

Syllabus  
Purdue University Fort Wayne  
COM 50800: Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction  
Sarah S. LeBlanc, Ph.D.  
Fall 2022: 8/22/22 – 12/18/22  
Asynchronous Online

#### Professor Information

Name: Sarah S. LeBlanc, Ph.D.  
Office: Neff 230H  
Office Hours: T/Th 12:30 to 2:00pm  
Online office hours by appointment only  
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#### Course Description (from 2020-21 catalog)

An examination of theoretical writings and critical studies in selected areas of nonverbal communication, e.g., environmental influences, space and territory relationships, physical appearance and dress, physical behavior, and vocal cues. One unit will specifically concern itself with measurement, recording, or transcription methods used in a nonverbal study.

#### Graduate Program Objectives

1. Develop knowledge of history, theories, and research practices in communication studies.
2. Articulate, critique, and elaborate on theories, methods, approaches, and/or practices across a range of communication contexts.
3. Design projects to address communication problems by thinking analytically about the problem, applying communication theory, and analyzing data.
4. Demonstrate facility with advanced research skills appropriate to the discipline.
5. Develop writing practices including coherent, logical, persuasive arguments in an appropriate tone, and voice.

#### Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

1. Learn and discuss various theories within the nonverbal communication field (GPO 1, GPO 2)
  - a. Assessed through Discussion Boards
2. Obtain knowledge and practice methods of data collection within nonverbal communication. (GPO 3, GPO 4, and GPO 5)
  - a. Assessed through Observation Reports, Photovoice Assignment, and Final Project
3. Observe and analyze nonverbal behaviors of self and others (GPO 2)
  - a. Assessed through Observation Reports and Photovoice Assignment
4. Produce a final report demonstrating and synthesizing research related to a nonverbal phenomenon (GPO 5)
  - a. Assessed through Final Project

## Required Text

Guerrero, L.K. & Hecht, M.L. (2008). *Nonverbal communication reader: Classic and contemporary readings*, (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Waveland Press.

Other readings as assigned are found on Brightspace

## Class Policies

### About Me

While there is a tab on Brightspace with a more detailed narrative, I need you to know that I wear many hats: wife, mom, professor, sister, community engager...My mom and wife rolls come first after 5 pm on weekdays and the entire weekend.

### My availability

I check email multiple times a day and work hard not to check email after 5 pm or on the weekends. You can expect a quick reply from me. Should I not respond within 24 to 48 hours, please email me again.

## Grading

I adopt “ungrading” for my graduate-level courses.

In 2018, Jesse Stommel introduced the concept of “ungrading”. Why? Because grades are arbitrary and are less about giving feedback and more about marking what is wrong or not done correctly. As graduate students, you are expected to complete your graduate-level courses with a B- or better. But as your instructor, I want you to focus less on what your final grade will be and more on the process, the knowledge, and the outcome.

Ungrading provides you (and I) the following benefits:

- Critical thinking: A more focused way to practice critical thinking. This skill will help you when you encounter a situation you've never encountered before and address what is happening? Why is it happening? And how is it happening?
- Anxiety-reducing: While in Ph.D. school, the only assignments I got a B on were tests. Each paper that I slaved over during the semester got an A and very little feedback. How was I learning? And why was I stressing out over getting a good grade? By ungrading, you don't have to worry about the points or the letter grade, you can focus on yourself, what you learn, and what you can improve.
- Grading yourself: At the end of the semester, you will grade yourself. This is more than just assigning yourself a letter grade. It will require you to assess why you gave yourself that grade and how did you go about achieving it. Start on Day 1. Make a list of goals/skills you want to accomplish during the 16 weeks of the semester, keep field notes on your progress, and then use this to assess yourself at the end of the semester.

On Brightspace, I use colors to mark 1) if you completed the assignment; 2) did you demonstrate critical thinking and application, and 3) highlight the subject/skill you needed to practice.

**Green** – Great Work; Read my Formative Feedback

**Yellow** – Needs Improvement (Read my formative feedback and redo the parts of the assignment that need more practice)

**Red** – Work unbecoming a graduate student or assignment not completed

Using the color scheme and your self-grading, a final grade will be generated.

## Assignments

### Participation/Discussion Boards

A good deal of what you will learn will be from discussions with your peers. Therefore, weekly logins and discussion contributions are important to your learning. Each week a discussion prompt will be posted. You will need to address the prompt by critiquing the readings or applying concepts from the readings.

One-word responses or one-sentence responses are not a good thing. Yes, you can complement someone but in your initial post, I want to see understanding and application of the material under discussion.

Reference pages are not required but you are highly encouraged to cite your readings when discussing, critiquing, or applying them.

### Observation Reports

As an autoethnographer, I am about using personal experiences and then critically analyzing them. This is what you will be doing for these reports. There will be seven options, but you only need to complete 5.

These observation reports are case studies in which you will choose a code, function, or theory of nonverbal communication and observe (or create) an interaction where you can observe that code, function, or theory.

In your report, you will need to:

- Briefly describe the interaction
- Analyze the role of the code and the effects of the nonverbal communication
- Evaluate what you gain(ed)/learn(ed) by using the concept/theory within that interaction.

**Check the Brightspace calendar for due dates.**

### Photovoice and Nonverbal Communication

For complete directions see the assignment on Brightspace

You can do this assignment as your schedule deems fit. The last day to turn the assignment in is **Wednesday, November 30 by 11:59 PM.**

### Final Project

The purpose of the final project is to allow students the opportunity to critically analyze a specific question relevant to nonverbal communication and their field. More information can be found on Brightspace.

For more class policies, academic policies and services, and other information please see the documents under the syllabus folder on Brightspace.

**DUE Monday, December 12 by 11:59 PM**