Comm 103 – Interpersonal Communication
Research Paper – 200 points
Spring 2016

The purpose of this research paper is to provide you with an opportunity to explore an area within interpersonal communication beyond what you learn through your textbook readings and in-class lectures. To accomplish this, you will need to complete the following:

1. **Source Citations (20 points).** Decide on an area of interpersonal communication to study. Be specific about the variables, contexts, messages, or effects you wish to investigate. You may find several ways that are helpful in locating topics (e.g., references from your textbook, conducting a search online, for example, on the National Communication Association website, etc.). Your topic **must** be relevant to interpersonal communication as studied in this course, but may be devoted to **any** aspect of interpersonal communication.

    Identify 20 potential academic source citations (i.e., from scholarly articles either online or in-print) that relate to your topic. As you progress in this research, you will likely dismiss some of these sources. But you must begin with a large pool of potential sources. Type these 20 references, alphabetically, in APA format. **Submit this assignment on Blackboard no later than 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 30.**

2. **Research Evidence (50 points).** Begin reading information from your list of 20 source citations. Record worthwhile information as you read each scholarly article. If you discover that an article does not provide any useable information you want, then disregard it and begin reviewing the next article. **Limit yourself to a maximum of no more than 7 pieces of useful information for each scholarly article.**

    Type a list of useful information. (An example of how to create this information will be provided). Begin by typing the APA citation. Underneath that citation, use bullet points to list specific and useful information you plan to incorporate in your final essay. Although you began with 20 potential scholarly articles, you will likely have dismissed some of them. You will need at least 10 source citations with useable information in your final essay. **Submit this assignment on Blackboard no later than 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 27.**

3. **Formulate your hypotheses and/or research questions.**

    **Research Questions.** A research question is used when the evidence you have does not provide any reason to predict an outcome. Examples of research questions are: “Do men
and women differ in their perceptions about____?“ OR “What are the types of conflict management strategies used by men when____?”

**Non-Directional Hypotheses.** This type of hypothesis is used to predict that something will happen (based on the evidence you have read), but you are unsure what will happen. Examples of non-directional hypotheses include: “Women and men will differ in how they communicate _____” OR “Employers and employees will differ in how they approach _____.”

**Directional Hypotheses.** This type of hypothesis is used to predict that something will happen (based on the evidence you have read) in a particular way. Examples of directional hypotheses include: “Men will display more _____ than women” OR “Employers will use a greater number of _____ than employees when managing conflict.”

**Identify specific research questions and/or hypotheses for your study.** There is no set amount. Obviously, at least one (of any of them) is required, but you may create as many as you like. Be specific, however, when writing research questions and/or hypotheses.

4. **Develop a method to collect data.** Identify what data needs to be collected to test your hypotheses and/or research questions. Will you distribute a survey? Will you conduct an experiment? Will you observe people somewhere? How many people will be part of your study? Your method should be easy to follow so that anyone who reads your method can accurately duplicate your method. (This is analogous to writing clear directions to a recipe for someone else to follow).

5. **Analyze your data.** You can use simple statistics (e.g., averages, percentages, total numbers observed, etc.) or even some statistical tests if your data collection is large enough. There may also be “qualitative” ways to summarize your data depending on how you collected this information. Feel free to ask questions about appropriate methods for summarizing your data. The main focus here is to simply describe what happened. For example, “Results showed that 75% of the people surveyed identified _____ when asked about their conflict management styles.”

6. **Interpret your findings.** After you have summarized your data, determine what your results mean. Specifically, how would you answer your own research questions based on your findings? Did the results support your hypotheses? If not, why? Speculate on the reasons why your results turned-out the way they did.
7. **Outline (30 points)**. **Create an outline of your final essay.** Use conventional outlining symbols (e.g., Roman numerals first, then capital letters, then regular numbers, then lower-case letters, etc.) and **hanging indents**. (Ask what these are if you are unfamiliar with this term). Your outline does not need to be typed in full-sentences; words, phrases, and sentence-fragments are fine. Your outline **must** include the following sections:

I. Literature Review (the last part of this section will include your hypotheses and/or research questions; cite your sources next to the information you will need to cite in your final essay)

II. Method

III. Results

IV. Discussion

V. References (these are the source citations that you used for your literature review; just include the sources you **ACTUALLY** used and **NOT** the sources you eliminated during your research)

Type your outline. There is no minimum length, but you are more likely to receive full credit for outlines that increase the probability of writing a better essay than an outline that demonstrates very little thought or reflection. **Submit this assignment on Blackboard no later than 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 26.**

8. **Original Research Essay (100 points)**. Using your outline as your guide, write a well-crafted essay that summarizes your entire study. Your essay should be approximately 7-10 pages in length and cover the areas identified in the outline (in item #7 above).

All essays **must** be consistent with the writing style outlined in the APA manual (latest edition). You are required to have an introduction, proper headings that help break-up each section of your essay, appropriate source citations for information or ideas borrowed from others, and a reference list of sources used in the essay. The finished product should be free of spelling, punctuation, syntax, and typographical errors. In short, your best work is expected. **Submit this assignment on Blackboard no later than 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 9.**