

COMM 3230 - Family Communication Syllabus – Summer Session 2, 2025

Excluding materials for purchase, syllabus information may be subject to change. The most up-to-date syllabus is located within the course in HuskyCT.

Course and Instructor Information

Course Title: Family Communication (COMM 3230)

Credits: 3

Mode of Instruction: Online Asynchronous (OA)

Prerequisites: COMM 2200

Professor: [Amanda Cooper, Ph.D](#)

Email: amandacooper@uconn.edu (preferred)

Office Hours/Availability: By appointment via [WebEx](#)

Course Materials

Required course materials should be obtained before the first day of class.

Required textbooks are available for purchase through the **UConn Bookstore**: [Find Course Materials](#), Campus: Storrs. Textbooks can be shipped ([fees apply](#)).

Required Materials:

Dorrance Hall, E. & Scharp, K. M. (2019). Communication in Family Contexts: Theories and Processes. Wiley.

Online ISBN:9781394260355 |DOI:10.1002/9781394260355

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/book/10.1002/9781394260355>

The University has set minimum [device requirements for all students](#).

Additional instructional materials and links to resources are available from within the HuskyCT course.

Course Description

The role of communication theories and processes in family contexts, construed broadly to include the biological, legal, and voluntary kin comprising diverse families today. Formerly offered as COMM 4240.

This course introduces students to the theories and processes that shape communication within family contexts. We will explore the ways that communication helps define and maintain family relationships broadly, including not only the people related to us by blood (e.g., parents, siblings) and by law (e.g., spouses, in-laws), but also those we view and claim as family. Given the increasing diversity of contemporary families, this course will explore many family relationship types beyond the traditional “nuclear” family to discuss topics such as voluntary childlessness, divorce and relational dissolution, remarriage and stepfamilies, adoption, and LGBTQ+ families.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. Explain the terms, principles, and theories of family communication.
2. Identify examples of family communication theories and concepts in the media and in their own family relationships.

3. Compare the strengths and limitations of family communication theories as they relate to specific family processes and relationships.
4. Critique common conceptualizations of “family” and their relationship with family communication.
5. Apply family communication theories and concepts within their own family relationships.

Course Outline (and Calendar if Applicable)

Module 1: What counts as Family?

Module 2: Creating Family through Communication

Module 3: Family Formation: First comes love, then comes marriage? Then comes baby in a baby carriage?

Module 4: It's all in the family: Family secrets, privacy, and disclosure

Module 5: Birds of a feather stick together: Managing difficulty as a family

Course Requirements and Grading

Summary of Course Grading:

Course Components	Weight
VoiceThread Discussions	30%
Field Journal Project	50%
Quizzes	20%

VoiceThread Discussions

Part 1: Post a short clip from a TV show or movie, briefly explain the family relationships represented in the clip, and explain any other details needed for us to understand the clip.

Part 2: Watch the family communication in the video posted by one of your fellow students.

- (1) Select one of the key models/concepts discussed in the module
- (2) Briefly explain the model/concept you have selected.
- (3) Identify specific ways that the model/concept is demonstrated through the family communication in the clip.
- (4) Answer a few additional application questions

Field Journal Project

The purpose of the field journal assignment is for you to apply course concepts within your own family relationships. In each model you will “go into the field” to analyze the communication within your own family. Each field journal entry will use different prompts and focus on different course concepts.

Quizzes

There will be several brief quizzes in each module on the readings and videos.

Grading Scale:

Information on grades and grading can be found on the Registrar's site and in the catalog:

- [Registrar's Information on Grading Scales](#)
- [Undergraduate Catalog Grade Information](#)

General explanation of the meaning of grades:

Grade	Letter Grade	Percent
Excellent	A	93% or higher
	A-	90-92.99
Very Good Good	B+	87-89.99
	B	83-86.99
	B-	80-82.99
	C+	77-79.99
Average	C	73-76.99
Fair	C-	70-72.99
Poor	D+	67-69.99
	D	63-66.99
Merely Passing	D-	60-62.99
Failure	F	59.99 or lower

Due Dates and Late Policy

All course due dates are identified in the course schedule at the end of the syllabus. Deadlines are based on Eastern Time; if you are in a different time zone, please adjust your submittal times accordingly. *The instructor reserves the right to change dates accordingly as the semester progresses. All changes will be communicated in an appropriate manner.*

Late Policy

Late assignments will receive 10% off for every day they are late (including weekends).

