

Interpersonal Communication

COMM 218Z | Z1 | Fall 2026

Instructor Information

Name: **Janice M. Bishop, M. S.**

Email: janice.bishop@oregoncoast.edu

Website: Canvas website at oregoncoastcc.instructure.com/

Office Room: Canvas Email

Office Phone: 503.704.5280 after 7:00 a.m. and prior to 9:00 p.m. Canvas email preferred unless urgent. OK to text.

Office Hours: As requested via Zoom

Secondary Contact: Dr. Sarah Whiteford, Dean of CTE and Academic Pathways
sarah.whiteford@oregoncoast.edu

Course Information

Class Room: Online – Canvas

Class Meeting Time: Online – Canvas

Textbook: Wood, J.T. (2020). *Interpersonal communication: Everyday encounters*. (9th ed.) Boston, MA: Cengage. (ISBN-13: 978-0-357-032947). An eTextbook is available to rent from [Cengage](https://www.cengage.com). Print texts are no longer in publication. Used copies are available to purchase at various sources online. Confirm 9th edition.

Materials/Equipment: Learning Management System: All courses are web-enhanced and all students are required to have access to Canvas, which can be accessed through the main OCCC website at OregonCoast.edu. All faculty must use the Canvas gradebook so that students can easily track their grades.

Important Dates

Last day to drop* with a refund in first week: See the [2026-2027 Academic Calendar](#)

Last day to withdraw* with a 'W': See the [2026-2027 Academic Calendar](#)

**Be aware that dropping/withdrawing from a course may affect your financial aid.*

Students are responsible for adding, dropping, and withdrawing from classes by published deadlines. The drop and withdraw deadlines are in the Academic Calendar. Beginning the second week, until the deadline published on the Academic Calendar each term, students may withdraw from classes. A mark of "W" will appear on their transcript.

Tuition and fees remain on the student account when a student chooses to withdraw from a class.

Syllabus Changes

This Syllabus serves only as a guide to this course. The instructor reserves the right to change any part of this Syllabus at any time due to any variety of circumstances. Methods and criteria used to evaluate student performance may also change. If and when changes occur, students will be informed in writing. Students are responsible to keep informed of Syllabus changes as they occur by attending and participating in class and communicating with the instructor.

Course Description

Course Number: COMM 218Z

Course Title: Interpersonal Communication

Credit Hours: 4

Lecture Hours: 40

Lecture/Lab Hours: 0

Lab Hours: 0

COMM 218Z increases the knowledge and use of competent communication skills to better understand oneself, others, and the role of communication in interpersonal relationships.

Prerequisites: WR 121Z and MTH 20 or equivalent placement. Audit available.

This course fulfills the following GE requirements: Arts and Letters/ASOT-B, Arts and Letters/AAS, Arts and Letters/AGS, Arts and Letters/AS, Arts and Letters/AAOT.

Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion, students should be able to

1. Describe how culture, identity, perception, biases, and power influence the communication process.
2. Recognize and analyze interpersonal communication concepts (e.g., ethics, verbal and nonverbal communication, listening, emotions, and conflict).
3. Assess one's own interpersonal skills to become more competent in a variety of relational contexts.
4. Apply foundational concepts and theories to interpersonal communication.

Course Activities and Design

Course outcomes and objectives are met in the face-to-face and online modalities with a combination of lectures, online modules, in-class application activities, out-of-class experiential learning activities, reflection journals, group projects (role plays of course skills), discussion, discussion posts, exercises, interpersonal skill manuals, exams and service learning projects.

NOTE: In order for this course to fulfill the oral communication outcome (**Outcome 4**), instructors need to choose multiple assignments (at least 3) across the term that require synchronous, face-to-face, oral communication activities.

In this class, the satisfactory completion of three out-of-class, synchronous, face-to-face, oral, interpersonal communication experiential applied learning activities, spaced throughout the term, fulfill this outcome.

Outcome Assessment Strategies

The forms of assessment will be determined by the individual instructor. Assessment strategies **may** include any of the following assignments:

- qualitative examinations
- essays
- research papers
- portfolios
- oral presentations
- community based learning
- quantitative examinations
- journals
- in-class participation
- projects
- group work
- dyadic exercises

Student Conduct

Academic Integrity

Learning is built on the fundamental qualities of honesty, fairness, respect, and trust. At Oregon Coast Community College, academic integrity is a shared endeavor characterized by truth, personal responsibility, and high academic standards. Any violation of academic integrity devalues the individual and the community. One important aspect of academic integrity is academic honesty.

