

MENNONITE BROTHERS BIBLICAL SEMINARY
MF 540 INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION: PERSON, FAMILY, COMMUNITY

2-3 Semester Hours, Friday 6-9 p.m., Saturday 8:30-4:30
January 12-13, February 9-10, March 16-17
April 13, 6-9 p.m., April 14 (3 unit students only)

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I. Course Description:

This course works from a family systems approach to integrate concepts of basic communication theory with Biblical models of communication, and skill practice. Communication is viewed as a major method of intervention in counseling and pastoral ministry. One's own understanding of communication patterns is important for any kind of counseling or ministry. This course assumes a preventative stance, i.e., that a reduction of interpersonal problems may occur as a result of personal communication skill development. Listening, self-awareness, conflict resolution, confirmation, feedback, and assertiveness skills will be among those practiced.

II. Course Objectives: (Knowledge, Skill Building, Personal and Spiritual Formation)

1. To acquire knowledge about and competency in communication and counseling skills including identification of one's own individual style of communicating.
2. To integrate communication skills, and theory with the biblical model of communication.
3. To explore the contributions of communication theory to the therapeutic process.
4. To identify and decrease one's own barriers to communication.
5. To develop skills in listening, empathy, disclosure, recognizing verbal and nonverbal cues, assertiveness, confrontation, conflict resolution and self-awareness.

Approach: This is a skills oriented class, and the process of feedback, inquiry, and learning may open new areas of self-understanding and self-perception. We will seek to "speak the truth in love" and support one another, so that we may "build one another up." Matters of self-awareness, confidentiality, esteem, and growth are not to be treated lightly. Come prepared to grow and share! The teaching/learning format will include:

1. **Involvement:** Structured activities will help participants discover for themselves the relevance and importance of what is being learned.
2. **Understanding:** Brief lectures will expand on the reading, emphasize the points most important to know and clear up misconceptions.
3. **Modeling:** Demonstrating, practicing and applying the skills to one's personal life and ministry or counseling situations is key to the teaching-learning process.
4. **Action/Practice:** Because the learning of a skill rarely takes place without actual use of the skill, class participants will be encouraged to practice the skills outside of class.
5. **Reflection:** The written reflection papers are designed to develop self-awareness.
6. **Critique & Feedback:** By evaluating one's own performance and receiving feedback

from others, students will discover and build on their strengths and improve their areas of weakness. Study and practice groups are also encouraged.

III. **Required Textbooks** (* are on two hour reserve at Hiebert Library)

- *Bartel, Barry (1999). Let's Talk. Herald Press.
- Galvin, K. M. and P. J. Cooper (2006). Making Connections: Readings in Relational Communication. Fourth Edition, Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company.
- *Schrock-Shenk C. and Ressler, L. (1999). Making Peace with Conflict. Herald Press.
- *Sofield, Juliano, Hammett. (1990) Design for Wholeness: Dealing with Anger, Learning to Forgive. Building Self-Esteem. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press.
- *Wachtel, Paul L.(1993). Therapeutic Communication. Guilford. (for third unit MFCC students only)

Please Note: A compilation of articles and handouts will be available for 24 hour check out at the Campus Center. These are particularly helpful for the self-reflection papers.

Recommended Textbooks: Some excerpts from these are assigned for all students, both two and three units of credit. (On Reserve at Hiebert Library and the Campus Center.)

- *Bolton, Robert (1979). People Skills. Simon & Schuster.
- *Daniels, David, and Virginia Price (2000). The Essential Enneagram, Harper Collins.
- *Elmer. (1993) Cross-Cultural Conflict. Intervarsity Press.
- Gilmore, S. and P. Fraleigh. (1992) Style Profile for Communication at Work. (\$11.00) Friendly Press. See also: Personal Style Profile for Intimate Partners, Students.
- *Greene, John O. and Bureson, Brant R. (2003) Handbook of Communication and Social Interaction Skills. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- *McKay, M, Fanning, P. and K. Paleg. (1994). Couple Skills. New Harbinger.
- *McKay, et.al. (1995). Messages: The Communication Skills Book New Harbinger.
- Orbe, Mark P. and Carol J. Bruess. (2005) Contemporary Issues in Interpersonal Communication. Roxbury.
- *Stewart, John. Bridges Not Walls. (There are 8 copies of the 7th edition available in the campus center. Other editions are available in the library and on internet.)
- Stewart, John, Karen Zediker, and Saskia Witteborn (2005) Together: Communicating Interpersonally. Roxbury, (6th ed.). See also Bridges Not Walls by John Stewart.
- *Vanier, Jean. (1997). Community and Growth, Paulist Press.
- *Yerby, Janet, Buerkel-Rothfus, Nancy, & Bochner, Authur P. (1995). Understanding Family Communication. Gorsuch Scarisbrick, (2nd ed.).

