**Teaching Materials**

For those interested in using this book as a teaching tool, we offer two resources that will be helpful. The first is a syllabus for a class exploring interpersonal communication and qualitative research. That course design integrates this book as well as supplementary readings, and it limits the space used to 13 weeks so that instructors have room to personalize the course and make it their own. Following current trends in education, measurable learning objectives are offered as part of the syllabus, as are some indications for assignments. The course could be offered at either the advanced undergraduate or graduate level. The second is a collection of question sets for each chapter. These question sets can be used with the syllabus, or separate from it; and even those who may not use this book for a class but who want to consider each chapter more deeply will likely find value in the questions. We know we both love teaching about interpersonal communication and qualitative research, and we also love it when we get good teaching ideas from others. We hope that if you are an instructor these materials will help you with your teaching practices.

**COMMUNICATION 500**

**QUALITATIVE STUDIES OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION**

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**Course Description**

This seminar examines the foundations and current directions of interpersonal communication and qualitative research, especially in consideration of interpretivist paradigms, methodological approaches, and the generation of interpersonal communication theory. Class members will explore multiple practices, processes, and contexts in order to understand, evaluate, and apply qualitative research methods in interpersonal communication studies. Readings, discussions, critical writings, in-class activities, and the development of a research project will allow for synthesis, visualization, and advocating of various positions regarding interpersonal communication—especially as it applies to individuals’ research programs, personal lives, and/or career paths.

**Texts**

1. Manning, J., & Kunkel, A. (2013). *Researching interpersonal relationships: Qualitative methods, studies, and analysis.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
2. Various journal articles and book chapters as listed in the syllabus and available through Blackboard or university course reserves.

**Course Goals (Student Learning Outcomes)**

1. To identify and develop an understanding of common qualitative research approaches, as well as their paradigmatic, methodological, and metatheoretical underpinnings (as demonstrated through in-class discussions, weekly question sets, article analyses, and the generation of an individual research project).
2. To consider how interpersonal communication theories develop and evolve in relation to qualitative research (as demonstrated through discussions, weekly question sets, article analyses, and the generation of a personal research project).
3. To deliberate about how competing communication perspectives can be contrasted, compared, and/or synthesized for stronger theoretical understandings (as demonstrated through discussions, weekly question sets, article analyses, and the generation of a personal research project).
4. To understand and articulate individual values, assumptions, and paradigms and how these constructs fit into interpersonal communication studies (as demonstrated through discussions, weekly question sets, and the generation of a personal research project).
5. To practice qualitative research methods in an interpersonal context (as demonstrated through the generation of a personal research project).
6. To be able to evaluate research in consideration of quality and practicality as it applies to understandings of interpersonal communication and relationships (as demonstrated through weekly question sets and article analyses).

**Course Requirements and Policies**

**[Please note:** As this is a model syllabus, we have omitted most course policies typically found on a course syllabus with the understanding that these will vary greatly from instructor to instructor and from university to university.]

**Grading**—Final grades will be assessed from the 500 point total on the following scale:  
  
450-500 A 400-449 B 350-399 C 300-349 D

Less than 300 points will result in a failing grade for the course. The instructor does not adjust grades at the end of the semester (in other words, points will not change for people who are one or more points away for a higher grade). Semester grades are non-negotiable. If you have a question about how an assignment is graded, contact the instructor to set up an appointment with you to talk about the grading procedure. You must, however, do this soon after the graded assignment is returned. It is expected that all learning will be a collaborative process where you solicit feedback on your assignments from classmates and the instructor in advance of presentation or completion as much as possible—and if you ever feel you have truly been slighted on a grade, please make an appointment to chat with me.

**Individual assignment details are as follows:**

**PARTICIPATION (No point value, but worth as much as 20%)**

Because this class is conducted seminar style, where students conduct readings or prepare assignments and come to class to share their insights, it is essential that students participate. When you are done with this class, you are going to be much more informed about interpersonal communication theory and qualitative research methods; but you can make an even bigger impact on your personal progress by asking questions, debating class members, and clarifying your assumptions. It is not only unfair to yourself to hold back on your thoughts, but it is unfair to the others who also depend on you to help them challenge their assumptions. Students who do not participate should not be surprised when their grade is lower than expected. Take this assignment seriously!

