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**COMM 480**  
**Nonverbal Communication**  
**Spring 2008**

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Instructor:	Jillian Pierson, Ph.D.	Office Hours:
Office:	ASC 227	Tuesday & Thursday
	You can usually also find me Tu/Th between	12:30 – 1:30
	9:15 and 9:30	and by phone
Office Phone:	(213)821-1406 [Tues/Thurs only]	Please use my home phone for messages. I cannot retrieve messages on the office line.
Home Phone:	(xxx)xxx-xxxx [9am-9pm daily]	I want you to feel free to call me at home. Since my availability on campus is limited, I do welcome your calls at home.
Email:	jilliank@usc.edu	

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**Course Goals**

In this class, we will develop an understanding of the key issues, theories, and research findings in the field of nonverbal communication. While we will study the codes people so often refer to as “body language,” we’ll also investigate appearance, the environment, perceptions of time and the application of nonverbal theories to deception, persuasion and interpersonal interactions.

I like to provide a variety of learning experiences in my classes. Therefore, we will use a combination of lectures, readings, discussions, film clips, exercises, role plays, and research assignments to attack the subject matter. I really hope we’ll enjoy our class sessions; please keep in mind that no matter how much fun we have in class, I take your exams and assignments very seriously and so should you.

**Required Course Materials**

Guerrero, L. K. & Hecht, M. L. (2008). *The nonverbal communication reader: Classic and contemporary readings* (3rd Ed.). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Please note that even when class lectures do not repeat material from the text, you will be required to read and thoroughly understand the chapters assigned on the course calendar.

Additional readings will be required.

## Course Standards

You will receive a “C” if you do all that is required for each assignment. If you do all that is required and you demonstrate an above average ability to interrelate concepts you have learned and put in some extra effort, you will earn a “B.” If you meet all requirements for a “C,” put in the extra effort required for a “B” and you demonstrate superior understanding and analysis, you will earn an “A.” Generally, “A” students are able to do more than repeat concepts laid out in class and in the readings. Instead, they contribute additional understanding to the material by synthesizing it in a meaningful way.

To achieve a “C” or better on papers, you must write at a level appropriate for a university student, i.e., with correct grammar, punctuation and spelling. If you have specific difficulties with either writing or oral communication, please let me know before you turn in your first assignment.

**Here’s the fine print. Read it.** Any student who misses more than four classes may fail the course. If you turn in an assignment late, it will be downgraded by a full letter grade for every day it is late. Missing an exam will result in a failing grade unless you have physical proof of some serious emergency that prohibited your presence (e.g., a bill from the paramedics). If you’re seriously ill on the day of the exam, please visit the health center and collect documentation. *You must complete all assignments to pass the course.*

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Paper 1	10%
Paper 2	20%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	20%
Research Project	25%

## Participation Policy

Our class sessions combine lecture and discussion. Participation (including attendance, promptness, courtesy, involvement in classroom activities, and discussion that clearly demonstrates you have kept up with the course material) may affect your grade by up to one half of a grade.

Missing more than four class periods *regardless of the reason* may result in a failing grade in the course. Arriving late twice or leaving early twice is viewed as equivalent of one absence.

There is no need to discuss with me reasons for your absences since it is reasonable that in fifteen weeks, you would have cause to miss one, two or even three classes. If for some reason you suspect you may miss more than four class sessions, see me immediately to discuss whether or not you will need to withdraw from the course.

Please turn your cell phones and other communication devices OFF when you enter our classroom. If you have a phone in “silent” mode that vibrates when it rings, it is not *silent!*

## **School of Communication Academic Integrity Policy**

The School of Communication is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical support. It endorses and acts on the SCampus policies and procedures detailed in the section titled: "University Student Conduct Code." See especially Appendix A: "Academic Dishonesty Sanction Guidelines." The policies, procedures, and guidelines will be assiduously upheld. They protect your rights, as well as those of the faculty.

It is particularly important that you are aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, fabricating data for a project, submitting a paper to more than one professor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone but yourself. If you have doubts about any of these practices, confer with a faculty member or the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

## **ADA Compliance Statement**

Any student requesting academic accommodation based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.

