

PSY 120 INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

3 credits

CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION: Theoretical basis of interpersonal communication, including focus on the self-concept and defensiveness, and elements of clear verbal messages. Other units cover the perception process, connotative and denotative language, nonverbal communication, active listening facilitative and debilitating emotional expressions, characteristics of relational communication, and conflict resolution. (Formerly listed as SOC 220). Not open for credit for students who have successfully completed SOC 220.

COURSE RATIONALE: Interpersonal Communication provides a solid theoretical and experiential base for students entering fields where such communication is vital to effective performance. These fields include, among others, work in social services and mental health services, nursing, early childhood education, drug and alcohol counseling, and such business fields as marketing and management.

Effective interpersonal communication is a rare commodity, the lack of which often results in destructive exchanges, escalating conflict situations, and often detrimental miscommunication.

- COURSE OBJECTIVES:** to learn the theories and concepts related to interpersonal communication;
- to understand the factors that facilitate positive relationships;
 - to develop skills in observing, listening, reflecting, and providing feedback;
 - to understand and be able to apply the concepts of conflict resolution where appropriate;
 - to distinguish between defensive and supportive behaviors;
 - to practice the application of these objectives in interpersonal social or work settings.

COURSE CONTENT:

- The process of communication: elements of a clear message.
- The self-concept defined.
 - Defensiveness
 - Self-fulfilling prophecies
- Perception
 - The perception process
 - Empathy defined
- Language: words, things, and people
 - Language as a symbol system
 - Abstraction in language
 - Language, attitudes, and behavior
- Non-Verbal Communication
 - Characteristics

- Types of non-verbal communication
- Listening vs. Hearing
 - Types of non-listening and other problems
 - Active listening
- Emotions: Thinking and Feeling
 - Elements of affect
 - Thinking and feeling: a cognitive approach
 - Facilitative and debilitating emotions
- Building Positive Relationships
 - Characteristics of relational communication
 - Confirming and disconfirming communication
- Resolving Interpersonal Conflict
 - Personal conflict styles
 - Coping with criticism
 - Constructive conflict resolution

APPROPRIATE ASSIGNMENTS THAT DEMONSTRATE CRITICAL THINKING:

Exercises in small interpersonal groups and test questions require the students to apply concepts that have been studying in novel situations, thus going beyond rote learning. A Journal is required of each student. This Journal will critically relate and interpret the student's experience in interpersonal situations within the context of the class.

EVALUATION: Evaluation is based on the cumulative point total of quizzes, final exam, and the Journal, as well as demonstrating cognitive understanding and experiential application of concepts and behaviors through informed discussion and participation in class exercises. An individual project is also required.

TEXT:

Adler, R. B. & Towne, N. (1996). Interpersonal Communication (8th ed.). New York: Harcourt Brace.