

CMST 412: Close Relationships

Tuesday/Thursday 12:40-1:55pm HSS 207

Instructor: Dr. Courtney N. Wright
Office: 293 Com, office 274
Office Hours: T 2:10-3:10pm and by appointment (email me your M-F availability to arrange a time)
Email: cwright@utk.edu

In order to receive a reply, your email must include -

- 1) an appropriate subject line (e.g., CMST 412:Homework Question),
 - 2) a salutation (e.g., Dear Dr. Wright)
 - 3) a body detailing the purpose of your email
 - 4) a closing (e.g., Sincerely, Your first Name AND last name)
- (for additional assistance see <http://www.entrepreneur.com/blog/225719>)

**I check email once a day. Please note that you have not contacted me via email until you have heard back from me. However, if you do not hear from me within 48 hours, please resend your email.*

Phone: 865.974.7066 (Note: email is the best way to contact me)

REQUIRED TEXT:

Cupach, W. R., & Spitzberg, B. H. (Eds.), (2011). *The dark side of close relationships*, (2nd ed.). New York: NY: Routledge.

**additional readings will be made available on blackboard*

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Many of the brightest and darkest moments in our lives occur within our close relationships where we display our best and worst selves. Consequently, our relationships with romantic partners, friends, and family members can be the sources of great joy, love, and companionship while also creating conflict, hurt feelings, and frustrations. In this course, we will develop an advanced understanding of the “darker sides” of interpersonal communication and close relationships with the purpose of understanding the role of communication in enhancing and compromising the quality of our intimate associations. How do we negotiate our relationships and manage the uncertainty we experience during them? What are the costs and rewards of avoidance and secrets? How do we experience hurt and communicate hurt to our intimate partners? What factors influence the occurrence and management of infidelity and other relational transgressions? We will examine these and other challenges we encounter in close relationships over the course of the semester. Class activities, readings, discussion, writings, lectures, presentations, and exams will facilitate, reinforce, and evaluate your learning.

PROFESSIONALISM:

I expect each of you to conduct yourselves as the independent learners and responsible adults that your enrollment at The University of Tennessee implies. Consequently, you are expected to complete the readings prior to class, follow directions, take quality notes, and appropriately manage your time in order to adhere to due dates, prepare for exams/presentations, complete assignments, and seek assistance when necessary. A successful quarter will not only require us to function effectively as individuals, but

collectively as well. Therefore, we should each be prepared for class, participatory (i.e., awake, alert, and attentive during class sessions/activities), and behave in a civil, ethical, and cooperative manner.

ATTENDANCE:

Excluding our first meeting, designated sessions, exams, and presentations, class sessions are not mandatory. However, your attendance and active participation will be vital to your learning and performance outcomes. Students are expected to be on time for class. In the event that you do miss class, it is your responsibility to acquire the notes and materials you missed from one of your classmates. You are welcome to use blackboard to ask for such assistance from your classmates.

LAPTOPS AND CELL PHONE USAGE:

I consider the use of laptops distracting and therefore, do not allow their use in class. Taking notes by hand may not be preferable but research shows that [writing by hand is better for retaining information](#). The burden of taking notes by hand is greatly decreased when students take notes on the readings before class and bring those materials with you. I also consider the use of cell phone technology during class lectures, presentations, and/or discussions distracting and socially inappropriate. Any student(s) observed using cell phones will be asked politely to quietly collect their belongings and exit the classroom. In addition to freeing students to pursue more important activities (e.g., communicating with friends/family/employers), it is my hope that this policy will help reduce classroom distractions so we can form an engaged classroom community.

CLASSROOM CIVILITY:

Civility is genuine respect and regard for others: politeness, consideration, tact, good manners, graciousness, cordiality, affability, amiability and courteousness. Civility enhances academic freedom and integrity, and is a prerequisite to the free exchange of ideas and knowledge in the learning community. Our community consists of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and campus visitors. Community members affect each other's well-being and have a shared interest in creating and sustaining an environment where all community members and their points of view are valued and respected. Affirming the value of each member of the university community, the campus asks that all its members adhere to the principles of civility and community adopted by the campus: <http://civility.utk.edu/>.

