

ADVANCED TOPICS IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES: LIFE-SPAN COMMUNICATION / COM342

Instructor: Dr. Keli Steuber Fazio
Time: Blended Learning (timing varies per semester)
Location: Classroom Location and online

COURSE INFORMATION

Lifespan communication examines how communication processes (social support, language skills, interpersonal relationship management) change across one's existence. This course will map out both normative and unexpected demographic and health events across a lifespan (e.g., schooling, pregnancy, marriage, health issues, parenthood) and acknowledge how our communication processes influence and are influenced by these social experiences. Students will engage in practical applications of this information through self-reflections, case analyses, and consulting-based projects.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- 1) To introduce and understand the core assumptions of the lifespan communication perspective.
- 2) To use a lifespan communication lens for understanding people's perceptions about and behaviors within various life and historical events.
- 3) To identify areas where consideration of the lifespan communication perspective can improve the process and outcome of communicative events, transitions, and relationships.
- 4) Students will apply these knowledge bases by analyzing and responding to a variety of societal and organizational dilemmas.

Books / Journals / News Media / Videos

The information covered in this course will be compiled from a variety of sources, including textbooks, academic journals, online newspapers and educational videos. The first portion of the class introduces the lifespan perspective in terms of individual growth and relationships. Core concepts and topics of life-span communication will first be presented through textbook summaries of the topics, followed by reading research applications of those theories, as well as perspectives of that issue in everyday life. Students will practice applying the theoretical concepts they learn from the perspective and identifying them in real-life examples.

The second section of the course will cover special topics related to life span-communication and shift to students identifying appropriate resources to inform their own applications of lifespan communication. Many of the projects in the latter half of the course are designed so that students meet the objectives of identifying and applying the concepts to case studies, organizations, and pertinent family issues.

Blended Learning

This course is a blended learning course, which means that we will create a formal education program in which we utilize online delivery and instruction as part of the curriculum. In this class, we will meet a portion of the time in the traditional classroom setting and remainder of the class will be web-based. For example, we might have students use various forms of technology to document examples of the concepts we are learning. We will work in groups in-person and/or online to apply lifespan communication concepts to real-life organizations. We will also use the web to search for examples of interpersonal components of the lifespan perspective, such as examining the pros and cons of online support groups for health and relational stressors, or to document ways to increase social support through collaborative learning environments online.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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REQUIRED READING INFORMATION

PDFs or links to additional readings will be available on the CANVAS course webpage.

GRADING

The following chart represents the grading scale used in this course.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Scale</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Scale</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Scale</u>
A	94% - 100%	4.0	D+	67% - 69%	1.3	I	Incomplete
A-	90% - 93%	3.7	D	60% - 66%	1.0	P	Pass
B+	87% - 89%	3.3	F	0% - 59%	0.0	S	Satisfactory
B	83% - 86%	3.0	W	Withdrawal	N/A	U	Unsatisfactory
B-	80% - 82%	2.7	WP	withdrawal pass	N/A		
C+	77% - 79%	2.3	WF	withdrawal fail	0.0		
C	73% - 76%	2.0	AU	Audit	N/A		
C-	70% - 72%	1.7	R	Repeat	N/A		

REQUIREMENTS

Exam (25%):

An exam will be administered in this course. The exam will test your knowledge of the core assumptions of the lifespan perspective and your ability to apply them.

Weekly Projects (60%)

The course is separated into modules – one for each week. Each module will have a series of projects for you to conduct sequentially that align with the lessons within that module.

Group Consulting Project (15%)

Each group will be assigned an organization to conduct a consultation for using a lifespan perspective. More details will be provided in a separate document.

POLICIES

Attendance: Attendance to each of the in-class sessions is mandatory. Because of the format of this class, I will not be able to re-teach material or provide alternate assignments. We also take part in a great deal of group work, making it unfair to your classmates if you are not in attendance.

Excused Make-ups: In the situations in which students have a *prearranged and excused* reason to miss an essay exam, that student should make every effort to take the exam PRIOR to the scheduled date. In the event that a student misses the test period without a pre-arranged and excused reason, there will be no make-up issued. “Pre-arranged” means that you have successfully contacted me and received a response confirming the granting of a make-up. Excused make-up requests must be made 48 hours prior to the exams.

Late Submissions: Any late work will be deducted 15% per day past the time in which it is due.

Grade Change Requests: There is a 24-hour minimum / 2 week maximum window applied to grade change inquiries. Grade inquiries will not be discussed (face-to-face, over email, or over phone) for 24 hours after the grade has been returned. The 24-hour rule is in effect to give students time to read over comments, reflect back on notes, and prepare a well-justified argument as to why they disagree with a grade. In addition to waiting 24 hours, you must also pose the concern within two weeks of the class session in which the grade was returned (regardless if you were present in that class or not). Conversations regarding areas for improvement will be welcomed all semester, but grade change inquiries will not be entertained beyond the two- week point.

Final Grade: Your final grade is final. Please do not ask to for a “change” of your grade for reasons other than mathematical error. Applying subjective standards after the fact invalidates the standards applied to the entire class and is unfair to every student.

