

# Close Relationships (CMST 412)

Fall 2020

TTH 9:50-11:05am

HSS-71C

**Instructor:** Dr. Jenny Crowley  
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**Office Hours:** W 10-12:30pm drop in office hours on Zoom:  
<https://tennessee.zoom.us/j/97514142552>  
FtF appointments, when necessary, available upon request

**Course Description:** This course is designed to introduce you to communication theories and variables of interpersonal communication that you may not have thoroughly covered in your prior coursework (e.g., CMST 312). During this course you will develop a deeper understanding of how communication functions in close relationships, such as those between friends, romantic partners, and family members. You will also be encouraged to apply theoretical concepts from class to your relationships. This will occur through lectures, class discussions, examinations, and written assignments.

## Course Objectives:

- Examine, analyze, and apply various theories and concepts of relational communication.
- Develop skills related to academic and professional development, including reading original research, conducting research, writing for scholarly audiences, and presenting information to large groups.
- Practice the principles of relationship building and group interaction.

## Required Text:

Guerrero, L. K., Andersen, P. A., & Afifi, W. A. (Eds.), (2017). *Close encounters: Communication in relationships*, (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage.

## Course Assignments:

**Discussions (10 points each):** There will be discussion forums related to each week's topic. Discussion posts will serve as the online learning activity when students are not meeting face-to-face/simulcast for the class period. Discussions require an initial post to the prompt and two follow-up replies to peers. You are expected to read the course material before posting, and posts should reference class concepts and represent intelligent, thoughtful, and analytical contributions. Discussions will occur 10 times throughout the semester and each discussion is worth 10 points (10 X 10 = 100 points total). To receive the full 10 points, students must complete the initial post and two replies, reference class content in all postings, and remain respectful towards peers.

**Identity Project (40 points):** This assignment asks you to explore your identity using the Communication Theory of Identity's (CTI) four frames of identity. This assignment

consists of two parts. You will write a 3-4 page paper unpacking how CTI's four identity frames apply to you. You will also create a digital collage that explores your identity, which will be presented to the class. A detailed description of the assignment is available on Canvas.

**Exams (60 points each):** There will be three exams. The exams are designed to assess your understanding of foundational concepts, including key terms, theories, and researchers associated with close relationships. The exams will include a wide-range of question types including short answer, multiple choice, and true/false.

**Research Application Paper (80 points).** You will write a 6-8 page research application paper to demonstrate your knowledge about an interpersonal communication behavior or issue in a particular personal relationship. A detailed description of the assignment is available on Canvas.

**Calculating the Final Grade:**

|                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Identity Collage           | 40 points                     |
| Discussion Posts           | 100 points                    |
| Exam 1                     | 60 points                     |
| Exam 2                     | 60 points                     |
| Exam 3                     | 60 points                     |
| Research Application Paper | 80 points                     |
|                            | 400 points total are possible |

**Grading:** The following chart displays the grading scale used in this course.

|    |         |    |         |    |              |
|----|---------|----|---------|----|--------------|
| A  | 400-372 | B- | 331-320 | D+ | 279-268      |
| A- | 371-360 | C+ | 319-308 | D  | 267-252      |
| B+ | 359-348 | C  | 307-292 | D- | 251-240      |
| B  | 347-332 | C- | 291-280 | F  | 239 or lower |

**Course Policies:**

**Late Assignments:** Papers, presentations, and exams must be turned in or completed in class on the day they are due. Late work is acceptable **only by arrangement with me**, and it may not always be possible to make up an assignment. If you need a make-up opportunity or extension for any assignment, you need to contact me **before** the class period in which the assignment is due. Extensions or make up work will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

**Final Grades:** My work at the end of the semester is that of a calculator. I add the points you received throughout the semester and identify where your total score lies within the grading scale described above. There is very little I can do to improve a grade at the end of the semester. If you are concerned about your grade, the time to see me is during the semester, preferably before the second half of the semester. Don't wait too

long to see me about grade concerns. At the end of the semester, the grade received is the grade earned based on your total points. This means if you are 1 point away from a B-, you have received a C+ in the course.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact Student Disability Services in Dunford Hall, at 865-974-6087, or by video relay at, 865-622-6566, to coordinate reasonable academic accommodations.

