

**UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Foundations of Effective Communication Skills in Interdisciplinary Settings

Course Number: SW360K / SW395K
Unique Number: 60805 / 61175
Semester: Spring 2016
Meeting Time: W 5:30-8:30pm
Meeting Place: Room SSW 2.130

Instructor: Dr. Angela M. Nonaka
Office Hrs: T-TH 11am-12pm; W 4:30-5:30pm
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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Combining knowledge, theory and practice, this course lays the foundation for students to develop greater knowledge of and practical skills in effective communication in educational, medical, and legal settings. The centerpiece of our rich communicative repertoire, language is inextricably linked to individual development and human psychology as well as to the facilitation of interpersonal interactions and the accomplishment of social life.

Resonant with bio-psycho-social-spiritual and human development approaches as well as critical theories in social work, this course will address the biological bases of language and its relationship to human development; common communicative disorders and disabilities; linguistic and cultural diversity and their implications for social work practice; cross-cultural communication and miscommunication; effective communication across modalities; and identification and application of effective communication skills for purposes of professional accountability.

As students learn to anticipate and avoid or to navigate and repair communicative misunderstandings, they can provide more appropriate services and effective advocacy. Emerging social work professionals must be equipped with an in-depth understanding of human communication and an ability to critically analyze those interactions for multiple purposes. Students will develop awareness of the multicultural backgrounds of their clients and co-workers and will develop effective intercultural communication skills.

Throughout this course considerable attention is devoted to applying students' newly acquired knowledge in order to develop and practice better communication. Therefore, students will gain hands on experience with the following method(ologie)s, with special attention devoted to understanding their professional utility: conversation/discourse analyses and their applications for social work practice; qualitative ethnographic observation of talk and interaction and its application for conducting site visits; techniques of micro-analytic transcription; and identification, utilization, and evaluation of neutral and non-neutral language in terms of confidentiality, documentation, report writing, and professional/public presentations.

Objectives

Upon completion of this course students will demonstrate:

1. Critically informed understanding of language as the foundation of human communication
2. Familiarity with issues involving communication disorders and (dis)abilities
3. Knowledge of cross-linguistic and inter-cultural (mis)communication and their implications for social work practice in educational, medical, and legal settings
4. Conversational analysis of interpersonal and cross-cultural communication
5. Improved spoken and written communication skills, with special attention given to professional writing and documentation

II. TEACHING METHODS

This class is small by design and is meant to encourage the development of intellectual community. Students are drawn from diverse academic backgrounds (Social Work and other colleges/schools at UT) and from different experience levels (graduate, undergraduate, pre-majors, undeclared). For this reason, the first order of business is to lay a common knowledge base; therefore, for the first part of the semester, students must memorize, learn, and master new terms, concepts, and theories, which will be applied later in the term.

This course incorporates a variety of instructional activities, learning assignments, and grading techniques, such as: readings, lectures, films, guest speakers, objective tests, written assignments, oral presentations, individual work, group work, and various types of hands-on experience; in-class and out-of-class assignments; written reports and oral presentations; individual and group work; objective (e.g. multiple choice, T/F) tests; and so on. The course is purposefully designed to enrich the educational experiences and maximize the learning outcomes of the most number of students and also to hone important social scientific/academic skills (e.g., scientific observation and research techniques, data analysis, critical thinking, information literacy, writing skills, public speaking, etc.) that will serve them well at university and in the world at large.

III. TEXTS AND MATERIALS

The required book for this course is available at the University Co-op's main location (the Guadalupe store). It also can be ordered online.

1. Ting-Toomey, S. & Chung, L.C. 2005. *Understanding Intercultural Communication*. Oxford University Press.
- Additional learning resources, both required and recommended, for this course include the following:
1. Required = additional readings posted on Canvas
 2. Required = miscellaneous films shown in class and available either online or at the Fine Arts Library.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

****The instructor reserves the right to adjust readings and assignments for educational purposes.****
If changes to the syllabus are made, the instructor will be reasonable, and students will be alerted in advance.
Flexibility in social work practice and in life is crucial, so we may need to practice it together in this class.

