

## COM 252 – Interpersonal Communication Journal Assignments (100 points)

Riley  
Due: Varies

The concepts discussed in interpersonal communication are things that impact us in our relationships and in our everyday lives. By improving our interpersonal skills, we can become better friends, coworkers, and partners. The first step in improving those skills is to recognize our own patterns and tendencies.

In order to help you consider your own interpersonal skills, you will be asked to complete a series of assignments related to the concepts we are studying in class. The prompts will allow you to analyze your behaviors and interactions in light of what research says about interpersonal communication. These assignments will also allow you the freedom to choose which aspects you most want to explore.

In the next several pages, you will find topics related to each of the sections of our textbook. You must choose and complete **4 of the journaling options**. Each essay is worth **25 possible points**. Each prompt has a “due date” that represents the last date upon which you may turn in a particular paper. So you may choose the topic you write about based on what most interests you and on what fits best into your schedule. It is your responsibility to make sure that you complete and submit the required number of journaling assignments by the end of the semester.

Each essay should be **3 to 5 pages in length** (not including a title page or reference page) unless otherwise noted within the specific prompt. Please write your papers in correct essay format. (In other words, do NOT put “1. Answer...”, use regular paragraph and sentence format instead. Each essay should have an introduction & conclusion, thesis statement, etc.) They should be typed and double-spaced with 1-inch margins all around. Use 12-point Times New Roman with regular character spacing. Please remember to include a title page (with your name, the journaling assignment name, the course number, section number, and the date). Any references you make to your text should be properly attributed and cited in APA 5<sup>th</sup> edition style.

Grades will be assigned based upon how well/fully you addressed the questions posed by the prompt. Your discussions should be thoughtful and need to demonstrate a mastery of the material. You should strive to connect the concepts discussed and that have appeared in your text with the things you experience in your everyday life. In addition to examining how well you met the content requirements for these assignments, your paper will also be evaluated based on good sentence structure, clarity, organization, appropriate punctuation, and general readability.

Chapter	Assignment	Due Date	Completed? (4)
2	Intercultural Communication Competence	Jan. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	
3	Who Am I?	Jan. 30 <sup>th</sup>	
4	What Do You See?	Feb. 4 <sup>th</sup>	
5	The Language Key	Feb. 11 <sup>th</sup>	
6	Nonverbal Norms	Feb. 15 <sup>th</sup>	
7	Listening Diary	Feb. 20 <sup>th</sup>	
8	Emotions: Thinking, Feeling, & Acting	Feb. 25 <sup>th</sup>	
9	Analyze a Relationship (1)	Feb. 29 <sup>th</sup>	
10	Analyze a Relationship (2)	Mar. 5 <sup>th</sup>	
11	Analyzing Defensiveness	Apr. 14 <sup>th</sup>	
12	What's Your Style?	Apr. 21 <sup>st</sup>	

**Chapter 2 – Intercultural Communication Competence**

Using the guidelines in Chapter 2, assess your own Intercultural Communication competence.

Some considerations:

1. To which cultures do you belong? Which co-cultures?
  2. How much experience do you have interacting with individuals from other cultures or co-cultures? (Remember that cultural differences are not limited to race or ethnicity.)
  3. How would you describe your motivation and attitude toward meeting people different from yourself? Do you feel comfortable approaching strangers? Does their culture make a difference?
  4. Do you consider yourself open-minded? Give an example of an instance in which you stereotyped. What were the results?
  5. How do you respond when you find yourself in a culture (or co-culture) different from your own? Relate a specific example.
  6. Overall, do you believe that you have high or low intercultural communication competence? Why?
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**Chapter 3 – Who Am I?**

Consider the following 12 statements.