**READING QUESTIONS (200 points, 40%)**

To help guide your weekly reading assignments, you will have four to six questions to answer for each class period. Answers for these questions should be primarily constructed in conjunction with class readings; but in-class discussions and presentations, as well as your own experiences, may be useful at times. **No more than three single-spaced, typewritten pages should be used in answering these questions, and questions should be printed and brought to the appropriate class meeting.** Please have your answers ready to submit at the beginning of the class period, although many times the instructor will not collect them immediately (and may ask for volunteers to share answers to particular questions in order to generate discussion). Question sets for each class period will be posted to Blackboard or distributed in class.

**RESEARCH ARTICLE ANALYSES (50 points, or 10%)**

Starting with week seven, we will up to read two research studies in addition to a book chapter in order to be prepared for class. That continues through week twelve. During that six-week stretch, students must choose any two of these articles to analyze and will generate two-page evaluations for each. The two page evaluations will be worth 25 points each, for a total of 50 points.

The following evaluation questions should guide the analyses:

1. What is the research question for this article? Is it explicit or implied? Is the method selected in this article appropriate for the information sought in the research question?
2. Does the literature review appear to be inductive or deductive? How do you suspect the literature review progressed during the formation of the article? Do you feel enough of the literature was explored for this particular study?
3. How well did the author employ the method? Explain the method? Utilize the strengths of the method? Work around the weaknesses of the method?
4. How did the analytic techniques employed by the author enhance the understanding of the data collected? Were the techniques well-explained? Did the technique appear to be a solid fit for the particular research question, data, and theoretical/methodological tradition employed in the piece?
5. What discussion is generated by the author? How does the research conducted in the study link to stronger understandings of the topic explored? What might have been done to improve the study and generate stronger discussion? How vital was the data to the information being discussed?

**PERSONAL RESEARCH PROJECT (250 points, or 50%)**

In order to accommodate each student’s personal goals in the program, and to broaden and strengthen the qualitative research experience, each student will make significant advancement toward her or his own qualitative research project. This project can be a completely new project (in the form of a well-written prospectus, complete with IRB paperwork properly completed and ready to submit, as well as all interview protocols, participant recruiting plans, and/or other applicable preparations) or can be work done to refine or continue an existing project (thesis projects are strongly encouraged). To facilitate this work, each student will generate a brief (one paragraph) proposal of what he or she hopes to accomplish with this assignment; and, if accepted, that paragraph will serve as the contract for what the student should complete for the project during the semester.

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**CLASS ONE: Introduction**

We will review the course syllabus, talk about all upcoming assignments, and introduce ourselves to each other before a brief lecture on key concepts of qualitative research methods and interpersonal communication theory.

**CLASS TWO: Interpersonal Communication and Qualitative Research**

**What should I have read? (For best results, read in the order listed.)**

Knapp, M. L., & Daly, J. A. (2011). Background and current trends in the study of interpersonal communication. In M. L. Knapp & J. A. Daly (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of interpersonal communication* (4th ed., pp. 3-22). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Manning & Kunkel, Introduction

**What are we going to do?**

In addition to discussing the readings, we will all share our own stories about how we came to this class and brainstorm about what might make good qualitative research studies.

**CLASS THREE: Further Considerations about Qualitative/Interpersonal Connections**

**What should I have read?**

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed., 1-19). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Braithwaite, D. O., & Baxter, L. A. (2008). Introduction: Meta-theory and theory in interpersonal communication research. In L. A. Baxter & D. O. Braithwaite (Eds.), *Engaging theories in interpersonal communication: Multiple perspectives* (pp. 1-18). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**What are we going to do?**

We will discuss the readings and map out both qualitative research as a field of inquiry and interpersonal communication as a field in groups using poster boards.

**CLASS FOUR: The Interpretivist Paradigm**

**What should I have read?**

Manning & Kunkel, Chapter 1

**What are we going to do?**

Discuss, discuss, discuss! This sets the foundation for interpretive research, and so it is important that we unpack as many concepts as possible.

