A Note from the Instructor:

Healthy relationships are one of the cornerstones of a happy life, and the foundation of such relationships is built on clear, effective, and compassionate communication. The good news is that competent communication skills can be learned. By identifying what we are perceiving, feeling, and wanting, we can express ourselves with honesty and clarity, while simultaneously respecting others’ needs and feelings.

This course will focus on interpersonal communication in several contexts and interchanges, including those with family, friends and co-workers, and internal dialogues we might have with ourselves. We will address listening skills, non-verbal communication, how to acknowledge and respect gender differences in communication, and how to express our feelings in a way that does not imply judgment, criticism, or blame/punishment. We will also explore various approaches to resolving conflict and dealing with power challenges through self-assertion.

Course Activities:

There will be on-going in-class participation exercises and activities, such as role-playing and interviews, and we will view several videos/DVDs, and we will have a guest speaker. By the end of the course you will have a greater range of responses in situations involving conflict, you will understand various ways of listening, and you will know how to achieve greater happiness and contentment in your current relationships through a greater repertoire of communication skills.

Assignments

Readings

For this course I was mindful in choosing readings that I think are interesting, relevant and useful, including very new, forward-looking articles and book excerpts. Recent research on happiness, gratitude, and success shows there is a direct link between interpersonal effectiveness and life satisfaction.

Two Options for Self-Reflection Paper

There will be one 3 to 5 page paper, due during the 8th week of class. In this paper you will address either your personal communication skills, or a current conflict in your life. Details will be handed out during the second class period.

One Class Presentation
At the end of the quarter, you will share with the class two concepts that you found particularly relevant and useful. I will provide you with basic information on how to present information in a cogent and coherent manner. Your presentation will be two to three minutes.

**Class Policies**

1) You must attend 8 of the 10 classes and complete all of the assignments in order to receive credit for the course.

2) During class, please turn off all beepers, pagers, and cell phones, and please completely refrain from using your laptop and/or text-messaging – I know this can be challenging, but please consider it a courtesy to me and to those around you.

3) Please do your best to be on time for each class.

**COURSE CALENDAR**

(You should have the following reading/homework assignments completed by the date listed.

**Note:** Due dates, assignments, and topics may change during the quarter).

**Week One**

*Intro class and selves;* Listening lecture and exercises; Grice’s Maxims

**Read:** The Art of Listening; Characteristics of Effective Listening

**Week Two**

*Listening, Asking Questions, Perception, Content and Relational Messages*

**Read:** Asking Questions; Perception chapter, Searle’s Speech Act Theory, CMM Theory

Handout; Digital Devices article

**Week Three**

*Friends, Family, Culture*

**Read:** Advice for HS Graduates; Richard Powers; What Are Friends For?; Go Deep re: Conversations; Sherry Turkle excerpt

TED Talk: Chimamande Adichie – *The Danger of a Single Story*

**Week Four**

*Gender and Communication*

**Read:** A Fabulous Child X; Women and Masculine Traits; Attribution Theory

In class - Deborah Tannen video

**Week Five**

*Judgment and Praise, Attribution Theory cont.*

**Read:** Read: Judgment article; Two Praise articles; Attribution Theory Info – cont.

Youtube: “A Class Divided” - Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes video

TED Talk: Brene Brown – *The Power of Vulnerability*

In class - Label activity

**Week Six**

*Conflict and Power*
Read: Managing Conflict in Relationships; Solitude and Leadership; Power Paradox; Getting to Yes
TED Talk: William Ury – The Third Side
In class - Balance video; Status exercises

**Week Seven**
*Emotions and Communication, Social Scripts, Giving Comforting Messages*
Read: Emotions; Non-Verbal Communication; The Power of Introverts; The Language of Grief
Video: Brene Brown #2

**Week Eight**
*Self-Assertion, Apologies, Forgiveness*
Read: Bower Assertiveness article; Two Apology articles; Nine Steps to Forgiveness
Video: Forgiveness
SELF-REFLECTION PAPER DUE

**Week Nine**
Guest Speaker
Read: The Five Languages of Love

**Week Ten**
Individual Presentations
Course Wrap-Up

Please note: most readings are between 2 and 5 pages. Additional readings may be handed out as pertinent articles are published during the quarter. These articles will usually be one to three pages long.

Full reference list provided to those enrolled in the course.