- |                            |                              |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>I am bossy</b>          | <b>I am attractive</b>       |
| <b>I am serious</b>        | <b>I am intelligent</b>      |
| <b>I am funny</b>          | <b>I am nosy</b>             |
| <b>I am a loner</b>        | <b>I am backwards</b>        |
| <b>I am short-tempered</b> | <b>I am high maintenance</b> |
| <b>I am energetic</b>      | <b>I am emotional</b>        |

After you have read through the statements:

1. Use all 12 phrases to rank yourself. (In other words, arrange the statements 1-12 in terms of how well you believe they describe you with the first statement being the one that best represents/applies to you and the last being the one that applies least to you.) Discuss why you chose to rank yourself the way you did. Are you happy with your rankings?
  2. Hypothetically speaking, do you believe that others (choose at least two specific others to discuss) would create rankings for you that look the same as the ones you created or would their rankings look different? Why or why not?
  3. Recreate the rankings based upon your “ideal self.” How do you feel about the “new you” that you have created? Why would you choose to make the changes that you have made? Discuss specifically how you feel about these changes and how they would impact your life.
  4. What does this exercise tell you about yourself? Are these perceptions about yourself ones that you would like to change?
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**Chapter 4 – What Do You See?**

We have many ways of finding meaning in the world around us. In this section, we discussed different methods for explaining these “sense-making” activities. Please consider the way you see the world as you answer the following questions.

1. Of the theories and explanations we discussed, which do you find yourself most often employing when trying to make sense of the actions of others? (Example: schemas, attribution, implicit personality theory, perceptual accentuation, etc.) Give specific examples.
  2. Why do you think you generally choose those theories/explanations? Are there specific influences that have led you to use these ways of thinking?
  3. Have you ever found yourself making any of the attribution errors we discussed? Provide specific examples. What were the outcomes of your attribution errors? (i.e. Did it turn out well? Badly? Didn't matter? Etc.)
  4. Have differences in perception ever caused problems in your life? (In other words, when have you perceived things differently than others did and it caused a problem?) Provide specific examples.
  5. Overall, do you believe you perceive things accurately? Are you good at making correct perceptions? What practical steps can you take to increase your perception accuracy?
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**Chapter 5 – The Language Key**

Our language choices, whether they are deliberate or accidental, can have huge effects on our communication interactions. Consider your own language choices as you address the following points.

1. Identify three specific personal examples of times when choice of language led to positive or negative results in your own interpersonal relationships.
  2. For each situation, cite the person(s) involved, the place of the occurrence, the situation, and the language used.
  3. Then identify the type of language problem (ambiguous language, relative words, euphemism, static evaluation, fact/inference problems, etc.) and note the results of each incident. How did language play a pivotal role in these experiences? (Each example should illustrate a different type of language problem.)
  4. If the experience had a negative result, speculate about how the language use could have been different to potentially result in a better outcome.
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**Chapter 6 – Nonverbal Norms**

Everyday we follow unwritten nonverbal rules and norms. We may not think about these norms until someone violates them. For this assignment, you are being asked to step outside of your comfort zone and violate a nonverbal norm.

Without putting yourself in harm's way, violate a nonverbal norm. Do so blatantly, repeatedly, and unapologetically. You can do this with someone you know or a complete stranger, but the behavior should be unexpected/inappropriate. Some examples of actions you could take include:

- Standing next to someone on an empty elevator
- Wearing an outfit all day that you would never ordinarily wear (i.e. wear an evening gown to class all day, exemplify a fashion trend from a past generation, wear something completely opposite of the way you usually dress, etc.)
- Invade the personal space of people who talk to you
- Leave your hand on the shoulder of the person you are having a conversation with for an extended period of time, wear sunglasses inside all day long
- Sitting at the same table as someone when the library is not crowded

There are obviously *more possibilities*, so please feel free to come up with ideas that are not on the list. *Remember that you should do this with a mind to good taste, not deliberately offending any person or group, or getting yourself into trouble. Don't do anything that is going to get you into personal or legal trouble or that's going to land you on the 6 o'clock news. If you have a question as to the appropriateness of violating a nonverbal norm, please see me.* It is your responsibility to use good judgment when engaging in this activity.

