CMS 348 – Gender Communication (3 credits)
Doane College Lincoln

Course Description: A course surveying writing and research in human communication in order to answer the question “Are there differences in the ways men and women communicate and, if so, what effects do those differences on relationships?” Students completing this course will become familiar with the research and theories regarding same gender and cross gender communication, will increase sensitivity to the effects and functions of communication within human relationships, and will become more aware of their historical/cultural/personal gender biases and how those biases effect communication with others. Prerequisite is CMS 220.

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Text: GenderSpeak: Personal Effectiveness in Gender Communication / Edition 5
by: Diana Ivy, Phil Backlund, Phil Backlund, ISBN-13: 0205825478

Class attendance is ESSENTIAL to a communication course, so if you know you are going to miss a class prior to signing up, it may be best to look into another course. Further explanation of attendance policy is in the syllabus.

Course Objectives: Through thorough examination and discussion of theoretical study, research, and practice of communication exercises, at the end of this course, each participant should:

1. Understand concepts and practice of appropriate gender communication skills.
2. Understand the history and development of gender communication influences and studies, both social and biological.
3. Be able to assess his/her communication skills as influenced by gender.
4. Become aware of barriers to effective gender communication.
5. Develop techniques for improvement of communication skills.
6. Have the ability to apply new communication skills to their personal and professional life.

Sincere participation in each class meeting insures meeting each of these objectives.
PRIOR TO EACH CLASS: Read the required textbook assignment and be prepared to be active in class discussions. This can be done by highlighting the text as you read it, or taking notes of talking points. After reading the text, find an example of gender influence on society, which applies to the reading. It can be a video clip of a television program, a clipping from a newspaper or magazine, a legal ruling, news item, a website, etc. Be prepared to share these materials with the class at the appropriate time of discussion. All materials will be gathered to complete a collage of gender influences pertinent to today’s world.

Course Schedule: Each course moves at its own pace. This course schedule will be used as a guideline to move participants through the course, however the class may progress through the material slower or quicker depending on the needs of the students. Students and instructor will discuss the next class meeting assignments to be completed.

Week 1       Introduction to the Course. Listing the course objectives and description of course requirements and grading criteria. A majority of this class will be dedicated to getting acquainted exercises to achieve a comfort level for open discussion. Discussion will begin on the impacts of social movements on gender communication. Students will be divided into gender groups asked to create a list of questions they would like to ask the opposite gender. These will be put aside until the last class period, when we shall determine if the course answered these questions.

Week 2       Chapter assigned - Prologue "The Impact of Social Movements..." Students will present materials they have gathered appropriate to discussion. Film on the suffrage movement, Iron Jawed Angels. Discussion of historical influence on development of gender identity and film.

Week 3       Chapter assigned - Chapter 1 "Talking the talk..." and Chapter 2 "Becoming a Woman..." Discussions of choosing and using gender communication; language, non-verbal, environmental. Students will present materials they have gathered appropriate to discussion. Role-playing of language, and non-verbal examples that may influence stereotypes and gender expectation. Students will be divided into gender groups and asked specific questions as to language that they use in describing the opposite gender. They will also be asked to describe what they think the other gender is writing about them. Answers will be compared and discussed. " Discussions of biological influences on gender. Discussions of gender and relationships: personal friendships. Students will present materials they have gathered appropriate to discussion. Written scenario's will be presented to students that they will respond to in discussion of influences and communication possibilities. Clips shown from the film Normal.

Week 4       Chapter assigned - Chapter 3 " Pictures, Porno and Pop..." and Chapter 4 "Choosing and Using Gendered..." Discussion of media and pop culture influence on gender. Students will bring in magazine ads, music lyrics, and video examples of information covered in the chapter. Certain examples will be chosen and students will work in groups to edit/change the examples to make them gender neutral. Discussions of
gender language and relationships. Students will present materials they have gathered appropriate to discussion.

**Week 5** - Chapters assigned – Chapter 5 “Gender and Relationships...” And Chapter 6 “Just Among Friends” Role-playing of different relationship scenario’s will be done in class. Non-sexist/sexist comparative language activities will be done. Discussion of gender and developing relationships. Some work time allowed for final presentation. Self assessment paper and final presentation will be assigned.

**Week 6** - Self Assessment paper due. Chapters assigned – Chapter 7 “Beyond Friendship...” and Chapter 8 “Power Abuses...” Discussions of women and men in personal relationships, romantic relationships, and the workplace. Students will present materials they have gathered appropriate to discussion. Discussion of power abuse in relationships. There will be both small and large group discussions. Video clips on gender relationships will be shown. Discussions of gender language and relationships. Students will present materials they have gathered appropriate to discussion.

**Week 7** – Self Assessment paper due. Chapters assigned – Chapter 9 “Workplace” and Chapter 10 “A Class Act...” Students will present materials they have gathered appropriate to discussion. Discussion of advancement in an organization, sexual harassment, and educational expectations. Recognition of literatures’ influence on gender and gender bias from elementary school through the college years. Time will be given to work on the final presentation.

**Week 8** - Summarization of course. Student question sheets answered. Student final presentations.

**Attendance and Participation:** This is a communication course about communication. There will be many opportunities during the course to practice effective communication, both during class discussion and in small groups. What you learn in this class is directly related to your participation.

Your grade will be affected if you miss class. Missing one class will lower the class grade portion of the grade to a B, meaning an “A” is still possible in the course with outstanding work on the paper/role play, activities, modern examples brought to class and discussion assignments. Missing two classes will lower the course portion of the grade to a “C,” meaning a “B” is still possible in the course with outstanding work on the other assignments. Missing three classes lowers the class portion of the grade to an “F”. Individuals should speak to the instructor prior to any possibility of class absences to discuss the ramifications.

**Projects:**

1. Over the course of the class meetings, students will work in teams to develop a final presentation to be presented on the final day of class. This presentation can
be a role-playing situation, a formal presentation, a class exercise, etc. The purpose is to advance the education of fellow classmates by example or information sharing. Students will be expected to present for 20 minutes and follow with a question and answer session. A full description of the final project will be given in class.

2. Course time will be devoted to several skills practice exercises, case studies, role-playing situations and discussion of readings and materials. We will concentrate on developing and/or improving gender communication skills. You will be graded on homework completion, discussion of readings, willingness to participate, and overall class participation.

3. Each student will be required to write a personal assessment paper of his or her own gender influences and biases which will be due after the seminar meetings are completed. This paper will be explained further in class.

Grades:

Your final grade will be computed as follows:

- Class participation includes: 50 % of final grade
  - Modern Examples brought to class 10 %
  - Discussion of Reading assignments 20%
  - Participation in skill exercises 20%

Class attendance as outlined above (including being on time for class and after breaks.)

- Group presentation 25 %
- Final Paper 25 %


Academic Integrity Policy

The Doane College Academic Integrity Policy will be adhered to in this class. All projects and tests will represent your own work. Any use of other’s ideas without proper citation of sources is plagiarism and will result in a loss of all points for that particular assignment or test.