



COM 123.01-Intro to Interpersonal Communication – 3 hrs.

School of Communication

Spring 2026 Course Syllabus

Meets Tuesday/Thursday 11:00am-12:15pm in Fell 152

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Jenifer Bowman

E-mail: jmbowm2@ilstu.edu

Availability: I will do my best to respond to emails within 1 business day (M-F/8-5). If you do not receive a response within a couple of days (during the school week), feel free to send a follow-up message. I am also available to meet you virtually by appointment on M/W/F. Your ilstu email (Microsoft Outlook) is the best way to get in touch with me. Please indicate your course/section # in the subject line.

Office Hours: Wednesdays 10AM-12PM, Fell 405

If you wish to request an appointment outside of this window, please contact me by email with a few proposed times that you are available (M, W, F between 8-5). Due to other class constraints, immediately before/following class is not the best time for us to meet.

COURSE INFORMATION

Catalog Description: An introduction to the principles of communication in the formation and maintenance of social and personal relationships.

HOW WILL WE LEARN?: COURSE MATERIALS & RESOURCES

Online Course Tools



Canvas will be our primary course website. I will post announcements, assignment descriptions and submission links to this site.

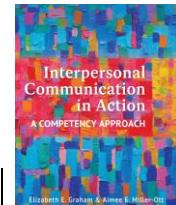
Office 365: We will utilize several apps in the Microsoft Office 365 suite.



Required Course Texts:

Our Course Textbook

Graham, E. E. & Miller-Ott, A. (2026) *Interpersonal Communication in Action: A Competency Approach*. Cognella. ISBN: 9798823303316



WHAT WILL YOU LEARN?: COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will become more competent interpersonal communicators (using knowledge, skill, motivation and judgment).
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the interpersonal communication process.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to apply interpersonal communication concepts such as active listening, perception, self-concept, and message systems (verbal and nonverbal) to everyday communication situations.

4. Students will become more competent in communicating in small group discussions and in class activities (articulating and defending their own ideas as well as listening to and considering the ideas of others).
5. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the differences in interpersonal communication contexts.
6. Students will identify their own patterns of functional and dysfunctional interpersonal communication habits.

HOW WILL WE LEARN?: COURSE DELIVERY & STRUCTURE

This course will primarily be discussion & activity based. Since we are 'practicing peopling' as a primary course goal, we will eliminate distractions in our class by choosing not to utilize personal devices (laptops/phones/etc.) except for instances when utilization of technology is necessary. You should come prepared with your completed *hard copy* chapter notes, having read that chapter and any assigned materials prior to class. During class, you will participate in active learning activities and group work.

HOW WILL I KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW?

COURSE EVALUATION METHODS & GRADING POLICY

The following are brief descriptions of the major assignments for this course. Detailed descriptions along with grading rubrics can be found on Canvas.

Grades:

GRADING NOTE: The course instructor only rounds up final grades (XX.5% and higher) for students who submit every assignment and who have missed 3 or fewer classes. Additionally, the instructor reserves the right to adjust the number and point value of assignments. Any changes in valuation will be communicated prior to submission.

Your grades for this course are private and will be posted on Canvas.

A=	90-100%
B=	80- 89%
C=	70- 79%
D=	60- 69%
F=	<60%

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

All assignments are briefly described below. Complete assignment descriptions, course schedule due dates, and grading rubrics **are posted on Canvas. Unless otherwise noted, assignments submitted via Canvas are due on the date shown in the weekly links prior to the start of class.**

Guided Reading Notes	60 pts.
Journals	120 pts.
Movie Analysis	100 pts.
Unit 1 Analysis: Movie Review	100 pts.

Unit II Analysis: Mediated Relationship Presentation	100 pts
Unit III Analysis: Toxic Workplace Exchange Presentation	100 pts.
Informal Activities	TBD by instructor
Extra credit opportunities	TBD by instructor

Please note that assignments can be added and deleted from the course, meaning the total points for the course can change.

HOW SHOULD WE CONDUCT OURSELVES? STUDENT BEHAVIOR & WORK HABITS

Attendance:

The principles of my attendance policy consider two things: 1. Safety and 2. Personal Responsibility. In terms of safety, if you demonstrate symptoms of a communicable illness, stay home. Rest is important for your recovery and isolation from others is essential to your peer's wellbeing. Regarding personal responsibility, it is your task to communicate your absence/return plans clearly and often. It is also your responsibility to acquire necessary information to meet the learning objectives as outlined in the course/complete assignments.