Violations of academic honesty include the following behaviors:

- plagiarism
- collusion/inappropriate assistance
- cheating
- fabrication/falsification/alteration
- unauthorized multiple submissions
- sabotage and tampering

A student who violates academic honesty will be subject to disciplinary action according to [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

Policy on Mobile Communication Devices

Students are not permitted to operate cell phones or pagers during class or laboratory sessions, as these devices disrupt learning and teaching activities. Students should use such communication devices only during class breaks outside the classrooms. Discuss exceptions with the Instructor.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

The [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) in the [Student Handbook](#) establish student freedom and protections as well as expectations of appropriate behavior and ethical academic work.

Children on OCCC Property

Students are not allowed to bring children to classes or leave them unattended on campus. We expect compliance from both students and faculty regarding this policy.

Enrolled Minors

The college offers programs that allow minors (students under 18) to enroll in college courses. Students are advised to foster relationships that are age appropriate with classmates.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes in which they are enrolled.

Students must attend and complete required assignments for the first week of the course or be administratively dropped from the course for non-attendance, unless arrangements have been made with the instructor in advance. Attendance is taken in all classes in the first week of the term. Instructors typically continue to take attendance all term.

Repeated absences will affect your grade.

Students are responsible for dropping or withdrawing from registered classes by talking with your Success Coach and completing the official drop/withdrawal process (see [Withdrawal | Oregon Coast Community College](#).) Students who stop attending or have excessive absences and who fail to drop or withdraw from a class by the published deadline may earn a grade of F or NP according to the grade system option selected by the student. Students who fail to attend or stop attending classes and fail to drop those classes by the published drop deadline will be responsible for the associated tuition and fees. Students may not attend classes they are not registered for.

Note: Attendance in this fully online class will be determined by full and timely participation in weekly online discussions.

Course Information

Class Routine

This course will be conducted online on OCCC's Canvas COMM 218Z course website. This course includes (1) researched and cited responses to assigned discussion questions drawn from the text and additional weekly resource content; (2) further exploration of these responses through expanded student-to-student discussions; (3) three out-of-class experiential synchronous learning activities; and (4) a final, open-book, comprehensive final exam.

To remain current with assignments, check the Syllabus frequently for due dates and assignment instructions. In addition, **log in to the course website at least three times per week** to read discussion posts, post in discussions, read emails, and check for new announcements and updates.

Discussion questions will be posted on Monday of each week in the weekly modules. To encourage dialogue, responses to discussion questions should be posted by Wednesday of each week but must be posted by Sunday of each week. Responses to others' posts can be made anytime during the week but must be completely posted by Sunday of each week as well since each Monday the class will be moving on to the next topic(s) of discussion. Students who restrict all their posts in any forum to Sunday will incur a **0.5-pt deduction to that forum grade (discussions are weighted at 3 points each, or 30% of the student's final grade—course is based on 100 points)** as posting on the final day of the week does not facilitate further dialogue. Further, late discussion posts; i.e., posts that take place after Sunday each week, while permissible, will not be credited. That said, students are encouraged to return to prior discussions in order to capture unread posts, including those made to them.

Weekly discussion/participation expectations are further detailed on p.p.11-12 of this Syllabus.

NOTE: While I will read all posts and interact occasionally in the weekly discussions, the purpose of these discussions is for you to (1) demonstrate your understanding of the assigned readings and resources and (2) to engage each other in the exploration of concepts and practices related to interpersonal communication. Also, while accuracy in discussing course concepts is important to learning, grading emphasis is on engagement, participation, and compliance with discussion content requirements, including reflection of all posted chapter resources, and cited direct references to the text in primary responses, as well as the inclusion of citations whenever you quote, paraphrase, or use key concepts from any source

Grades

Grading Criteria

In order to assess student achievement of learning outcomes, I will rely on the evaluation of outcomes of student's (1) contributions to online discussions; (2) three out-of-class experiential synchronous learning activities; and (3) a final exam.

One 5-pt (half-letter grade) extra-credit option is available.

Overall evaluation will be based on (1) demonstration of understanding of the interpersonal communication process, including related principles, concepts, behaviors, skills, and terminology; and (2) the demonstration of preparedness through the timely completion of all assignments.

