



COUN 513: COMMUNICATION IN MARRIAGE  
Course Syllabus, Fall 2020  
*Online Class*

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

**Instructor:** Audrey Robinson, PhD, LPC-S, RPT, Certified-CCPT, CSC  
**Office Hours:** Virtual (by appointment only)  
**University Email Address:** Audrey.robinson@tamuc.edu  
**Preferred Method of Communication:** E-mail  
**Communication Response Time:** 24 hours, Monday-Friday in most cases

***COURSE INFORMATION***

**Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings**

**Required Textbook**

Gottman, J., & Gottman, J. S. (2014). *Level 1 clinical training Gottman method couples therapy: Bridging the couple chasm*. Gottman Institute.

Berger, R. & Hannah, M.T. (Eds.). (1999). *Preventive approaches in couples therapy*. Philadelphia: Brunner/Mazel.

**Supplemental Readings**

American Psychological Association. (2004, Oct 8). Marital education programs help keep couples together. <https://www.apa.org/research/action/marital>

Selected articles/programs ... stay tuned

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE**

Coun 513. *Communication in Marriage*. Three semester hours.

Theories and techniques of verbal and nonverbal communication in marriage relationship are studied.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES (Student Learning Outcomes)** include, but are not limited to, the following. Students should be able to:

1. Understand the behaviors and patterns of verbal and nonverbal communication in marital relationships.
2. Understand the individual (emotional and developmental) and family (developmental and multigenerational) dynamics that contribute to and influence marital communication.

3. Understand the systemic context in which communication is perceived, defined, and responded to by individuals within marital dyads.
4. Know the characteristics of functional and dysfunctional marital communication.
5. Become familiar with several approaches to marital therapy.
6. Become familiar with current models of marital enrichment program.
7. Become aware of current research on marital functioning.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Minimal Technical Skills Needed**

In this class, you will utilize the Learning Management System (LMS) entitled D2L for portions of instructional and learning methods and submitting assignments. You will need to utilize other technologies such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, etc. If you have issues with this system, it is your responsibility to contact the help desk immediately.

### **Instructional Methods**

#### **METHOD OF INSTRUCTION/COURSE FORMAT**

The class will consist of lectures, discussions of assigned readings, audio and video tapes of theoretical presentations and clinical applications.

### **Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course**

As a student in this course, you are responsible for the active learning process. Expectations of this course include the following:

1. You are expected to display professionalism at all times. Be respectful of your professor and peers. Be open to feedback, as you will receive this throughout the program.
2. Prepare for classes. Complete any and all readings prior to class time.
3. Complete all assignments by the deadline.
4. Adhere to the university student code of conduct.
5. Participate. During face-to-face classes, you are expected to actively participate in all activities and discussion. In the online format, you are expected to participate in all online discussions/activities. This is crucial to your learning.
6. All writing assignments must be done according to APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition standards.
7. Regularly check your University email. My suggestion is to check this at least once a day as your instructors and others from the department and University may contact you.
8. Begin your readings ASAP. Sometimes it may take more than one attempt to digest the material.
9. Deadlines are the last possible moment something is due—not the first moment to start. Work ahead. I realize this may not always be possible; however, when you can, do so.
10. Be open to the process. This degree takes time, work, effort, and growth.

### **Attendance & Participation**

Students are expected to attend all classes and to be prepared to discuss assigned readings. Attendance and participation will be considered as part of your final grade. For completion certificate of Level 1 Gottman Training, you must be in attendance for all training modules. You will be responsible for any material missed due to an absence. You will also be responsible for material assigned, but perhaps not discussed in class.

### **Assignments/Assessments**

**Note due dates** on all assignments and assume a professional position on this. Specific requirements include:

#### **Couple Interview (20 points)**

You will be required to interview one (1) couple, at a selected stage of marriage (committed relationship) from the following.

Stage 1:	0-3 years
Stage 2:	4-8 years
Stage 3:	9-15 years
Stage 4:	16-25 years
Stage 5:	25+ years
Bonus Stage:	
	50+ years

Indicate whether the couple is within their first marriage or remarried, with or without children.