Students are responsible for making arrangements to receive any information from their study partners/group missed in the event of an unavoidable absence.

If you should need to be absent, please:

1. Email me (when possible, in advance) notifying me of the absence.
2. If qualifying (see below- contact Dean of Students).
3. Review Canvas for that day's assignments (when possible, turn in any assignments due that day).
4. Reach out to individuals in your study group for notes/assignment details.
5. Communicate with me (via email) re. a plan for remediating content/revised due dates.

If proper absence notification is not provided, your assignment, whether submitted online on time or not may not be counted for credit.

Be familiar with [which absences are excused under university policy and which are not](#). If absences exceed 3 unexcused absences during the semester, the instructor reserves the right to decline any (online) assignment submitted without attendance on the coinciding due date. If you are unable to attend class for an extended period (3 days) in a way that impedes your ability to participate in a group, arrangements to complete your ReMo independently will be made.

Absence for Bereavement, Active Military Duty, Serious Communicable Disease

If you need to miss class due to [the loss of a family member](#), active military duty, or [required quarantine/isolation for a serious communicable disease](#), contact the Dean of Students Office to request that a formal excused absence notice be sent to your instructors. The Dean of Students Office can send a courtesy notice to your instructors about other absences, but many other absences (including routine illness for which isolation/quarantine are not indicated) are governed by the absence policy for this course and are not excused under university policy.

Absence for University-Authorized Activity

If you need to miss class due to a university-authorized activity, as defined by [University policy](#), it is your responsibility to (1) inform instructors of scheduled absences in advance, (2) provide a schedule of all semester absences, as soon as you know, where possible, and, (3) arrange to complete missed class work. Ultimately, it is your responsibility for any material covered in missed class(es).

Late Assignments:

As a rule, assignments/activities/quizzes on Canvas *will not* be accepted/opened after the communicated close/due date. If extenuating circumstances arise that will prevent timely submission of graded work, students are encouraged to communicate with their instructor prior to the assignment/quiz due date/time on Canvas. Exceptions to this rule will be considered at the instructor's discretion and instances outlined by university 'excused' absence policies. Students must be present in class for online submissions of assignments to be considered for points unless prior arrangements are made.

Grade Discussions:

I am always willing to discuss students' grades on assignments; however, all students must wait at least **48 hours** after an assignment has been returned before challenging their assignment grade. This allows you to thoroughly read through the feedback given and process why the grade was given based on the criteria for that assignment. To challenge a grade, please prepare a written statement (sent via email) providing support for the grade change using the grading criteria/rubric provided. Note that all evaluation challenges must be received no later than one week after the assignment in question has been returned. Keep in mind that grade discussions should NOT take place before, after, or during class for confidentiality reasons.

Classroom Conduct:

Professional Courtesy: Professional courtesy includes respecting others' opinions, not interrupting in class, being respectful to those who are speaking, and working together in a spirit of cooperation. I expect you to demonstrate these behaviors in this class. With that in mind, sleeping, browsing materials irrelevant to class purposes, texting, or disrupting the class will not be tolerated and will result in the student being considered absent for that particular class period.

Behavioral Expectation Policy: Should any student violate the expectations of appropriate classroom behavior (as mentioned in the professional courtesy and presentation etiquette policies above), the instructor will schedule a meeting to discuss these expectations and develop a behavioral modification plan. If these behaviors persist, you will be at risk of failing the course.

University Behavioral Policy:

In the classroom and other learning environments, you are expected to conduct yourself in a manner consistent with Illinois State University's [Code of Student Conduct and you should familiarize yourself with the University Classroom Disruption Policy 4.1.17.](#)

Disruptive student conduct is behavior in a classroom or other learning environment (including in person and virtual learning environment in both on and off campus locations) that disrupts the educational process. Examples of disruptive behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

- threatening, intimidating, or other inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates
- persisting in disruptive personal conversations with other class members
- unreasonable interference with class discussion or activities
- repeated interruptions by electronic devices
- refusing to follow the direction of the instructor or other university official
- leaving and entering class frequently without notifying the instructor of illness or other extenuating circumstances

Students who demonstrate disruptive class behavior may be removed from the classroom for the remainder of that class session and/or may be referred to the Dean of Student Office in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct Policy 4-1-17.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS & POLICIES

Most of your assignments will be submitted online via Canvas, so it is essential that you have regular access to a working computer. Your computer must not only be connected to the internet, but it also must have the minimum software and hardware requirements to meet the needs of each assignment. [Computer difficulties are not acceptable excuses for late or incomplete work.](#) Therefore, it is essential that you have a tech failure backup plan and complete assignments in a timely manner in case you need to use your backup plan. In other words, do not procrastinate and wait until the last minute to complete your assignments/activities.

