TEXAS A & M UNIVERSITY-COMMERCE

COMMERCE CAMPUS

Department of Mass Media, Communication, & Theatre

Spring 2013

Course Instructor: Stephen A. Furlich, Ph.D.
Course Title: Nonverbal Communication
SPC 397
Class Time: M 4:00-6:30
E-Mail: Stephen.furlich@tamuc.edu
Office Hours: (M/W. 2:00-4:00 PM; Tues./ Thurs 8:00-9:30 AM).
Office: PAC 120
Prerequisites: None

Disability statement: It is university policy that no otherwise qualified disabled person be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. Students should inform the instructor of existing disabilities the first class meeting.

Course Description:
Nonverbal Communication will explore different aspects of nonverbal communication. The class is structured to first build an understanding of nonverbal communication from an academic standpoint. A theoretical perspective will be understood. Then, the areas of visual and auditory codes (kinesics, physical appearance, and vocalics); contact codes (haptics and 1roxemics); place and time codes (environment, artifacts, and chronemics); Relationship between verbal and NV communication; emotion and NV behavior; NV coding and decoding of deception will be addressed. A major portion of the course to follow will apply nonverbal communication to students' lives. An understanding of interpreting different nonverbal messages will be covered. Different contexts will also be addressed, such as personal relationships, business, and public as a few examples.


(Electronic copy information purchased at bookstore)
**Course Outcome Competencies**

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. To understand current theories, principles, and research findings examining the role of nonverbal communication in the total communication process.
2. Improve their ability to effectively encode and decode nonverbal messages to enhance the quality of daily interactions.
3. Understand the influence of culture and context in formation of perceptions and impression management.
4. To gain an understanding of nonverbal codes and their effects on managing interaction, forming impressions, developing and maintaining relationships, and engaging in social influence.
5. To understand social norms governing nonverbal behavior and the consequences of violating those norms.
6. To apply theories and concepts in analyzing nonverbal communication in a variety of contexts.
7. Emotional expressivity: To improve your own nonverbal encoding, such as the ability to convey emotions and feelings appropriately and effectively.
8. To recognize reliable and unreliable nonverbal correlates of deception.

**Attendance** – Punctual attendance is expected at all class sessions, especially on presentation and test days. If you participate in University sponsored activities (e.g., intercollegiate sports) you must check with the instructor with appropriate documentation before you are absent. Students are responsible for all missed work.

**Course Assignments/Assessments**: The department of Mass Media, Communication, & Theatre supports university policies of academic excellence as noted in the student handbook. Interpretation of grades should be considered within the university framework: A=excellent, B=good; C=average; D=inferior; and F=failure. Final grades in this course will be based on:

* **Tests** – (70%)
  20% Test 1
  25% Test 2
  25% Test 3

* **Presentations** – (20%) Note: Encyclopedias and dictionaries do not count as sources.
  10% Presentation 1: Context Observation – Emphasis on Content and Structure with Library Sources.
10% **Presentation 2**: Personal Experience – With Library Sources

**Paper Assignment (10%)**

**Assignment Descriptions:**

**Presentation 1**: Observation of a particular context: Each student will choose a different context to observe people’s nonverbal behaviors. Each student should address the following areas:

1. What does research indicate occurs nonverbally within this context? What are some of the nonverbal behaviors that previous researchers have identified studying this context?
2. What unique nonverbal behaviors are occurring within this context that differs from other contexts?
3. What is consistent and inconsistent about your observations from that of previous research regarding this context?
4. What can researchers do in the future to better understand nonverbal behaviors within this context?
5. Some examples are a park, airport, social gathering, sporting event, school cafeteria, mall, elevator, doctor/dentist office, etc.
6. Speeches will be 6-7 minutes, include 3 different reference sources (books or journal articles), and follow the outline format.