Missed Assessment Policy

In general, missed assignments cannot be made up. If you experience uncontrollable circumstances that prevent you from completing assignments, please contact me as soon as possible. I can do more to accommodate you before a due date than I can after, and the longer you wait, the less flexibility I will have in giving accommodations.

Incompletes will not be given for any reason.

Feedback and Grades

I will make every effort to provide feedback and grades in one week. To keep track of your performance in the course, refer to My Grades in HuskyCT.

Weekly Time Commitment

You should expect to dedicate 20 to 25 hours a week to this course. This expectation is based on the various course activities, assignments, and assessments and the University of Connecticut's policy regarding credit hours. More information related to hours per week per credit can be accessed at the [Online Student website](#).

Student Authentication and Verification

The University of Connecticut is required to verify the identity of students who participate in online courses and to establish that students who register in an online course are the same students who participate in, complete the course activities and assessments, and receive academic credit. Verification and authentication of student identity in this course will include:

1. Secure access to the learning management system using your unique UConn NetID and password.
2. Use of voice thread discussions.
3. Field journal assignments that require uploading interview recordings and pictures of one's family.

Students who do not complete the above required authentication steps may be denied access to the course and given an incomplete. Students could lose credit if the identity of the enrolled student completing course activities and assessments cannot be confirmed.

Virtual Classroom Guidelines

Engaging Online

Just as in a physical classroom, we need a culture of respect in our online classroom. I expect each student to engage with myself and other students in a respectful manner. This includes respecting other's opinions and values, and supporting an inviting and inclusive environment. If at any point you feel uncomfortable with the course material or the behavior of other students, please contact me.

The University of Connecticut does not tolerate harassment. Harassment consists of abusive behavior directed toward an individual or group because of race, color, ethnicity, religious creed, age, sex, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, genetic information, physical or mental disability (including learning disability, intellectual disability, and past/present history of a mental disorder), veteran's status, prior conviction of a crime, gender identity or expression, or membership in any other protected classes as set forth in state or federal law. All members of the University community are responsible for the maintenance of a social environment in which people are free to work and learn without fear of discrimination and abuse.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is not permitted. Submitted written work which misrepresents work from another source as a student's own constitutes plagiarism. Sanctions are applied whether the violation was intentional or not. Additional examples of plagiarism and academic integrity violations include: (a) lazily/hastily taking notes and using someone else's language without citing it and/or using quotation marks; (b) handing in another's work or part of another's work as your own, (c) turning in one of your old papers for a current class, (d) turning in the same or similar past or current paper for two different classes, (e) presenting a group project as your work solely, (f) purchasing or otherwise obtaining research or papers written by another and turning that work in as your own, (g) using unauthorized notes or other study aids or otherwise obtaining another's answers for an examination. All submitted work should cite relevant sources in APA 7. Instances of plagiarism will be reported via an Academic Integrity Reporting Form to the University following guidance from the Student Conduct Process. All submitted written work will be submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detection software. Review the "Understanding Plagiarism" tutorial offered by the UConn Library. Please review the library's [Plagiarism Resources](#).

Recording Lectures

The web-based video delivery of each class in this course is for sole use of the students enrolled in this course. Any other use of these class videos or any pictures or derivatives of the class videos without the written consent of the course's professor is prohibited.

The videos created by students as part of this course are for sole use of the students enrolled in this course. Any other use of these videos or any pictures or derivatives of the videos without the written consent of the video creator is prohibited.

Copyright

My lectures, notes, handouts, and displays are protected by state common law and federal copyright law. They are my own original expression and I've recorded them prior or during my lecture in order to ensure that I obtain copyright protection. Students are authorized to take notes in my class; however, this authorization extends only to making one set of notes for your own personal use and no other use. I will inform you as to whether you are authorized to record my lectures at the beginning of each semester. If you are so authorized to record my lectures, you may not copy this recording or any other material, provide copies of either to anyone else, or make a commercial use of them without prior permission from me.

Student Responsibilities and Resources

As a member of the University of Connecticut student community, you are held to certain standards and academic policies. In addition, there are numerous resources available to help you succeed in your academic work.

