

**CMN 457 Summer Course**  
**Introduction to Language and Social Interaction**

This course is an introduction to the study of the conversational basis of social reality. Presents an overview of interpersonal communication processes and the ways in which they influence and construct identity, personal relationships, gender, interactional patterns, conflict, culture, and power. This course includes readings and class material from a variety of authors in the communication discipline as well as related fields in the humanities and the social sciences.

**Introduction to the Syllabus**

An accelerated summer online course is a very different sort of class from the sort you would take during the regular term. It involves pros and cons. It is fast and intensive, which means you are doing it a lot more regularly and for longer periods of time. This is good for focus and allows things to stick with you, but it also may leave little time for in-depth reflection or for certain things to “sink in.” It happens during the summer, which means you aren’t taking a lot of other classes simultaneously and have only one teacher or set of classmates to get to know. This is good because you can get involved with the class and the material, but on the other hand you have to compete with the weather, social activities, family obligations, and potentially work which may happen during the summer. It is all asynchronous and on the internet, which means you need a certain level of technological ability and access. This is good because you have a lot of control to do the course wherever you happen to be, but because it is heavily text and visual based, means you have to do a lot more reading and watching and not very much talking or interactive discussing. That final point applies to this syllabus. Without the benefit of that first half of the first day of class, usually devoted to introductions and syllabus explanations and questions/answer time, this syllabus has to pick up a lot of slack. Really, it counts as its own whole reading. Hell, it’s longer than your first official reading. It may look a little boring, but it (and the introductory first lecture) is important in setting up the expectations of the class. If you skip over these things you might find yourself quite confused and it could damage your ability to do well. So please, read carefully, and email me whatever questions you have.

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## Course Overview, Requirements, and Instructor

### Course Overview

**Course Dates:** This course begins Monday, June 24 and ends Friday, July 26. You will turn in final papers Saturday, July 27 and grades will be posted within one week after that.

**Course Content:** This course takes a social, qualitative look at interpersonal communication in everyday life. Unit 1 discusses what the focus of the course will be, how we will be looking at it, and what ways we will have of investigating it. Unit 2 looks at basic forms of communication in interpersonal interaction. Unit 3 looks at complex forms of communication and relates them to specific communication contexts and issues in society. An introduction to the ideas covered in this course can be found on pages 7-9. The specific units and what you do in each of them are covered in detail in the course schedule on pages 10-11.

### Requirements

**Book:** “Everyday Talk: Building and Reflecting Identities” by Karen Tracy (other readings will be available in PDF through the Blackboard website).

**Technology:** you must have regular access to a computer and to internet; have a decent connection through which you can view posted lectures; have at least a basic grasp of word processing programs; understand how to use audio or video recording devices; have experience working with websites and uploading/downloading content; and be able to contact UNH technology experts should you run into any technological difficulties. *You will need access to an audio or video recorder for the midterm!*

### Instructor

My name is Jessica Robles. I love thinking about, researching, teaching, and watching communication (actually doing it is sometimes more difficult). I have been teaching communication, and in particular classes like this one, offline and online since 2007. I am NOT PERFECT. I have some good qualities. I am enthusiastic about learning, will put crazy amounts of time into reading and giving feedback on major assignments (notably in your case, the midterm essay), and am always willing to talk to students about questions or ideas they have. On the other hand, I am constantly busy (this summer I am moving across the country and spending a good chunk of time traveling for conferences and to visit family and friends) and that can make me a little scatterbrained at times. If I've said something incomprehensible in a lecture, forgot to email you back, or called you Suzy when that's not your name, please don't hesitate to give me a gentle reminder to come back from outer space. I know a lot about communication academia but not so much about being a regular college student (it was a long time ago and I was/am a huge nerd). I'm pretty nice but I'm insanely demanding and have high grading standards. I've put a lot of time into this class but that doesn't mean it all came out immaculately in the end. So if something does not make sense or seems unreasonable, *tell me*. Thank you.