This should be an informally structured interview designed to discover how the couple makes the marriage work. As such, no specific set of questions is required. This allows you, the interviewer, the privilege and freedom to explore the unique set of dynamics that exists in your couple. Also, videotaping or recording the interview will allow you to be fully involved in the process, while simultaneously providing you with the recording to reflect on later. Provide a permission to record document and execute with signatures (form will be distributed). Areas to tap into, using your own style of engagement, are: How long have you been married?; Initial attractions; How did you know this person was the one for you?; Qualities you love and appreciate in your partner; How do you express that to each other?; Discoveries/surprises along the way; How do you handle conflicts?; What characteristic or quality would you say contributes the most to the success of your marriage?; What advice or suggestions for a successful marriage would you give to couples contemplating marriage? Any other areas that naturally flow out of the interview can be addressed as well. Summarize your interview by incorporating the above information as well as your observations of the couple in areas of style of communication, level of connectivity, ways of interacting, verbal/non-verbal patterns, seating arrangement, etc. Include any personal reaction you might have had to the couple.

#### **Couple Interview Rubric**

	1 – Does Not Meet Expectation	2 – Meets Expectation	3 – Exceeds Expectation
Summary of	Did not summarize, or only	Interview summary	Interview summary

interview (10 points)	summarized some of the questions. Writing is shallow and lacks in-depth exploration. Not representative of graduate level work (0-7.9 points)	completed at basic level. Questions present, missing topics; representative of graduate level work (8-8.9 points)	covered at an in-depth level. Self-awareness is demonstrated; representative of graduate level work (9-10 points)
Your observations (10 points)	Did not provide observations, or only provided minimal observations. Writing is shallow and lacks in-depth exploration. Not representative of graduate level work (0-7.9 points)	Observations completed at basic level. Questions present, missing topics; representative of graduate level work (8-8.9 points)	Observations covered at an in-depth level. Self-awareness is demonstrated; representative of graduate level work (9-10 points)

### **Reflective Paper (10 points)**

You will keep a working written reflection of readings and their application to your personal and professional development, particularly pertaining to your own style of communication. At the end of the semester you will write an integrated personal reflection on your progress throughout the course regarding your style of communication within relationships, working with couples, your fit, and your walked path into an increased level of self-awareness and hopefully congruence. As this assignment is partly developmental in nature, you may be asked to show your written reflections after you have turned in your paper.

#### **Reflective Paper Rubric**

	1 – Does Not Meet Expectation	2 – Meets Expectation	3 – Exceeds Expectation
Reflections (10 points)	Did not provide integrated personal reflection of progress, or only reflected on a few course aspects. Writing is shallow and lacks in-depth exploration. Not representative of graduate level work (0-7.9 points)	Reflections completed at basic level. Many reflections present, missing one or two topics; representative of graduate level work (8-8.9 points)	Reflections covered at an in-depth level. Self-awareness is demonstrated; representative of graduate level work (9-10 points)

### **Presentation (20 Points)**

You will participate in a group or solo (your choice) presentation of a preventative approach (couple's enrichment programs, etc.) in couple's therapy. You may select from the approaches we discuss (in text), or from another source with permission from the instructor. You are encouraged to be creative, yet professional, in your presentations. Use of technology is required.

#### **Presentation Rubric**

	1 – Does Not Meet Expectation	2 – Meets Expectation	3 – Exceeds Expectation
Presentation	Did not present, or only	Presentation completed	Presentation covered at an

(15 points)	presented a brief overview. Presentation is shallow and lacks in-depth exploration. Not representative of graduate level work (0-11.9 points)	at basic level. Overview and pros/cons present; representative of graduate level work (12-13.4 points)	in-depth level. In addition to overview and pros/cons, an application example is given; representative of graduate level work (13.5-15 points)
Discussion feedback (5 points)	Did not provide feedback in the discussion, or only provided minimal feedback or feedback to some not all presentations. Writing is shallow and lacks in-depth exploration. Not representative of graduate level work (0-3.9 points)	Feedback completed at basic level. Feedback is present, missing one presentation or none; representative of graduate level work (8-8.9 points)	Feedback given at an in-depth level. Application and constructive responses are demonstrated; representative of graduate level work (9-10 points)

### **Case Conceptualization (20 points)**

Using the couple from our initial class video, select a timeframe within this couple's marriage and apply the Gottman approach to "our class couple, the Roses." A handout with guidelines will be given, though basically you will include background information, assessment of the couple along the lines of healthy functioning, constructs associated with this approach applied, role of the facilitator/therapist, goals of treatment, and how you might use the techniques of this approach with a rationale for use. Again, your grade will be based on demonstrated applied knowledge of the constructs of the Gottman approach, overall presentation of the material, and thoroughness.

