COMM C1004: INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Proposer:

Name:	Email:
Daniel Alvarado	danielal@cos.edu

Effective Term:
Fall 2026

Does this course use a CA Common Course Number
Yes

Credit Status:
Credit - Degree Applicable

Subject:
COMM - Communication

Course Number:
C1004

CA Common Course Number
C1004

Discipline:

And/Or	(	Discipline	)
		Communication Studies	

Catalog Title
Interpersonal Communication

COS Course Description
This course covers theory, research, and application of ethical one-to-one communication practices in various and diverse interpersonal relationships including in personal, professional, and social situations. COS Course Description: This course covers theory, research, and application of ethical one-to-one communication practices in various and diverse interpersonal relationships including in personal, professional, and social situations. COS Course Description: Interpersonal Communication introduces students to the social-scientific study of human interaction, emphasizing empirical research methods, theoretical perspectives, and cultural analysis of relational behavior. Students investigate how identity, perception, language, emotion, and power operate within interpersonal contexts such as family, friendship, romantic, and professional relationships. Coursework integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches, critical evaluation of peer-reviewed research, and applied analysis to explain and predict patterns of interpersonal communication in a diverse and interconnected society.

Advisory on Recommended Preparation:
ENGL C1000 or equivalent college course with a minimum grade of C

Method of Instruction:
Distance Education
Lecture and/or Discussion

Course Units/Hours:

Course Units Minimum:
3

Lecture Hours Minimum (week)
3

Total Contact Hours Minimum (semester)
52.5

Total Outside Hours Minimum (semester)
105

Total Student Learning Minimum Hours (semester)
157.5

Repeatability:
No

Open Entry/Exit:
No

Field Trips:
Not Required

Grade Mode:
Standard Letter

TOP Code:
150600 - Speech Communication

SAM Code:
E - Non-Occupational

Course Content

Common Method of Evaluation:
Examples of potential methods of evaluation used to observe or measure students' achievement of course outcomes and objectives could include but are not limited to quizzes, exams, written assignments, journals, projects, research, oral presentations, etc.
Methods of evaluation are at the discretion of local faculty.

COS Methods of Evaluation:
Essay quizzes or exams
Mulitple choice tests
Oral presentations
Project
Short answer quizzes or exams
Written essays or extended papers

Common Course Topics:

	Course Topics
1	Foundational theories, models, and research in interpersonal communication.
2	Influences on identity development, and the impact of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, orientation, etc. on interpersonal communication.
3	The role of perception in interpersonal communication; including theories such as Attribution Theory and Uncertainty Reduction Theory.
4	Symbolic and linguistic attributes with respect to language in interpersonal communication.
5	The role of emotions in communicating effectively; may include physiological, cognitive, and neurological theories.
6	Nonverbal communication; may include principles and theories such as Expectancy Violation Theory.
7	Listening; processes, styles, types, challenges, and responses.
8	Interpersonal climate (social tone of relationships) such as confirming/disconfirming messages, self-disclosure, and relational trust.
9	Ethics in interpersonal communication; may include concepts such as navigating power, influence, bias, stereotyping, bullying, and the dark side of communication.
10	Interpersonal conflict theories; may include Face-Negotiation Theory and Accommodation Theory.

11	Development, maintenance, and dissolution of various types of relationships; may include Social Penetration Theory, Attachment Theory, and Knapp's Relational Model.

COS Course Topics:

	COS Course Topics
1	Social-Scientific Foundations of Interpersonal Communication, including the systematic study of interpersonal behavior; an overview of communication as a social science; quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches; and evaluation of empirical research findings.
2	Identity, Perception, and Culture including social construction of identity and perception; influence of culture, gender, race, and social roles; theoretical and empirical studies (Attribution Theory, Uncertainty Reduction Theory, Symbolic Interaction).
3	Language, Meaning, and Message Systems, including language as symbolic action, power, discourse, and cultural norms, verbal and nonverbal codes, linguistic relativity, and expectancy-violation and accommodation theories.
4	Theories of Relationship Development and Maintenance, including Social Penetration, Social Exchange, Relational Dialectics, Attachment Theory, Knapp's Stages; cross-cultural and empirical perspectives.
5	Emotion, Cognition, and Regulation, including research on emotional expression, management, and contagion; the connection between emotion, cognition, and social behavior.
6	Research Applications and Critical Analysis, including interpreting data, evaluating peer-reviewed studies, and applying theory to analyze communication in family, friendship, and workplace contexts. a. Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research b. Hypothesis Testing c. Independent and Dependent Variables d. Reliability and Validity
7	Social Systems and Power in Interpersonal Contexts — analysis of institutional, cultural, and technological influences; ethics, equity, and social change in communication.

Common Course Objectives:

	Course Objectives
1	Evaluate and apply research methods and theories of interpersonal communication.
2	Analyze the ways that communication can create, develop and shape perceptions of personal and social identities including variables such as but not limited to culture, gender, ethnicity, race, age, and orientation.
3	Evaluate the influences of culture, gender, ethnicity, race, age, accessibility, and orientation on the development, maintenance, and dissolution of interpersonal relationships.
4	Critically assess and utilize ethical communication practices within interpersonal relationships as part of interpersonal communication competency.
5	Critically assess sources of conflict in interpersonal relationships and implement appropriate conflict management strategies.

COS Course Objectives:

	COS Course Objectives
1	Analyze interpersonal communication through a social-scientific lens, identifying how theories and systematic research methods (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods) are used to study human interaction.
2	Evaluate and apply empirical findings and theoretical models to explain communication patterns, relational conflict, and behavioral outcomes within social and cultural systems.
3	Assess ethical, cultural, and power dimensions of interpersonal communication using evidence-based frameworks.
4	Examine how variables such as identity, culture, gender, and socioeconomic context influence interpersonal behavior and social outcomes.
5	Analyze empirical research on emotion, perception, and listening as behavioral aspects of human communication by evaluating interpersonal data, case studies, or peer-reviewed research. Combine theoretical and methodological knowledge to develop strategies for enhancing relational communication in various settings.

Course Outcomes:

	Course Outcomes
1	Develop an understanding of interpersonal communication theories and their application in various real-life settings and relationships.
2	Identify and apply effective communication strategies within the context of various relationships, grounded in communication theory and research.
3	Describe how verbal and nonverbal communication creates, develops, and influences perception and personal identities through culture, gender, age, ethnicity, race, group membership and more.
4	Demonstrate an understanding of effective listening techniques, ethical interpersonal communication, relational sensitivity, and appreciation of social diversity.
5	Analyze conflict in interpersonal relationships and demonstrate appropriate conflict management strategies within diverse social and cultural contexts.

Assignments:

Assignment Type:	Details
Reading	Possible reading assignments include: 1. Textbook Readings: Students are assigned relevant readings from the course-assigned textbook each week. 2. Current Topics in Interpersonal Communication: Students will be required to engage with current interpersonal research (e.g. peer reviewed journal articles) and then report their findings during in-class discussion.
Writing	Possible writing assignments include: 1. Theory Application and Research Analysis Paper: Students will identify and describe an interpersonal communication theory of their choice (e.g., Social Penetration Theory, Relational Dialectics, or Face-Negotiation Theory) and apply that theory to analyze a real interpersonal situation involving a friend, family member, or romantic partner. The paper must integrate at least two peer-reviewed research studies that examine or test the selected theory, with appropriate APA citation and analysis of research design, data, or findings. Students will compare theoretical concepts with observed interpersonal behaviors, demonstrating their understanding of how social-scientific inquiry explains and predicts relational communication. Minimum 2,000 words (approximately 6–8 pages).
Other	Possible assignments may include: 1. Johari Window Presentation: After reading and learning about the Johari Window (a tool that helps people understand themselves and others), students will create a visual representation (digital rendering, painting, physical item, etc.) of the 4 areas of their Johari Window: Open area, Blind area, Hidden area, and Unknown area. Once complete, students will present a 2-3 minute speech sharing their "window" with the class. 2. Interpersonal Theory Group Presentation: In groups of 2-4, students will select an interpersonal communication theory of their choice, research the selected theory, and then develop an informative presentation that includes credible, academic research. Groups will provide their findings to the class in a 10-15 minute presentation.

Representative Texts, Manuals, and/or OER that is equivalent, Other Support Materials:

Common Textbooks or other support materials

Resource Type	Details
Web/Other	Texts and course materials will be in accessible format. Priority will be given to OER or low-cost materials where possible. Examples of texts include, but are not limited to:
Zero Textbook Cost	Department of Communication Studies, Austin Community College. (2021). Communication to Connect: Interpersonal Communication for Today. OER: Department of Communication Studies, Austin Community College.
Zero Textbook Cost	Leonard. (2019). Interpersonal Communication Textbook. OER: College of the Canyons.
Books	Adler, R., & Proctor II, R. (2022). Looking Out, Looking In. 16th ed.: Wadsworth Publishing.
Books	Wood, J. (2020). Interpersonal Communication: Everyday Encounters. 9th ed.: Wadsworth Publishing.

Books	Guerrero, Anderson & Afifi. (2020). Close Encounters: Communication in Relationships. 6th ed.: Sage Publications, Inc.
Zero Textbook Cost	Wrench, Punyanunt-Carter, & Thweatt. (2023). Interpersonal Communication: A Mindful Approach to Relationships. OER: State University of New York.
Books	Adler, R., & Proctor II, R. (2023). Interplay: The Process of Interpersonal Communication. 16th ed.: Oxford University Press.

Texts used by individual institutions and even individual sections will vary. The list of representative texts must include at least one text with a publication date within five (5) years of the course outline approval date.

COS Textbooks or other support materials

Resource Type:	Details
Books	Possible texts include: 1. Looking Out, Looking In. Adler R. & Proctor R. Cengage Learning. 16th ed. 2022. 2. The Interpersonal Communication Playbook. Gamble & Gamble. SAGE Publications, Inc. 2nd ed. 2022.
Zero Textbook Cost	Possible texts to include: 1. Interpersonal Communication: A Mindful Approach to Relationships. Wrench, Punyanunt-Carter, & Thweatt. LibreTexts. 2022. 2. Interpersonal Communication: Context and Connection. Multiple Authors. LibreTexts. 2024.
Low Textbook Cost	Possible texts to include: 1. Stratums: The Many Layers of Interpersonal Communication. Johnson, C. NSSpress 2nd ed. 2018.

Transferable to CSU

Yes - Approved

This course will also be proposed for UC transfer.

Yes

Transferable to UC

Yes - Approved

Cal-GETC General Education

Transferable to UC

COS General Education

COS GE Area 1B: Oral Communication & Critical Thinking
COS GE Area 4: Social & Behavioral Sciences
COS GE A2: Oral Communication/Analytic Thinking

Other Degree Attributes

Degree Applicable
Not a Basic Skills Course

Distance Learning Addendum

COMM 4 DLA upd Oct 2024.pdf

Additional Attachment

ccn-course-template-comm-c1004-interpersonal-communication-a11y.pdf

Banner Title:

Interpersonal Communication

Curriculum Committee Approval Date:

02/04/2026

Academic Senate Approval Date:
02/11/2026

District Governing Board Approval Date:
03/09/2026

Course Control Number:
CCC000451972

C-ID:
COMM130

Equity Review

Select elements of the COR that were reviewed for equity. Must select at least one:

Assignments
Other
Textbooks / Other Support Materials