## Course Goals and Suggestions

### Course Goals

1. Engage in inquiry to learn a qualitative, social approach to *interpersonal communication* and *language and social interaction*.
2. Conduct and write original research to gain familiarity with how to research, study, and analyze *language and social interaction*.
3. Reflect on aspects of this class to develop insight into the connections between *ordinary conversational interaction* and social realities such as *identities, relationships, gender, conflict, culture* and *power*.

### Suggestions

1. Make a schedule and follow it. Start the class early if you need to. I've not made specific things due on weekends so that you have some flexibility around due dates or if you want to take a weekday off here and there. Make sure you do not fall behind!
2. Keep in touch. Let me know if something comes up or you are worried about your progress or if you'd like more explanation about something. Email me if you have a question or idea. Don't feel shy about skyping me or sending me a chat on gmail. The only questions I won't be able to help you with are technological ones—you should direct those to UNH IT. See page 6 for details.
3. ALWAYS have a backup plan. Computers break down. Operating systems crash. Files get lost. Save your work in more than one place (saving online is a good idea) and saving in different formats (like word, text, PDF) might help too.
4. Know what is coming in this class. It happens pretty fast so you really don't have time to figure out what is going on at the last minute. Read this whole syllabus and watch the intro video. Read all assignment descriptions (especially for the midterm and final) ahead of time so you know what to expect.
5. Be careful and thorough. Sweat the small stuff. Having bad grammar and typos in your writing, not following simple format expectations in your documents, or emailing me questions which are solely due to you not having read something carefully, will make a bad impression. Remember, this *is* a communication class, and everything you do in it will communicate something about you. Make sure what you are communicating is presenting you as the kind of student you want to be!

## Grading

There are various things you have to do to learn the content, theories, and methods discussed in this course, like reading, taking notes, watching examples, and viewing the recorded lectures. These things should feed directly into the stuff you actually turn in, and on which you are graded. You will turn something in *every weekday* (except July 4, a holiday). The following sections (1) break down what sorts of things you turn in and how much they are worth, and (2) discuss how those things are graded. Full assignment and grading descriptions are on Blackboard; this is just a summary.

### Grading Items

Type of Item	Description	How Many	How Many Points
Miscellaneous	Includes a profile of yourself, notes on the second reading, and an activity	3	5 each, 15 total
Quizzes	Multiple choice, timed quizzes administered through Blackboard	6	5 each, 30 total
Assignments	Short assignments which are either small and informal or a bit longer and more formal; most are essays or involve writing	8	5-10 points, 60 total
Projects	Involve group and peer-to-peer activities	3	5 points, 15 total
Exam	There is one exam, the quarter-term exam, at the end of the first week	1	30 points
Midterm essay	The midterm essay is due at the end of Unit 2 and is the basis of the final	1	75
Final essay	The final essay is due the Saturday after the course ends	1	100
Participation	Involves discussion posts related to the lectures and website usage	See Bb*	25 points

TOTAL POINTS IN THE COURSE: 300

\*Bb = Blackboard

### Grading and Assignment Standards Overview

**Miscellaneous:** You get a full 5 points for doing these items.

**Quizzes:** These are graded automatically by Blackboard. You will receive some feedback if you go back to the quiz after taking it. If you want more feedback or would like to discuss why a particular answer is the best one, email me.

**Assignments:** Grading standards for assignments are given at the end of the assignment descriptions in Blackboard. I tend to grade these smaller assignments more gently than longer ones. An average grade would be an 8/10 or a 4/5, with exceptional work garnering a 9/10, 10/10 or 5/5, and work which is a bit off or needs more serious improvements receiving a 7/10 or a 3/5 and lower.

**Projects:** Grading standards for projects are given at the end of their descriptions in Blackboard. You will get at least a 3/5 just for doing projects.

**Exam:** Like quizzes, this is auto-graded in Blackboard. There will be a bit more feedback than for the quizzes.

**Midterm and Final Essay:** detailed descriptions and rubrics are given in the midterm and essay guides.

**Participation:** This includes attendance and engagement. Attendance will be judged by you using the website (Bb), viewing the lectures, and responding to at least 15 separate class discussions across the term. Engagement will be judged by the quality (not necessarily the length) of your discussion posts. More details on Blackboard.

