

**I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

A. Department Information:

|               |                                     |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| Division:     | Humanities                          |
| Department:   | Speech                              |
| Course ID:    | Speech 176                          |
| Course Title: | Gender Differences in Communication |
| Units:        | 3                                   |
| Lecture:      | 3                                   |

B. Course Description:

This course explores the gender differences evident in communication. Students will examine the theories concerning gender differences, issues of gender in a variety of contexts (families, relationships, the workplace, the media, school), and the differences in the communication patterns resulting from gender. Students will evaluate their own communication for evidence of gender patterns, and will discuss and effective communication skills.

**II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: One.**

**III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:**

Upon successful completion of the course, the student should be able to do the following:

- A. Recognize and list the theories explaining gender differences in communication.
- B. Analyze the issues surrounding gender differences in relationships.
- C. Recognize the various gender movements in America.
- D. Identify their individual gender communication patterns
- E. Recognize, discuss, and respond to the impact of gender communication differences within the contexts of family, workplace, schools, etc.
- F. Compare and contrast media coverage of men and women.
- G. Explore the gender differences in language use.
- H. Explore the gender differences in non-verbal communication.

**IV. CONTENT:**

- A. Differences between sex and gender.
  1. Sex is biological
  2. Gender is socially constructed
- B. Models of communication.
  1. Messages
  2. Meaning
  3. Context
  4. Symbols
- C. Theoretical approaches used to explain gender.
  1. Biological
  2. Psychological
  3. Cultural
- D. Gender movements in America.
  1. Pre 1960's movements
  2. Post 1960's movements
  3. Men's movements
  4. Backlash movements
- E. Family dynamics affect gender and communication.

1. Gender identity
2. Parents' interactions with boys and girls
3. Early classroom experiences
- F. Gender differences in language.
  1. Symbolic nature of language (shapes reality)
  2. The games boys and girls play (translates into communication style)
  3. Women's verbal communication
  4. Men's verbal communication
  5. Misunderstandings
- G. Gender differences in non-verbal communication.
  1. Functions of non-verbal communication.
  2. Gender patterns of non-verbal communication
    - a. touch
    - b. proxemics
    - c. artifacts (clothing)
    - d. vocal cues
    - e. facial and body movement
- H. Gender differences in interpersonal relationships, including romantic relationships, family relationships, and friendships.
  1. Male patterns of behavior in relationships
  2. Female patterns of behavior in relationships
- I. Gender differences in the school setting.
  1. School organization, distributions of power and authority, numbers of male/female instructors.
  2. Gender differences in the curriculum
  3. Research concerning the amount of attention given to male and female students
- J. Influence of the media on gender.
  1. Stereotyped images of men and women
  2. Stereotyped images of relationships
  3. Types of stories covered depicting men and women
- K. Gender differences in organizational communication.
  1. Institutional beliefs about men and women
  2. Stereotypes of men and women in the workplace
  3. Prevalence of masculine forms of communication in the workplace
  4. Organizational policies (leaves, work schedules)
  5. Communication climate
  6. Laws reflecting sensitivity to gender issues

**V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

The course is designed under the lecture/discussion format. The instructional methods to be used include:

- A. Lecture
- B. Read text and other sources
- C. Class and group discussion of significant issues and topics
- D. Relevant video tapes
- E. Written assessments of personal communication patterns
- F. Researching newspapers and magazines
- G. Observation project

**VI. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:**

- A. Lecture
  - 1. Theories of gender differences
- B. Reading
  - 1. Read the chapter on gender in close relationships.
- C. Class and group discussion of significant issues and topics
  - 1. Class discussion: Why does the word feminist have such negative connotations?
  - 2. Group discussion: Discuss and compare the various gender movements. Then, identify those which you feel have helped develop gender equity and those which have hurt gender equity. Justify your answers.
- D. Relevant video tapes
  - 1. Select a video tape from the approved list which addresses issues involving gender and communication.
  - 2. After watching the tape, identify which issues and concepts discussed in class which apply to the video.
  - 3. Write an analysis paper which discusses your findings.
  - 4. Prepare a brief speech which presents your findings to the class.
- E. Written assessments of personal communication patterns
  - 1. Journal entry: Describe/reflect on a) one interaction with your parents (the earliest you can remember) that communicated expectations for your gender and b) the most recent interaction with someone who communicated expectations for your gender.
- F. Researching newspapers and magazines
  - 1. Review several newspaper or magazine articles and obtain two stories: one which features men, and one which features women.
  - 2. Compare the two articles to identify which issues are in the articles and the images of men and women portrayed in them.
  - 3. Using the concepts from class, explain what you believe is occurring.
  - 4. Prepare a brief speech which presents your findings to the class.
- G. Observation Project
  - 1. Observe the "real life" communication of men and women in a given context (school, work, family, etc.).
  - 2. Record your observations.
  - 3. Identify the issues and behaviors which explain what you have observed.
  - 4. Prepare a written analysis of your findings. Be sure to apply the concepts and issues discussed in class and in the readings to justify your answers.

**VII. EVALUATION:**

- A. Methods of evaluation
  - 1. Objective and subjective comprehensive examinations (for lecture and text reading assignments).
    - a. Typical questions
      - 1. The movement that focuses on how minority women are oppressed by both racism and sexism is
        - A. separatism
        - B. womanism
        - C. marginalism
        - d. ecofeminism
    - 2. List the three major theories explaining gender differences.

3. Compare and contrast women's and men's styles of leading or managing.
  2. Evaluative essays and presentations (VII.D, VII.F)
    - a. Evaluation will be based on clarity of thought and expression and application of course concepts to materials studied.
  3. Brief speeches (VII.D, VII.F)
    - a. Evaluation will be based on clarity of and expression and organization of ideas.
  4. Written assessments of personal communication behavior
    - a. Evaluation will be based on completeness of answers and clarity of thought and expression.
  5. Observation project
    - a. 20% of project grade: thoroughness of data collection
    - b. 20% of project grade: description of communication behavior observed
    - c. 20% of project grade: analysis of communication behavior observed
    - d. 20% of project grade: application of concepts discussed in lectures and readings
- B. Frequency of evaluation
1. One midterm examination
  2. One final examination
  3. Periodic review of journals, written assignments, and presentations
  4. End-of-term evaluation of Observation Project

**VIII. TYPICAL TEXTS:**

- A. Wood, J. (1996). Gendered lives, 2nd edition. San Francisco, CA: Wadsworth .
- B. Bates, B. & Bowker, J. (1997). Communication and the sexes. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- C. Borisoff, D. & Merrill, L. (1998). The power to communicate: Gender differences as barriers (3rd edition).
- D. Canary, D. J. & Dindia, K. (1997). Sex differences and similarities in communication. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum & Associates.
- E. Romaine, S. (1998). Communicating gender. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum & Associates.

**IX. OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED OF STUDENTS:**

Some instructors may require reading packets (obtained in the campus bookstore) and/or rented videos (obtained from local video stores).