

**Messiah College**  
**FAM 142 - Introduction to Interpersonal Relationships**  
**Fall 2004**

**Instructor:** Erin Boyd-Soisson, Ph.D.

**Office:** Boyer Hall 353

**Phone:** Ext. 2254

**email:** [eboyd@messiah.edu](mailto:eboyd@messiah.edu)

**Office Hours:** MW 8 – 9 and 10 - 11 and by appointment

**Location:** Boyer 277

**Days:** MWF

**Time:** 12 – 12:50

***Required Readings and Materials***

1. Adler, R. B., Rosenfeld, L. B., & Proctor, R. F. (2003). *Interplay: The process of interpersonal communication*. (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Harcourt.
2. File folder with clasps (for homework assignments)

***Course Description and Goals***

As Christians we are asked to be in fellowship with others. This includes establishing relationships as well as providing an atmosphere in which relationships can grow in strength and intimacy. Much of human behavior attempts to establish and maintain satisfactory relationships with others. Unfortunately, people do not function with equal success in their interpersonal encounters since building quality relationships usually requires considerable skills and motivation on the part of the individuals involved. This course focuses specifically on helping individuals better meet their interpersonal needs and goals, while learning those skills necessary to function more effectively in interpersonal situations. An underlying assumption here is that if our interpersonal needs are adequately met we can function better as models of Christ's love. Material presented in this course come from a broad behavioral science background and is designed to be interdisciplinary in nature. You are expected to gain a strong knowledge base in the area of interpersonal behavior in addition to continue to develop your interpersonal skills.

***Course Objectives***

1. To be able to identify behavioral characteristics of interpersonally competent and interpersonally effective individuals
2. To explain how social behavior is learned and changed
3. To describe the influence of roles and norms on social behavior
4. To identify your interpersonal needs and goals as well as those barriers that inhibit their attainment
5. To recognize that nonverbal communication can be interpreted differently by different people and understand how nonverbal communication can reiterate or confuse verbal messages
6. To express yourself clearly using appropriate nonverbal and verbal cues
7. To recognize interpersonal conflict and problems and be able to negotiate them to a mutually satisfying solution
8. To recognize when decisions need to be made and employ effective decision-making strategies to reach a mutually agreeable solution
9. To learn to initiate meaningful relationships with others
10. To learn to develop mutual trust in relationships

### ***Course Format***

This class meets three times a week. Class time will consist of lectures, class discussions, videos, film/TV clips, and activities based, in part, on your readings for that day. Therefore, it is important that you read the assignments prior to class. Because this class is a skill-training course, we will be participating in in-class group activities regularly. Therefore, it is important that you attend class. Finally, you should feel free to ask questions at anytime during class.

### ***Course Requirements***

**1. Self-concept bag with small group presentation (homework assignment) (30 points):**

This homework assignment is required. This assignment is to get you to start thinking about yourself and how your individual characteristics affect your communication. Please note that I will be walking around the class, observing groups and therefore, I will not be able to hear all individual's small group presentations, therefore, you must have a note card you will turn in containing the notes of what you plan to say during your small group presentation. See Appendix A for details.

**2. Homework Assignments (140):** Seven additional out of class homework assignments are required. Each homework assignment is worth 20 points. **All homework assignments will be housed in a file folder with clasps.** The homework assignments provide opportunities to practice interpersonal skills and for self-assessment and values clarification. Homework assignments are due, without exception, at the beginning of class on the due date. Because some of the homework assignments will be the basis for our class discussion, **homework assignments will NOT be accepted late. See Appendix B for detailed information about each homework assignment.**

**3. Three Exams (300 pts):** Each exam is worth 100 points. Exams will be based on material from the text, along with any supplemental material presented in class during lectures and class discussions, activities from class or homework, and films or videos. Exams may include objective (multiple choice, true/false, matching, fill-in-the-blank, etc.) and/or essay and short answer questions. Make-up exams will rarely be permitted, and never without a request in advance. A doctor's note must be provided if an exam is missed because of sickness.

**4. Class participation and attendance (100 pts.):** Because this is a skill-training course, punctuality and regular attendance are deemed essential. Students will be supervised in their practice of interpersonal and communication skills during class time. Class participation and attendance are worth 100 points. Your class participation and attendance will come from two sources. You will be evaluated on your participation and attendance within the larger class group (50 points), and your participation and attendance in your smaller group (50 points). In this class, students will be expected to attend classes regularly. In addition, students are expected to come to class prepared for the topic of that day, which includes reading all assigned material for that day. ***Be aware that participation in class is much more than simply attending class – it involves contributing to class discussion, asking questions, and taking an active role in class activities.*** Students who simply attend class, but rarely participate will have class participation/attendance grades that reflect poor participation. In addition, each small group will develop their own criteria and evaluation method for participation and attendance within the smaller groups. Each group member will agree to and sign off on their group's criteria and evaluation method and will be evaluated by their group members ***and*** the instructor using that criteria.

