

RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ACADEMIC COURSE OUTLINE
COMM 220 Nonverbal Communication

I. Basic Course Information

A. Course Number and Title: COMM 220, Nonverbal Communication

B. New or Modified Course: Modified

C. Date of Proposal: Semester: Fall Year: 2024

D. Effective Term: Fall 2025

E. Sponsoring Department: Communication and Languages

F. Semester Credit Hours: **3**

G. Weekly Contact Hours: 3 Lecture: 3
Laboratory: 0
Out of class student work per week: 6

H. ☐ Prerequisite (s): none

☐ Corequisite (s): none

I. Additional Fees:

II. Catalog Description

Nonverbal Communication explores theories and types of nonverbal behavior in interpersonal, organizational, intercultural, and computer-mediated communication contexts. This course will cover several nonverbal channels such as voice (e.g., paralanguage, pace, tone, volume), touch, space and territory (proxemics), environment, gaze (eye behavior), gestures (movement), physical appearance, facial expressions, and emotions. This course will also explore how nonverbal communication is implicated in person perception, impression management, immediacy behaviors, power and dominance, and the role of context and culture. Nonverbal Communication will help students develop competency in understanding the nuances of nonverbal social cues in relation to individual and group differences and similarities.

III. Statement of Course Need

A. Nonverbal Communication is important because it offers students the opportunity to expand their knowledge of communication in interpersonal, organization, intercultural, and computer-mediated contexts. Nonverbal communication is nuanced and ambiguous; this

course will cultivate an understanding of how culture and context are salient components of observed behavior and the subsequent sense-making of that behavior. Additionally, this course provides insight into the role of nonverbal communication in personal and professional day-to-day life and its implications for interactional outcomes. Nonverbal Communication will help students understand that communication is not just something that “happens out there” in the social world; it is underpinned by biology, physiology, and underlying neurological processes. This course will help students cultivate the skills needed to navigate the complexities of interpersonal relationships across a variety of contexts. This course will be especially relevant to students who are majoring in Raritan Valley’s fields of Communication Studies, Liberal Arts, Nursing, Human Services, and Business and Public Service.

- B. There is no lab component for this class.
- C. Please describe the transferability of this course.
 - 1. This course generally transfers as an elective in Communication Studies

IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum

- A. Free Elective
- B. This course serves as an elective in the Communication Studies Associate of Arts in the Liberal Arts degree program.
- C. To see course transferability: a) for New Jersey schools, go to the NJ Transfer website, www.njtransfer.org; b) for all other colleges and universities, go to the individual websites.

V. Outline of Course Content

- A. Foundations of Nonverbal Communication
 - a. Roots of Nonverbal Communication
 - i. Development of Nonverbal Behavior
 - ii. Sensory Deprivation, infants, twins, nonhuman primates, multicultural studies
 - b. Theories and Paradigms
 - i. Bioevolutionary Paradigm
 - ii. Sociocultural Paradigm
 - iii. Expectancy Violations Theory
 - iv. Interaction Adaptation Theory
 - v. Attribution Theory
- B. Sending and Receiving Nonverbal Signals
 - a. Person Perception
 - b. Social Cognition
 - c. Gender, Age, Culture
 - d. Encoding / Decoding

- C. Proxemics: Space and Territory
 - a. Intimate, personal, secondary, public
 - b. Invasion and defense
 - c. Crowding & density
 - d. Culture
 - e. Gender, age, culture
- D. Kinesics: Body Movements, Gestures, Posture
 - a. Emotion
 - b. Memory and gestures
 - c. Speech related and referent gestures
 - d. Coordination of speech and gesture
 - e. Interactional synchrony, mirroring, mimicking
- E. Environment as Nonverbal Communication
 - a. Surroundings
 - b. Architectural Design
 - i. fixed / movable objects
 - ii. color
 - iii. texture
 - iv. light
 - v. Warmth, privacy, familiarity, constraint, distance
 - c. Natural and man-made environments
- F. Physical Appearance
 - a. Attractiveness, judgments, attractiveness over time
 - i. Face, body, height, age, scent, hair, body image, clothing, artifacts
 - b. Courtship / marriage
 - c. Self-esteem
 - d. Antisocial behavior
 - e. Professional advantages
 - f. Effects of interaction and context
 - g. Stereotypes
- G. Emotions
 - a. Emotion as Communication
 - b. Nature of Emotional Experiences
 - i. Adaptive
 - ii. Affective
 - iii. Physiological
 - iv. Cognitive
 - c. Perspectives
 - i. Universalists
 - ii. Neurocultural
 - iii. Behavioral ecology
 - iv. Functionalists
 - d. Emotional Intelligence
- H. Face

