Interpersonal Journal
Interpersonal Relationship

Purpose:
To assist you in understanding course concepts by recognizing them in your own life.

Explanation:
Throughout this class, you will keep a journal of one (1) interpersonal relationship that you would like to maintain or improve. You will write every journal entry with your Interpersonal Communication Partner in mind.

There are prompts to help you focus your journal each week, associated with concepts covered in the textbook and in class. You may write on one of those prompts or another concept in the chapter (or associated lectures).

You are welcome to refer back to previous chapters or lectures (oftentimes, something discussed earlier in the semester connects to concepts discussed in a later chapter or lecture). And, occasionally, the lectures are slightly out of order with the assigned reading in the textbooks or cover two or more chapters.

Important Notes:

- **Number of Communication Partners (Relationships):** Remember that, for this assignment, we are focusing on one (1) relationship, not several (picking and choosing a different relationship for each journal entry). If the relationship dissolves before we finish the class, you can still identify the concepts reflectively.

- **Submission Methods** (how you submit your journal entries to me): I’ve written this assignment to accommodate two “submission” methods: online submission or “hard copy” submitted in class. You do not have the option of how you will submit your journal entry to me. Check the Syllabus or the Schedule to determine which submission method I have identified for your class.

Scheduling of Journal Checks:
Journal checks will be identified in the schedule (often during scheduled in-class activities). You cannot turn in a journal check late.

- **If I’ve told you to submit the assignment online,** it must be submitted online before the class session starts (I might be able to grade it while you are participating in your in-class activity).
• If I told you to bring in a hard copy, handwritten, it is due at the beginning of class. If you are not in class for whatever reason (including illness, work issues, transportation difficulties, etc.), you will not get the points for the journal check.

• If you do not have your journal in class on the assigned day, here are your options:
  o Bring it to me the class period before it is due so I can review it.
  o Scan the entry and email it to me before class, then bring the actual journal on the next class day. (Some of you can take a picture of it with your phone!)

  Suggestion: Scan the entry and email it to yourself; that way, if you forgot your journal, you can print it out and bring it to me on the day it is due.

I've tried to make the points pretty forgiving, but if you consistently don't get the journal "checked off," your grade will be affected.

**Considerations:**

**Frequency of Journaling:**
Each chapter in the textbook as identified on the schedule (follow the schedule to determine which chapters need to be covered by when).

**Length of Journal Entry:**
At least 1 page per journal entry (at least one journal entry per chapter). Please don't cram everything into one small paragraph—at least 1 full page handwritten. (If you are typing your entry, your goal is as least 1 full page, double spaced.)

**Content:**
You will be writing about your communication with your Partner—one that you identified at the beginning of the semester. Focus on identification and application of concepts discussed in the textbook and any lectures associated with those chapters. If we are "on schedule," the lectures in the class will coincide with the chapters assigned.

Do not just regurgitate (summarize) the chapter or lecture notes—**apply** them to your life and relationship!

At the end of this document is a list of “prompts” for each chapter/journal entry. You may write on one of these prompts or on another significant concept discussed in the chapter or in class.

• The nature of this assignment means that you will be self-disclosing (to me) some personal information. I don't expect (nor want) to read every little detail
of your life. I do expect to be able to tell that you can correctly identify and apply the course concepts to real events.

- Identify the concept and how it applies to your relationship, giving an example to support it (or vice versa).

- Please make it clear which interpersonal concepts you are using in your journal. Use the terminology of the field (e.g., “self-disclosure” vs. “we talked about really personal stuff,” “incrementalism” vs. “in small steps,” “nonverbal communication” vs. “body language”). Don’t just list the terminology to indicate that you can sprinkle in terms; choose a few that you think you know and use them correctly, providing an example or two to show your understanding of the concept.

- Please make sure you are applying the concept to yourself and your communication with your Partner. Don’t just praise or blame your partner (e.g., when writing about conflict, you shouldn’t just blame your partner for the conflict; you should identify areas where you could have been responsible for the conflict and what you might do to help manage it).

- You can write to yourself, to me, or just generally. You can ask rhetorical questions, relate events, etc. You can make recommendations to yourself, describe how trying a new skill worked (or didn’t). Keep in mind that the purpose of this assignment is to “bring the course content home” to you.

- Date the entry and note the chapters/lectures you focused on for the journal entry. Put this at the top of the page. (Make sure they match the reading and/or the lectures). One entry per chapter, even if there are two chapters assigned for one day (i.e., Journal Check Chapters 2, 3 are assigned for the same day: have one entry for Chapter 2 and one entry for Chapter 3).

**Medium:**

**If I’ve made this an online assignment,**

- You need to submit your journal entry via the Learning Management System (LMS) online by the due date (check the Schedule on the date/time it is due).