After you have violated your norm, write an essay addressing the following:

1. Describe the nonverbal norm you violated and briefly discuss how you did this (no more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  page).
  2. Why did you choose this particular norm?
  3. How did violating this make you feel? Why do you believe you felt the way you did?
  4. How did those around you react to your violation of this norm? Did it impact your relationships in any way?
  5. Why do these norms exist in our culture?
  6. What did you learn (if anything) from this activity?
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**Chapter 7 – Listening Diary**

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

Your text discusses several types of listening/non-listening and styles of feedback:

<u>Listening</u>	<u>Non-listening</u>	<u>Response styles</u>
To Understand & Retain Info	Pseudolistening	Silent Listening
To Build & Maintain Relationships	Stage Hogging	Questioning
To Evaluate Messages	Selective Listening	Paraphrasing
To Help Others	Filling in the Gaps	Empathizing
To Appreciate & Enjoy Others	Insulated Listening	Supporting
	Defensive Listening	Analyzing
	Ambushing	Advising
		Evaluating

Procedures:

1. Before beginning your diary, circle the three listening/non-listening styles and three response styles that you think you use the most frequently.
2. For the next 3 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 non-listening ways listed above.
3. Using the entry sheets provided on the next page, note FIVE listening experiences for each of the three consecutive days (a total of 15 entries). Be sure to include a weekend day in your survey. Each entry should include the following information: time & place, people involved, situation, emotions (Mood/atmosphere? Yours? Your partner’s? Expressed or not?), style of listening used, response style, and outcome (Did your listening and responses bring the situation to a satisfactory conclusion?). *While you entry sheets will be handed in with your journaling assignment, the notes are for your benefit, not the instructor’s. (In other words, you will not be graded on the quality of your notes, but they must be included.) Be sure you include enough information so that you will be able to draw conclusions and support your conclusions with specific examples.*
4. Using the information you recorded over the three days, analyze your listening behavior. Create a cohesive essay in which you discuss the following points. Be sure to use specific examples from your data sheets to support and illustrate your points. Your essay should be approximately 3 typed, double-spaced pages.
  - a. Did you anticipate the results of the 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?
  - b. Which listening/non-listening and response styles did you use most frequently? Do you see any patterns in your listening behaviors? (Do particular situations or people or times of day regularly correlate with certain listening/non-listening behaviors or response styles?)
  - c. What conclusions can you draw about your listening behavior?
  - d. How effective are your listening patterns? How satisfied are you with your listening behavior? *Explain why you are satisfied or dissatisfied.* How would you wish to change? How can you begin to change?

## Listening Diary

Day 1 - Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Results	Response Style	Listening/Non-Listening	Situation	Emotion(s)	Time/Place/People

Day 2 - Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Results	Response Style	Listening/Non-Listening	Situation	Emotion(s)	Time/Place/People

Day 3 - Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Results	Response Style	Listening/Non-Listening	Situation	Emotion(s)	Time/Place/People

**\*\*Remember to hand this in along with your Listening Diary essay\*\***



## Chapter 8 – Emotions: Thinking, Feeling, and Acting

We all experience emotions, but we identify them and express them with varying degrees of expertise. The purpose of this exercise is to focus on the role which emotions play within your daily life.

1. Complete the three-day emotions survey by filling out the entry sheet found on the next page. You should note **five** different experiences for each of the three days. *While you will be asked to hand in your entry sheets, the notes are for your benefit, not the instructor's. Be sure to include enough information so that you will be able to draw conclusion sand support your conclusions with specific examples. You may use any kind of personal shorthand that is meaningful for you.*
2. Using the data on your entry sheets, analyze the role of emotions in your life during this three-day period and in general.
  - a. How easy were the emotions for you to identify? Which methods did you use for the purpose of identification: proprioceptive stimuli (physical reactions)? Nonverbal manifestations? Cognitive interpretations? Illustrate your response with two *specific* examples.
  - b. Analyze the types of emotions that you experienced. How wide a range of emotions? Are most of them facilitative or debilitating? Illustrate by giving specific examples.
  - c. Do you think that this three-day period provides a “typical” sample of your emotions? If not, explain why not.
  - d. Did you find evidence that you subscribe to any of the fallacies given in your text? Give two examples of incidents when you did subscribe to a fallacy. (You may go outside of the three-day period to answer this question if you wish.)
  - e. How freely do you express your emotions? With whom do you express yourself most freely? Least freely? Why?
  - f. How comfortable are you with your emotions? What is the impact of emotions in your daily interpersonal relationships?