- a. Personality Judgments
 - b. Interaction Management
 - c. Emotions / emotional expression
 - i. Recognition, measurement, controversy, inferences
 - d. Physiology
 - e. Display rules
 - f. Facial feedback
- I. Gaze
 - a. Eye behavior
 - b. Types and functions of gaze
 - c. Group differences / cultural differences
 - d. Speaker – listener pattern
 - e. Personality
 - f. Cultural and racial background and racial attitudes
 - g. Pupil dilation and constriction
- J. Haptics: Touch
 - a. Touch and human development
 - b. Impacts of touch
 - i. Positive and negative affect, emotions, play
 - c. Interaction management
 - d. Touch as a physiological stimulus
 - e. Task and relational touch
 - f. Well-being
- K. Vocalics: Voice
 - a. Content and relational
 - b. Paralanguage
 - c. Personality
 - d. Group perceptions
 - e. Judgments
 - i. sociodemographic and developmental characteristics
 - f. Individual differences, age, gender / biological sex, status, dominance
 - g. Emotion
 - h. Hesitations, pauses, and silence
 - i. Conversation management
 - i. Turn- taking, yielding, requesting, maintaining, denying
- L. Personal and Professional Interactions
 - a. Relationship Development
 - i. Courtship, quasi-courtship, liking, immediacy behaviors
 - b. Greeting behavior and leave-taking behavior
 - i. Conversation management
 - c. Identity
 - i. Personal
 - ii. social
 - d. Dominance and status

- e. Violence and aggression
 - i. Criteria
 - ii. Social cues
 - iii. Fight or flight
- f. Culture
 - i. Individualistic and Collectivist
 - ii. High and low context
- g. Deception
 - i. Nonverbal cues
- h. Technology and nonverbal communication

VI. A. Course Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Apply nonverbal communication theories and concepts in day-to-day life and demonstrate competency in writing and speech (GE-1, GE-5, *)
2. Describe individual and group differences in the use of nonverbal communication (GE-8)
3. Describe the influence of culture and context in the formation of perceptions and impression management (GE-8)
4. Describe nonverbal channels (e.g., face, gestures, environment, etc.) and their effects on managing interaction, forming impression, developing and maintaining relationships, and in social influence (GE-5, GE-8)

*** Embedded critical thinking**

B. Assessment Instruments

1. project: research paper and presentation (required)
2. exams and quizzes
3. discussion questions
4. class participation
5. journals / response papers

VII. Grade Determinants

What factors may enter into the determination of the final? LIST the grade determinants. Please note any grade determinants that will be *required* for the course. For example:

- A. essays
- B. projects
- C. tests
- D. presentations

Given the goals and outcomes described above, LIST the primary formats, modes, and methods for teaching and learning that may be used in the course:

- A. lecture/discussion
- B. small-group work
- C. computer-assisted instruction
- D. student oral presentations
- E. simulation/role playing
- F. student collaboration

VIII. Texts and Materials

LIST which of the following types of course materials will be used. Specify title and publication information about textbooks and any other major text sources or other materials.

- A. Suggested textbook: Knapp, M.L., Hall, J. A., & Hogan, T. G. (2021) *Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction (9th ed.)*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing
- B. film and video
- C. audio sources
- D. web sources
- E. other: Peer-review papers related to their project and peer-review papers assigned as supplemental reading (to be provided)

The following statement should be included in the outline:

(Please Note: The course outline is intended only as a guide to course content and resources. Do not purchase textbooks based on this outline. The RVCC Bookstore is the sole resource for the most up-to-date information about textbooks.)

IX. Resources

What specific or unusual resources (such as library, computer, or laboratory resources) does the College presently have that will be necessary for the course? What additional resources will be needed? List the resource:

1. Academic Databases accessible through Evelyn S. Field Library

X. Check One: ☐ Honors Course ☐ Honors Options ☒ N/A