Electronics

- In efforts to meet our course goals, we will be going (mostly) screen free in 123. You will only need a computer at designated times. Digital technology (e.g., phones, computers, etc.) must be put away when not explicitly required during class. Failure to do so will result in you being marked as "absent" for the class period.
- I see a distinction between sending a quick text and scrolling on your phone. If your device becomes a distraction from your engagement in class (to you/others) you will be considered absent and will be required to attend office hours for us to create a plan of action to ensure your success in the course.
- Additionally, please make sure to remove your headphones, earbuds, etc. prior to the start of class. Failure to do so will result in you being marked "absent" for the class period.

Generative AI: Students may use generative AI tools to support independent study practices, but content created in whole or in part by AI may not be incorporated into any assigned coursework. AI should not be utilized during comp. Checkins.

In this course, the use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT or Adobe Firefly) is not permitted during the completion of any assigned work. Use of a generative AI tool to complete assigned work in whole or in part may be referred under the Code of Student Conduct academic dishonesty provisions for further action by the Dean of Students Office. Students may use generative AI tools to support their independent study of course topics but should do so with the understanding that generative AI tools may not be trustworthy.

File Saving/Assignment Format

Your name must be on all assignment submissions.

All work must be typed, submitted as a PDF, and double-spaced unless otherwise noted. Submissions should follow APA style, have one-inch margins, and use a standard 12-point font (Times New Roman, Calibri, Cambria, Helvetica or Arial). Please proofread your work carefully for spelling or grammatical errors. You will lose points for excessive grammatical or spelling errors. *Please refer to the resources available on Canvas

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE SUPPORT/SERVICES

The [Dean of Students Office](#) provides guidance and support in several ways. A [Dean on Duty](#) is available every weekday from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. as a general referral and advice service for questions or concerns about Illinois State students. We encourage all members of our university community to report to the [Redbird Care Team](#) (RCT) student behavior that is significantly out of character, causes alarm, is unhealthy, and/or is potentially dangerous. RCT is a dedicated interdisciplinary group of professionals committed to supporting students' well-being by identifying opportunities to provide and contribute to student success.

Student Access and Accommodation Services: Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact [Student Access and Accommodation Services](#) at 308 Fell Hall, Office Phone [\(309\) 438-5853](tel:(309)438-5853), Video Phone [\(309\) 319-7682](tel:(309)319-7682) or visit the website at StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu. Please email to let me know if you are seeking accommodation or have accommodations.

Mental Health

Life at college can get very complicated. It's common to face challenges in college, whether they relate to academics, identity, relationships, mental health, or other personal matters. If you're feeling stressed, overwhelmed, anxious, depressed, or simply need someone to talk to, you're not alone—help is available.

[Student Counseling Services \(SCS\)](#) provides FREE and confidential counseling to all students, inclusive of all backgrounds, identities, and experiences. You can visit SCS in person at 320 Student Services Building, make an appointment online through the [Secure Student Health Portal](#), or call (309) 438-3655 to access services. Additional information can be found at Counseling.IllinoisState.edu.

In addition, TimelyCare is a free, 24/7 virtual mental health and well-being platform for ISU students. It offers immediate access to mental health support, including on-demand mental health counseling, scheduled counseling visits, health coaching, and digital self-care. You can access TimelyCare by visiting online at Counseling.IllinoisState.edu/Services/Timely-Care, through the Well-Being page on the ISU mobile app, or by downloading the TimelyCare app.

Please don't hesitate to use these services, and feel free to reach out to your professor if you need help connecting with campus support. Your health and well-being matters.

Redbird Well is ISU's centralized hub for on-campus well-being and recreation resources, finding help, and getting involved. Through Redbird Well students have access to: information pertaining to scheduling Counseling appointments through Student Counseling Services, virtual counseling through Timely Care, medical appointments with Student Health Services, personal training, wellness coaching, and more.

Textbook Assistance

The following resources may be helpful if you are having difficulty or concern paying for your textbooks:

- Milner Library has purchased thousands of [Electronic Textbooks](#); even more texts are available via [I-Share](#).
- [Course Reserves](#) are options and available in 2-hour time blocks inside Milner Library.
- If Milner or the instructor doesn't have a text, you can [request](#) Milner purchase it.
- The [Financial Aid Office](#) can ensure students who are experiencing financial difficulties are using all forms of available aid that may help them purchase textbooks.
- The peer-to-peer [Student Navigator program](#) can help students navigate these resources and explore/assist if the student is experiencing other basic needs insecurity.
- Milner Library lends [technology devices](#) such as laptops, calculators, microphones, and more.

