

**Communication 389/589**  
**Family Communication**  
**Spring 2016**

**\*\*The course will meet online (100%) from January 25-March 18. The course will meet in person Tuesday, March 29 through the end of the semester\*\***

**Professor:** Dr. Sylvia L. Mikucki-Enyart  
**Office:** CAC 209  
**Phone:** 346-2267  
**Email:** [smikucki@uwsp.edu](mailto:smikucki@uwsp.edu) (please note I observe email free evenings and weekends)  
**Office hours:** January 25<sup>th</sup> – March 25<sup>th</sup> - by appointment. Email to schedule.  
March 28<sup>th</sup> – May 13<sup>th</sup> Tuesday and Thursdays 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and by appointment

**Course Description:** Communication 389/589 is an advanced course focused on family communication theories, research, and behaviors. The intent of family communication is to foster an interest and understanding of communication theories, research, and processes that can help individuals develop and maintain satisfying family relationships.

**Division of Communication Learning Outcomes:** Students in the Division of Communication will be able to...

- Communicate effectively using appropriate technologies for diverse audiences.
- Plan, evaluate, and conduct basic (quantitative and qualitative) communication research.\*
- Use communication theories to understand and solve communication problems.\*
- Apply historical communication perspectives to contemporary issues and practices.\*
- Apply principals of ethical decision making in communication contexts.

\*Outcomes supported by this course

**Course Learning Outcomes:** After completing this course students will *be able to*...

- Describe the prominent theories governing family communication.
- Summarize, evaluate, and critique scholarly communication research.
- Explain the benefits of certain communication strategies versus others.
- Identify communication theories, principles, and strategies in applied contexts.
- Demonstrate how to enact various communication strategies in applied settings.

**Enduring Understandings:** After completing this course students will *understand* that...

- Communication is an essential tool for maintaining satisfying family relationships.
- Communication theories and research help us understand which communication strategies are more or less effective in families.
- The diverse and multifaceted nature of families affects the communication enacted across family forms.

### **Essential Questions:**

- How are certain communication strategies beneficial and/or detrimental to families?
- How can research be used to understand family communication?
- How do communication theories help us understand and assess more or less effective family communication?

## **ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING**

### **Texts**

- **Required Textbook Rental:** Galvin, K. M., Bylund, C. L., & Brommel, B. J. (2012). *Family communication: Cohesion and change* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Allyn & Bacon.
- **Additional Required Reading:**
  - Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). You can purchase this from amazon.com.
  - Additional online readings (will be posted to D2L)

### **Assignments & Assessment**

1. **Discussion posts & participation:** Discussion posts (DPs) are designed to help focus your reading and provide you with a space to explore connections among course concepts. For each discussion post assignment students are responsible for: (1) an initial post that contains at least two issues from the readings for that DP that “spoke” to you (these can be issues that upset you, perplexed you, surprised you, or confirmed beliefs) *and* an insightful, open-ended question for your peers to contemplate and respond to (credit will not be given for close-ended questions, i.e., something that can be answered with a one word response); and (2) an insightful and thorough response to a question posed by a fellow classmate (credit will not be given for single word or sentence answers). That is, for each DP assignment, you must have two posts in the discussion forum. This format will allow a conversation rather than just a collection of discrete and disconnected posts.

Our first three DPs (DP #1 – DP#3, see syllabus) will be online through D2L. There is also a 48-hour time limit on DPs. For instance, the first DP is scheduled for readings connected to Storytelling & Rituals on Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>. Therefore, you will have from 8:00 a.m. Monday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> until 11:30 p.m., Wednesday February 24<sup>th</sup> to complete your DP assignment.

The remaining three DPs will take place in class and will require that you turn in a hard copy of your two “issues” and question at the beginning of class. The remaining discussion will happen in class.

Your DPs will be graded based on their thoroughness and insightfulness. Posts made after the cut-off time (see syllabus) will not be given credit.

- 2. Exams:** The midterm exam will be an open book, open notes exam that consists entirely of short answer and essay questions that will ask you to synthesize course content to make a pointed argument in response to a question prompt. The exam will be completed individually, although you may use your notes and readings, and submitted to D2L. The exam will be checked for plagiarism using turnitin software. Any exams that contain plagiarized responses will receive a score of zero.

The final will be a combination of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay questions and will take place in class. True/false and multiple choice questions are, primarily, applied in nature and require critical thinking as they will ask you to apply learned theories and concepts to hypothetical situations. Short answer and essay questions will ask you to synthesize course content to make a pointed argument in response to a question prompt.

Exams will include information from both the readings (textbook and online readings) and lecture, including questions about examples, video clips, and discussions that occur during class time.

- 3. Final Project:** You will have three options for your final project: (1) Parent interview; (2) Intergenerational interview; and (3) Family observation. More details will be provided on a separate handout.

For this project you may elect to work individually or in small group of up to three individuals. If you select the group option, all group members will receive the same grade.

**Grading Philosophy:** My primary aim is for you to understand course material and its utility and application in your daily life. As such, I view grades as a means to an end, not an end themselves. In other words, I want you to be focused on learning rather than simply receiving a high grade. If you focus on the latter this course will seem onerous, assignments and exams will seem like obstacles, and your motivation will quickly evaporate. If you focus on the former, however, you are more likely to stay engaged, involved, and motivated. And, in more cases than not, this intrinsic desire and motivation often goes hand-in-hand with higher marks.

Based on my philosophy, I view grading as a tool that allows me to (a) assess your demonstrated competence of particular content area, and (b) provide you feedback on how well you appear to comprehend course material. Unfortunately, I cannot assess or assign a grade to effort or time. Even if you worked “really hard” on a paper or spent “hours” studying for a test, I can only evaluate how competently you demonstrate knowledge and understanding of lecture and textbook material. If you are unhappy with your grade, I am happy to meet with you to discuss your approach to learning, such as how you prepare for class, assignments, and exams.