## Emotions

Day 1 – Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Results	How expressed?	How recognized?	Facil/Deb	Situation	Emotion(s)	Time/Place/People

Day 2 – Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Results	How expressed?	How recognized?	Facil/Deb	Situation	Emotion(s)	Time/Place/People

**\*\*Remember to hand this in along with your Emotions essay\*\***

Day 3 – Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Results	How expressed?	How recognized?	Facil/Deb	Situation	Emotion(s)	Time/Place/People

***\*\*Remember to hand this in along with your Emotions essay\*\****

**Chapter 9 – Analyze a Relationship (1)**

In essay format, analyze one of your most important relationships. Begin by identifying the person and briefly describe the relationship. Use the principles in the chapter to analyze this relationship.

1. Consider the variables of why we form relationships (attraction, similarity, complementarity, proximity, etc.). How did these variables function in the beginning of your relationship? How do the variables function now that you have a more established relationship?
  2. Discuss your relationship in terms of Knapp's Stages of Coming Together/Apart. How did you move from one stage to another? Where are you now? What tells you this?
  3. How do the dialectical tensions function in this relationship? Give at least two specific examples and describe how you managed the tension.
  4. What types of compliance-gaining strategies do you use in this relationship? What kind does the other person use? Give at least two specific examples of these strategies.
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**Chapter 10 – Analyze a Relationship (2)**

In essay format, analyze one of your most important relationships. Begin by identifying the person and briefly describe the relationship. Use the principles in the chapter to analyze this relationship.

1. What role does self-disclosure play in this relationship? Why do you self-disclose? What benefits have you found in self-disclosure in this relationship?
  2. How important is honesty in this relationship? Do you ever use “alternatives” to self-disclosure? What are the results of such behavior? Give a specific example.
  3. How would you describe the “social penetration” of this relationship?
  4. What is your level of satisfaction in the relationship? What could/should be changed? What is your prediction for the future?
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## **Chapter 11 – Analyzing Defensiveness**

Defensiveness implies protecting ourselves from a perceived threat. The universal tendency is to try to “save face” by defending our presenting self when we perceive that it has been attacked by what social scientists call “face-threatening acts.” Frequently, this results in creating a climate, which leads to a negative defense spiral. For this assignment, you will do the following:

1. Identify three different times when you perceived that you were under attack and responded by using one of the Gibb defensive categories. *Briefly* describe each situation and your response. (Each of the responses you choose should describe a different Gibb category.)
  2. Identify the Gibb category that you used.
  3. Describe how you might have otherwise responded in order to create a more positive and supportive climate.
  4. Analyze your defensive behavior. In general, do you consider yourself a “defensive” person? Why or why not? Are there certain topics that tend to trigger your defensiveness? Are there certain people with whom you are more defensive than normal?
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**Chapter 12 – What's Your Style?**

As a part of our discussion of conflict, you will be asked to complete the conflict style inventory found on pages 350-351 of your textbook. This inventory allows you to see how you might be inclined to manage conflict. For your essay:

1. Report the scores that you determined in each of the five categories (competition, collaboration, compromise, avoidance, accommodation).
  2. Do you agree that the scores reflect your style(s) in managing conflict?
  3. Does your conflict style ever change? If so, what prompts the changes (e.g. specific people, situations, times, issues, etc.)? Provide specific examples.
  4. Do you believe that your conflict style has changed over time? Why or why not?
  5. What factors/influences do you believe "taught" you how to have conflict? Which were the most influential? Do you believe these were positive influences or negative influences?
  6. Do most of your conflicts end in a satisfactory or unsatisfactory manner? Why do those outcomes occur?
  7. Are there any aspects of the way you deal with conflict that you would like to change? Why? What practical steps can you take to change these behaviors?
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