This course is based on a 100-point grade scale. You will have research, reading, writing, participation, observation, discussion, interviewing, dialogue, analysis, and evaluation requirements. Your final grade will be based on your performance in all of these areas.

AI Policy. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools is allowed in this class providing their use is consistent with the course learning objectives and is used in productive and ethical ways. Essays, code, and images and other media generated by AI tools trained on public data, documents, and images may be subject to copyright infringement, and any use of such tools to generate these should include a statement that AI has been used. Please be aware you are responsible for any information you submit based on an AI query (i.e., it is fact checked and does not contain misinformation or unethical content). Your use of AI tools must be documented and cited to conform to course expectations.

General instructions for discussions and for the three synchronous out-of-class experiential learning assignments are included in this Syllabus. Instructions for the optional extra-credit assignment and the final exam are provided separately—as they are published. They are accessible under “Assignments” in the Canvas course menu.

Note that weekly discussion assignments are broken out from other assignments in the Canvas course menu and are accessible, as they are published, under “Discussions.”

Due dates for all assignments are specified in the Course Calendar that follows.

Note: For ease of access, assignment grades will be entered in the Canvas gradebook. Unless otherwise stipulated, allow 7 days for the publication of individual assignment grades). **Extra-credit points, while showing in the Canvas gradebook, will not be factored into the overall grade as published in the Canvas gradebook but instead will be added manually at the end of the term. This is to ensure that students who do not complete the extra-credit assignment will not incur point losses.**

Grading Scale

A = 90% - 100%
B = 80% - 89%
C = 70% - 79%
D = 60% - 69%
F = 0% - 59%

Late Policy

- Late discussion/participation posts will not be factored into discussion grades.
- The **final exam** will not be accepted late.
- **Synchronous applied learning activity assignments** that are submitted late (1 week maximum) will be accepted but will be assessed a 10% late penalty (a letter grade reduction). Get in touch with me well in advance of the posted deadline (not on the same day) to work out mutually satisfactory arrangements. **Posting late without approval to do so will result in a grade of 0 for that assignment.**
- The **extra-credit assignment** will be accepted late (1 week maximum) and will not be assessed a late penalty.

Assignments	Possible Points
1. Discussion/Participation: 3 pts/forum x 10 forums (30%)	30
2. Synchronous Experiential Applied Learning Activities: 3 @ 15 pts ea (45%)	45
3. Final Exam (25%)	<u>25</u>
TOTAL	100

Course Calendar

The following schedule is subject to change at the instructor's discretion to better accommodate student learning, course outcomes, and course flow. Changes will be announced promptly but may occur without prior notice. Be sure to log in daily and read current announcements/email in order to stay on top of assignment status.

Course Calendar

Wk	Dates	Topics	Assignment(s) Due	Reading (<i>Due at beginning of each week</i>)
1	9/21 – 9/27	Self-introductions, familiarization with website navigation, materials, resources & assignments	Week 1 Discussion Forum - Self-Introductions (not graded—establish Week 1 attendance)	Review Canvas course website information, including Announcements and Syllabus.
2	9/28 – 10/4	A First Look at Interpersonal Communication	Week 2 Discussion Forum (3 pts)	Read Ch 1.
3	10/5 – 10/11	Communication & Personal Identity	Week 3 Discussion Forum (3 pts)	Read Ch 2.
4	10/12 – 10/18	Perception & Communication	Week 4 Discussion Forum (3 pts) <i>Due: Cognitive Schemata Observation (15 pts). Submit via “Assignments” using the “file” tab.</i>	Read Ch 3.
5	10/19 – 10/25	The World of Words	Week 5 Discussion Forum (3 pts)	Read Ch 4.

6	10/26 – 11/1	The World Beyond Words	Week 6 Discussion Forum (3 pts) <i>Due: Optional extra-credit exercise (5 pts): Nonverbal Communication Observation/Analysis. Submit via "Assignments" using the "file" tab.</i>	Read Ch 5.
7	11/2 – 11/8	Mindful Listening	Week 7 Discussion Forum (3 pts) <i>Due: Listening Skills Observation (15 pts). Submit via "Assignments" using the "file" tab.</i>	Read Ch 6.
8	11/9 – 11/15	Emotions & Communication	Week 8 Discussion Forum (3 pts)	Read Ch 7.
9	11/16 – 11/22	Communication Climate: The Foundation of Personal Relationships	Week 9 Discussion Forum (3 pts)	Read Ch 8.
10	11/23 – 11/29	Managing Conflict in Relationships	Week 10 Discussion Forum (3 pts) <i>Due: Workplace Interview (15 pts). Submit via "Assignments" using the "file" tab.</i>	Read Ch 9