IV. **Course Assignments/Grading and Due Dates:**

Students taking the course for two hours need to read the assigned textbooks and additional readings, (approximately 800 pages), keep a reading log, take the final exam, and complete three, 4-5 page reflection papers. The requirements are as follows:

1. **Participation and Attendance**. Active, thoughtful participation in class discussion, role

plays and activities. All absences must be cleared with the professor. (10%)

2. **Reading.** Careful reading of the assigned texts **and outside readings** is expected **before** the topic is discussed in class. A reading log should be kept with dates and what was read, plus a brief statement of the major thesis, how the author dealt with the material, and how you interacted with the ideas presented. Because this class is being taught in a weekend format, there will be quizzes covering the reading assigned each weekend. **Log for two units Due March 30; Log for three units Due April 20. (10%).**

3. **Preparation for Each Weekend Class.** The detailed assignment sheet attached gives the outline of readings, topics and action steps for each section of the course. Nine percent of your grade will be based on the requested readings, activities and questions which are due each Friday evening when the class meets. **January 12, February 9, March 16 (9%).**

4. **Self-Assessment.** Three 4-5 page reflective papers will be written. The purpose of these assignments is to develop personal awareness of interpersonal issues and communication styles. They are not research papers, although students should draw on various readings and must include a bibliography of sources consulted and footnotes where appropriate. Reflection on experience, personal insight, and feedback is crucial. The purpose of the written assignments is to engage in communication with yourself, God, and others. When you use a direct quotation, the APA style of footnoting (author, date, page) is preferred. Please acknowledge your sources, including experience, on which the paper is based. Include relevant skills worked on and feedback you have received. Further directions for these papers are on page 5. **Due Dates: January 31, February 28, March 30. (45%)**

5. **Quizzes and Final Exam:** (26%) Quizzes will be given each weekend over the assigned reading materials. The final exam will focus primarily on communication theories and vocabulary covered in assigned readings, and lectures. It will also include case studies, and short essay questions. Study questions will be provided and study groups are encouraged.

6. **Three Unit Requirements:** The additional project (workshop), reading, and take home questions which are due on **April 20** are described on the final page of the syllabus.

7. **Grading:** The assignments will be given the following weight:

Reflection Papers (3 x 15)	45%	Reading Log	10%
Class Participation & Attendance	10%	Final Examination	20%
Activities/questions/exercises	9%	Quizzes	6%

Please Note: Students are expected to submit written assignments on time. Late Work will be graded down 2% for each day after the due date. ALL assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade in the course. The third unit work is worth one third of the course grade.

VI. Course Outline and Overview: (A more detailed schedule will be provided in class.)

- I. Communicating as Persons: Valuing, Understanding and Disclosing Self.
- II. Communicating as Families: Attraction, Intimacy, Conflict, Forgiveness
- III. Promoting Communities of Growth and Healing: Therapeutic Communication, Conflict Resolution Skills, Group Communication, Stories, Metaphors.
- IV. Communication Theories and Interpersonal Approaches to Therapy and Pastoral Work

January 31: Reflection Paper 1 is due, Early Papers are Welcome!

February 28: Reflection Paper 2 is due, Early Papers are Welcome!

March 17: Tentative Date for Final Exam for both two and three unit students.

March 30: Reflection Paper 3 is due. Reading Log for two unit students is due.

April 13-14: Workshop Presentations (These can be presented earlier.)

April 20: Take home study guide questions, Reading Log and Presentation Projects are due for three unit students.