**\*Extra credit:** You can get *up to* 5 points of extra credit. This can be used to make up a missed assignment or to counteract a low grade. Extra credit must be turned in by the last day of class (July 26) in order to count. Extra credit is a 10-minute basic transcription of a video from those posted in the course gallery on Bb.

### **Basic Letter Grade Meanings**

A-, A: amazing, spectacular

B-, B, B+: good, very good, great

C, C+: good enough, or pretty good

C-: almost but not quite

D-, D, D+: various problems

F: serious problems

### **A Final Note about Grading**

I think pretty carefully about the grades assigned, particularly with high-impact, big-points assignments like the midterm and final paper. I am always willing to hear you out if you have a question or concern about a grade, think I might have made an error or missed something, or would just like more feedback. Grades are always hard because they must be judged against the finished quality of the product, regardless of the kind of person you are and sometimes regardless of how much work you put into something. Grading, like everything in life, is an interpretation: not everyone will see the same work in the same way, and not everyone will attribute the same meaning to a particular grade. My understanding of what letter grades mean is based on the UNH grading standards, the standards set by the communication department, the expectations of students in this class, and my experience with grading student papers over years.

## Policies and Deadlines

**Course policies:** late work, plagiarized work, or work which is significantly above or below page length will not be graded with *very* few exceptions. Students are expected to respect one another. Your instructor is open to any questions or concerns you have and will be reachable in some form or another throughout the semester. Your instructor is not responsible for problems which arise from last-minute or sub-par efforts, nor any other aspect of students' personal lives. You are responsible for taking care of technological problems you may encounter. Your instructor will make every effort to respond to inquiries in a timely manner. Work cannot be accepted after a deadline (extreme cases and/or very small delays in submission may be negotiated in rare situations). Work cannot be "made-up" after the fact. Your instructor is not responsible for problems you encounter due to (1) not having properly followed directions, (2) not having read thoroughly the instructions and guidelines and syllabus, nor (3) not having watched lectures or viewed course content. You must keep up on your work, monitor your grade, and contact your instructor if you have any concerns. Late final papers will absolutely not be accepted.

**Summer Term Info:** <http://www.unh.edu/summersession/courses.html>

**Student Rights, Rules & Responsibilities:** <http://www.unh.edu/student/rights/>

**Add/Drop Deadline:** June 28

For specific course deadlines, see the Course Schedule on pages 10-11.

## Technology Support

All technology-related issues and questions should be directed to any of the following:

**UNH IT Center:**

<http://it.unh.edu/index.cfm?ID=6AA7B3FD-0A40-79D8-4BCAABACAF37BAFA>

**UNH IT Service Desk:**

<http://it.unh.edu/index.cfm?ID=AF65A729-D567-BF1C-C7B097B99B4D357A>

**UNH IT Hours, Contacts and Forms:**

<https://itsupport.unh.edu/>

<p><b>Contact IT by phone at 603-862-4242</b> IT Service Desk Hours: (M-F) 7:30 AM - 5:00 PM</p>
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**UNH Media Lab:** <http://parkerlab.unh.edu/>

## Introduction to Course Content

### Goals

There are a lot of ways you can treat a college class. You can see it as just another hurdle you have to overcome. You can see it as a grade to put on your transcript. You can see it as an opportunity to make some new friends. You can see it as a chance to find out if you want to major in a particular subject. My hope is that in addition to these possibilities, you might have, or develop, a little overlap with the objectives I am aiming for us to get out of the class. So let me begin by reviewing and explicating the course goals listed previously on page 3.

1. Learn a qualitative, social approach to *interpersonal communication* and *language and social interaction*.

Interpersonal communication can be defined in a lot of different ways. Basically, it means person-to-person communication or communication between or among people. This can be face-to-face, mediated, one-on-one, group, long-term, fleeting, meaningful, trivial, peaceful, combative, relational, public, institutional, private, verbal, nonverbal...all sorts of things! And it can be studied in a lot of ways too. You can observe people, record people, interview people, do experiments on people, etc. In this class we focus on using observations and recordings of real, unscripted communication interactions between people (usually face-to-face, but not always) doing regular, everyday things. The hope is that you will learn a new way of viewing interaction, that you will see how small-scale communication can be more important than you might have thought, and that you will learn to think differently from how you ordinarily would.