**Presentation 2**: Personal Experience focusing on nonverbal communication:

1. All students will experience a different customer service encounter and report about the nonverbal communication observations from the encounter.
2. Students should address what is consistent and inconsistent from their observation from that of class material. It is essential to identify what is different from class material or at least what is new that class material has not covered.
3. Some examples are buying a car, shopping at the mall, shopping for clothes, shopping for a cell phone/ plan, workout membership inquiry, eating at a restaurant etc.
4. The main purpose is to have interaction with the sales person and make note of their nonverbal actions and reactions during the communication encounter.
5. Address each of these area (proximity, facial, tactile, chronemics, olfactics)
7. Speeches will be 6-7 minutes, include 3 different reference sources (books or journal articles), and follow the outline format.

*Each student must get their customer service encounter approved beforehand in order for each student to have a different situation.

**Paper Assignment:** Each student will write a paper of 4-5 pages about nonverbal communication research found in journal articles. The focus of the paper is explaining how nonverbal communication research is conducted. The ways that data is collected and interpreted, such as from observation, manipulation, experimentation, video-taping, in-person experiences etc. Each student must have at least 5 journal articles cited in their paper. The student will turn in their paper and a reference page. Only the body of the paper is counted toward the 4-5 page requirement, hence the title page and reference pages are not counted.

**Course Procedures**

**Assignments** – Assignments must be completed on time. Late work will result in loss of points. Academic integrity is expected on all course assignments and activities. Violations of academic integrity (e.g., plagiarism, cheating, etc.) are serious offenses and will be dealt with according to university policy.

**Make-Up Assignments and Examinations** – If you miss an exam or presentation it must be for one of the following types of documentable reasons: death in the family, severe personal illness, university sponsored activities, etc. If you have an unexcused absence on a day you are scheduled to make a presentation or take a test, you cannot make up that presentation or test. Additionally, because of time constraints, the instructor may elect not to grant make-up speeches for any reason. In order to take a make-up examination you must submit verifiable and official documentation to your instructor (e.g., a doctor’s note for the specific day missed). If your request is approved, you may take a make-up test on the appointed day. All make-up exams must be given for qualified persons within 2 weeks of the missed test.

**Extra Credit** – Extra credit can be earned for participation in departmental research conducted in or outside of class, if the opportunity arises. Extra credit points awarded will be determined by the nature of the project.

**Cell Phones** – All cell phones must be turned off before class starts.
Observance of a Religious Holy Day – Texas House Bill 256 requires institutions of higher education to excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day. The student shall also be excused for time necessary to travel. An institution may not penalize the student for the absence and allows for the student to take an exam or complete an assignment from which the student is excused. No prior notification of the instructor is required.

### Spring 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 14</td>
<td>Intro., Ch. 1 Intro. to Nonverbal Comm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 21</td>
<td>No Class MLK Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 28</td>
<td>Ch. 2 Sociocultural, Ch. 3 Bio-evolutionary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 4</td>
<td>Ch. 8 Message Processing, Nonverbal Signals (Knapp Book ch. 3 Nonverbal Signals)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 11</td>
<td>Ch. 9 Social Cognition, Ch. 14 Conversations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 18</td>
<td>Ch. 5 Visual, Auditory, Kinesics, Vocalics, Ch. 6 Haptics &amp; Proximity</td>
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<td>Feb. 25</td>
<td>TEST 1, Ch. 11 Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 4</td>
<td>Presentation 1, Ch. 7 Environment, Artifacts, &amp; Chronemics</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 11</td>
<td>NO CLASS SPRING BREAK</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
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<td>March 18</td>
<td>Nonverbal Comm. Persuasion, Ch. 4 Body</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>Clothing, Ch. 13 Power</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Paper Due, <strong>TEST 2</strong>, Colors, Ch. 12 Intimacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 8</td>
<td>Olfactory, Ch. 10 Identity</td>
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<td>April 15</td>
<td>Subliminal Messages, Ch. 15 Deception</td>
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<td>April 22</td>
<td><strong>Presentation 2</strong>, Historical Changes &amp; Contemporary Nonverbal Comm.</td>
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<td>April 29</td>
<td>Test 3</td>
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