Campus Safety and Security

Illinois State University is committed to maintaining a safe environment for the University community. Please download the [SafeRedbirds app](#), the official safety application for Illinois State University. Students should also consult information posted in each classroom about emergency shelters and evacuation assembly areas (both are indicated on stickers inside every classroom).

Student Technology Support

All students are encouraged to take the [Introduction to Technology Quickstart Orientation](#).

Technology support is available to all students, faculty, and staff through the Technology Support Center (TSC). The TSC is available via phone at (309) 438-HELP and via [chat](#) and [webform](#). Hundreds of [Help articles](#) are available for 24/7 support. Walk-up support, as well as computer repair and technology purchases, are available through TechZone on the first floor of the Bone Student Center and [online](#).

Two software packages are available at no additional charge: [Microsoft 365](#) (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.) and [Adobe Creative Cloud](#). Students can install these programs on their personal computers.

Students who do not have access to the technology they need to be successful in their coursework may [request a loaner laptop](#).

Student Well-Being

The Student Navigator program is a student-led, peer-to-peer initiative in the Dean of Students Office designed to assist students facing economic hardships and basic needs crises. Referrals are available to resources for food, textbooks, housing, finances, health, and more.

For more information, please visit the following link: <https://deanofstudents.illinoisstate.edu/services/student-navigator/>

Academic Help

As your instructor I want to partner with you to help you achieve your personal academic goals. I am glad to set up zoom meetings or answer course related questions via email. Additional services (tutoring, academic coaching, workshops) are available through the [Julia N. Visor Academic Center](#).

In addition, Free peer tutoring is available for math, writing, and everything in between. All ISU tutoring opportunities are now conveniently located on one centralized [website](#).

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE POLICIES

Notice that Instructor may record class session

This is notice that your instructor may record class sessions. Recordings made available at the discretion of the instructor are for use only by students enrolled in the class and only for the purpose of individual or group study. The recordings may not be reproduced, shared with those not enrolled in the class, or uploaded to publicly accessible web environments. Please do not independently record the course without prior written authorization from the instructor or an approved accommodation from [Student Access and Accommodations Services](#).

Regarding students making their own recordings or photographs

Student recording prohibited

Students may not use phones, or other audio or video recording devices to record classroom lectures/class discussions or to take photographs except with an approved accommodation from [Student Access and Accommodations Services](#). Violation of this classroom rule may result in referral to the Student Conduct and Community Responsibilities (SCCR) office for disciplinary action.

Permission required to record

Students who wish to use phones or other audio or video devices to record classroom lectures/discussions or take photographs must obtain written permission from the instructor except with an approved accommodation from [Student Access and Accommodations Services](#). Approved recordings are to be used solely for the purposes of individual or group study with other students enrolled in the class. They may not be reproduced, shared with those not enrolled in the class, or uploaded to publicly accessible web environments. Violation of this classroom rule may result in referral to the Student Conduct and Community Responsibilities (SCCR) office for disciplinary action.

Withdrawal from this class/University

Illinois State administrators and faculty strongly advise students to complete all courses in which they enroll. Students are encouraged to consider withdrawing from courses after the program change period only after they have exhausted all other options. Students are encouraged to speak with their academic advisor or the Dean of Students office before withdrawing from a class or classes. A description of policies related to course withdrawal can be found here: <https://policy.illinoisstate.edu/students/2-1-14.shtml>

Academic Integrity: You are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy as outlined in the [Code of Student Conduct](#) and any additional syllabus language. All work is to be appropriately cited when it is borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Unauthorized and/or unacknowledged collaboration on any work, or the presentation of someone else's work, is plagiarism. For independent assignments, you are expected to demonstrate your knowledge, not an online resource or peers. For this reason, actions such as sharing quiz content, utilization of online 'study tools,' claiming another person's reading guide notes as your own (for assignment submissions), etc. will be considered a violation of academic integrity and a grade penalty may be applied.

Content generated by an Artificial Intelligence third-party service or site (AI-generated content) without proper attribution or authorization is another form of plagiarism. If you are unsure about whether something may be plagiarism or another form of academic dishonesty, please reach out to me to discuss it as soon as possible.

Any allegation of academic dishonesty may be referred to [Student Conduct and Community Responsibilities](#), a unit of the Dean of Students Office for possible review. If found responsible for academic dishonesty, a grade penalty can also be applied.