2. Gain familiarity with how to research, study, and analyze *language and social interaction*.

Language and social interaction refers to both the thing being studied, but is also an area of research that studies that “thing” in a particular way. The approach is social, functional, and social constructionist, and the methodology involves observation, recording, and discourse analysis. We will learn how to do these things, and you will do some of them for your midterm and final papers. The point is to start developing practical research skills which you can build on and apply in your future college courses. Many of these skills should also apply beyond college, in any situation where you have to make arguments, write things down, or offer unique perspectives.

3. Understand the connections between *ordinary conversational interaction* and social realities such as *identities, relationships, gender, conflict, culture* and *power*.

This part of the class focuses on taking a step back and connecting the small-scale discursive practices we’ve learned about to larger issues in society and different contexts. This goal is really focused on making connections and seeing how you can practically apply what you have learned. It is wished that you will begin to be more thoughtful in interpreting others’ communication and more reflective on your own communication after having taken this class. This could be the basis of learning to improve communication in your everyday life.

### Busting a Few Myths

One thing you will have to get over is whatever you might have heard about “Communication classes” or the Communication major in the past. Communication has a reputation in the media and among the general public as a “soft” or “easy” major which teaches basic skills. At some colleges, this may be the case. But at most universities, especially ones where Communication research is active, this is—emphatically—not the case. The major is meant to be challenging and the content is meant to go far beyond basic skills. In this class in particular, the temptation to see what we learn as obvious and easy to understand will be especially strong because we are

learning about fundamental communication practices which you all do on an everyday basis. You can easily take everything we learn at face value, see it as pretty simple, and pass the class. But to get more out of it and learn something more meaningful, you will have to dig a bit deeper. Resist the urge to assume you understand something just because it seems simple or you can think of a thousand examples for it. Oftentimes that is only the first step. Think a little harder. See if you can think of alternative explanations for something you learn. Come up with counter-arguments. Challenge the concept and see what it applies to, and what it doesn't. Put it in a new context and see if it still works. Pretend you are an alien and see if the idea makes sense in the way you've explained it. As Leeds-Hurwitz points out in our second reading, communication is hard to investigate because it happens all around us—it is so “normal” that we cannot see it easily, and if we do, it is often through layers of assumptions and biases. Do your best to go further, to see how it really works, rather than just reinforcing all the stuff that, as an accomplished communicator in practice, you already know.

### **Some Ideas**

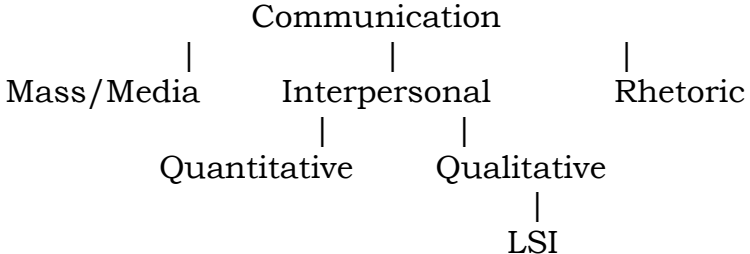
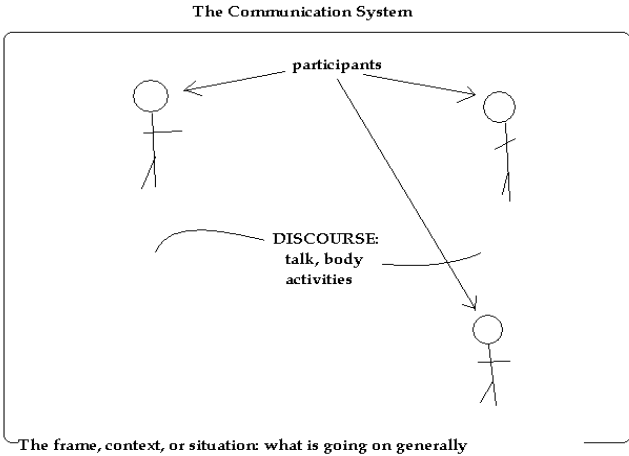
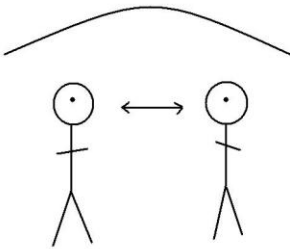
Now I want to get to some foundational distinctions which I hope will help you as you move through the course. Some of these are ideas you will see reinforced in later readings or lectures. Others are meant to make grasping the course a bit easier. Other ways you can get some background other than what is discussed in the class is by looking up websites online (here's one I made: <https://sites.google.com/site/introcomm/>), or consulting the glossary in our Blackboard website, as well as emailing me your questions.