Self-Assessment Reflection Papers

Each 4-5 page paper should reflect an understanding of the issue as it relates to interpersonal communication, and its relationship to Christian life and/or Scripture. Demonstrate an awareness of self as perceived by others, including both personal insight, and feedback from others. Please talk to at least one person about each paper. Describe your willingness to make changes and skills you are developing and working on. It is important to show the relevance of texts and other readings and all bibliography and sources must be noted. Finally, please reflect on how, why, and when these issues and questions might be important in your vocation of counseling or ministry. The references in parentheses are suggestions for additional, optional readings and Biblical passages that will assist you in answering the questions and writing your papers.

I. Communicating As Persons: Valuing, Understanding & Disclosing Self (Jan. 31, Mt.5-7)

- A. What aspects of verbal and nonverbal communication are important for you to attend to? What are your communication barriers and "red flag" words/actions? What social and conversational skills do you need to develop? (See Fast, Henley)
- B. What is your basic temperament and communication style? (Gilmore, Myers-Briggs) What are your strengths and growth areas as a communicator? (Bolton, Lawyer) Where are you on the continuum of passive-assertive-aggressive communication?
- C. How does your self-esteem and self-disclosure affect your communication? (Wachtel) What builds and negates your self-esteem and self-disclosure? (See Ellison, Stoop) What kinds of self-talk & self-care do you need to work on? How do you avoid burnout?
- D. Which of the Johari windows apply to you? To your spouse or friends? (Draw them!)

What is the value and risk of self-disclosure as a Christian? As a counselor or minister?
How can you help yourself and others in the area of **shyness**? (See Zimbardo, Binder)

E. What are some things you have learned about yourself from Jesus' example or teachings?

II. Communicating as Families: Attraction, Intimacy, Conflict (Feb. 28, Ephesians, Yerby, Greene & Burleson, McKay, Couple Skills, Pipher, The Shelter of Each Other)

A. Why is it important to be aware of gender differences in communication? (Penner)
How do you encourage members of the opposite sex to feel heard/understood?
Where are your growth points (strengths and weaknesses) in communication with the opposite sex? In couple or dyadic communication? (See Tannen, Hiebert)

B. Why are you attracted to a certain person? What attracts others to you? (Stewart, Yerby)
How will you deal with interpersonal attraction in yourself and others when you work as a counselor or pastor? What are your personal guidelines in this area? How comfortable are you in male/female relationships? (See Stewart, Tannen, Penner, both McKay, et. al.)

C. Briefly describe your family's communication and conflict rules and patterns (Yerby, page 277) and discuss how this has affected you. Do you prefer the one up or the one down position? Why? How might you change this? (Watzlawick, Elmer, pp. 80-98)

D. Give several examples of paradoxical communication which you have experienced.
How do you deal with a double bind? (Fredman & Sherman, Haley, Berger, Sluzki)

E. Please include in this paper your own personal and/or congregational guidelines for keeping yourself, your clients, colleagues and parishioners safe from sexual molest. (Edelwich & Brodsky, Sexual Dilemmas for the Helping Professional, etc.)

III. Promoting Communities of Growth and Healing (March , James, Vanier, Yalom)

A. How does your style affect the way you function in community and how you respond to conflict? (Bartel) How do you function in groups? Where are you connected and supported? Where do your communities need to grow? What are your growth plans? (Yalom, Theories of Group Psychotherapy, workbook & on reserve, Egan, Janis)

B. How do you practice and experience forgiveness in your daily life? (McCullough, et.al)
Are there times when you should "not forgive"? (Augsburger, Smedes, Davis)

C. How and when has communication been therapeutic (healing) for you?(SSR, Wachtel)
Which techniques of therapeutic communication (metaphor, myth, story, imagery, paradox, etc.) will you use and why? How will you use interpersonal/relationship theory in your work? (Wachtel, Barker, Bergmann, Fredman, & Sherman, Klerman, Hiebert)

- D. How do you say goodbye and deal with loss, grief, failure, challenge? (Worden, Vanier)
- E. Please include in this paper at least one example of how you manage (or have learned from) cross-cultural communication or conflict (Shrock-Shenk, Ressler, Elmer)

Many of the books on reserve at Hiebert Library and the articles and excerpts in the Binders in the North Wing will be useful for self-assessment papers. You will find Articles in Binders on:

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| 1. Self-Esteem & Self Disclosure | 4. Burnout and Stress | 7. Leas, Conflict in the Church |
| 2. Shyness, Zimbardo | 5. Assertiveness Skills | 8. Running Through the Thistles |
| 3. Communication Style | 6. Interpersonal Attraction | 9. Suicide, Force & Faberow |

MBBS academic policies are described in the *Academic Handbook*, which is updated annually. The *Handbook* includes policies on extensions for incomplete coursework, academic integrity, non-discriminatory language, academic appeals, etc. Students are expected to be familiar with MBBS academic policies and to follow them. Copies of the *Academic Handbook* are available on the MBBS Web Site.