- While I prefer you to upload a word-processed document (in rtf, doc, docx, or pdf), you may handwrite this and “pdf it” (check to see which format the LMS will accept).

**If I’ve made this a hard copy assignment that you need to turn into class:**

- Purchase a composition notebook (yes, I’m being specific as I want to be able to carry these without having all odd sizes that will be hard to control).

- Additionally, I want all the journal entries grouped together. If you turn in separate pieces of paper, then I lose the continuity.
• If you are handwriting your assignment, please make sure your handwriting is legible. If you prefer to use word processing, please print the journal entry out and tape/paste it to a page in the composition book.

• **Please make sure your name, Course Number, and Class Days/Times are legibly written on the cover of the composition book.** (Many students purchase identical colored books and it will make identification upon returning/retrieving your journal much easier.)

• Please prepare your first page as identified in the sample below:

```
Your Name
Course Number, College/University
Semester
Class Dates/Times

Interpersonal Communication Journal
Interpersonal Partner: Name (can use a pseudonym)

For Professor Harris-Jenkinson

If lost, please contact at (CONTACT INFORMATION)
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**Make it Easy for Me to Grade:**

In most cases, I'm just checking to see that you have done the assignment (the assignment is for your benefit, not for mine). If I can't read this (and I really want to skim it), then I can't grade it. The more time I spend trying to figure out what you did/where you did it, the lower your grade is likely to be.

• While you are writing more to yourself than to me, make sure your spelling and grammar are understandable. If you use abbreviations, please make it clear what it means. Just don’t make it frustrating for me to read.

• Clearly identify the communication concepts you are addressing by underlining, highlighting, etc. (This will help me and also help you later when you refer to this.)

• When you turn this into me for your journal check, do something to draw attention to the new entry (entries) so that I don’t have to flip through all the previous entries to find it. Paperclip the entry page, use a post-it note on the side, etc.
Grading Criteria

(What I will be looking for):

✓ **Length**: Full page or more per entry.

✓ **Topic Area**: Discussed one or more concepts identified in the chapter or associated lecture(s).

✓ **Terminology**: The terminology of the communication field is used rather than "lay" terms (e.g., "self-concept" versus "I think of myself as"; "communication apprehension" rather than "shy" or "afraid of talking to others").

✓ **Content**: Appropriate examples used support the concepts identified.

✓ **Legibility**: If I can't read it, I can't grade it.
Journal Prompts

REMEMBER:

You may write on one of these journal prompts, or another concept in the chapter (or associated lectures).

You are welcome to refer back to previous chapters or lectures (oftentimes, something discussed earlier in the semester connects to concepts discussed in a later chapter or lecture). And, occasionally, the lectures are slightly out of order with the assigned reading in the textbooks or cover two or more chapters.

If necessary, reread the explanation and considerations for this assignment.

Journal Entry #1: Intro to Interpersonal Communication

Based on Chapter 1 (Intro to Interpersonal Comm), Lectures: Communication Process, Interpersonal Communication, Electronically-Mediated Communication, Communication Apprehension

1. What changes have taken place in your relationship with your Partner? In what ways have your interpersonal communication skills (or those of your Partner) changed or improved? How have those changes affected the relationship? What changes still need to occur in YOUR interpersonal communication skills to further improve the relationship? How about in your Partner’s interpersonal communication skills?

2. Which communication model best describes your typical communication with your Partner? Analyze a recent interaction (phone conversation, text message, face-to-face, email interchange, etc.) and apply the elements of the communication model to it. What insights can you draw from this?

3. How does your relationship with your Partner meet the definition of interpersonal communication? Why did you choose this relationship over any other you have? What aspects do you want to focus on for improvement (yourself and/or the relationship)? How motivated are you to make changes in yourself and your communication behavior? Why?

4. Analyze the role electronically-mediated communication plays in your relationship with your Partner. Do you communicate differently based upon the channel? Has the role of EMC changed as your relationship with your Partner has progressed? Are there ways you can be more effective using this channel?
Journal Entry #2: Communication & the Self

Based on Chapter 2 (Interpersonal Communication & the Self), Lectures: Emotions, Self-Concept/Self-Esteem, Self-Disclosure, Trust

1. Does your communication with your Partner make a positive or negative impact on your self-concept? Why? Give at least two examples of what your Partner did/said to make a positive (or negative) impact on your self-concept.

2. Using the Johari Window model, diagram your relationship with your Partner. What insights can you draw from this? (e.g., how did information move from your Hidden quadrant to your Open quadrant, or from your Blind to Open quadrant?) Now diagram one for a person you don’t know very well. What information is in your Open quadrant with your Partner but not in the Open quadrant with your acquaintance? What other differences are there?