11	11/30 – 12/3	Friendships in Our Lives Committed Romantic Relationships Communication in Families <i>Final Exam– due 12/2</i>	Week 11 Discussion Forum (3 pts) <i>Final Discussion Forum (Covers Ch 10-12).</i> <i>Due: Final Exam (25 pts). Submit via “Assignments” using the “file” tab by end of day 12/2. <u>No late exams accepted.</u></i>	Read Ch 10, Ch 11 & Ch 12. <i>End of term 12/4. Loss of course access 12/8 11:59 pm.</i>
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Student Resources

Americans with Disabilities Act

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Oregon Coast Community College provides reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities. If you desire reasonable accommodation, please contact The Office of the Vice President Student Affairs (400 SE College Way, Newport, OR 97366) at 541-867- 8501, or you can email access@oregoncoast.edu. *Students are responsible for requesting accommodations in a timely manner and documenting the nature and extent of their disability.*

OCCC Email

OCCC email is the official form of communication of Oregon Coast Community College. If you have any difficulties accessing your OCCC email address please contact support at helpdesk@oregoncoast.edu

Emergency Funds

If you are experiencing challenges securing food, transportation, or housing, or have other financial issues that are affecting your ability to attend and succeed in class(es), we encourage you to apply for emergency funds. Please call, email, or visit Student Services for assistance (phone: 541-867-8544). If you are comfortable doing so, please let your instructor know about your situation. This will allow for a better understanding and could potentially lead to further support and/or resources.



Use this QR code to access the student resources webpage.

College Information

Land Acknowledgement

Oregon Coast Community College acknowledges that we reside within the ancestral homelands of the Yaquina (Yaqo'n) and Alsea (Wusi'n) Tribes. Today, those tribal descendants are represented by The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. We are honored for the opportunity to teach, learn, and work on their ancestral lands. We also recognize the ongoing contributions they make to the community, Oregon Coast Community College, and the world.

Mission Statement

At Oregon Coast Community College, we equip students for success by providing educational pathways and supports in response to the diverse needs of our community. Through accessible and engaging programs, we enrich the economic and civic vitality of Lincoln County and beyond.

Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination

Oregon Coast Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, or religion in its programs and activities. The following individuals have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

- Vice President Academic and Student Affairs, Dr. Kristina Holton, 541-867-8511 kristina.holton@oregoncoast.edu, or
- Director of Human Resources, Joy Gutknecht, 541-867-8515 [\[joy.gutknecht@oegoncoast.edu\]](mailto:joy.gutknecht@oegoncoast.edu).

COMM 218Z Assignment Instructions

1. Discussion/Participation (30 points)

To earn the full 30 points for discussion/participation, you must post at least one comprehensive response to assigned discussion question(s). Responses must include cited direct references to the text to support your reasoning AND these responses must reflect your review of required posted module resources (excludes .PPT and resources marked as optional). Further, you must

regularly respond in depth to others' posts (minimum of 2 additional reply posts per forum) to ask questions, add to, clarify, and/or challenge information. While it is not a requirement that you respond to posts directed to you, it is a recommended courtesy.

Note that 30 points total are allocated to 10 discussion and participation assignments combined over 12 weeks; that is, 3 points per forum or 30% of your overall grade.

Discussion assignments must be completed in the week they are assigned. Students who restrict all their posts to Sunday, regardless of compliance with other requirements, will incur a 0.5-pt deduction from that forum grade as posting on the final day of the week does not facilitate further dialogue. In order to earn any credit, you must, at minimum, respond to the assigned discussion forum question. For optimum learning, read all posts, including mine.

NOTE: While I read all posts and interact occasionally in the weekly discussions, the purpose of these discussions is for you to (a) demonstrate your understanding of the assigned readings and to (b) engage each other in the exploration of concepts and practices related to interpersonal communication behavior. Also, while accuracy in discussing course concepts is important to learning, grading emphasis is on engagement, participation, and compliance with discussion content requirements, including providing cited direct references both to the text and also to the required module resources and including citations whenever you quote (set off all quoted material with quotation marks), paraphrase, or discuss key concepts from any source. Citing instructions are provided.