Supplemental Reading

- *Augsburger, David. (1979). *Anger and Assertiveness in Pastoral Care, Fortress, *Caring Enough to Forgive. Caring Enough Not to Forgive. See also, *Freedom of Forgiveness.
 Bandler, R., Grinder, D. (1976) Reframing. Structure of Magic II. Science and Behavior Books.
 *Barker. (1985). Using Metaphors: In Psychotherapy. Bruner/Mazel.
 *Berger, M. M., Editor. (1978). Beyond the Double Bind. Bruner/Mazel.
 *Bergmann, Joel. (1985). Fishing For Barracuda. Norton.
 *Bolton R. and D.G. Bolton. (1984). Social Style/Management Style. Amacom.
 Bower, Sharon A. and Bower, Gordon H. Asserting Yourself: A Practical Guide.
 Braithwaite, Dawn O. and Leslie A. Baxter. (2006) Engaging Theories in Family Communication: Multiple Perspectives. Sage.
 *Brody, Clair. (1984). Women Therapists Working with Women. Springer.
 Cormier, S. and Hackney, H.(1999) Counseling Strategies and Interentions. Allyn & Bacon.
 *Davis, Ron Lee. (1978). A Forgiving God In An Unforgiving World. Harvest House.
 *Dinkmeyer, Don and Lesoncey, Lewis. (1980). The Encouragement Book. Prentice-Hall.
 *Edelwich and Brodsky. Sexual Dilemmas for the Helping Professional,
 *Egan, Gerard. (1977). You and Me: The Skills of Communicating and Relating to Others. Wadsworth/Brooks/Cole.
 *Ellison, Craig, Ed. (1993). Your Better Self: Christianity, Psychology & Self-Esteem. Harper.
 *Fast, Julius. (1970). Body Language. Pocket Books.
 Fein, Melvyn I. (1993). I.A.M.: A Common Sense Guide To Coping With Anger. Praeger.
 Floyd, Kory and Mark T. Morman. (2006). Widening the Family Circle: New Research on Family Communication. Sage.
 *Fredman & Sherman. (1986). Handbook of Structured Technique. Bruner/Mazel.