## **Tentative Course Schedule, Subject to Change:**

Readings should be completed prior to class the day they are scheduled and assignments are due at the *beginning* of the class period. **Please see BlackBoard for additional readings.**

	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>	<u>Readings</u>
1	Jan 15	Course Introduction		
	Jan 17	Defining Nonverbal Communication		
2	Jan 22	Functions of nv comm.		1
	Jan 24	Researching nv; Perspectives		3
3	Jan 29	Skills		2
	Jan 31	Kinesics		11,13,14
4	Feb 5	Kinesics and Greetings		15,16
	Feb 7	Vocalics		17, 19, 20

5	Feb 12	Proxemics	<b>First Paper Due</b>	21
	Feb 14	Haptics		24, 25, 26
6	Feb 19 Feb 21	Appearance (cont.)		5, 6, 7, 8
7	Feb 26	Adornment		8, 10
	Feb 28	<b>Midterm</b>	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	
8	Mar 4	Time		29
	Mar 6	Environment		31, 33
9	Mar 11	Emotion, Intimacy & Relationships		39, 40, 41
	Mar 13	(cont.)		43, 44
	* * *	<i>Enjoy spring break!</i>	* * *	
10	Mar 25	Theories of nv comm		36, 52, 53
	Mar 27	(cont.)	<b>Second Paper Due</b>	54, 55
11	Apr 1	Power		49
	Apr 3	Persuasion		50, 51
12	Apr 8	Deception	Research Project <b>topic</b> and <b>methods</b> must have final approval by this date.	46
	Apr 10	(cont.)		48
13	Apr 15 Apr 17	Applications (cont.)		27, 31, 37 42, 45
14	Apr 22 Apr 24	<b>Colloquium presentations</b> <b>(cont.)</b>	<b>Research Project Due</b>	
15	Apr 29 May 1	NV Disorders Course Conclusion		
Tues.	May 13	<b>Final Exam 8 – 10 a.m.</b>		

## ASSIGNMENTS

I try to provide as much information as possible in the syllabus about your assignments. Please read all of my directions carefully and always feel free to ask questions.

### **Exams**

Please note that our lectures and readings will not always overlap. Unless I inform you to the contrary, you can safely assume that the areas that do not overlap *will still be included on the exams*—so you need to study both lecture and reading materials.

Missing an exam will result in a failing grade unless you have physical proof of some serious emergency that prohibited your presence (e.g., a bill from the paramedics). If you're seriously ill on the day of the exam, please visit the health center and collect documentation.

### **Paper 1: Scavenger Hunt**

This assignment is more of a collection of exercises than one cohesive paper. By working on the scavenger hunt, you should become more aware of the major role nonverbal communication plays in our everyday lives.

Ideas about nonverbal communication can be found everywhere, from daily experiences to popular culture. The objective of the scavenger hunt is for you to collect a number of these ideas, in the form of propositions, from a variety of both primary and secondary sources. You are to draw a proposition from the class lectures or readings then find data to support it. Any of the following types of data may be used, but please do not use any one type of data more than three times. Choose a different proposition for each report.

Data choices:

1. Account of a personal experience.
2. Interview of someone about their experience.
3. Description of a scene from a television program or movie.
4. Photograph or drawing.
5. Synopsis of an article in a magazine or newspaper.
6. Copy of information from a relevant web site.
7. Abstract of a published study (in your own words).
8. Excerpt of a scene from a novel.
9. Quotation from a biography or autobiography of a well known person.
10. Published cartoon (where the nonverbal idea is the main point of the cartoon).
11. Newspaper account of a true incident.
12. Report of a mini field observation (report what you did and what you found).

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You will turn in a set of **eight** of these reports, each being about one page long. Each report should have:

- Your name
- The idea or proposition (cite your source, including the page number)
- The type of data you collected
- The description of the data (and an image, where applicable) and how it supports the proposition
- References in APA format for the proposition and for the data

One of my criteria is variety. For example, do not choose three propositions from one day's lecture. Another is that your choice of data and propositions really enhance each other, so that your report helps increase our understanding of nonverbal communication. The best reports will be so good that I'll want to remember them to use in future classes.

## **Paper 2: Literature Review**

Choose a relatively narrow area of nonverbal communication that has sparked your interest, research it, and write a literature review. You may use this literature review as the springboard for your research project.