2. Synchronous Cognitive Schemata Observation/Evaluation (15 pts) - See the separate grading rubric for a checklist of the assignment requirements and also use it as a guide for developing your report content. Due as stated in the Course Calendar.

This assignment provides you with the opportunity to identify how your perceptual processes affect your impressions of people. Submit your report per the following overall instructions via "Assignments" using the "File" tab.

Be sure to plan ahead as this assignment must be completed in the same week it is assigned and must be conducted in real time.

Observe Yourself

The next time you meet a new person face to face this week, pay attention to the cognitive schemata you use.

First, notice how you classify the person. Do you categorize him or her as a potential friend, date, coworker, neighbor, etc.? What is the prototype you draw on? A prototype is a person you base your initial assessment on—who in your mind is the person who is the ideal representation of this category (acquaintance)?

Next, identify the constructs you use to assess the person. Do you focus, for example, on physical characteristics (attractive-not attractive), mental qualities (intelligent-not intelligent), psychological features (secure-not secure), or interpersonal qualities (friendly-not friendly)?

Note how you stereotype the person. What do you expect him or her to do based on the prototype and constructs you have applied?

Finally, identify your script, or how you expect interaction to unfold between you.

Evaluate Your Response

Ask yourself whether you would rely on different constructs if you used a different prototype to classify the person. Why or why not? Do you believe the stereotype(s) you applied as being potentially accurate or inaccurate? Why? Harmful or helpful? Why? Back up your reasoning throughout with cited direct references to Ch 3 in the text.

3. Synchronous Listening Skills Observation/Evaluation (15 pts) - See the separate grading rubric for a checklist of the assignment requirements and also use it as a guide for developing your report content. Due as stated in the Course Calendar.

This assignment provides you with the opportunity to build your interpersonal communication listening skills by becoming more mindful. Submit your report per the following instructions via "Assignments" using the "File" tab.

Be sure to plan ahead as this assignment must be completed in the same week it is assigned and must be conducted in real time.

Observe Yourself

Follow these guidelines in a face-to-face interaction that calls for you to listen:

1. Empty your mind of thoughts, ideas, plans, and concerns so that you are open to the other person.
2. Concentrate on the person with whom you are interacting. Say to yourself, "I want to focus on this person and on what he or she is feeling and thinking."
3. If you find yourself framing responses to the other person, try to push those aside; they interfere with your concentration on the other person's words.
4. If your mind wanders, don't criticize yourself; that is distracting. Instead, gently refocus on the person you are with and on what that person is communicating to you. It is natural for other thoughts to intrude, so just push them away and stay focused on the other person.
5. Let the other person know you are attending mindfully--give nonverbal responses (nods, facial expressions); ask questions to encourage elaboration; and keep eye contact.

Evaluate Your Listening Behavior

Evaluate how mindfully you listened. Did you understand the other person's thoughts and feelings? How do you know? Did you feel more focused on that person than you usually do when you listen to him /her? Were there identifiable triggers that may have influenced your ability to be mindful? What went well? What do you need to work on? What changes can you make that will help you be a more mindful listener? Back up your reasoning throughout with cited support from Ch 6 in the text.

4. Synchronous Interview Workplace Application of Interpersonal Communication Skills/Evaluation (15 pts) - See the separate grading rubric for a checklist of the assignment requirements and also use it as a guide for developing your report content. Due as stated in the Course Calendar.

This assignment provides you with the opportunity to identify necessary workplace interpersonal communication skills in your chosen profession and assess which ones you currently have and which ones you need to develop or improve. Submit your report per the following instructions via "Assignments" using the "File" tab.

Be sure to plan ahead as this assignment must be completed in the same week it is assigned and must be conducted in real time.

Conduct Interview

Conduct an Interview (**face to face** using any synchronous method—in person, Zoom, Face Time, etc.) with a professional in the field you plan to enter. Ask him or her to explain the interpersonal communication skills needed for success and advancement in this field.

Report Findings

List the desired workplace interpersonal communication skills for this field.

Devise Action Plan

Which skills do you already have? Which skills do you need to develop or improve? How do you plan to do so? Devise a personal action plan--you need a specific action plan for improvement. It is one thing to be mindful of what you want to work on, but, to be successful, you need a well-defined, step-by-step, action plan, including metric(s) for defining improvement/ success. Back up your reasoning throughout with cited support from the text and/or any pertinent course content.