First, as discussed in Handout 1, the word “Communication” can be applied to different things. On one hand it is a name for a vast area of research. This is represented by journals and academic societies, as well as by labels for departments and what are called disciplines or areas (or what you would most likely call “majors!”). Communication can also be a topic or subject, something which is studied by people in all sorts of research areas—not just people in official communication departments, but people in psychology, sociology, linguists, etc. Communication can also be a way of seeing the world. This point is probably the hardest to grasp because in everyday life we are used to seeing communication as a thing we look *at* rather than a perspective we look *through*. Finally, communication is something we all do, all the time, sometimes quite well and other times not so successfully.

In this class we are doing “Communication” in all of these ways. It's a “Communication” class in a “Communication” department, so it comes from a particular history of research and involves particular vocabularies, methods, and theories. We will study communication too, as a phenomenon: we will watch, record, listen, write, read, and think about how we and other people communicate on an everyday basis. We will also try to take a communication perspective and see everyday interaction in a slightly different way from how a psychologist or sociologist would look at the same thing. And lastly, this class involves all sorts of communication, from the emails you send and the posts you do, to the papers you write and the recordings you make.

On the next page I break down these distinctions in more detail.



Communication is...	Description	Diagram
Research	This class covers only one small slice of communication research: qualitative, socially-oriented interpersonal communication. More specifically, we focus on language and social interaction (LSI) within interpersonal communication.	 <pre> graph TD     Comm[Communication] --&gt; MM[Mass/Media]     Comm --&gt; Inter[Interpersonal]     Comm --&gt; Rhet[Rhetoric]     Inter --&gt; Quant[Quantitative]     Inter --&gt; Qual[Qualitative]     Qual --&gt; LSI[LSI] </pre>
Topic	Language and social interaction involves, perhaps obviously, (1) language—how people speak and what they say to each other; (2) society—social groups, situations, and issues; and (3) interaction—the back-and-forth which happens every day in real life.	
Perspective	In this class the communication perspective we take is to focus on the communication itself and what it accomplishes. We will look at meaning as constructed between interacting people through communication practices.	 <p data-bbox="1682 889 1969 1187">In this class we focus on meaning which is created (the arrows) not objective (that swoosh thing) nor mental (the brain dots).</p>
Activity	In this class we will be doing a lot of communicating <i>about</i> communication. As you will learn in the second reading, this is considered “metacommunication.”	<p data-bbox="1262 1208 1986 1279"><u>Communication</u>: what happens in a recording of people interacting.</p> <p data-bbox="1262 1279 1986 1385"><u>Metacommunication</u>: what happens when you write a paper about the communication in a recording.</p>