Use of ChatGPT and other AI

AI aggregates the ideas and insights of many researchers without giving them credit. Submitting AI-generated text as your own work would be an act of plagiarism insofar as it would involve passing off the work of others as your own.

The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion board prompts assigned to you or content that you put into a chat.
- Completing group work that your group has assigned to you, unless it is mutually agreed upon that you may utilize the tool.
- Writing a draft of a writing assignment.
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments.
- Replacing or supplanting, in whole or in part, human data analysis and interpretation processes.
- Drafting writing, in whole or part, within documents pertaining to legal or ethical research processes within the University (e.g., IRB documents).
- Passing off AI-generated writing as your own without explicitly acknowledging the use of an AI tool and describing how, specifically, it was used.

Again, you are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws, or contain misinformation or unethical. **Submitting AI generated material as your own work will result in a grade of 0 for the assignment and will be reported to the Dean of Students.**

Review these important [standards, policies and resources](#), which include:

- The Student Code
 - Resources on Avoiding Cheating and Plagiarism
- [Academic, Scholarly, and Professional Integrity and Misconduct \(ASPIM\)](#)
- Copyrighted Materials
- Credit Hours and Workload
- Netiquette and Communication
- Adding or Dropping a Course
- Academic Calendar
- Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Inappropriate Romantic Relationships
- Sexual Assault Reporting Policy

Student Health and Wellness

The University of Connecticut strives to support the optimal well-being of all students. [Student Health and Wellness](#) (SHaW) offers a comprehensive set of services including medical care, mental health, and health promotion.

Students with Disabilities

The University of Connecticut is committed to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and assuring that the learning environment is accessible. Students who require accommodations should contact the Center for Students with Disabilities, Wilbur Cross Building Room 204, (860) 486-2020 or <http://csd.uconn.edu/>.

Blackboard measures and evaluates accessibility using two sets of standards: the WCAG 2.0 standards issued by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act issued in the United States federal government." (Retrieved March 24, 2013 from [Blackboard's website](#))

Software/Technical Requirements (with Accessibility and Privacy Information)

The University has set minimum [device requirements for all students](#). **NOTE:** Chromebooks do not meet the minimum requirements.

The software/technical requirements for this course include:

- HuskyCT/Blackboard ([HuskyCT/ Blackboard Accessibility Statement](#), [HuskyCT/ Blackboard Privacy Policy](#))
- [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) ([Adobe Reader Accessibility Statement](#), [Adobe Reader Privacy Policy](#))
- Microsoft Office ([free to UConn students](#)) ([Microsoft Accessibility Statement](#), [Microsoft Privacy Statement](#))
- VoiceThread ([Accessibility Statement](#), [Privacy Policy](#))
- Dedicated access to high-speed internet with a minimum speed of 1.5 Mbps (4 Mbps or higher is recommended).
- Webcam and microphone

For information on managing your privacy at the University of Connecticut, visit the [University's Privacy page](#).

NOTE: This course has NOT been designed for use with mobile devices.

Help

This course is facilitated online using the learning management platform, [HuskyCT](#). The [IT Knowledge Base](#) provides students with support, troubleshooting, and how-to information about HuskyCT. The [IT Knowledge Base](#) includes a video tour of HuskyCT.

For technical help with HuskyCT, you have access to the in-person/live person support options available during regular business hours through the [Technology Support Center](#). You also have [24x7 Course Support](#) outside of business hours, including access to live chat, phone, and support documents.

[Technical and Academic Help](#) provides a guide to frequently asked questions for online students.

Study Groups

Are you interested in forming a study group with other students in the class? There is a [study group application](#) in Nexus that can help you get started. View this [video](#) for more information.

Minimum Technical Skills

To be successful in this course, you will need the following technical skills:

- Use electronic mail with attachments.
- Save files in commonly used word processing program formats.
- Copy and paste text, graphics or hyperlinks.
- Work within two or more browser windows simultaneously.
- Access PDF files.
- Use a webcam and microphone.

Evaluation of the Course

Students will be provided an opportunity to evaluate instruction in this course using the University's [Student Evaluation of Teaching \(SET\)](#), which is administered by the [Office of Budget, Planning and Institutional Research \(BPIR\)](#).

Additional informal formative surveys may also be administered within the course as an optional evaluation tool.