- 5. Film Evaluation (50 pts):** We will be viewing a movie in class and you will be writing an evaluation of the movie based on concepts you have learned about in this class.  
Requirements for Film evaluation assignment: This assignment is worth 50 points. It needs to be typed in 12-point font, double-spaced, have 1-inch margins, and be no more than 4 pages long. Five points will be deducted for each day it is late. A late day begins immediately after the assignment is collected.

Directions: For the movie, you will need to choose ONE character and evaluate his or her communication skills based on what you have learned in class. For this assignment, do NOT simply list a series of concepts and discuss the character's competence for each concept. INSTEAD, **integrate** concepts you have learned in class and discuss how they apply to the character by evaluating his/her communication. For example, you may want to discuss how a character's self-concept develops over the course of the movie and evaluate how it has affected several areas of his/her communication and then how each of those areas of communication influence the other. There is no one correct way to do this paper. Do not waste time sitting around wondering what I want you to write about. Be creative. Grading will be based on how thoroughly you have covered and **INTEGRATED** different aspects of communication in your evaluation of the character.

NOTE: Do NOT spend time summarizing the content or plot of the movie. Papers that summarize or critic the movie will receive a failing grade.

- 6. Extra Credit Note (Optional):** You will notice that there are 8 homework assignments listed in Appendix B, however, only 7 homework assignments are required. You may choose to do only 7 of the 8 homework assignments (as required). This would be an option for a student who does not feel comfortable doing a particular assignment. You may also choose to complete all 8 homework assignments and one will be considered extra credit. Students must hand in all homework assignments on the due date, including the extra credit homework. Therefore, if you forget to do a homework assignment, you will be unable to make up that homework and therefore, will not have the opportunity for extra credit.

### ***Course Grading***

Self-concept bag assignment/presentation notes	30 pts.
Assignments (7 @ 20 points each)	140 pts.
Exams (3 @ 100 points each)	300 pts.
Class Participation/Attendance	50 pts.
Group Participation/Attendance	50 pts.
Movie Evaluation	50 pts.
<b>Total Points Possible:</b>	<b>620 pts.</b>

A	93% and above	C	73 – 76.99%
A-	90 – 92.99%	C-	70 – 72.99%
B+	87 – 89.99%	D+	67 – 69.99%
B	83 – 86.99%	D	60 – 66.99%
B-	80 – 82.99%	F	59.99 % and below
C+	77 – 79.99%		

NOTE: Please be aware: Because students have access to extra credit in this course I do NOT round up with grades. For example, a 92.5 is an A- and an 89.75 is a B+.

***Students with Disabilities***

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT: Any student whose disability falls within ADA guidelines should inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester of any special accommodations or equipment needs necessary to complete the requirements for this course. Students must register documentation with the Office of Disability Services (OM 342). If you have questions, call extension 5358.

***Policy Regarding Academic Integrity***

Personal integrity is a behavioral expectation for all members of the Messiah community: administration, faculty, staff, and students. Violations of academic integrity are not consistent with the community standards of Messiah College, a will be dealt with according to Messiah College guidelines. These violations include:

1. ***Plagiarism:*** Submitting as one's own work part or all of any assignment (oral or written) which is copied, paraphrased or purchased from another source, including on-line sources without the proper acknowledgment of that source.  
Examples: failing to cite a reference, failing to use quotation marks where appropriate, misrepresenting another's work as your own, etc..
2. ***Cheating:*** Attempting to use or using unauthorized material or study aids for personal assistance in examinations or other academic work.  
Examples: using a cheat sheet, altering a graded exam, looking at a peer's exam.
3. ***Fabrication:*** Submitting altered or contrived information in any academic exercise.  
Examples: falsifying sources and/or data, etc.
4. ***Misrepresentation of Academic Records:*** Tampering with any portion of a student's record. Example: forging a signature on a registration form or change of grade form.
5. ***Facilitating Academic Dishonesty:*** Helping another individual violate this policy.  
Examples: working together on an assignment where collaboration is not allowed, doing work for another student, allowing one's own work to be copied.
6. ***Computer Offenses:*** Altering or damaging computer programs without permission.  
Examples: software piracy, constructing viruses, introducing viruses into a system, copying copyrighted programs, etc.
7. ***Unfair Advantage:*** Attempting to gain advantage over fellow students in an academic exercise.  
Examples: lying about the need for an extension on a paper, destroying or removing library materials, etc.