3. Using Altman & Taylor’s Social Penetration Model, diagram your self-disclosure with your partner, shading in the sections/pieces of the pie to signify what/how deep you disclose.

Consider: Are you satisfied with the depth and breadth of your relationship? Have there been any changes in your diagram in the last month? The last six months? Do you think there may be some changes in the next month or six months?

To simplify this, use the following 12 qualities:

- Religious views
- Political views
- Activities
- Education
- Family
- Your upbringing
- Sexual issues
- Personality
- Weaknesses/Faults
- Health & medical history
- Job experiences/career plans
- Skills possessed & desired

Journal Entry #3: Perception

Based on Chapter 3 (Interpersonal Communication & Perception), Lectures: Perception

1. Contrast the various theories about how perception influences how we interact with others (e.g., implicit personality theory, impression formation
theory, causal attribution theory, standpoint theory). Analyze your
communication with your Partner based upon at least two of these theories.

2. What perceptual barriers have affected your relationship with your partner,
either in the short-term or long-term? Which have you successfully overcome,
at least occasionally? Which ones are the most difficult for you to overcome? Why?

3. Would improving your interpersonal perception skills result in an improvement
of your relationship with your Partner? Why or why not? What strategies
might you focus on for improvement? What strategies do you already employ?

**Journal Entry #4: Impact of Diversity on Communication**

Based upon Chapter 4 (Diversity), Lectures: Intercultural Communication,
Intergenerational Communication, Gender Communication

1. How have gender differences (or similarities) played a role in your
communication or interactions with your Partner? Give an example to support
your answer. Now, after having read the chapter and absorbed the lectures,
will you change the way you communicate with your Partner? If yes, how? If
no, why not?

2. What co-cultures are you and your Partner members of? Are they the same
or different? Are they high- or low-context cultures, masculine or feminine?
Provide examples of when cultural differences created difficulties in your
communication with your Partner. Looking forward, what will you do differently
when communicating with a partner who identifies with a different culture or
co-culture?

3. If you and your Partner are from different cultures or co-cultures, what
barriers did you have to overcome in your relationship? How did you
overcome them? Are there additional (or the same) barriers you need to
address in the future? How might you address them?

4. How did you learn your cultural values (masculine vs. feminine, individual vs.
group, tolerance for uncertainty vs. need for certainty, concentrated vs.
decentralized power)? Through enculturation or acculturation (or both)? How
have those values affected your communication and relationship with your
Partner? Give an example of how you and your Partner have developed a
“third culture”?

**Journal Entry #5: Listening /Small Talk**

Based upon: Chapter 5 (Listening) and Lectures: Listening & Small Talk
1. Give an example of a time when you were an ineffective listener with your partner. What did you do/not do? What was the effect on your Partner at the moment? Were there any long-term impacts? Do the same for an example of a time you were an effective listener with your partner. What might you do differently in the future?

2. What listening style do you exhibit most often (people-oriented, action-oriented, content-oriented, time-oriented)? Is it the same as or different from your Partner? How have you adapted your listening (or how has your partner adapted his/her listening style) to your communication? Give an example of when you changed your listening style based upon the situation.

3. What daily challenges do you encounter in your listening to your Partner? What strategies do you use to overcome these listening barriers? Are there additional strategies you can employ?

4. Give an example of a difficult listening situation with your partner where the outcome was not favorable. Analyze the situation: What made it difficult? What barriers may have existed? Now consider how you could have improved your listening in this situation. How might you have responded to acknowledge that you were listening and understood what was being discussed.

**Journal Entry #6: Verbal Communication**

Based upon Chapter 6 (Verbal Communication) and Lectures: Language and Communication Climates

1. Have you and your Partner ever experienced a “disconnect” due to language? Explain. What caused the difficulty and what would have “fixed” it?

2. Do you agree or disagree with linguistic determinism/linguistic relativity? Give an example of how this concept has played out in your relationship with your Partner.

3. Do you tend to be assertive, aggressive, or passive in how you verbally communicate with your partner? Give an example of when you were not assertive. Why weren’t you? How could you have better asserted yourself?

4. Analyze your relationship with your partner according to Jack Gibb’s communication climates approach. Is your climate generally supportive or defensive? Justify your evaluation with examples from each of the communication behaviors connected with the type of climate chosen (descriptive communication, problem-oriented approach, etc. for supportive, evaluative communication, controlling outcomes, etc. for defensive).
Journal Entry #7: Nonverbal Communication

Based upon Chapter 7 (Nonverbal Communication) and Lectures: Nonverbal Communication

1. Think about a recent communication exchange you had with your Partner. What nonverbal cues were present? (Think about the nonverbal codes we discussed in class as well as are discussed in the book, such as oculsics, kinesics, chronemics, etc.). Did you have difficulty interpreting the nonverbal cues of your Partner? Did the nonverbal cues communicate anything that was in conflict with the spoken message? Explain.

2. Think about a time when you were experiencing a strong emotion and how that affected your communication with your Partner. What emotion were you feeling? What nonverbal cues do you (think) you exhibited? How did your Partner react to you? Did your partner acknowledge (verbally or nonverbally) the nonverbal cues you were expressing? What affect did the nonverbal expression of your emotion have on your Partner and the subsequent communication?

3. Watch a television show you haven't seen with your Partner with the sound turned off. Both of you should make a note of what you think is occurring on the show, based upon the nonverbal cues. Compare your responses with your Partner. Did you come to the same conclusions? What nonverbal cues did you notice that led you to those conclusions? Did you pay attention to different cues? Why do you think there were differences in what you observed and concluded?

Journal Entry #8: Conflict Management

Based upon Chapter 8 (Conflict Management) and Lectures: Conflict

1. Analyze your primary conflict management style (competitive, accommodation, avoidance/withdrawal, compromise, collaboration). What makes you think this is your primary style? Is it the same or different than your Partner’s primary style? In what ways do your conflict management styles hamper effective communication with your Partner? Or enhance?

2. Describe a pseudo conflict that you and your Partner have experienced. What was the real cause of the pseudo conflict? How did you determine that it was pseudo (and not real) conflict?

3. Think of a conflict situation that you had with your Partner where you were not satisfied with your behavior during the interaction. In hindsight, what would you have done differently and why?
4. Think of a recent communication exchange with your Partner that began as a seemingly casual conversation but escalated into a conflict. Can you identify a reason for this (emotional condition, difference in values, etc.)? Is there anything you could have done to avoid the conflict? What cues might you each have looked for to understand the other’s mood?

**Journal Entry #9: Interpersonal Relationships**

Based upon Chapter 9 (Understanding Relationships), 10 (Developing Relationships) and Lectures: Love & Intimacy, Interpersonal Attraction & Power, Relationships

1. Would you describe your relationship with your Partner as one of choice or circumstance? Has it changed? What initially attracted you to your Partner (short-term attraction)? (Think about interpersonal attraction, which holds true for friendships as well as romantic relationships.) Are any of those short-term factors still an issue? Have different factors emerged as your relationship developed (long-term attraction)?

2. Brainstorm some of the turning points that you have experienced in both the escalation and de-escalation (coming together and coming apart) stages of your relationship with your Partner. Identify the relational stages in which the turning points occurred. Identify whether each turning point is a *causal* or *reflective* turning point. How significant an impact are turning points in the development of your relationship?

3. In your relationship with your Partner, is it acceptable to be deceptive? Does your answer differ based upon circumstances? What form does your deception come in (e.g., white lie, exaggeration, omission)?

4. If your relationship with your Partner is current: If this relationship were to dissolve, which termination strategy would you prefer? Why?

5. If your relationship with your Partner has already dissolved: What termination strategy was used? How did you feel? Would you have done something differently?

6. If your relationship with your Partner has already dissolved: How well does Steve Duck’s model of relationship dissolution fit what happened to you (intrapsychic phase, dyadic phase, social phase, grave-dressing phase)? What happened that is not reflected in his model?

**Journal Entry #10: Friendship & Romance/Family & Workplace**

Based upon Chapter 11 (Friendship & Romance), 12 (Family and Workplace) and Lectures: Family Communication, Love & Intimacy
1. What ethical responsibilities do you have toward your Partner? If your Partner is a romantic partner, would the responsibilities be different if s/he were a friend instead? (and vice versa)

2. How does the triangular theory of love apply to your relationship with your Partner?

3. If your Partner is a romantic partner: Which of Lee’s types of love (eros, ludis, storge, mania, pragma, agape) is the way you view your love with your Partner? Is your Partner’s view the same, or different, as yours? What effect do these views have on your relationship?

4. If your partner is a friend: How would you describe your relationship? (Same sex, cross-sex, intergenerational, etc.) What qualities do you find to be most important in friendships and how do those qualities apply in this relationship? Is there a quality that you find to be very important that does not apply to this friendship? If so, what is the effect of that omission?

5. If your relationship is a familial one: What kind of family are you in? Has the communication changed as you both have grown older? How does the circumplex model of family communication apply in your relationship? Give examples to support your views.

6. If your relationship is a workplace one: In what ways is your workplace friendship different from your non-workplace friendships? In what ways is it the same? Which type of relationship do you find the most challenging to maintain? Why?