



COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT

COMM 3322

TERM AND INSTRUCTOR INFO

Spring 2020

Tues/Thurs 12-1:20pm

Bell 130A

Instructor: Dr. Corrie Boudreaux

Email: cmboudreaux@utep.edu . I am available by email typically within 5-6 hours on weekdays and 24-48 hours on weekends.

Office Hours: MW 10am – 12pm; Cotton Memorial 307A (go through computer lab)

COURSE OVERVIEW

The overall purpose of the course is to examine conflict in everyday life with a particular focus on the role that communication plays in the development and management of conflict situations. The course examines the dynamics of everyday conflicts across a variety of settings, from interpersonal relationships to the workplace. We will draw on the readings, the conflict management literature, our own experiences, and case studies discussed in class to examine the nature and development of conflicts, learn the principles of conflict, and learn the techniques for productive conflict management.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will learn to:

- Understand and appreciate the role of communication in conflict and conflict management processes.
- Analyze the components of conflict that lead to constructive or destructive communication patterns.
- Appreciate the many variables to consider in the selection of strategies, methods, and responses that are appropriate to a given conflict situation.
- Understand and make recommendations for effective conflict management communication and strategies in various contexts of interest.

TEXTBOOK

Dudley Cahn and Ruth Abigail, *Managing Conflict Through Communication*, 5th ed (2014).

Digital ISBN: 9780205914852

Hard Copy ISBN: 9780205862139

In addition to the textbook, you will be required to read one of the following books:

-Zimbardo, P. (2007). *The Lucifer effect: Understanding how good people turn evil*. New York: Random House.

-Tavris, C., & Aaronson, E. (2007). *Mistakes were made (but not by me): Why we justify foolish beliefs, bad decisions, and hurtful acts*. New York: Harcourt.

-Gladwell, M. (2019). *Talking to strangers: What we should know about the people we don't know*. Little, Brown, and Company.

-Miller, R. (2015). *Conflict communication: A new paradigm in conscious communications*. YMAA Publication Center.

GRADING AND EVALUATION

Your grade is based on the following categories and assignments:

- **Attendance - 100 points.** Attendance is required. Having more than 3 unexcused absences will negatively impact your grade. I appreciate the courtesy of receiving notification when you will be absent, but notification alone will not make your absence excused. Documentation is required and absences will be excused according to University policy and my discretion. If you do not intend to finish the course, it is your responsibility to drop the course before the drop deadline. If you drop after the drop deadline, or if you remain on the roster without attending class/doing work, you will be graded according to whatever work you've completed; any work you've missed will be counted as a zero and will negatively affect your final grade.
- **Reading Review – 200 points.** You should come to class prepared by having completed all readings for that day. You should be prepared to contribute your opinions, questions, and examples. For each textbook chapter that is assigned, you will submit a "Reading Review" (instructions on Blackboard) before class. There are 11 total Reading Review assignments; you can choose one "free" week to skip this assignment without penalty.
- **Journal – 450 points.** One of the goals of this course is for you to become more self-aware about your own participation in communication and conflict. Your journal assignments are essentially a semester-long project on your personal conflict management development. These assignments will include an initial assessment, an action plan paper, three conflict worksheets, and a final self-assessment paper. Details will be provided on Blackboard.
- **Conflict Case Analysis – 200 points.** In small groups, you will choose a conflict (organizational, cultural, political, etc.) and prepare a presentation in which you analyze the conflict and demonstrate your expertise in applying theories and concepts from the course to real-life conflict resolution.
- **Book presentation/report – 200 points.** You will choose one of the supplemental books and prepare a presentation and brief report for that book.

I do not offer extra credit and I do not round up grades because you are only one point away from an A, etc. If you are concerned about your grade, complete all assignments on time and ask me for help as soon as possible. Do not wait until late in the semester to seek help.

Your assignments must be submitted through Blackboard. Assignment descriptions, videos, announcements, and materials will be made available on Blackboard. You are responsible for having access to and regularly checking your UTEP email account and the Blackboard page for this course.

You are in a 3000-level Communication class. I have high standards for your written and oral communication skills. If you have concerns about your writing ability, you must start working on writing assignments EARLY and you must make appointments with the University Writing Center to help you through the writing process. Organization, clarity, grammar, spelling, etc., WILL be a factor in your grade on written assignments. Come talk to me if you have questions or concerns about these expectations.

Grading is on a ten-point scale:

As listed above, your total possible points in the class is 1150. This total may be subject to slight fluctuation for each individual. To calculate your grade, your earned points will be divided by total possible points to find a percentage. Please note that an "A" is awarded for outstanding/impressive work, not for work that adequately meets requirements.

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

Late Policy:

Late assignments will receive either a grade a reduction or a zero. Extensions may be granted for if there is a legitimate need. If you intend to request an extension on any assignment for a legitimate reason, you must notify me in advance about the reason why you need an extension. Extensions may be given for serious reasons such as serious illness, military obligations, or religious observance. Documentation is required. I do not accept most extension requests after deadlines have passed. Extensions are granted at my discretion.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is required. Three or more unexcused absences will negatively affect your final grade. There is no make-up work unless you have a legitimate excuse with documentation. You are responsible for dropping the class if you no longer wish to attend and complete assignments. If you haven't dropped the class, you will continue to receive zeros on work that you do not complete and you may receive an F at the end of the term.

OTHER POLICIES

- All work must be completed by you. All work must be completed this semester. You may not turn in work you've done prior to this class. You may not turn in work that you've also submitted in another class. You may not turn in work you didn't do. If you violate this policy, you will receive a zero on that assignment. In addition, you may receive a zero for the course and/or be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.
- Conflict sometimes involves offensive or violent words and actions. You may be asked to discuss and/or view images of subjects/topics that are offensive or graphic in nature.
- I do not accept assignment submissions through email.

- No audio or video recording during class unless necessary as an accommodation with proper documentation from CASS.
- No cell phones, laptops, etc., during class unless specific instructions or permissions are given. Notes must be taken with pen/paper unless an alternate method is necessary for accommodation, with proper documentation from CASS.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of rules articulated in UTEP's Handbook of Operating Procedures. It is also contrary to the process of organizational leadership itself, and includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Any sort of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously. Students will receive a zero on any assignment where there is a reasonable suspicion of cheating, plagiarism, and/or collusion. Additionally, students who are suspected of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. More information can be found in the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures, under the heading "Alleged Student Scholastic Dishonesty" and the UT System Regent's Rules and Regulations.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires reasonable accommodations be made for students with documented special needs, and that all materials needed for a course be made available to all students in that course, whether it is face-to-face or online. If you have any special needs that require accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. In order to receive accommodations, you will need to make a formal request by contacting the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at cass@utep.edu or visit <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>.