A. Attendance and Participation (10% of total grade)

Assessment based on:

- Prompt daily class attendance
- Active and prepared participation (completion of readings and assignments correctly, fully, and promptly)

B. Weekly Homework Assignments (30% of total grade)

Assessment based on:

- Applied Exercises Observing, Analyzing, Describing, and Documenting Communication
- Quizzes (in-class, take-home, and/or online)
- Other written and/or oral assignments

C. Midterm Exam (25% total grade)

Assessment based on:

- Midterm comprehensive objective test (T/F, multiple choice, short answer, analytical applied problems)

D. Oral Presentation (15% total grade)

- Individual 10~15 minute oral presentations that apply what you've learned vis-à-vis inter-professional communications and your field

E. Captioning and Transcription Final Project (20% total grade)

Assessment based on:

- Learning about captioning and transcription: theories and practices
- Hands-on practice captioning and transcribing
- Correct use of established captioning and transcription conventions
- Successful completion of captioning and transcription of assigned material (TBA)

V. EVALUATION AND GRADING

Electronic Canvas (the new course 'Blackboard')

1. <http://canvas.utexas.edu/>
2. Canvas works on all major browsers, see <https://guides.instr...h-browsers-does-canvas-support>

Receiving, Viewing and Submitting Assignments

This is a multi-lingual and multi-modal pedagogical environment, so there are different types of assignments that must be submitted in different ways: written hard copies, electronic and video submissions on Canvas, etc. For details, see the Calendar of Course Assignments and Activities, which is subject to amendment as per the pedagogical needs of the class.

Final Assignment of Grades

Final grades will be calculated on a 100-point scale with the following breakdown:

94.0 and Above	A
90.0 to 93.999	A-
87.0 to 89.999	B+
84.0 to 86.999	B
80.0 to 83.999	B-
77.0 to 79.999	C+
74.0 to 76.999	C
70.0 to 73.999	C-
67.0 to 69.999	D+
64.0 to 66.999	D
60.0 to 63.999	D-
Below 60.0	F

Incompletes

Except in extreme circumstances and with proper documentation, no incompletes will be given.

Q Drop Policy

The State of Texas has enacted a law that limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six (6).

Official Written (medical or legal) Excuses

If you are unable to complete any course requirement due to a medical or other genuine emergency, please contact me as soon as possible to inform me of the situation, and consistent with university policy, please be prepared to provide an official written excuse (e.g. from a doctor, police department, etc.).

Feedback

Students will be asked to provide feedback on their learning and the professor's teaching strategies in informal as well as formal ways. It is very important for the professor to know the students' reactions to what is taking place in class, ensuring that together the professor and students can create a dynamic and effective learning community. Students are encouraged to provide ongoing feedback to the instructor during class and office visits.

VI. OFFICIAL INFORMATION, POLICIES, AND REQUIREMENTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HONOR CODE. The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND CIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM. The professor expects students to act as professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as ethnicity, gender, sex, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, national origins, and sexual orientations, among others. We expect to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect. Social Work also deals with complex and controversial issues. These issues may be challenging and uncomfortable, and it would be impossible to offer a substantive classroom experience that did not include potentially difficult conversations relating to challenging issues. In this environment we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. Nevertheless, the professor requires that students engage one another with civility, respect, and professionalism.

POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION. Public social networks are not private. Even when open only to approved or invited members, users cannot be certain that privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. If social work students choose to participate in such forums, please assume that anything posted can be seen, read, and critiqued. What is said, posted, linked to, commented on, uploaded, subscribed to, etc., can be accessed and archived, posing potential harm to professional reputations and prospective careers.

Social work students who use social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and other forms of electronic communication (i.e. blogs, etc.) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Social work students are expected to make every effort to minimize material which could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. Because of this, social work students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image.

Students are asked to consider the amount of personal information posted on these sites and are obliged to block any client access to involvement in the students' social networks. Client material should not be referred to in any form of electronic media, including *any* information that might lead to the identification of a client or compromise client confidentiality in *any* way. Additionally, students must critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding community agencies and professional relationships, as certain material could violate the standards set by the School of Social Work, the Texas Code of Conduct for Social Workers, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.

Social work students should consider that they will be representing professional social work practice as well as The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work program while in the classroom, the university community, and the broader area communities.

DOCUMENTED DISABILITY STATEMENT. Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471- 6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). A student should present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed and followed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/how-to-register-with-ssd/>.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS. By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, examination, work assignment, or project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

TITLE IX REPORTING. In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the University of Texas at Austin is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from discriminatory conduct based on gender. Students who report incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or sexual misconduct to faculty, instructors, and/or staff who supervise students, will be provided a list of University resources. If the incident is impacting the academic environment, a report will be provided to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may be found at <http://socialwork.utexas.edu/dl/files/academic-programs/other/qrg-sexualharassment.pdf>.

