (LL) with everyone in your class and your lecturer. On these days we will cover major class concepts, discuss any readings, and you will have the opportunity to ask questions.** Your lecturer will also spend time explaining the out of class tasks for that week (see Canvas for schedule). This may include small writing assignments, worksheets, journaling, or working on your culmination paper.

**The second class meeting each week will be in your small breakout (BO) session with your other instructor, who will be helping you this semester, looking over your work, and assigning grades.** The BOs will meet in the same small classroom every time. Whatever the weekly tasks are, you may be bringing work into your BOs and/or submitting your work online by the end of the week. This course format is designed to allow you to learn course concepts, get hands on learning, demonstrate interpersonal skills, work effectively in groups, and receive constant feedback regarding your writing skills and grasp of the material.

**Attendance:** Do you have to come to class? Yes, attendance is mandatory. See mandatory reporting of attendance on last page. It is imperative that you stay on schedule for all of the readings and assignments and attend every LL and BO session. You will be learning concepts and weekly tasks in LL, which will then be completed and brought to your BO session. Missing any of those sessions will make completing tasks and progressing very difficult. Each class session builds upon the next, and we work together on major assignments. **Participation points are built into your BO sessions, and cannot be made up if missed for any reason, or earned anywhere else.** University sanctioned absences (athletic teams, religious holidays, etc.) are acceptable and do not count against you but do require instructor notification in advance. You are still responsible for all required work.

We take attendance every class session, so make sure you are counted. In LL we rely on a photo you submit your first week to identify you. In BO we will call out roll. We do not excuse absences except for University sanctioned absences (see above) and DRC absence accommodations. An absence is an absence, and it is your decision whether to come to class or not. You get two "free" absences for LL and two "free" absences for BO. If you miss more than two LLs you will begin to face penalties. If you miss more than two BOs you will begin to face penalties. **Each penalized absence will reduce your overall grade by 20 points (2%).** If you miss a class for any reason, check Canvas immediately to know what you should be working on that week, and contact a fellow student for lecture notes. Your instructors will not provide lecture slides or notes for missed days.

Arrive on time to every class session and do not leave early as it is rude and disruptive. Do not schedule work, appointments, interviews, or other activities during class time so you know you can always attend. If you expect to have time conflicts, transportation or childcare issues, or are unlikely to attend every session, please take the course at another time.

**Late work policy: Attendance and time management is vital to doing well in this course.** You cannot pass the class if you do not turn work in on time, and there are tasks due every week. Most of your work will be submitted online, meaning **you can and should still submit assignments online even if you cannot attend class.** If an assignment is required to be brought to class because we will use it, please do so, as you may get points for it. Stay on top of your schedule. If you were asked to bring work to class, and missed class, those points cannot be made up.

If you miss a due date (even by 1 minute) you should immediately send your completed work to your instructor via Canvas message and submit the late work request form to your instructor explaining what happened. You likely will be asked to provide electronic documentation such as doctors notes, hospital paperwork, other documents, photos, etc. Late work requests will only be considered if your initial contact was within one week of the due date. Some work will not be accepted late. **If your late work request is approved you will receive a 10% penalty. If your late request is denied you will receive a zero for that assignment. Late work will only be accepted twice this semester. Any more missed work will receive a zero.**

**Required Material:** You will need reliable internet and computer access throughout the semester to submit written work, complete readings, watch videos, and take assessments. You cannot complete this course on your smartphone. **All submitted work must be double spaced 12 pt Times New Roman Word documents in a .doc or pdf format (no Pages, or .docx or shared google docs).**

Your required textbook is the 2019 5th Edition of *Reflect and Relate: An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication* by Steven McCornack and Kelly Morrison, published by MacMillan Learning. Purchase the electronic access code for your ebook at the Bookstore on UNLV's campus. Keep in mind if you buy it [online from the Bookstore](#) they will mail you your access code, which takes time. You may sign up for the free two week trial to get you through waiting for your access code.