**CCI Diversity Statement:** The College of Communication and Information recognizes and values diversity. Exposing students to diverse people, ideas and cultures increases opportunities for intellectual inquiry, encourages critical thinking, and enhances communication and information competence. When all viewpoints are heard, thoughtfully considered, and respectfully responded to, everyone benefits. Diversity and fairness unite us with the wider professional and global community.

**Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity is taken very seriously. If you violate academic standards of conduct, you risk failing this course or possible suspension from the university. Violations include (but are not limited to) cheating, plagiarism, use of a paper that has been turned in by you or someone else in another class, and unauthorized possession of exam materials. **If caught engaging in academic dishonesty in this course you will receive a zero in the course.** You are responsible for being familiar with university policies on such matters; including a thorough understanding of the university's Honor Statement:

*An essential feature of the University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the university, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity.*

**COVID-19:** Students are required to wear face masks at all times and maintain social distancing (6 feet between individuals in traditional classrooms, or, in instructional laboratories and similar settings, only a few minutes in closer proximity when absolutely necessary to achieve learning objectives). Students who are feeling ill or experiencing symptoms such as sneezing, coughing, or a higher than normal temperature will be excused from class and should stay at home. Instructors have the right to ask those who are not complying with these requirements to leave class in the interest of everyone's health and safety. In the event that a student refuses to comply with these requirements, the instructor has the right to cancel class. Additionally, following other simple practices will promote good health in and out of the classroom, such as frequent and thorough hand washing, wiping down desks and seats with disinfectant wipes whenever possible, not sharing personal items such as pens and cell phones, and avoiding crowded hallways and other enclosed spaces. The Volunteer Creed reminds us that we bear the torch in order to give light to others. As Volunteers, we commit to caring for one another and for the members of the communities in which we live, work,

and learn. This semester, the University asks that we all demonstrate the Volunteer spirit by following these and other health guidelines and requirements.

**Tentative Course Schedule:**

Tentative schedule subject to change as instructor deems necessary.

| <b>Week</b>  | <b>Sessions</b>     | <b>Topic of the Week</b>                              | <b>Reading</b>       | <b>Due</b>   |
|--|---------------------|---|----------------------|--|
| 1  | TH 8.20             | Introduction to the Course                            | Syllabus<br>Chap. 1  | Read and Sign 'A letter from Dr. C'                      |
| 2  | T 8.25<br>TH 8.27   | Communicating Identity                                | Chap. 2              | Discussion 1 due TH                                      |
| 3  | T 9.1<br>TH 9.3     | Attraction  | Chap. 3              | Discussion 2 due TH                                      |
| 4  | T 9.8<br>TH 9.10    | Uncertainty   | Chap. 4              | Discussion 3 due TH<br><br>Identity paper due TH 11:59pm |
| 5  | T 9.15<br>TH 9.17   | Relationship Changes<br>and Information<br>Management | Chap. 5<br>Chap. 6   | Discussion 4 due TH                                      |
| 6  | T 9.22<br>TH 9.24   | Exam Week   |                      | Zoom Exam Review T, Online<br>Exam TH                    |
| 7  | T 9.29<br>TH 10.1   | Getting Closer  | Chap. 7              | Attend Diversity Week Panel T                            |
| 8  | T 10.6<br>TH 10.8   | Love and Sex  | Chap. 8<br>Chap. 9   | Discussion 5 due TH                                      |
| 9  | T 10.13<br>TH 10.15 | Relationship Maintenance                              | Chap. 10             | Discussion 6 due TH<br><br>Topic proposal due TH 11:59pm |
| 10   | T 10.20<br>TH 10.22 | Conflict  | Chap. 11             | Discussion 7 due TH                                      |
| 11   | T 10.27<br>TH 10.29 | Exam Week   |                      | Zoom Exam Review T, Online<br>Exam TH                    |
| 12   | T 11.3<br>TH 11.5   | Power   | Chap. 12             | Discussion 8 due TH                                      |
| 13   | T 11.10<br>TH 11.12 | Transgressions and<br>Forgiveness                     | Chap. 13<br>Chap. 14 | Discussion 9 due TH                                      |
| 14   | T 11.17<br>TH 11.19 | Ending Relationships                                  | Chap. 15             | Discussion 10 due TH                                     |
| 15   | T 11.24             | Finding Closure                                       |                      | Meet on Zoom, Research<br>application paper due 11:59pm  |
| <b>FINAL EXAM THURSDAY DECEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup> 3:30-5:30PM</b> |                     |   |                      |  |