**Course Schedule of Readings, Lectures, Assignments, and Exams\***

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
Sept. 1	Course Introduction	
Sept. 3	Interpersonal Process	Chapter 1
Sept. 6	Interpersonal Process	
Sept. 8	Interpersonal Process	
Sept. 10	Communication and the Self	Chapter 2
Sept. 13	Communication and the Self <b>Self-Concept Bag Homework Due</b>	
Sept. 15	Communication and the Self Perceiving Others	Chapter 3
Sept. 17	Perceiving Others	
Sept. 20	Perceiving Others	
Sept. 22	Perceiving Others Language <b>Homework #1: Two Views Due</b>	Chapter 4
Sept. 24	Language	
Sept. 27	Language <b>Homework # 2: Empathic Listening Skills Due</b>	
Sept. 29	<b>Exam 1</b>	
Oct. 1	<b>NO CLASS</b>	
Oct. 4	Nonverbal Communication <b>Homework # 3: Practicing “I” vs. “You” Due</b>	Chapter 5
Oct. 6	Nonverbal Communication	
Oct. 8	Nonverbal Communication	
Oct. 11	Listening <b>Homework # 4: Examining Your Nonverbals Due</b>	Chapter 6
Oct. 13	Listening	
Oct. 15	Listening	
Oct. 18	Emotions <b>Homework # 5: Listening Diary Due</b>	Chapter 7
Oct. 20	Emotions	
Oct. 22	<b>Fall Break: NO CLASS</b>	
Oct. 25	Dynamics of Interpersonal Relationships <b>Homework # 6: Identify Debilitating Emotions Due</b>	Chapter 8
Oct. 27	Dynamics of Interpersonal Relationships	
Oct. 29	Intimacy and Distance	Chapter 9
Nov. 1	Intimacy and Distance	
Nov. 3	Intimacy and Distance	
Nov. 5	<b>Exam 2</b>	
Nov. 8	Communication Climate	Chapter 10
Nov. 10	Communication Climate	
Nov. 12	Managing Conflict	Chapter 11
Nov. 15	Managing Conflict	
Nov. 17	Movie for evaluation	
Nov. 19	Movie for evaluation	

Nov. 22	Culture and Communication <b>Homework # 7: Your Conflict Style Due</b>	Chapter 12
Nov. 24 & 26	<b>Thanksgiving Break: NO CLASS</b>	
Nov. 29	Culture and Communication	
Dec. 1	Culture and Communication	
Dec. 3	Communication in Family and at Work <b>Movie Evaluation Due</b>	Chapter 13
Dec. 6	Communication in Family and at Work	
Dec. 8	Communication in Family and at Work	
Dec. 10	Communication in Family and at Work <b>Homework # 8 Due: Faith Integration Paper</b>	
Dec. 13	<b>Final Exam 1:30 to 3:30</b>	

**\*I reserve the right to change or modify this course schedule. Students who choose not to attend class are responsible for checking with the instructor for any changes.**

## **Appendix A: Self-Concept Bag**

### **Self-Concept Bag and small group presentation**

1. Find a paper bag. (The larger bags used by grocery stores typically work the best).
2. On the outside of the bag, construct a collage that symbolizes what you know of yourself that is also known by others. You may use cut out pictures from magazines and advertisements, draw pictures that represent yourself, or use small items that reflect who you are. You have creative freedom!
3. Inside the bag, place pictures, labels, objects, etc., which symbolize what you know about yourself that is not known by others (or only very few others).
4. During the class period that your self-concept bag is due, you will have the opportunity to talk about your bag with your group. You may talk about as much or as little as you like. You do not have to share what is inside your bag with anyone else, unless you would like to share some of that information.
5. When presenting your bag to the group, please be sure to monitor the time so that all group members will have an equal opportunity to share their bags.

## Appendix B: Detailed Directions for Additional Homework Assignments

### Grading

Homework Assignments will be assessed using the following standards:

- 18 -20: Outstanding – **Excellent demonstration of self-awareness** and interpersonal skills.  
 Responses are uniformly appropriate in both form and content.  
 Demonstrates clear willingness to self-disclose  
 Demonstrates honesty and insightfulness about self.
- 16- 17: Good – Demonstrates personal awareness and access to interpersonal skills.  
 Responses are appropriate but not consistently so.  
 Willingness to self-disclose.
- 14-15: Average – Shows some personal awareness. Awareness may be limited to one or two domains, but some access to interpersonal skills.  
 Responses are not consistent in either form or content.  
 Apparent difficulty in self-disclosing.
- Below 14: Poor - Please see the instructor to discuss specific concerns.