### **Case Conceptualization Paper Rubric**

	1 – Does Not Meet Expectation	2 – Meets Expectation	3 – Exceeds Expectation
Conceptualization of the Roses using Gottman (15 points)	Did not apply Gottman and materials studied in this class. Missed basic concepts. Writing is shallow and lacks in-depth exploration of couple. No evidence of synthesization across multiple sources; did not address fit; not representative of graduate level work (0-11.9 points)	Applied Gottman and material discussed in class, most basic concepts are covered, evidence of possessing knowledge about couples but missing one or two key points; representative of graduate level work (12-13.4 points)	All Gottman concepts listed in handout are covered. In-depth review of related concepts, evidence of possessing knowledge about topic without missing key information; representative of graduate level work (13.5-15 points)
Format (5 points)	Did not follow format provided, body of the paper and the reference	APA format was followed with one or two minor errors. Mostly original	APA format was followed with no errors on cover page, in body of

	page. Many spelling/writing/grammar errors present.  (0-3.9 points)	sources were used. Sources are related to the selected theories (4-4.4 points)	the paper or reference page. All four original sources were used (4.5-5 points)
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**Exam (30 points)**

Multiple choice short answer format based on assigned readings

**Exam Rubric**

	1 – Does Not Meet Expectation (0-33.9 points)	2 – Meets Expectation (24-26.9 points)	3 – Exceeds Expectation (27-30 points)
Grade Percentage on Exam	Less than 80% correct on all exam items	Between 80% and 89% correct on all exam items	Greater than 89% correct on all exam items

**GRADING**

<b>Assignment/Assessment</b>	<b>Point Value</b>
Interview	20
Reflective Paper	10
Presentation	20
Case Conceptualization	20
Exam	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

- 90% - 100% A
- 80% < 90% B
- 70% < 80% C
- 60% < 70% D
- < 60% F

**Grading:** An instructor does not give grades. Students earn grades. If you approach your class with this understanding, it is the beginning of taking responsibility for your education and being a great student.

## ***TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS***

### **Browser support**

D2L is committed to performing key application testing when new browser versions are released. New and updated functionality is also tested against the latest version of supported browsers. However, due to the frequency of some browser releases, D2L cannot guarantee that each browser version will perform as expected. If you encounter any issues with any of the browser versions listed in the tables below, contact D2L Support, who will determine the best course of action for resolution. Reported issues are prioritized by supported browsers and then maintenance browsers.

Supported browsers are the latest or most recent browser versions that are tested against new versions of D2L products. Customers can report problems and receive support for issues. For an optimal experience, D2L recommends using supported browsers with D2L products.

Maintenance browsers are older browser versions that are not tested extensively against new versions of D2L products. Customers can still report problems and receive support for critical issues; however, D2L does not guarantee all issues will be addressed. A maintenance browser becomes officially unsupported after one year.

Note the following:

- Ensure that your browser has JavaScript and Cookies enabled.
- For desktop systems, you must have Adobe Flash Player 10.1 or greater.
- The Brightspace Support features are now optimized for production environments when using the Google Chrome browser, Apple Safari browser, Microsoft Edge browser, Microsoft Internet Explorer browser, and Mozilla Firefox browsers.

### **Desktop Support**

<b>Browser</b>	<b>Supported Browser Version(s)</b>	<b>Maintenance Browser Version(s)</b>
Microsoft® Edge	Latest	N/A
Microsoft® Internet Explorer®	N/A	11
Mozilla® Firefox®	Latest, ESR	N/A
Google® Chrome™	Latest	N/A
Apple® Safari®	Latest	N/A

### **Tablet and Mobile Support**

<b>Device</b>	<b>Operating System</b>	<b>Browser</b>	<b>Supported Browser Version(s)</b>
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Device	Operating System	Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)
Android™	Android 4.4+	Chrome	Latest
Apple	iOS®	Safari, Chrome	The current major version of iOS (the latest minor or <b>point</b> release of that major version) and the previous major version of iOS (the latest minor or <b>point</b> release of that major version). For example, as of June 7, 2017, D2L supports iOS 10.3.2 and iOS 9.3.5, but not iOS 10.2.1, 9.0.2, or any other version.  Chrome: Latest version for the iOS browser.
Windows	Windows 10	Edge, Chrome, Firefox	Latest of all browsers, and Firefox ESR.