TOPICS COVERED WITHIN THE COURSE:
LIFESPAN COMMUNICATION THEORY AND ASSERTIONS
INDIVIDUAL AND GENERATIONAL IDENTITIES
FAMILY SOCIALIZATION
CAREGIVING
NON-NORMATIVE LIFE EXPERIENCES
TRANSITIONS & TIMING
STIGMA
CONFLICT COMMUNICATION

SEMESTER SCHEDULE
[EXAMPLE OF A BLENDED LEARNING FORMAT FOR A 14-WEEK COURSE]

MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO LIFESPAN COMMUNICATION (IN-CLASS LECTURE)

Lecture Powerpoint: Introduction to Lifespan Communication

MODULE 2: INTRODUCTION TO LIFESPAN COMMUNICATION CONT. & IDENTITY

Reading 1: Pecchioni, L., & Nussbaum, J. (Year). Life-span Communication: Perspective and Methodology. In L. Pecchioni & J. Nussbaum (Eds.), Lifespan Communication (pp. 3-21). State: Press.

Assignment 1: TedTalk Activity & Response (see Canvas)

Reading 2: Giles, H., Fortman, J., Honeycutt, J., & Ota, H. (2003). Future selves and others: A lifespan and cross-cultural perspective. *Communication Reports*, 16, 1-22

Assignment 2: Future Selves Response (see Canvas)

MODULE 3: CONVERSATIONS ABOUT GENERATIONS

Reading 1: Grinberg, E. (2012). As baby boomers retire, a focus on caregivers. *CNN Living*.
http://www.cnn.com/2012/01/16/living/caregiver-stress-report/index.html?hpt=li_c2

Reading 2: Stewart, A. J., & Torges, C. M. (2006). Social, historical, and developmental influences on the psychology of the baby boom at midlife. (pp 23-39). In S.K. Whitbourne & S. L. Willis (Eds.), *The Baby Boomers Grow Up*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Reading 3: American Psychological Association's *Stress in America: Our Health at Risk* (pp. 24 -30) "Stress in Generations" PDF

Assignment: Baby Boomers vs. Millennials Fact Sheet (see Canvas)

MODULE 4: SOCIALIZATION & FAMILIES

Reading: Soliz, J., & Fowler, C. Sandwich relationships. In J. Nussbaum's (Ed.) *The Handbook of Lifespan Communication*. (p. 294-306). New York: Oxford.

Assignment: NPR StoryCorp Viewing & Response (See Canvas)

MODULE 5: PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Assignment 1: "Your Twenties" TedTalk Viewing & Response (see Canvas)

Assignment 2: Generational Identity Exercise Essay (see Canvas)

MODULE 6: STIGMA & MARGINALIZATION (IN-CLASS LECTURE & ONLINE ASSIGNMENT)

Reading 1: Dickson, F. C., Hughes, P., Walker, K. L. (2005). An exploratory investigation into dating among later-life women. *Western Journal of Communication*, 69, 67-82.

Reading 2: Steuber, K.R. (2014). Life without kids: (In)voluntarily childless families. In L. Baxter (Ed.), *Remaking "family" communicatively*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Assignment: Stigma Reflection – How did it feel?

Lecture PowerPoint: Stigma, Transitions, & Conflict

MODULE 7: REFLECTIONS ON STIGMA, TRANSITIONS, & CONFLICT

Reading 1: Bergstrom, M. J., & Nussbaum, J. F. (1996) Cohort differences in interpersonal conflict: Implications for the older patient-younger care provider interaction. *Health Communication*, 8, 233-248.

Assignment 1: Response to Conflict Reading & Conflict Assessment (see Canvas)

Assignment 2: An Evaluation of Stigma & Time (online support groups; see Canvas)

MODULE 8: COMMUNICATING & DECISION-MAKING ABOUT END OF LIFE (EOL)

Reading 1: Pecchioni, L. (2001). Implicit decision-making in family caregiving. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 18, 219-237.

Reading 2: Cherlin, E., Fried, T. Prigerson, H., Shculman-Green, D., Johnson-Hurzeler, R., & Bradley, E. (2005). Communication between physicians and family caregivers about care at the end of life: When do discussions occur and what is said? *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, 8, 1176-1185.

Assignment: EoL Intervention (Individual or Group Exercise; see Canvas)

MODULE 9: CAREGIVING

Reading: Tehee, E., Honan, R., & Hevey, D. (2009). Factors contributing to stress in parents of individuals with autistic spectrum disorders. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 22, 34-42.

Assignment: Reflection on Caregiving (see Canvas)

MODULE 10: EXAM & INTRODUCTION OF CONSULTING PROJECT (IN-CLASS MEETING)

MODULE 11: CONSULTING PROJECT / IDENTIFY A NON-PROFIT OR ORGANIZATION

Assignment: Identifying and Research an Organization or Non-Profit (see Canvas)

MODULE 12: CONSULTING PROJECT / TARGETED COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Assignment: Conducting a Literature Review and Summary Assessment of Communication Strategies

MODULE 13: CONSULTING PROJECT / APPLICATION & INTERVENTION DESIGN

MODULE 14: CONSULTING PROJECT / PRESENTATIONS