**NOTE: *These homework assignments are worth quite a bit of your total grade. Be sure that you address all questions that are asked in each assignment in depth and that your homework assignments are proofread. Homework that is poorly thought out or contains numerous typos or grammatical errors will receive poor grades. Please be aware that several assignments require that you monitor your communication over a period of several days. Therefore, be sure to examine the requirements for each homework assignment well before they are due.***

### Homework Assignment # 1: Two Views

1. Identify a behavior that a significant other (e.g., a friend, parent, etc.) has conducted that upsets or frustrates you. It is best that you do this *while* the behavior is occurring or has just occurred; do NOT bring up something from the past.
2. Discuss that behavior with the person, HOWEVER, make sure you are using your perception checking skills and give the other person the opportunity to respond.
3. After the discussion:
  - a. write down the behavior you addressed
  - b. write down exactly what you said
  - c. label each part of your statement as one of the 3 elements of perception checking (i.e. a description of the behavior, two possible interpretations of the behavior, and a request for clarification.)
4. Answer the following questions
  - a. Was this a behavior you have brought to the person's attention before?
  - b. How do you think the conscious use of perception checking in this situation influenced the outcome of the discussion?
  - c. Was the person more receptive than you thought they might be?
  - d. Do you think that perception checking made it harder or easier to discuss the behavior? Why or why not?
5. REPEAT 1 – 4 with a different significant other. (For this exercise, you should have conducted 2 different perception checking episodes with different people.)

**Homework Assignment # 2: Developing your Empathic Listening Skills**

(Adapted from Adler, Rosenfeld & Proctor, 2003. pg. 79 and Avery & Hall, 1977)

You can develop your empathy skills by putting yourself in the shoes of someone with whom you have an interpersonal relationship. Ask a friend or family member to sit down and discuss an issue with you that is important to them and for which they need someone to listen to their feelings. Use your empathic listening skills to respond to that individual. After the discussion, ask the individual for feedback on how they felt you did as an empathic listener.

Remember the following:

1. Put yourself in the shoes of the other person by putting your own thoughts and feelings aside and putting yourself in the other person's frame of reference.
2. Listen to what the person is saying verbally and nonverbally. Demonstrate interest in the other person by maintain good eye contact, body posture, etc.
3. In your mind, identify the feelings and emotions the individual is expressing.
4. Do not confuse accepting the other person with agreeing with them. You can be empathic with out condoning the other person's behaviors. Being empathic means that you accept that the other person may have feelings different from your own. Do NOT judge the other person.
5. Also, do not make excuses for other individuals by trying to explain why they may be treating the person a certain way. For example, if your best friend is upset because her father hasn't called her, don't make excuses for him by say, "Maybe he is just busy."
6. Also, empathy does NOT involve giving advice or solutions to a problem. Being empathic means you listen and acknowledge the person. You do not give them advice or solutions.
7. Finally, your nonverbal behavior should be consistent with what you say. Demonstrate empathy by making empathic statements as well as actions.

Now address the following on paper:

1. What was the issue being discussed. (Do not identify your friend)
2. Write down as accurately as possible what some of your responses were.
3. How were they empathic?
4. Can you identify some responses that may not have been empathic? What were they?
5. What feedback did you receive from your significant other about your empathic listening?

**Homework Assignment # 3: Practicing "I" vs. "We"**

1. Think of at least 5 situations in your life where you either have or could use a "you" statement. Write down each "you" statement.
2. Write out a better way to address each situation using an "I" statement instead.
3. Use two of your "I" statements from above in relevant relationships.
4. Answer the following additional questions:
  - a. How does it make you feel when someone uses a "You" statement directed toward you? Why?
  - b. How did the individuals respond to the "I" statements you made in both situations?
  - c. What were some of the benefits of using the "I" statement in each situation? Did it make a difference in the outcome? Why or why not? (Be reflective!)

**Homework Assignment # 4: Examining Your Nonverbals**

On page 138 of your textbook, under “Activities,” complete “# 6 Invitation to Insight.” (“Learn more about the nonverbal messages you send...”). In addition to the emotions listed in this activity, what other information do you convey nonverbally. According to your interviewee how do you convey it? Be sure to answer all questions listed in the textbook under this activity. In addition, are there any nonverbal expressions (facial, gestures, etc.) that you engage in that were called to your attention, but you were unaware of doing? How might knowing this information change your communication?