- You will need regular access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection. The minimum computer requirements are:
  - 512 MB of RAM, 1 GB or more preferred
  - Broadband connection required courses are heavily video intensive
  - Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display 1024 x 768 or higher resolution
- **For YouSeeU Sync Meeting sessions 8 Mbps is required.** Additional system requirements found here: <https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>
- You must have a:
  - Sound card, which is usually integrated into your desktop or laptop computer
  - Speakers or headphones.
  - \*For courses utilizing video-conferencing tools and/or an online proctoring solution, a webcam and microphone are required.
- Both versions of Java (32 bit and 64 bit) must be installed and up to date on your machine. At a minimum Java 7, update 51, is required to support the learning management system. The most current version of Java can be downloaded at: [JAVA web site](http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp)
- Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date.



Running the browser check will ensure your internet browser is supported.

Pop-ups are allowed.

JavaScript is enabled.

Cookies are enabled.

- You will need some additional free software (plug-ins) for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:
  - [Adobe Reader](https://get.adobe.com/reader/) <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
  - [Adobe Flash Player](https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/) (*version 17 or later*) <https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>
  - [Adobe Shockwave Player](https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/) <https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/>
  - [Apple Quick Time](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/) <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>
- At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

## ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

**Note:** Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

## COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

### Brightspace Support

*Need Help?*

### Student Support

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

## Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778 or click on the **Live Chat** or click on the words “click here” to submit an issue via email.



## System Maintenance

Please note that on the 4th Sunday of each month there will be System Maintenance which means the system will not be available 12 pm-6 am CST.

## Interaction with Instructor Statement

Communication with your professors is key to your professional growth. I am here to support and guide you along your academic journey. With that being said, I cannot help you if you do not communicate with me. Please make an appointment if you have any concerns or questions. Because I teach in different locations, email is the best way to reach me. I will attempt to answer all emails within 24 hours, Monday-Friday, but at times will need up to 72 hours to do so. When emailing, please use your university email and address me with courtesy and respect.

## *COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES*

### **Course Specific Procedures/Policies**

Written assignments are due on the day noted in the syllabus. All papers are due at the beginning of the class period. Late papers will have 10% deduction per day late from the final score.

### **Syllabus Change Policy**

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

## *University Specific Procedures*

### **Student Conduct**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: [Netiquette](http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html)

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

## **TAMUC Attendance**

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

## **Academic Integrity**

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

## ***ADA Statement***

### **Students with Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

### **Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu)

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

### **Nondiscrimination Notice**

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

### ***Campus Concealed Carry Statement***

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

### **FLEXIBLE COURSE CALENDAR**

(subject to change at the discretion of the instructor)

<b>Week/Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
Week 1: 8/24	Course overview, communicating expectations	Opening Video Berger & Hannah Ch. 1	Complete Student Information Google Form (link will be provided)  Discussion Post 1
Week 2: 8/31	History of the institution of marriage and current statistics	Choose a Program in Berger & Hannah Part II	
Week 3: 9/7	Myths and truths about Dysfunctional relationships	Gottman Ch. 1 Choose a Program	

		in Berger & Hannah Part II	
Week 4: 9/14	Marriage & Family Therapy myths and mistakes	Gottman Ch. 2 Choose a Program in Berger & Hannah Part II	
Week 5: 9/21	The Sound Relationship House Theory.	Gottman Ch. 3 Choose a Program in Berger & Hannah Part II	
Week 6: 9/28	Aspects of Assessment	Gottman Ch. 4 & 5 Choose a Program in Berger & Hannah Part II	
Week 7: 10/5	Oral History	Gottman Ch. 6 Choose a Program in Berger & Hannah Part II	
Week 8: 10/12	Intervention	Gottman Ch. 7 & 8 Choose a Program in Berger & Hannah Part II	
Week 9: 10/19	Conflict Management	Gottman Ch. 9 & 10 Choose a Program in Berger & Hannah Part II	
Week 10: 10/26	Working with resistance	Gottman Ch. 11 Choose a Program in Berger & Hannah Part II	
Week 11: 11/2	Building Friendship...	Gottman Ch. 12 Choose a Program in Berger & Hannah Part II	
Week 12: 11/9	Putting it all together, the process of therapy	Gottman Ch. 13 Berger & Hannah Ch. 15	<b>Interview Due by 11/15 11:59PM</b>
Week 13: 11/16	Preventative measures...	Gottman Ch. 14 Berger & Hannah Ch. 16	<b>Presentation Due by 11/18 11:59PM</b>
Week 14: 11/23	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>		
Week 15: 11/30	Marital Conflict and the Children	Gottman Ch. 15 Choose a Program in Berger &	<b>Case conceptualization; Reflection paper Due by 12/6 11:59PM</b>

		Hannah Part II	
Week 16: 12/7	Final Examination		<b>Final Exam Due by 12/10 11:59PM</b>