Macmillan eBook Information: LaunchPad for Reflect & Relate (Six-Month Access) ©2019 Fifth Edition ISBN-10: 1-319-10348-0; ISBN-13: 978-1-319-10348-4

**Graded Work out of 1,000:**

|                                     |                    |            |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| • Learning Curves                   | 10 @ 10 points     | 100 points |
| • Participation opportunities       |                    | 120 points |
| • Journals (choose 5)               | 5 @ 40 points each | 200 points |
| • Culmination Paper                 |                    | 155 points |
| • Culmination Paper Progress Pieces | 5 @ 20 points each | 100 points |
| • Assignments                       | 4 @ 50 points each | 200 points |
| • Assessments                       | 25, 25, 75 points  | 125 points |

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**TOTAL:** **1,000 points**

**Extra Credit:** There will be many extra credit opportunities this semester. You can find them on Canvas, and your instructor will explain in class. The max extra credit possible is 30 points.

**Learning Curves:** You will be completing 10 Learning Curve activities on LaunchPad, the textbook publisher's website. Each Learning Curve coincides with lecture material- it is an interactive multiple-choice learning tool designed to help you understand the reading material before class. It is adaptive,

so the better you perform, the fewer questions you will receive. You should feel prepared to discuss class concepts in class after completing Learning Curves.

**Assignments:** You will be completing 4 assignments this semester. Some are 1-2 page written assignments; some have in class small group presentations associated with them. Assignments will be discussed in large lecture, to then be completed and submitted online and/or brought into BOs that same week.

**Journals:** As we move through the course we will learn new concepts in interpersonal communication. Many of the bigger concepts have online self-quizzes (not for points) that you will take as a way to reflect on your current skill level, level of competence, self-awareness, and personal relationships. These short quizzes may be used as prompts for journal entries. You are required to complete 5 journals this semester (we will offer 6 choices), and they are scattered throughout the 15 weeks of class. Most are 1-2 pages typed and double spaced. These are designed to help you discover and analyze your own interpersonal communication practices. If you complete all 6 the lowest score will be dropped.

**Participation:** Every BO session is an opportunity to earn participation points. These cannot be made up outside of class, or at later times; you must be present to earn them. They vary each week but may include in class quizzes or free writes on the readings, videos, and/or lecture for the week, in class group or dyad activities, in class editing, peer revision sessions, etc. Other opportunities for participation points include other online tasks in the course schedule (responding to polls, posting topics, quizzes, bringing materials to class, etc.).

**Culmination paper:** The major task in this class is the culmination paper, which involves the entire semester and several steps. First, you will be choosing an established and stable relationship in your life to evaluate and improve on this semester (friendship, family relationship or romantic partner) and documenting your communication interactions with this person. As we progress through the class, you will choose a communication skill that you'd like to work on in your relationship (listening skills, emotion management, conflict management, verbal skills, or nonverbal skills). You will also identify one part of being a competent communicator (self-awareness or empathy) that is vital to improving this skill. **You will research the two topics you chose, come up with a plan to make improvements in your communication and your relationship, and apply these concepts to your life, enacting your plan and documenting the progress.** The goal is to conduct and summarize academic research, apply it in a practical way to improve your communication and an interpersonal relationship in your life this semester, and write about the process.

Your final paper will be 5-7 pages typed, double-spaced, with at least 4 sources (of which 2 are scholarly and 1 is a TED talk or podcast) formatted in APA with an annotated bibliography. While this paper is worth the most points in the class, you will be working on it throughout the semester in stages, turning in pieces of the paper to be evaluated by your instructor and given helpful feedback. **If you stay on task this semester, by the time the paper is completed towards the end of the semester, you will have had every piece looked over.**

**Course Grade Standards:** If you need/want a specific grade in this course, work from the first day to achieve it. Grades cannot be changed at the end of the semester. You can see below which percentages will be rounded up and which ones will not. Monitor your grade closely throughout the semester, rather than waiting until it is over to try and improve it. You are in control of your grade.

|                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 92.45 – 100% = A    | 72.45 – 76.44% = C  |
| 89.45 – 92.44% = A- | 69.45 – 72.44% = C- |
| 86.45 – 89.44% = B+ | 66.45 – 69.44% = D+ |
| 82.45 – 86.44% = B  | 62.45 – 66.44% = D  |
| 79.45 – 82.44% = B- | 59.45 – 62.44% = D- |
| 76.45 – 79.44% = C+ | 0 – 59.44% = F      |

**Grade disputes:** It is your responsibility to monitor your grades on Canvas. Instructors will not discuss grades until 24 hours after they have been posted. This allows you time to reflect on your work and read any comments before asking questions. If you catch an error, you have one week from the time the grade posted to bring it to your instructor’s attention. Any problems brought up after that time will not be considered.