Students found to inadvertently commit acts of dishonesty will receive appropriate penalties specific to the assignment in question. Students found to commit intentional acts of dishonesty will receive a failing grade on the assignment or course (at the instructor's discretion) and will be referred for appropriate disciplinary action through Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution Office.

Mandated Reporter/Title IX Disclosure: Please note that I am legally obligated to report crimes (present or historical) related to violence (sexual/physical) and child abuse/neglect. Thus, any disclosures you make pertaining to events/crimes (as a victim or perpetrator) through class discussion, assignments, etc. will be reported to appropriate campus personnel in keeping with federal law. For more details please visit: <https://equalopportunity.illinoisstate.edu/mandatory-reporting/>

Illinois State University's Title IX Coordinator is available to assist students with facilitating supportive measures and to discuss options as a result of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, or stalking. All ISU faculty and staff are responsible for reporting disclosures of these crimes to the Title IX Coordinator, so that the student may be contacted about their rights and resources available to them. The Title IX Coordinator can be reached in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access at (309) 438-3383, EqualOpportunity@IllinoisState.edu, or by mail at Campus Box 1280, Normal, IL 61790-1280. More information is available 24/7 at TitleIX.IllinoisState.edu.

- **I am grateful to Jillian Kaufman and Abbie Paul for collaborating on many of the shared syllabus statements and course structure.**

*****Special Note:** The instructor reserves the right to make modifications to the rules, regulations, and schedule of this course. This includes an individual written contract with students as described above. The instructor maintains the authority to revise and adapt these assignments and accompanying points, due dates, and scoring procedures as needed based on formative assessment.

Tentative Course Schedule

Topics/readings/assessments below are subject to change. Please refer to the WEEKLY LINKS in Canvas as our schedule may change throughout the semester. These changes will be communicated explicitly via class/Canvas weekly links (e.g. changes will NOT be updated on the syllabus)

- Unless indicated via Canvas, hard copy completed guided reading notes are due on at the start of class on the day we first discuss a chapter.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading (Complete BEFORE class)	Assignments Due
1	1/13	Syllabus Review and Introduction		
	1/15	Chapter 1: Introduction to Interpersonal Communication	Ch. 1	Ch. 1 Guided Reading Notes Due
2	1/20	Chapter 2: Communication Competence	Ch. 2	Ch. 1 Journal Due Ch. 2 Guided Reading Notes Due
	1/22			Interpersonal COM research day
3	1/27	Chapter 3: Self and Identity	Ch. 3	Ch. 2 Journal Due Ch. 3 Guided Reading notes Due
	1/29	Research Day- Bring laptops		
4	2/3	Chapter 4: Perception		Unit 1 State of Research Assignment Due Ch. 3 Journal Due
	2/5			Ch. 4 Guided Reading Notes Due
5	2/10	Ch. 5: Culture		Ch. 5 Guided Reading Notes Ch. 4 Journal Due
	2/12	Analysis Project day 1		
6	2/17	Analysis Project day 2		Ch. 5 Journal Due
	2/19	Project day 3		Analysis Due
7	2/24	Ch. 6: Verbal Communication		-Peer/Self Evaluations Due -Ch. 6 Guided notes Due
	2/26			Ch. 6 Journal Due
8	3/3	Ch. 7: Nonverbal Communication		Ch. 7 Guided Notes Due
	3/5			Ch. 7 Journal Due
9	3/10	SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS		
	3/12			
10	3/17	Ch. 8: Conversations		-Ch. 8 Guided Notes Due
	3/19			Ch. 8 Journal Due
11	3/24	Ch. 9: Theories of Interpersonal Relationships		Ch. 9 Guided Notes Due
	3/26	Unit 2 Review		Ch. 9 Journal Due Unit II State of the Research Assignment Due

12	3/31	Project Day 1-Workshop day		
	4/2	Project Day 2-Workshop day		
13	4/6	Project Day 3- Unit 2 Analysis Presentations		
	4/9			Self/Peer Evaluation Due before class
14	4/14	Ch. 10: Friendships and Peer Relationships in the Workplace		Ch. 10 Guided Reading Notes
	4/16			Review State of Research Assignment Ch. 10 Journal Due
	4/21	Ch. 11: Romantic Relationships and Families		Ch. 11 Guided Reading Notes Due
	4/23			Ch. 11 Journal Due
15	4/28	Final Project Work		
	4/30	Final Project Work *Final project analysis due		
16	Finals TBA: Unit III State of Research Assignment Due			