



Peru State College  
**SPCH 154 – INTERPERSONAL AND SMALL GROUP COMMUNICATION**  
Syllabus – Spring [1] – 2012

**Instructor:** Mr. PK Simmons, M.A. Communication; M.S. Education  
**Office Hours:** Online Virtual Office - e-mail checked regularly  
**Contact Telephone:** 402-291-5161 (home)  
**Email Address:** **PSimmons@peru.edu**  
**Course Meets:** Online

**Required Textbook:** Lumsden, G. (2006) *Communicating with Credibility and Confidence* (3 ed.) Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth

**Required Software:** Microsoft Word

### **Course Description & Objectives**

This course provides an overview of the concepts, basic theoretical and practical aspects of the study of interpersonal and small group communication. The purpose of this course is to introduce the student to the basic theoretical and practical aspects of interpersonal and group communication. Areas of concentration will focus on variables associated with the discipline of communication, theories of communication, and communication contexts. The process of communication in small groups is explored. Verbal, nonverbal, and metacommunication are examined. Students are expected to master the terminology of the discipline, the interrelationship of concepts, and the application of concepts and ideas to a variety of contexts.

Prerequisites: None

Upon completion of this course you should be able to:

1. Define key terms associated with interpersonal and small group communication
2. Explain various concepts and theories associated with the field of communication
3. Apply communicative tools and techniques to everyday situations
4. Evaluate communication samples using tools and techniques presented in this course

At the beginning of the course, we will discuss how these objectives fit into the College's and School's mission and goals. The instructor reserves the right to modify any aspect of the course syllabus or content. Any modifications will be communicated to students in advance.

### **Expectations & Instructional Approach**

The course is conducted online via Blackboard.

Communication with students will be via Blackboard announcements and student PSC Acornmail e-mail accounts. Students are required to check their Acornmail accounts regularly.

Students are required to participate in online discussion; read the textbook; take periodic quizzes; complete individual activities, projects, and independent research; and to write, perform, and record an oral presentation. Specific weekly requirements and instructions are listed in the “Assignments” section within Blackboard. I expect you to complete assignments on time, read the material, and participate through on-line discussion board postings. In order to foster a climate conducive to learning, please join me in treating your classmates with respect. I encourage students to ask questions, seek my help when they need it, and help their classmates understand the material.

## **Assessment and Grading**

### How to Submit Course Work

All weekly assignments are located in the “Weekly Assignments” tab of the course site.

All discussion board posts and replies should be posted to the Discussion Board.

Submit weekly individual assignments to the instructor via the “View/Complete Assignment” link located at the bottom of the page in the weekly Assignments folder. Students should complete all assignments using Microsoft Word rather than trying to type the assignment directly into the “comments” box. The student’s name must be placed on all assignments submitted through the “View/Complete Assignment” link. Instructor feedback can be viewed through the grade book section of Blackboard. By ‘clicking’ on an individual grade, students can see any instructor comments.

### Weekly Assignments:

Students must observe all due dates in order to be successful in this course. Since the course moves at a fast-paced eight-week schedule, it is critical that students keep up with weekly readings and assignments. ***Students should keep paper/electronic copies of all course work in case there is a technical problem that requires work to be re-submitted.*** Weekly assignments, including discussion board questions, must be written thoroughly, using paragraph form and complete sentences.

### Project:

The main course project is the recorded panel discussion. Details about the assignment are contained in the “Assignment” section. Each student will plan, research, and conduct a video-taped panel discussion about a subject with more than one reasonable point of view (an example would be a political issue that has two sides). During the panel discussion members will explore both sides of the subject. Prepared statements by panel members should be limited to less than half of the presentation. The rest of the time should consist of discussion among those on the panel. A detailed rubric is provided in Week 6 of the course.

Once the panel discussion is recorded, it must be made available for instructor assessment. There are many ways to get the recorded panel discussion to the instructor. Past students have used video sharing services (like YouTube), or recorded

it to a tape or disk and then mailed or hand delivered it to the instructor. Students choosing to mail their panels have successfully used Standard VHS tapes, CDs, DVDs, or memory sticks. There are several types of older video camera tapes that do not work and those formats are listed on the assignment page. One critical requirement associated with the Panel Discussion is that the instructor be able to view it.

Panels must have 4-6 members and can be anyone the student chooses to put on his/her panel (fellow students, friends, family members, or coworkers are all acceptable). If several students in the course are interested in working together on the same panel, it is ok to send one tape. Creating panels and determining who is on them is the student's responsibility. All students in the course can contact each other by e-mail through the communications section of Blackboard. Students wishing to work with other students in the course can set up joint panels in this manner.

**NOTE:** Students must be positively identified participating in the panel discussion. During the first week of the course all students will send the instructor a digital file containing a visual image of an official photo ID (drivers license, student ID, etc.). The instructor will compare the photo ID to the recording of the panel discussion to positively identify each student taking the course. **Since there is no proctored final examination for this course, I require positive identification of the final project in order to receive a passing grade.**

#### Exams:

There are two tests in this course. Both consist of objective multiple choice questions. The tests are available in the week assigned. An announcement will appear when the tests are available to students. These tests are scored automatically by Blackboard and results appear in the grade book immediately following the test. These tests only show one question at a time. Contact the instructor if you have a problem with the test.