DIVERSITY:

The College of Communication and Information (CCI) 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. Each of us benefits when all viewpoints are heard, thoughtfully considered, and responded to respectfully. Diversity and fairness unite us with the wider professional and global community.

ACCESSIBILITY:

I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability. Student requests for academic accommodations should be made during the first week of the semester, except for unusual circumstances, in order for arrangements to be made. Students are strongly encouraged to register with services for students with disabilities for disability verification and for determination of reasonable academic accommodations.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

All students enrolled in Communication courses are accountable for compliance with University regulations regarding academic integrity. Relevant information can be located on the University's web page. If you are in doubt about what constitutes academic dishonesty, speak to me before the assignment is due and/or examine the University web site. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an exam

(e.g., copying others' answers, providing help to others, using a crib sheet) or plagiarism of a paper or exercise (e.g., taking material from readings without citation, copying another student's work).

Cases of academic dishonesty will result in failure of the course and administrative involvement. Other penalties may also apply. If you have *any* questions or confusion regarding academic dishonesty, please refer to the Hilltopics Student Handbook or contact me.

EVALUATION:

Grade Inquiries: Sometimes it can be difficult to assess the meaning of the grades you earn in a class. To address these issues, we will go over the correct answers for each exam during the class period in which they are returned. Please feel free to ask questions for clarification about the material you missed during those class periods. They are intended to assist you ☺

I also understand that sometimes students are disappointed by a grade earned and am willing to meet with students in my office to discuss their exam/assignment grades. These meetings are important opportunities to provide clarification and encouragement to assist you in succeeding in this course. Therefore, please take advantage of them. While I welcome opportunities to meet with students to discuss their performance in this course, it is important that these interactions are conducted respectfully.

If at any point you want to discuss with me how you can improve your grade on subsequent assignments please do not hesitate to meet with me. I strongly encourage students who perform below a C-/70% to meet with me to develop a strategy for improving throughout the remainder of the semester. The later you wait in the semester to meet with me then the less time there is to improve. Therefore, if you delay seeking assistance, a minor bump in the road may become an unnecessary undesirable outcome.

ASSIGNMENTS: I encourage you to start on assignments early and be attentive to the course schedule and deadlines. ALL assignments are to be personally turned in to me unless otherwise noted. Therefore, do not put assignments in my mailbox or submit them electronically. Simply, it is your responsibility to make sure I receive your assignments on time. Students should expect to take examinations on the dates scheduled.

I make it a policy to not accept late work, schedule make-up exams, or assign incompletes. I define "late" as any assignment(s) not received during the time when they were collected. It is important to note that I make it a practice to collect assignments at the beginning of class. Therefore, being late to class can make your assignment(s) late. I am aware that in extreme circumstances late work, make-up exams, and/or incomplete procedures may be necessary. In the event of such cases, it is your responsibility to notify me of your circumstance and request such assistance. In the event of an emergency, please contact me via email.

All Communication Studies majors are required to keep electronic versions of papers and presentations completed for this class and all communication studies classes. To complete the capstone class (CS 499), you must turn in a portfolio that contains all of your work in the major.

Course Readings: You are expected to read the designated readings **before** coming to class on the day the readings are due. Please come to class: 1) prepared to discuss the material and 2) able to provide examples and illustrations of the theories and concepts addressed. In addition to completing the course readings, I recommend students complete the discussion questions located at the end of each chapter. While these questions will not be graded, your attention to them will be noted in the quality of your ability to contribute to class sessions (i.e. participation) and preparation for exams, projects and/or papers.

If you cannot not recall specific information from the readings then you have not fulfilled your responsibilities for class. Therefore, I encourage students to not only read the material but to take notes on the material that they can refer to during class discussion and in preparation for subsequent assignments.

**Details regarding the course evaluation components will be provided in class and listed on the course website.*