

**SPE/WGS 203 – Winter on the Web**  
Interpersonal Communication  
December 16, 2016 – January 7, 2016

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**Text:** *Looking Out/Looking In*. Ron Adler and Russell Proctor (14<sup>th</sup> edition, 2014). Please make arrangements to have the book in your possession by December 16. No changes will be made in scheduling even if you don't have the book. I know books are expensive, but their content is part of the education process. It is assumed that all students purchase (or have access 100% of the time to) this book and edition. **Signing up for a college class is a student commitment and agreement to accept and meet all class responsibilities and deadlines and accepting the consequences for not meeting them. All students in the class are subject to the exact same deadlines. Students who, for any reason, anticipate not meeting said deadlines – including a delay of their textbook purchase – have a much lower chance of passing and, therefore, should not enroll in the class. I'm looking forward to your taking the initiative, catching up, and meeting the remainder of those deadlines. Choosing not to have the book or having an older edition could significantly hinder your success in this class.**

**General Course Objectives:** The student should learn definitions and applications of various interpersonal communication theories including (but not limited to) areas of general communication theory, perception, semantics, nonverbal communication, listening, defensiveness, conflict resolution, and relationships. Since interpersonal communication is normally a live, face-to-face transaction, we obviously encounter some obstacles in doing this online. Nonetheless, we will make every attempt to apply our ideas in cyber communication and demonstrate a number of communication competencies.

All class materials, this course syllabus, course announcements, course assignments, and PowerPoint slides for the course can be found on the class Moodle site. **It is extremely important that you keep up with material and class assignments.** As this is an online course, most of it is self-directed, though I will be available to help you to learn the material via email and Skype. Keep an eye on all assignments and tests and their respective deadlines.

**Online:** This is an *online* class. **Perpetual and reliable access to a working computer and to the internet is required at all times during the three weeks of the course. This is non-negotiable.** If you're somewhere without reliable internet service, then you are responsible for finding a place that has it before any impending deadline occurs. Given the perpetual availability of computers and wireless internet service, computer problems on your end will not be considered an acceptable excuse for missing a deadline.

**Class:** This is an online *class*. **Though there are obvious flexibility advantages in taking this course online versus onsite, it is still a Westminster College class with Westminster College-level expectations. Deadlines matter, and you are expected to meet them.** I fully understand the difficulty in taking a class that spans over the winter holidays. Therefore, I will be as flexible as I can be, but holiday activities won't factor in how you'll be assessed. Missing an exam/quiz or discussion-post deadline, unfortunately, will translate into a grade of zero regardless of reason.

**Netiquette:** Your course instructor and fellow students wish to foster a safe online learning environment. All opinions and experiences, no matter how different or controversial they may be perceived, *must be respected in the tolerant spirit of academic discourse*. You are encouraged to comment, question, or even critique an idea in your discussion posts (should you post anything). We can respectfully agree to disagree, and we can even respectfully comment on why we disagree. **But you are not to attack an individual.** Doing so will have an adverse effect on your semester grade. Our differences will add richness to this learning experience. Please consider that sarcasm and humor can be misconstrued in online interactions and generate unintended reactions. Working as a community of learners will allow us to build a polite and respectful course ambience.

**Academic Honesty:** Westminster College's Honor Code, as well as College policies regarding honesty, ethics and professionalism will be respected. All exams are to be taken without any notes, textbook, printed materials present, and through absolutely no help from any individual.

**Assignments and grading:** The course work consists of three exams, one quiz, and discussion posts and responses. The following is a tentative grading scale, which is subject to change in the event of added or deleted material:

- **Exams and Quiz:** (Exams are 50 points each; Quiz is 25 points; 175 possible): The exams will cover textbook readings and lecture (PowerPoint) material, and any handout given during a particular unit.
- **Posting on discussion boards:** (30 points possible) **Posting to discussion boards:** (Each post and two responses [five points each, **if substantive**, less if not] worth 10 for a total of 30 points possible): Reading assignments will be followed by a discussion board for that topic on each of the four units. Students will post to the professor's question, as related to the readings (text and/or handouts), a *minimum* of two substantive, well-written paragraphs. You must incorporate information from the readings and/or the posted unit PowerPoints. In addition to my evaluating your content, proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization do count in my assessment. Although more is preferred, students will then be required to respond to a minimum of one other student's original post, again, a minimum of two paragraphs each. Missing a discussion-post or response deadline will result in a zero for that section of the discussion.