## CMN 457 Summer Course Schedule

This schedule outlines each day of our summer class and what you are expected to do. There are five weeks in the class, and material will be presented (as well as homework expected) every week day. The chart below specifies the week, the day of the unit and date of that week, the topic covered, your reading assignment, the name of the lecture you will watch, and what assignments you will turn in. Everything is posted so you are able to do things ahead of time if you want, but you must not fall behind. Each day of class represents two to three days of class in the regular semester, so plan accordingly. You might even want to put this schedule in a highly visible place where you will see it regularly. If you have any questions or concerns email me at [Jessica.s.robles@gmail.com](mailto:Jessica.s.robles@gmail.com). My office hours are 3-6pm weekdays. Please direct technology questions to Blackboard or IT at UNH. *There are three units in the course. The first introduces you to the focus, perspective, and methods used in the course. The second covers foundational material on basic discursive practices in everyday communication. The third covers complex discursive practices alongside research case studies. Each unit ends with an assessment (exam or essay).*

<u>Week</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Read</u>	<u>Watch</u>	<u>Turn in</u>
<i>Unit 1</i>					
<b>Interpersonal Communication/Language and Social Interaction</b>					
<b>Week 1</b>	1: Mon. June 24	Interpersonal Communication	Handout 1	Interpersonal Communication	Profile
	2: Tue. June 25	Social Approaches to Comm.	Leeds-Hurwitz, 1989	Social Approaches	Notes
	3: Wed. June 26	Language and Social Interaction Discourse Analysis	Handout 2	LSI & Discourse Analysis	Quiz 1
	4: Thu. June 27	Quarter-Term Exam	Exam Study Guide	Exam Review	Project 1
	5: Fri. June 28	<b>Quarter-term Exam Due</b> by 11:59pm			
<i>Unit 2</i>					
<b>Everyday Talk: Foundations</b>					
<b>Week 2</b>	1: Mon. July 1	Everyday Talk: Foundations	Chapter 1	Everyday Talk Foundations	Assignment 1
	2: Tue. July 2	Perspectives on Talk and Identity	Chapter 2	Perspectives on Talk and Identity	Activity 1
	3: Wed. July 3	Person-Referencing Practices	Chapter 3	Person-Referencing	Quiz 2
	4: Fri. July 5	Speech Acts	Chapter 4	Speech Acts	Assignment 2
<b>Week 3</b>	1: Mon. July 8	Sound of Talk	Chapter 5	Sounds of Talk	Assignment 3
	2: Tue. July 9	Language Selection	Chapter 6	Language Selection	Quiz 3
	3: Wed. July 10	Midterm Essay	Midterm Essay Guide	Midterm Guide	Assignment 4
	4: Fri. July 12	<b>Midterm Essay Due</b> by 11:59pm			

*Unit 3*  
**Everyday Talk: Developments**

<b>Week 4</b>	1: Mon. July 15	Interaction Structures	Chapter 7	Interaction Structures	Quiz 4
	2: Tue. July 16	Mediated Communication	Stokoe, 2008	Mediated Communication	Assignment 5
	3: Wed. July 17	Directness Style Gender, Friendship and Work	Chapter 8 Cameron, 2006	Directness Style Gender, Friendship and Work	Assignment 6
	4: Thu. July 18	Narrative	Chapter 9	Narrative	Quiz 5
	5: Fri. July 19	Stance	Chapter 10	Stance	Quiz 6
<b>Week 5</b>	1: Mon. July 22	Race and Power	van Dijk, 1992	Race and Power	Project 2
	2: Tue. July 23	Interethnic Conflict Final Thoughts	Bailey, 2001 Chapter 11	Interethnic Conflict Final Thoughts	Assignment 7
	3: Wed. July 24	Data Sessions	DA Guide	none	Project 3
	4: Thu. July 25	Final Essay: Requirements Drafting	Final Essay Guide	Final Essay	Assignment 8
	5: Fri. July 26	Final Essay: Writing, Revising	APA and Writing Guide	none	Draft Upload
	6: Sat. July 27	<b><i>Final Essay Due</i></b> by noon			

Average daily reading: 20-40 pages

Average daily lecture viewing time: 15 minutes to one hour (not including videos, examples and online discussions)

Average weekly writing: 8-10 pages (not including reading notes or midterm/final essays)

*\*\*plan to spend on average 5-6 hours per weekday on this class\*\**

You may not need it all, but plan it anyway!