Additionally, students often ask why points were deducted from a writing assignment. This question suggests that you began the assignment with a 100%. I take the approach that all student assignments begin at a 0% and students *earn rather than lose points*.

**Graded Assignments:** Your grade will be calculated based on your scores from following assignments:

Discussion Posts (DPs) & Participation:	25%
Midterm Exam:	25%
Final Exam:	20%
Final Project:	30%

**Grading Scale:** The following grading scale is used to determine your final grade.

100% - 94% = A	79% - 77% = C+	59% or less = F
93% - 90 = A-	76% - 74% = C	
89% - 87% = B+	73% - 70% = C-	
86% - 84% = B	69% - 67% = D+	
83% - 80% = B-	66% - 60% = D	

**Graduate Students:** The requirements for graduate students differ slightly from those of undergraduates in the course. First, graduate students are expected to be “course leaders” and actively participate in course discussions. Additionally, graduate students will be required to write a research paper proposal in addition to the assignments outlined above. Details about the research paper proposal will be provided in a separate handout.

## Course Guidelines and Policies

**Attendance:** Daily attendance is not mandatory, nor do I take attendance. However, regular attendance is an essential part of performing well in class. For example, a great deal of lecture will stem from material that is not included in the textbook. Additionally, lecture content along with examples discussed in class are fair game for exams. As a result, students are strongly encouraged to attend all class sessions.

Although daily attendance is encouraged, I recognize that life sometimes interferes with your ability to attend class. If you do miss a class period *it is YOUR responsibility to obtain all the information presented in class, including assignments, course material, announcements, and schedule changes from a classmate.* I do not give copies of my notes to students, so you must get this information from a classmate. If information or content is unclear, please do not hesitate to contact me.

There is one *exception*—TEST DAYS. *Attendance on tests days is required.* If you are absent on a test day and you do not have an excused absence (which we discussed in advance) you will receive a zero on your exam. No excuses, no exceptions.

**Tardiness:** Although attendance is not taken, it is unprofessional and disrespectful to come to class late. I understand that occasionally circumstances arise that may prevent you from being punctual; however, please do not make this a daily occurrence. *Remember: Early is on time, on time is late, and late is unacceptable.*

**Excused Absences:** An absence on a test day will only be excused for a University-sponsored activity (with a note provided by an advisor or coach), documented illnesses (including flu-like symptoms), or attendance at a funeral (bring a funeral card or obituary). However, just like your job, you must “call in” if you are going to be absent. You must inform me TWO WEEKS before in advance if you are unable to take the exam on the scheduled date. If you do not inform me in advance of your absence you will not be able to retake the test. In addition, all make-up exams will be solely in essay format.

**Late Assignments:** I do not except late assignments, period. The course schedule includes all due dates, including exam dates, please plan your work and travel schedule accordingly.

**Grade Inquiry for Exam Items and Writing Assignments:** Students are encouraged to take action if they believe an exam question or paper section was scored inaccurately. Students should submit a typed essay within one week after the exam or paper is returned in class. Essays should cite class material to convincingly argue for why the exam answer or paper section should be re-evaluated.

**Delayed Enrollment in the Class:** Of course, students are responsible for all material and assignments beginning from the first day of the semester. Students who enroll after the first day of class begin the course at a sizeable disadvantage, particularly because some points will already have been awarded. Students in this position should carefully consider whether they wish to enroll once the course is underway.

**Email Etiquette:** Email is a quick and convenient way for us to communicate outside of class. Remember, however, that you are still communicating with your professor. That being said, I expect all emails to be professional and courteous. Please make sure that all emails include a subject, a salutation (e.g., Dear Dr. Mikucki-Enyart, Hello Professor, etc.), content that is free of grammatical and spelling errors, a close (e.g., From, Sincerely, etc.), and your name. I will not respond to emails that do not include these elements. Also, be mindful of the tone of your email.

**Technology Policy:** Please refrain from texting, g-chatting, facebook-ing, or doing anything else non-class related during class time. If you are unable to be “unplugged” I ask that you do not attend class. I reserve the right to ask you to refrain from bringing a laptop to class or leave class if your behavior distracts your fellow classmates and prevents them from learning, or distracts me.

**Classroom Environment:** UWSP values a safe, honest, respectful and inviting learning environment. In order to ensure that each student has the opportunity to succeed, the University has developed a set of expectations for all students and instructors. This set of expectations is known as the *Rights and Responsibilities* document, and it is intended to help establish a positive living and learning environment at UWSP. For more information, please visit the following link: <http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Pages/rightsandresponsibilities.aspx>

**Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity is central to the mission of higher education in general and UWSP in particular. Academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarisim, and helping others commit violations) is taken very seriously and will not be tolerated. The *minimum* penalty for a violation

of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. Students who violate the university's academic code will be rigorously sanctioned. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/Academic%20Integrity%20Brochure.pdf>

*To protect against cases of academic dishonesty, all major writing assignments will be submitted through Dropbox via D2L and checked against Turnitin.*

**Religious Holidays:** The university does not observe all religious holidays. Students who observe religious holidays that conflict with class sessions should notify me in writing within the first two weeks of the semester.

**Disability Issues:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring education institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP's policies, please visit:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf>

If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability and Assistive Technology Center and then notify me in writing within the first two weeks of the semester. I am happy to help in any way that I can. For more information, please visit the Disability and Assistive Technology Center, located on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the LRC. You can also find more information here: <http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability>