

## CO 32001--Family Communication

Instructor: Marilyn J. Matelski  
E-mail: [matelski@bc.edu](mailto:matelski@bc.edu)

Office: 21 Campanella Way, Rm. 542  
Phone: 617.552.4988  
Fax: 617.552.2286

“Family Communication” is a predominantly on-line course, utilizing both technology and classroom attendance to best present topic issues. Students will meet with the instructor three times during the summer session—one night each week. The other weeks will be devoted to shared journal entries, research and writing projects.

### Purpose of the Course

This course focuses on “the family” as a framework for communication analysis, and includes theory-based discussions such as roles and relationships, conflict, commitment, aging, and extended relations. More specifically, students in this class will:

- \*Expand their understanding of family dynamics within a social system, including both verbal and nonverbal communication
- \*Explore their personal family histories and backgrounds through the lens of systems theory
- \*Compare notions of the “typical American family” versus “family” in other macro-cultures and micro-cultures
- \*Discuss family communication through life stages, as well as specific circumstances (such as families during wartime, families dealing with chronic illness, biracial relationships, mixed marriages, etc.)

### ATTENDANCE

Since this is a web-based, distance learning experience, attendance is measured by e-mail correspondence and assignments, usually occurring three days each week. **You will also be expected to attend three (3) classroom sessions are scheduled on Monday, June 29, Tuesday, July 7 and Tuesday, July 14.** Classroom attendance and journal entries, together, will serve as your “participation” grade. **MISSING ONE OF THE CLASSROOM SESSIONS WILL AUTOMATICALLY RESULT IN A ONE-GRADE REDUCTION; TWO CLASSROOM ABSENCES WILL AUTOMATICALLY FAIL YOU IN THIS COURSE. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Assignments via Internet will include 1) family communication awareness video/discussions; 2) comments on readings (attached to daily e-mails); and 3) e-journal entries, which will be submitted each day. You will also be given one major paper assignment: a family interview project.

In-class time will be spent discussing family-related case studies as well as your family research project.

TEXTBOOK

Galvin, Kathleen, Carma L. Byland and Bernard J. Brommel. *Family Communication: Cohesion and Change, 7<sup>th</sup> edition*. Boston, MA: Pearson Allyn & Bacon, 2007.

ASSIGNMENTS/GRADING

1) Electronic Journal (15-20 pages) 40%

Using both textbook readings as well as other sources, these entries will address aspect of communication within a “family” context. These topics will be assigned three times each week through e-mail correspondence, and should be due within 24 hours of the assignment. For example, if the entry is assigned on Monday, June 29, you must send your 2-3 page (double-spaced) entry by Tuesday, June 30.

Each entry should include: 1) several “key terms” from the chapter; and 2) application of these “key terms.” Each entry should be 2-3 pages (double-spaced).

It would be nice for you to include everyone in the listserv, so we can all share the journal entries...but if you'd rather not, please send them to me alone

2) Life Story Project 30%

You will be asked to interview at least one person from your family who is from a different generation than you. You will then compare and contrast their answers with yours, based on age, gender, family role, etc. This paper (8-10 pages in length) **MUST BE RECEIVED BY E-MAIL NO LATER THAN THURSDAY, JULY 16<sup>th</sup>**, and is worth 30% of your grade.

3) Participation in classroom activities 30%

COURSE SCHEDULE

- \*\*June 29**                    **CLASSROOM ATTENDANCE REQUIRED**  
**Introduction to the Course**  
**Video: MEANING OF FOOD—FAMILY AND FOOD**  
**Electronic Journal Assignment (EJA 1)—Cultural Identity and Food**  
**Readings: Ch. 1**
- June 30                    (EJA 2)—Family Context and Culture  
 Readings: Ch. 2; [http://www.humanities-interactive.org/texas/lonestar/german\\_texas\\_families.htm](http://www.humanities-interactive.org/texas/lonestar/german_texas_families.htm)
- July 1                    (EJA 3)—The Family as a System  
 Readings: Ch 3; [http://www.crvp.org/book/Series04/IVA-2/chapter\\_iii.htm](http://www.crvp.org/book/Series04/IVA-2/chapter_iii.htm)
- July 2                    (EJA 4)— Family Holidays/(EJA 5)—Families and Health Care  
 Readings: Ch. 5; Ch. 10-12;  
[http://www.gio.gov.tw/info/festival\\_c/spring\\_e/spring.htm](http://www.gio.gov.tw/info/festival_c/spring_e/spring.htm);  
<http://www.uib.no/isf/people/doc/hovedfag/nursing/annems.htm>;  
<http://www.info-france-usa.org/atoz/health.asp>
- July 6                    NO CLASS—RECOGNITION OF JULY 4<sup>TH</sup> HOLIDAY
- \*\*July 7**                    **CLASSROOM ATTENDANCE REQUIRED**  
**Lecture: Balance Theory/Congruity Theory**  
**Video/Discussion: SICKO**
- July 8                    (EJA 6)—Family Extensions (in-laws, out-laws and steps)  
 Readings: Ch. 6; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/uk/573446.stm>;  
[http://www.motherinlawstories.com/terri\\_apter\\_interview.htm](http://www.motherinlawstories.com/terri_apter_interview.htm)
- July 9                    (EJA 7)—Families and Conflict  
 Readings: Ch. 8, 9; <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/1999/issue2/jv3n2a1.html>
- July 13                    (EJA 8)—Families of Mixed Race/Ethnicity  
 Readings: Ch. 7;  
[http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/lifestyle/134536\\_interracial12.html](http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/lifestyle/134536_interracial12.html)
- \*\*July 14**                    **CLASSROOM ATTENDANCE REQUIRED**  
**Lecture: Cognitive Dissonance**  
**Video/Discussion: TWELVE ANGRY MEN**
- July 15                    Work on Life Story Project
- \*\*JULY 16**                    **LIFE STORY PROJECT DUE (via e-mail)**