\*Notes on grading: I grade on a straight percent scale:

184-205 – A	(90-100%)
178-183 – B+	(87-89.99)
168-177 – B	(82-86.99)
164-167 – B-	(80-81.99)
159-163 – C+	(77-79.99)
147-158 – C	(72-76.99)
143-146 – C-	(70-79.99)
139-142 – D+	(67-69.99)
127-138 – D	(62-66.99)
123-126 – D-	(60-61.99)
0-122 – F	(0-59.99)

- 1) The minimum point value you see per grade must be attained in order to receive that grade. Getting 163 total points earns you a C+, not a B-.
- 2) All assignment grades in this class reflect my professional assessment of your work and ability to follow directions. Standards and grades are non-negotiable. It is my responsibility to make my standards clear, and students are responsible for meeting/exceeding those standards.
- 3) Students often ask me why I deducted points in a certain portion of a discussion post. I don't deduct points. Students must earn them. An assignment is not a perfect score until proven otherwise, it is a zero until proven otherwise.

### **General Class policies:**

- 1) **Exam Schedule:** All portions of the class will be open from 12/16/15 through 1/7/16. Therefore, you can take the exams at your pace. But all exams must be completed by 10:00 p.m. on January 7, 2016. An email address for IT will be given to you should you experience technical problems during an exam or quiz. Naturally, a person is more likely to answer your call during daytime and early evening hours than at 3:00 a.m. (not to mention Christmas Eve or Christmas day). You assume that risk should you take an exam at an odd hour or day. No makeups will be given. **It is your job to take the exam in a venue in which there is flawless internet service.**
- 2) **Deadlines for discussion posts:** Be certain not to miss these as once the deadline passes, your posts will not count for any points.
- 3) **Academic Dishonesty:** This is the intentional *or* unintentional act of copying, paraphrasing, or somehow using another's work without giving credit to the work's originator on a written or oral assignment, or copying someone else's past or present exam. It is unequivocally the most personally and professionally disrespectful thing you can do with your professor. At the very minimum, the assignment or exam in question will be graded as a zero. If you are caught, your professor loses all trust in you. It might be in your best interest to withdraw from class at that point.

## Course Schedule

### Unit 1: The self and communication

- Intro to communication theory
- Self-concept and self-disclosure
- Perception

PowerPoints and Chapters 1, 2, 3

Both discussion-board posts must be made no later than noon (CST) December 19, 2015, otherwise, there is no possibility of making this up.

Exam 1

### Unit 2: Verbal and Nonverbal messages

- Semantics – Meaning is in people, not in words
- Nonverbal communication – What you do “speaks” so loudly I often don’t hear what you say

PowerPoints and Chapters 5, 6

Both discussion-board posts must be made no later than noon (CDT) December 27, 2015, otherwise, there is no possibility of making this up.

Exam 2

### Unit 3: Communication and problem-solving

- Listening – I know you believe you understand what you think I said, but I’m not sure you realize what you heard is not what I meant!
- Lessening toxic defensive communication – Build bridges, not walls
- Conflict: productive and destructive problem-solving strategies
  - 1) Interpersonal conflict - Control your *self*
  - 2) The art of confrontation with grace – Aggressiveness vs. assertiveness
  - 3) Power in conflict

PowerPoints and Chapters 7, 10, and 11

Exam 3

### Unit 4 Relationships and Termination

- Universals of relationships – So far, so good. We’ve been moving right along just like we should
- Deterioration and termination – All good things must come to an end

PowerPoints and Chapter 8

Both discussion-board posts must be made no later than noon (CDT) January 7, 2016, otherwise, there is no possibility of making this up.

Quiz

Federal Credit hour policies require that students complete a total of 45 hours of work for each academic credit they receive (time in class plus time outside of class). For a 3-credit course, that means a minimum total of 135 hours. Translated into three weeks, that means 45 hours per week.

Week	Class Time	Reading	Discussion	Assignments and Written Work	Exams	Other	Other	Other	Total Student Time
12/16-12/22	43 hrs			1 hr	1 hr				45 hrs
12/23-12/29	43 hrs			1 hr	1 hr				45 hrs
12/30-1/7	43 hrs			1 hr	1 hr				45 hrs
Totals	129 hrs			3 hrs	3 hrs				135 hrs