- *Griffin, Emory A. (1987). Making Friends and Making Them Count. InterVarsity Press.
- *Heldmann, Mary Lynne. (1988). When Words Hurt. Ballantine.
- *Henley, Nancy. (1977). Body Politics. Prentice Hall.
- Hill, Clara and Karen O'Brien. (1999). Helping Skills, APA. See especially Chapters 6, 8, & 15.
- Kassinove, Howard. (1995). Anger Disorders. Washington D. C. Taylor & Francis.
- Klerman, G. L., M. M. Weissman, B.J. Rounsaville & E. S. Chevron. (1984). Interpersonal Psychotherapy of Depression. Basic Books.
- *Kraybill, Ronald. (1981). Repairing the Breach. MCC. 2nd ed. Herald Press.
- *Lawyer, John and Neil Katz. (1985). Communication Skills For Ministry. Kendall-Hunt.
- *Leas, Speed B. (1982). Leadership and Conflict. Nashville: Abingdon.
- *McKay, M., P. Fanning, K. Paleg. (1994). Couple Skills, New Harbinger.
- *McCullough, Pargament, Thoresen. (2000). Forgiveness: Theory, Research & Practice. Guilford.
- Meier, Paul, Frank Minirth. (1993). What They Didn't Teach You in Seminary. Thomas Nelson.
- Miller, Sherod, D. Wackman, E. Nunnally, & P. Miller. (1988). Connecting with Self and Others. See Workbook also. Interpersonal Communication Program, Inc.
- Miller, Sherod, (1982). Straight Talk. Signet.
- *Penner, Carol. (1998). Women & Men: Gender in the Church. Herald Press.
- Pipher, Mary. (1997). The Shelter of Each Other. Ballantine.
- Richardson, Ronald W. (1984). Family Ties that Bind. Self Counsel Press.
- *Sanders, Randolph K. (1985). Speak Up: Christian Assertiveness. Westminster Press.
- *Schlossberg, N., E.B. Waters, J. Goodman. (1995). Counseling Adults In Transition. Springer
See Ch. 8, "Group Counseling", pp. 203-240.
- *Sluzki, C. E., & Ransom, D. C., ed. (1976). Double Bind. Grune & Stratton.
- *Smedes, Louis. (1984). Forgive and Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve. Harper.
- Spiegel, S. (1996). An Interpersonal Approach to Child & Adolescent Psychotherapy. Jason Aronson.
- *Stewart, John. Bridges Not Walls. 6th ed. Random House, 1995, 5th edition, 1986, 4th edition.
- *Stoop, David. (1982). Self Talk: Key to Personal Growth. Revell.
- Tannen, Deborah. (1990). You Just Don't Understand. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Watzlawick, Paul, Weakland, John and Fisch, Richard. Change: (1974). Principles of Problem Formation and Problem Resolution. New York: Norton.
- Watzlawick, Paul. (1978). The Language of Change. Basic Books.
- *Watzlawick, P., Beavin J., and Jackson, D. Pragmatics: A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies, and Paradoxes. Norton.
- *Worden, William J. (1982). Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy. Spring.
- *Yalom, Irving. (1975). Theory of Group Counseling. Basic Books.
- *Most of these will be on two hour reserve at the Hiebert Library, and in the Campus Center.

For The Third Unit of Credit:

Students will be expected to work at understanding the therapeutic value of good interpersonal communication and basic communication theories of counseling and group dynamics. Haley and Satir's videos and writings will be used as representative of communication theorists and therapists. There will be other assigned readings in Wachtel, Watzlawick, et. al. To receive the third unit of credit: (1) Each student will develop a workshop or seminar style presentation on some aspect of Interpersonal Communication that can be used in his or her work as a counselor or pastor. This will include goals, objectives, resources, and activities to help persons, families, or communities communicate with self and others. (2) This project should reflect 400 pages of additional reading and research beyond the required textbooks. A list of resources and annotated bibliography is expected. (3) Students are expected to give a brief oral presentation, sharing their topic, goals and at least one activity or intervention with the class, so others can benefit from these projects. There will be feedback given by class members to each presenter, focusing on how the ideas might be used and further developed dynamics. (4) There will also be take home study guide questions for this section of the course, which need to be completed and turned in. Additional information on the presentation and feedback requirements will be given in class.

Grading: The development of the Interpersonal Communication workshop/seminar, extra reading and take home study guide questions will count as 33% of your final grade. All work for the third unit will be due on or before **April 25**.

Books Needed For Take Home Questions for the third unit of credit: (The first four entries are primarily for pastoral majors; the last six entries are for MFCC majors.)

- *Augsburger, David (1979). Anger and Assertiveness in Pastoral Care. Fortress.
See also Caring Enough to Forgive; Caring Enough Not To Forgive, Freedom of Forgiveness, Hearing Enough To Hear and Be Heard, The Love-Fight.
- *Hiebert, William, Joseph P. Gillespie, Robert F. Stahmann. (1993). Dynamic Assessment In Couple Therapy. Lexington Books.
- *Janice, Irving Lester (1982). Group Think. Houghton Mifflin.
- *McCullough, Pargament, Thoresen. (2000) Forgiveness: Theory, Research & Practice. Guilford. (Several hardback copies are available for \$10. from the instructor.)
- *Haley, J. (1977). Problem Solving Therapy. Torch Books, Harper & Row, Jossey-Bass.
- *Satir, Virginia. The Magic of Satir: The New Peoplemaking. Changing with Families. Conjoint Family Therapy, and other titles or videos by Satir.
- *Wachtel, Paul L.(1993). Therapeutic Communication. Guilford.
- *Watzlawick, Paul, Beavin Jane and Jackson, Don. Pragmatics: A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies, and Paradoxes. New York: Norton.
- *Yalom, Irving (1975) Theory of Group Counseling. Basic Books.