A literature review is not a simple summary of articles on a topic. The lit review itself makes a contribution so that even a reader already familiar with the subject area would learn something by reading your paper. In a literature review, your purpose is to convey to the reader what knowledge and ideas have been established on a topic, and what their strengths and weaknesses are. You are not trying to list all the material published, but to synthesize and evaluate it according to the guiding concept of your thesis or research question. You will also identify areas needing further research.

Your paper will include:

- The nature of the topic under discussion
- Definition of key terms and concepts
- Principal questions that are being asked
- Methodologies and methods in use
- Current approaches to the subject
- Current conclusions that are being drawn
- Summary of major agreements and disagreements in the literature
- What holes in knowledge remain in this area / directions for future research

Organize your paper into an introduction, where you introduce your topic and the parameters of your lit review; a body, which contains your discussion of sources organized either chronologically, thematically, or methodologically; a conclusion where you discuss what can be

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learned from the literature so far, and where research should continue from this point. A lit review does not detail each study mentioned, but synthesizes a large number of studies within each paragraph or section, according to the organizational scheme being followed.

Please discuss 10-20 studies that are:

Primary sources (research studies published in a refereed journal)

Relatively recent (a general guideline would be that the study was published in the last 5 years, except when you are including a classic study or need to provide historical background)

Sometimes you will find and read many more sources than actually end up in your finished product. This may frustrate you, but only cite on your reference page the articles you actually refer to in the text of your paper. Conversely, all references within the text must be cited on the reference page.

As a very general guideline, this paper should be 6-8 pages long.

### **Research Project**

Working alone or on a team, you will investigate some aspect of nonverbal communication using appropriate methodology. This is an original study, one in which you collect and analyze data. Your job is to test a hypothesis or answer some question about nonverbal communication.

You may work alone or on a small team. If you choose, you might work on data collection together but write separate papers. You are 100% responsible for your own grade. If you would like an individual grade, write an individual paper. If you've done research with team members and you all want to accept a group grade, you may write one research paper as a group.

We will hold a colloquium in class where each researcher or team will present their research.

The paper you write will follow the format of all traditional research reports, just like the ones you read for your literature review. The parts of a study are as follows:

1. **Statement of problem:** This is the introduction to the report and should include your general research question and justification of why it is worth investigating.
2. **Review of literature:** This section examines previous research on your topic: the kind of studies that have been done, how they were done (methods) and what they found (results). Findings should be not just summarized, but evaluated. What holes have been left by prior studies?
3. **Statement of questions/hypotheses:** In this section you identify and justify the questions and/or hypotheses you intend to investigate in your study.

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4. **Method:** This is a description of the methods you used to answer your questions to answer your questions or to test your hypotheses.
5. **Results:** Present the results of your study *without* explaining the meaning or importance of what you found.
6. **Discussion:** Now interpret your results. What do they mean? Are they what you expected to find based on previous literature? Are they important? Also be sure to discuss the limitations of your study.
7. **Conclusion:** Do not just stop writing. Finish with a conclusion that leaves a final impression on the reader.
8. **References:** A complete list of your sources in correct APA style.

### **For All Assignments:**

Your papers should have the following elements:

- A citation from a chapter in *The Nonverbal Communication Reader*
- Correct APA format (for the in-text citations and reference page)
- Pages numbered
- Proofread
- Organized
- Interesting title
- Strong intro
- Strong close

One important note on citations, specifically on citing our text. Because our text is an edited anthology, you will not be citing the entire book. Instead, you use a specific format used for citing chapters from an edited anthology. Edited anthologies have a specific format. You do NOT cite “Guerrero & Hecht” UNLESS they wrote the specific chapter you're referencing. Cite the *specific* authors of the chapter from which you took the concept. As an example:

Giles, H. & Wadleigh, P.M. (2008). Accommodating nonverbally. In L. K. Guerrero & M. L. Hecht (Eds.), *The Nonverbal Communication Reader* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., pp. 491-502). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

### **Writing Successful Assignments: Some General Advice**

By my definition, good writing is concise; is not repetitive; avoids overstatements and generalizations; is specific; is backed up with support; uses detail; takes a position or a stance; uses all words for a purpose (doesn't just try to sound sophisticated); does not state the obvious; is clear; is grammatically correct; is free of spelling errors; does not use “you” unless specifically addressing the reader; and does not include parenthetical remarks.