**Homework Assignment # 5: Listening Diary**

(from: Adler, R., Rosenfeld, L., & Proctor, R. (2003). Interplay: The process of Interpersonal Communication: Instructor’s Manual/Test Bank)

Nobody’s a perfect listener. Here’s a chance for you to see how often you truly listen and how much of the time you just pretend.

Purpose:

1. To help you identify the styles of listening/non-listening you use in your interpersonal relationships.
2. To help you identify your response styles
3. To help you discover the consequences of the listening styles you use

Background: Your textbook discusses several types of listening/non-listening and Response Styles:

Listening	Non-listening	Response Styles
To understand & retain information	Pseudolistening	Silent Listening
To build & maintain relationships	Stage hogging	Questioning
To evaluate messages	Selective listening	Paraphrasing
To help others	Filling in the gaps	Empathizing
	Insulated listening	Supporting
(To Appreciate & Enjoy	Defensive listening	Analyzing
This is another reason less clearly	Ambushing	Advising
related to interpersonal		Evaluating
communication why we might		
listen.)		

Instructions:

1. Before beginning your Diary, circle the three listening/non-listening styles and three responses styles that you think you use the most frequently.
2. For the next 4 days, pay attention to your listening behavior. Don’t try to change the way you act; just observe the times when you’re really trying to understand someone and the times you’re behaving in one of the nonlistening ways listed above.

3. Using the entry tables provided, note FIVE listening experiences for each of the four days (a total of 20 entries). Be sure to include a weekend in your survey. Each entry should include the following:
  - a. Time/Place
  - b. People involved
  - c. Situation
  - d. Emotions (yours? Your parent's? Expressed or not?)
  - e. Style of listening or nonlistening you used (see table above)
  - f. Response style you used
  - g. Outcome (did your listening and response styles bring the situation to a satisfactory ending?)

While your entry tables will be handed in with your homework, any other notes you take are for your own benefit in order to answer the following questions:

1. Did you anticipate the results of your diary? Why or why not? Did you find that the styles you used most frequently were the ones you circled prior to collecting the data?
2. Which listening/non-listening and response styles did you use most frequently? Do you see any patterns in your listening? (Do particular situations, people, or times correlate with certain listening/non-listening behaviors or responses styles?)
3. How effective are your listening patterns? How satisfied are you with your listening behavior? Why or why not? How would you wish to change? How can you begin to change?

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Entry Table (Diary)**

Results/Outcome	Response Styles	Listening/ Non-listening	Situation	Emotions	Time/ place/ people

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Entry Table (Diary)**

Results/Outcome	Response Styles	Listening/ Non-listening	Situation	Emotions	Time/ place/ people

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Entry Table (Diary)**

Results/Outcome	Response Styles	Listening/ Non-listening	Situation	Emotions	Time/ place/ people

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Entry Table (Diary)**

Results/Outcome	Response Styles	Listening/ Non-listening	Situation	Emotions	Time/ place/ people

### **Homework Assignment # 6: Identify Debilitating Emotions**

On page 197 of your textbook, under “Activities,” complete “# 5 Skill Builder.” Complete this exercise for **TWO** different situations in which you experience debilitating emotions.

In addition to your discussion for each situation, answer the following questions after you’ve completed this exercise for the two different emotions:

How is your own ability to regulate your emotions related to your use of facilitative and debilitating emotions? How does this affect your communication in general?

### **Homework Assignment # 7: Your Conflict Style**

(Adapted from: Adler, R., & Towne, N. (2003). Looking out, looking in (10<sup>th</sup> ed.). Wadsworth: Belmont. (page 413).)

Identify 4 recent conflicts you have had with at least 3 different people who are important to you.

1. For each conflict make a chart with the following column headings:
  - “Who the conflict was with” (relation to you, no names)
  - “Description of the conflict”
  - “How I managed the conflict”
  - “How the conflict ended”
2. There will be four rows in your chart corresponding to each of the 4 conflicts you mention. Fill in the columns of your chart for each conflict.
3. Based on your chart, answer the following questions:
  - a. Do you come away from your conflicts feeling better or worse? Why?
  - b. How has each conflict made your relationship with that person stronger or weaker?
  - c. What patterns do you recognize in your conflict style? What are the benefits and limitations of this style?
  - d. Using one of your conflicts as a specific example, how could you improve your conflict style to make the conflict more productive? How hard or easy would this be to change taking into account your conflict style(s)?

### **Homework Assignment # 8: Faith Integration Paper**

Write a 2- 3 page, double-spaced “Faith Integration Paper.” In this paper you should discuss how the concepts you have learned in this class tie into your spiritual life. How might the skills you have learned in this class help build upon your life as a Christian?