**Canvas:** Written work is submitted via Canvas, so everything must be in the proper format. See required material section above for format requirements. We rely on Canvas to stay in contact with the class. Any changes in schedule, reminders about due dates, assignments, worksheets, supplementary materials, etc. will be posted on Canvas, and possibly pushed to your Rebel email. Check it every day. You are responsible for materials and information posted online so stay up to date! Any specific issues can be sent directly to your instructor through a message. If you have a question, please refer to this syllabus for your answer before asking. We attempt to respond within 24 hours Monday through Thursday, but generally check messages during office hours. Only email our Rebel email if Canvas is not working.

**Electronics in class:** Phones should always be silenced and put away during all class times, unless you are specifically asked to use it for a class activity. If you need to be on your phone, please do so outside of class. If we see it out we will ask you to put it away because it is a distraction to others. If you want to use a tablet or laptop for taking notes electronically, that is acceptable, but please stay focused on class related information only. Any time you are a distraction you will be asked to put it away for the rest of the semester. We also prefer if you sit to the sides or back of the class so as not to distract other students with your screen. *See the article on Canvas regarding choosing to type or hand write notes.*

**Children in class:** As a general policy, please secure childcare for any children you are responsible for so you don’t need to bring them to class. However, if there is an emergency situation and your child is not ill, out of respect for your instructor and other classmates, please reach out to your instructor before class to request permission to bring them. The main goal is to not distract other students (or yourself as the caregiver). Older children are easier to keep occupied and happy if they need to come with you to class. However, our topics for the day may be sensitive to school aged children, so please always consider the specific class session material. Infants are discouraged. Regardless, do not bring children to class regularly, only in approved emergencies.

**Statement of Basic Needs and Security:** Any student who faces challenges securing food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact Stephanie Reahm, Special Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs at 702-895-1122. The main office number is 702-895-3656. Furthermore, please notify your instructor if you are comfortable calling and we will do it for you.

If at any point in the class, or on campus, you feel unsafe or as if your rights to security and privacy are compromised, you are urged to contact the Office of Student Conduct 702-895-2308. If you need to contact the UNLV Police, non-emergency services can be reached at 702-895-3668 and emergency services can be reached at 911.

## **UNLV Policies**

### **Academic Misconduct**

Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the Campus community; we all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility, and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy, and are encouraged to always take the ethical path whenever faced with choices. Students enrolling at UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's educational mission. An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another person, from the Internet or any other source without proper citation of the sources. See the [Student Conduct Code](https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct), <https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct>.

### **Auditing Classes**

Auditing a course allows a student to continue attending the lectures and/or laboratories and discussion sessions associated with the course, but the student will not earn a grade for any component of the course. Students who audit a course receive the same educational experience as students taking the course for a grade, but will be excused from exams, assessments, and other evaluative measures that serve the primary purpose of assigning a grade.

### **Classroom Conduct**

Students have a responsibility to conduct themselves in class and in the libraries in ways that do not interfere with the rights of other students to learn or of instructors to teach. Use of electronic devices such as pagers, cellular phones, or recording devices, or potentially disruptive devices or activities, are only permitted with the prior explicit consent of the instructor. The instructor may rescind permission at any time during the class. If a student does not comply with established requirements or obstructs the functioning of the class, the instructor may initiate an administrative drop of the student from the course.

### **Copyright**

The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves with, and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend you, nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional [copyright policy information](http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright) is available at <http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright>.

### **Disability Resource Center (DRC)**

The [UNLV Disability Resource Center](https://www.unlv.edu/drc) (SSC-A, Room 143, <https://www.unlv.edu/drc>, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. Students who believe that they may need academic accommodations due to injury, disability, or due to pregnancy should contact the DRC as early as possible in the academic term. A Disabilities Specialist will discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours, so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

### **Final Examinations**

The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur on the date and at the time specified in the Final Exam schedule. The general schedule is typically available at the start of the semester, and the classroom locations are available approximately one month before the end of the

semester. See the [Final Exam Schedule](https://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars), <https://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars>.

### **Identity Verification in Online Courses**

All UNLV students must use their Campus-issued ACE ID and password to log in to WebCampus.