**CLASS FIVE: Design**

**What should I have read?**

Manning & Kunkel, Chapter 2

**What are we going to do?**

We’ll talk about design and then work on applying the first steps to the topic you’ve selected to study.

**CLASS SIX: Ethics**

**What should I have read?**

Vanderstaay, S. L. (2005). One hundred dollars and a dead man: Ethical decision making in ethnographic field work. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 34*, 371-409.

University IRB training materials.

**What are we going to do?**

In addition to discussing the reading, everyone will announce their paper topic to the class. This week you lock in on your topic—there’s no turning back from here, only revising. We’ll also discuss IRB policies and watch a short video. **(*Paragraph length description of your paper topic and proof of IRB training completion is due*.)**

**CLASS SEVEN: Interviews**

**What should I have read?**

Manning & Kunkel, Chapter 3

Baxter, L. A., & Braithwaite, D. O. (2002). Performing marriage: Marriage renewal rituals as cultural performance. *Southern Communication Journal, 67,*94-109.

Heino, R. D., Ellison, N. B., & Gibbs, J. L. (2010). Relationshopping: Investigating the market metaphor in online dating. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 27*, 427-447.

**What are we going to do?**

We will discuss the week’s readings and then talk about your projects.

**CLASS EIGHT: Focus Groups**

**What should I have read?**

Manning & Kunkel, Chapter 4

Koenig Kellas, J., & Suter, E. A. (2012). Accounting for lesbian-headed families: Lesbian mothers’ responses to discursive challenges. *Communication Monographs,* DOI:10.1080/03637751.2012.723812

**What are we going to do?**

We will discuss the week’s readings. They have been reduced by one this week so that everyone will have time to give a progress report about the class project and so that we can help each other brainstorm ideas about how to move ahead.

**CLASS NINE: Open-Ended Surveys**

**What should I have read?**

Manning & Kunkel, Chapter 5

Kunkel, A. D., Wilson, S. R., Olufowote, J., & Robson, S. (2003). Identity implications of influence goals: Initiating, intensifying, and ending romantic relationships. *Western Journal of Communication, 67*, 382-412.

Manning, J. (in press-a). Perceptions of positive and negative communicative behaviors in coming out conversations. *Journal of Homosexuality*.

**What are we going to do?**

We will discuss the week’s readings and practice creating survey items.

**CLASS TEN: Ethnography**

**What should I have read?**

Manning & Kunkel, Chapter 6

Pelias, R. J. (2006). A personal history of lust on Bourbon Street. *Text and Performance Quarterly, 26*, 47-56.

Fitch, K. L. (2003). Cultural persuadables. *Communication Theory, 13*, 100-123.

**What are we going to do?**

Business as usual with the readings—plus some considerable talk about your final project.

**CLASS ELEVEN: Discourse Analysis**

**What should I have read?**

Manning & Kunkel, Chapter 7

Tracy, K., & Agne, R. R. (2002). “I just need to ask somebody some questions”: Sensitivities in domestic dispute calls. In J. Cottrell (Ed.), *Language in the legal process* (pp. 75-89). Brunel, UK: Palgrave.

Manning, J. (in press). Construction of values in online and offline dating discourses: Comparing presentational and articulated rhetorics of relationship seeking. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*.

**What are we going to do?**

Business as usual with the readings—plus some considerable talk about your final project.

**CLASS TWELVE: Narrative**

**What should I have read?**

Manning & Kunkel, Chapter 8

Medford, K. (2006). Caught with a fake ID. *Qualitative Inquiry, 12*, 853-864.

Arrington, M. I. (2005). “She’s right behind me all the way”: An analysis of prostate cancer narratives and changes in family relationships. *Journal of Family Communication, 5*, 141-162.

**What are we going to do?**

We will discuss the week’s readings and then discuss any final concerns you have about your class projects.

**CLASS THIRTEEN: Wrapping It All Up**

**What should I have read?**

Manning & Kunkel, Chapter 9

**What are we going to do?**

Have a ten minute talk prepared for your project and bring a copy of it to class. Email a copy to Dr. Manning as a .docx file in advance of the class session.