CLASSROOM CONFIDENTIALITY. Information shared in class about agencies, clients, and personal matters is considered confidential per the NASW Code of Ethics on educational supervision and is protected by regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as well. As such, sharing this information with individuals outside of the educational context is not permitted. Violations of confidentiality could result in actions taken according to the policies and procedure for review of academic performance located in sections 3.0, 3.1, and 3.2 of the Standards for Social Work Education.

USE OF E-MAIL FOR OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO STUDENTS. Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible for keeping the university informed about a change of e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

USE OF COURSE MATERIALS. The materials used in this course, including, but not limited to exams, quizzes, and homework assignments, are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized duplication of the course materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of course materials without the specific, express approval of the professor may be a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This sharing includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of distributing those materials to other current or future students.

POLICY ON SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>).

UNANTICIPATED DISTRESS. Students may experience unexpected and/or distressing reactions to course readings, videos, conversations, and assignments. If so, students are encouraged to inform the professor. The professor can be responsive and supportive regarding students' participation in course assignments and activities, but students are responsible for communicating clearly what kind of support is desired. If counseling is needed, students may contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at 512-471-3515 or online at www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/.

BEHAVIOR CONCERNS ADVICE LINE (BCAL). If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership between the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

SAFETY. As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY. Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors in the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you are given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

VII. COURSE PHILOSOPHY AND EXPECTATIONS: CREATING COMMUNITY

This class is an intellectual community—one to which we all belong and are accountable. Community is an interactive, co-constructed space that is created, nurtured and maintained. Like learning, community takes genuine and sustained effort—a readiness and willingness to be present, prepared and engaged.

To foster a positive classroom environment and to facilitate learning, members of our community should be prompt: arriving at class on-time, keeping scheduled appointments, communicating with the professor in a reasonable and timely fashion, and meeting deadlines for readings and assignments, etc. Community members are expected to be civil (in comportment, behavior, language, discourse and interaction) and respectful of fellow students, the teacher as well as any guest speakers. Good participation—and by extension good community—required attending to teach other and to the subject matter and activities at hand, not obsessing over personal communication devices (e.g., texting, tweeting, cyber chatting, emailing etc.).

Your attendance, preparation, participation, and dedication – like mine – are crucial to our mutual educational endeavor. This course will be as interesting, fun, challenging, and rewarding, as we make it. **Welcome and let's get started.**

VIII. WEEKLY CALENDAR OF COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Professor reserves the right to adjust readings and assignments for educational purposes

****Learning activities subject to change based on the availability of guest speakers****

*****Exact schedule of readings/homework TBA, based on class members' academic knowledge*****

******Students advised to closely monitor Canvas announcements and course-related email******

WEEK 1

Wed. 01/20/16 Getting Started

Topic: Charting a path for the term

Activities: getting acquainted; introduction to and reflections on 'communication' and other core concepts

WEEK 2

Wed. 01/27/16

Topic: Language—The Innate Human Faculty/Capacity

WEEK 3

Wed. 02/03/16

Topic: Language—The World's Many Different Languages

WEEK 4

Wed. 02/10/16

Topic: Language Use I

WEEK 5

Wed. 02/17/16

Topic: Language Use II

WEEK 6

Wed. 02/24/16

Topic: Language Use III

WEEK 7

Wed. 03/02/16

Topic: Language Ideologies

WEEK 8

Wed. 03/09/16

Activities: Midterm Examination

WEEK 9 = SPRING BREAK / NO CLASSES (Wed. 03/16/16)

WEEK 10

Wed. 03/23/16

Topic: Captioning and Transcription

WEEK 11

Wed. 03/30/16

Topic: Interpreting and translation

WEEK 12

Wed. 04/06/16

Topic: Interpreting and translation

WEEK 13

Wed. 04/13/16

Activities: Guest speaker, Dr. Lauren Gulbas

Topic: Discourse and discourse analysis—applying what you’ve learned

WEEK 14

Wed. 04/20/16

Activities: Guest speaker, Dede Sparks

Topic: Micro analysis and professional social work interactions—applying what you’ve learned

WEEK 15

Wed. 04/27/16

Activities: Guest speaker, TBA

Topic: Professional writing—applying what you’ve learned

WEEK 16

Wed. 05/04/16

Activities: Individual oral presentations

****FINAL CAPTIONING & TRANSCRIPTION PROJECTS = DUE by 5pm Monday 05/09/16****