UNLV students enrolled in online or hybrid courses are expected to read and adhere to the [Student Academic Misconduct Policy](https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/misconduct/policy), <https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/misconduct/policy>, which defines, “acting or attempting to act as a substitute for another, or using or attempting to use a substitute, in any academic evaluation or assignment” as a form of academic misconduct. Intentionally sharing ACE login credentials with another person may be considered an attempt to use a substitute and could result in investigation and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Academic Misconduct Policy.

UNLV students enrolled in online courses are also expected to read and adhere to the [Acceptable Use of Computing and Information Technology Resources Policy](https://www.it.unlv.edu/policies/acceptable-use-computing-and-information-technology-resources-policy), <https://www.it.unlv.edu/policies/acceptable-use-computing-and-information-technology-resources-policy>, which prohibits sharing university accounts with other persons without authorization.

To the greatest extent possible, all graded assignments and assessments in UNLV online courses should be hosted in WebCampus or another UNLV-managed platform that requires ACE login credentials for access.

### **Incomplete Grades**

The grade of “I” (Incomplete) may be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session, but cannot complete the last part of the course for reason(s) beyond the student’s control and acceptable to the instructor, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. For undergraduate courses, the incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester. Graduate students receiving “I” grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the period indicated, a grade of “F” will be recorded, and the student’s GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete grade do not register for the course, but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the “I” grade.

### **Library Resources**

Librarians are available to consult with students on research needs, including developing research topics, finding information, and evaluating sources. To make an appointment with a subject expert for this class, please visit the [Libraries’ Research Consultation](http://guides.library.unlv.edu/appointments/librarian) website: <http://guides.library.unlv.edu/appointments/librarian>. You can also [ask the library staff](http://ask.library.unlv.edu/) questions via chat and text message at: <http://ask.library.unlv.edu/>.

### **Missed Classwork**

Any student missing class, quizzes, examinations, or any other class or laboratory work because of observance of religious holidays will be given an opportunity during that semester to make up the missed work. The make-up opportunity will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor within the first 14 calendar days of the course for Fall and Spring courses (except for modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for Summer and modular courses, of their intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit the Policy for Missed Work, under Registration Policies, on the [Academic Policies](https://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531) webpage, <https://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531>

In accordance with the policy approved by the Faculty Senate regarding missed class time and assignments, students who represent UNLV in any official extracurricular activity will also have the opportunity to make up assignments, provided that the student provides official written notification to

the instructor no less than one week prior to the missed class(es).

The spirit and intent of the policy for missed classwork is to offer fair and equitable assessment opportunities to all students, including those representing the University in extracurricular activities. Instructors should consider, for example, that in courses which offer a “Drop one” option for the lowest assignment, quiz, or exam, assigning the student a grade of zero for an excused absence for extracurricular activity is both contrary to the intent of the Faculty Senate’s policy, and an infringement on the student’s right to complete all work for the course.

This policy will not apply in the event that completing the assignment or administering the examination at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the University that could reasonably have been avoided. There should be a good faith effort by both the instructor and the student to agree to a reasonable resolution. When disagreements regarding this policy arise, decisions can be appealed to the Department Chair/Unit Director, College/School Dean, and/or the Faculty Senate Academic Standards Committee.

For purposes of definition, extracurricular activities may include, but are not limited to: fine arts activities, competitive intercollegiate athletics, science and engineering competitions, liberal arts competitions, academic recruitment activities, and any other event or activity sanctioned by a College/School Dean, and/or by the Executive Vice President and Provost.

### **Rebelmail**

Rebelmail is UNLV’s official email system for students, and by University policy, instructors and staff should only send emails to students’ Rebelmail accounts. Rebelmail is one of the primary ways students receive official University communications, information about deadlines, major Campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the University. Emailing within WebCampus is also acceptable.

### **Tutoring and Coaching**

The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring, academic success coaching, and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, please visit the [ASC website](https://www.unlv.edu/asc), <https://www.unlv.edu/asc>, or call 702-895-3177. The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of SSC A, Room 254. Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library, and on the second floor of the College of Engineering building (TBE A 207).

### **UNLV Writing Center**

One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the [Writing Center](https://writingcenter.unlv.edu/), <https://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>, located in the Central Desert Complex, Building 3, Room 301 (CDC 3–301). Walk-in consultations are sometimes available, but students with appointments receive priority assistance. Students may make appointments in person or by calling the Center, 702-895-3908. Students are requested to bring to their appointments their Rebel ID Card, a copy of the instructions for their assignment, and two copies of any writing they have completed on their assignment.