#### Film Assignment:

Students are required to select a single film from a list that is posted to the "Assignment" section of the course. Each student is required to buy, rent, or borrow a copy of the film necessary to complete the assignment. All of these films are available from various on-line companies that will sell and deliver the movie to a personal residence. These films may also be available from local movie rental stores. All of these films have been released or re-released since 2000, so it should not pose a significant problem for students to obtain one of them.

#### Late Assignment Policy:

Assignments received late may receive zero (0) points. It is critical that students keep up with the coursework. Contact the instructor immediately if problems arise that will cause an assignment to be late. Flexibility is allowed for personal emergencies, but only if the instructor is notified prior to the due date.

### Grading Scale:

Grades are based on a total point calculation. There are 695 points available in the course based on the above course requirements. A running total is maintained in Blackboard's Grade Center. Final percentages are derived from the students earned points divided by the total available (695). Grades are then assigned as follows:

A	90 - 100%	C	70 - 74%
B+	85 - 89%	D+	65 - 69%
B	80 - 84%	D	60 - 64%
C+	75 - 79%	F	below 60%

### College's Incomplete Coursework Policy:

To designate a student's work in a course as incomplete at the end of a term, the instructor records the incomplete grade (I). **Students may receive this grade only when serious illness, hardship, death in the immediate family, or military service during the semester in which they are registered prevents them from completing course requirements.** In addition, to receive an incomplete, a student **must have completed substantially all** of the course's major requirements.

Unless extenuating circumstances dictate otherwise, students must initiate requests for an incomplete by filling out an Incomplete Grade Completion Contract, which requires the signature of the student, instructor, and Dean. The Incomplete Grade Completion contract cites the reason(s) for the incomplete and details the specific obligations the student must meet to change the incomplete to a letter grade. The date by which the student agrees to complete required work must appear in the contract. The Dean, the instructor, and the student receive signed copies of the Incomplete Grade Completion Contract.

Even if the student does not attend Peru State College, all incomplete course work must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester. Unless the appropriate Dean approves an extension and if the student does not fulfill contract obligations in the allotted time, the incomplete grade automatically becomes an F.

### College's Academic Integrity Policy:

The College expects all students to conduct themselves in a manner that supports an honest assessment of student learning outcomes and the assignment of grades that appropriately reflect student performance. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to understand and comply with instructions regarding the completion of assignments, exams, and other academic activities. At a minimum, students should assume that at each assessment opportunity they are expected to do their own original academic work and/or clearly acknowledge in an appropriate fashion the intellectual work of others, when such contributions are allowed. Students helping others to circumvent honest assessments of learning outcomes, or who fail to report instances of academic dishonesty, are also subject to the sanctions defined in this policy.

Instances of academic dishonesty may be discovered in a variety of ways. Faculty members who assign written work ordinarily check citations for accuracy, run data base and online checks, and/or may simply recognize familiar passages that are not cited. They may observe students in the act of cheating or may become aware of instances of cheating from the statements of others. All persons who observe or otherwise know about instances of cheating are expected to report such instances to the proper instructor or Dean.

In order to promote academic integrity, the College subscribes to an electronic service to review papers for the appropriate citations and originality. Key elements of submitted papers are stored electronically in a limited access database and thus become a permanent part of the material to which future submissions are compared. Submission of an application and continued enrollment signifies your permission for this use of your written work.

Should an occurrence of academic misconduct occur, the faculty member may assign a failing grade for the assignment or a failing grade for the course. Each incident of academic misconduct should be reported to the Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). The VPAA may suspend students for two semesters found to be responsible for multiple instances of academic dishonesty. The reason for the suspension will be noted on the student's transcript.

A faculty member need present only basic evidence of academic dishonesty. There is no requirement for proof of intent. Students are responsible for understanding these tenets of academic honesty and integrity. Students may appeal penalties for academic dishonesty using the process established for grades appeals.

### **Title IX Compliance Notice**

Peru State College is an equal opportunity institution. PSC does not discriminate against any student, employee or applicant on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or age in employment and education opportunities, including but not limited to admission decisions. The College has designated an individual to coordinate the College's nondiscrimination efforts to comply with regulations implementing Title VI, VII, IX, and Section 504. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies and practices may be directed to Eulanda Cade, Director of Human Resources, Title VI, VII, IX Compliance Coordinator, Peru State College, PO Box 10, Peru, NE 68421-0010, (402) 872-2230.

Students requesting reasonable accommodation and tutoring services should contact the Center for Achievement and Transition Services (CATS).

## **Tentative Course Schedule**

Assignments are due by Saturday night of each week

- Week 1:** Read syllabus; e-mail instructor with the answers to three administrative questions; send copy of photo ID; read Ch 1 & 2; and discussion board
- Week 2:** Analyze a Presidential Inaugural Address; read chapters 3 & 4; short paper comparing consumer ads; and discussion board
- Week 3:** Analyze a reporter's question, read chapters 5 & 6; test over chapters 1 - 6; and discussion board
- Week 4:** Prepare for panel discussion, read chapters 7 & 8; complete defensive communication exercise; and discussion board
- Week 5:** Complete panel outline, read Ch 9 & 10; and discussion board
- Week 6:** Read chapter 12 and conduct videotaped panel discussion
- Week 7:** Select and analyze a film; read Ch 13 & 14; and discussion board
- Week 8:** Read chapter 15; test over Ch 7 - 15; and discussion board

## **Modification of Course Syllabus and Course Schedule**

The instructor reserves the right to modify any part of this course syllabus and course schedule. Any such modifications will be communicated to students in advance of becoming effective.