

COUN 214: MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS

Citrus College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Fall 2024
Credits:	3
Total Contact Hours:	54
Lecture Hours :	54
Lab Hours:	0
Hours Arranged:	0
Outside of Class Hours:	108
Total Student Learning Hours:	162
District General Education:	D2. Behavioral Science
Transferable to CSU:	Yes
Transferable to UC:	Yes - Proposed
Grading Method:	Standard Letter, Pass/No Pass

Catalog Course Description

This course explores human relationships using insights from psychology, sociology, counseling, and communication theory. It covers various types of relationships, including family, friends, romance, and professional. Students will gain self-awareness, interpersonal skills, practical techniques for resolving conflicts constructively, and the ability to cultivate healthier and more harmonious relationships. This course goes beyond theory and empowers students to recognize and analyze their own distinct relational communication styles to shed light on how emotional reactions, perceptions, beliefs, and life experiences profoundly shape our interactions with others. This course is beneficial for those in helping professions and anyone seeking to improve or nurture their connections with loved ones, colleagues, and the broader community. 54 lecture hours.

Course Objectives

- Identify what a relationship is and the dynamics that pertain to the patterns, growth, and development of a relationship
- Investigate the connection between social relationships and well-being
- Understand why the quantity and quality of relationships can affect happiness and health
- List and define different forms/types of relationships and the characteristics that make them unique
- Examine one's relationship needs and gain awareness of everyday one-on-one communicative interactions in relationships
- Recognize some of the challenges that plague close relationships today and become familiar with how communication can contribute to negative outcomes such as hurt, conflict, psychological damage, and relationship termination
- Define and explain the components of effective communication (verbal and non-verbal) and active listening techniques for supporting relationships
- Demonstrate at least three strategies for effectively managing interpersonal conflict in relationships by incorporating conflict resolution strategies (e.g. compromise, empathy, problem solving)

- Explain the importance of setting and respecting boundaries in relationships
- Plan a personal program that will include practical strategies to help one strengthen their personal and working relationships, have difficult conversations, and deal with conflict

Major Course Content

Course Content

1. The Nature of Relationships
 - a. Characteristics
 - b. Purpose
 - c. Relationship formation
 - d. Elements of a quality relationship
 - e. Attachment theory and attachment styles (Mary Ainsworth, John Bowlby, Mary Main)
2. Types of Relationships
 - a. Five categories of relationships
 - i. Romantic and Intimate Relationships
 1. Gottman Method: Dr. John and Julie Gottman
 - ii. Friendships
 - iii. Family Relationships
 - iv. Professional, Work, and Networking Relationships
 - v. Acquaintances and neighborhood/community relationships
 - b. The significance of relationships in personal well-being
 - c. Challenges that plague close relationships today
 - d. Building and maintaining relationships
 - i. Social Exchange Theory: George Homans and Peter Blau suggests that individuals weigh the costs and benefits in relationships to determine their level of satisfaction and commitment
 - e. Meaning in relationships
 - i. Symbolic Interactionism: George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer and the emphasis the role of symbols and language in shaping human interaction and meaning in relationships.
 - ii. Social support theory and social exchange theory
3. Understanding Relationship Dynamics
 - a. Emotional intelligence for relationships
 - b. Personal needs
 - c. Learning about self and others
 - d. Communication style and patterns
 - e. Relational Dialectics Theory: Baxter and Montgomery
 - f. Examples of relationship dynamics
 - i. Trust and betrayal
 - ii. Intimacy and vulnerability
 - iii. Attachment styles
 - iv. Gender and cultural dynamics
 - v. Co-dependency and independence
 - vi. Cycles of abuse and recovery
 - vii. Role of time and change
 - viii. Jealousy and insecurity
 - ix. Shared goals and values
 - x. Social support networks
 - xi. Parent-child relationships and parenting dynamics
 - xii. Professionalism

- xiii. Ethics and respect for others
- xiv. Language use
- xv. Personal responsibility
- g. The “dark side” of relationships and being mindful
 - i. Destructive relationship behaviors
 - ii. Aggression
 - iii. Bullying
 - iv. Hurtful messages
- 4. Effective Communication Skills and Active Listening in Relationships
 - a. Communication Accommodation Theory: Howard Giles
 - b. Interpersonal communication for relationships
 - i. Listening styles and types of listening responses
 - ii. Verbal affection and compliments
 - iii. Conflict resolution discussions
 - iv. Non-verbal cues and body language
 - v. Expressing boundaries
 - vi. Supportive communication
 - vii. Appreciative feedback
 - viii. Negotiation and compromise
 - ix. Apologies and forgiveness
 - x. Crisis communication
 - xi. Assertiveness
 - xii. Celebrating achievements
 - c. Techniques to communicate clearly and concisely, both verbally and non-verbally, in diverse relationship contexts.
 - d. Active listening techniques to enhancing one’s capacity for empathy and comprehension in interpersonal interactions
 - e. Examples of practical exercises and applications
- 5. Conflict Resolution Proficiency in Relationships
 - a. Understanding conflict in relationships
 - b. Emotions and feelings
 - c. Conflict resolution skills and strategies to address and resolve interpersonal conflicts constructively and empathetically
 - d. Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI): This tool assesses how individuals handle conflict and provides insights into their preferred conflict resolution styles
- 6. Setting and Respecting Boundaries
 - a. The importance of setting and maintaining personal boundaries while respecting the boundaries of others to promote healthier and more fulfilling relationships
 - b. Boundary theory: Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy and others
- 7. Empathy and Perspective-Taking
 - a. How and why one should cultivate empathy and the ability to understand others’ viewpoints, feelings, and needs, fostering more compassionate and effective interactions
 - b. How and why one should adapt their communication and listening styles to different individuals, cultures, and situations, enhancing their effectiveness in a wide range of relationships
 - c. Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT): Jean Baker Miller and the importance of connection and the impact of relationships on an individual’s well-being
- 8. Effective Feedback and Constructive Criticism
 - a. How and why one should provide feedback and criticism in a constructive and non-defensive manner, contributing to healthier communication
 - b. Examples of effective communication practices including assertive expression of thoughts and feelings
- 9. Practical Application
 - a. Case studies and real-life scenarios
 - b. How to apply communication and listening techniques to practical situations, including professional settings, personal relationships, and conflict resolution
 - c. How to use “positive emotional deposits” to strengthen relationships
- 10. Reflective and Continuous Improvement
 - a. How and why it’s important to engage in self-reflection on topics such as: communication and relationship management skills, emphasizing continuous improvement, and lifelong learning in the areas of effective communication and relationship building

Examples of Required Writing Assignments

Writing Assignments and/or Proficiency Demonstration

- Relationship diary or journal • Students will complete a log of their experiences in family, friendship, romantic, and professional relationships concluding with a paper that: a. analyzes past behavior and thought patterns that are nonproductive and relationship progress and b. measures their improvement. • Students will complete a structured relationship management journal in order to analyze their experiences and devise methods to negative behaviors. • Students will demonstrate at least one technique or strategy to strengthen a relationship of choice or manage conflict

Examples of Outside Assignments

Course Assignments

Assignments that Demonstrate Critical Thinking

- Individual Projects - Students will write an individualized, comprehensive Relationship Improvement and/or Relationship Management plan that integrates course concepts and learned techniques into their daily lives. The goal is for students to apply their understanding of relationship management concepts to real-life scenarios, fostering practical skills and self-awareness. • Self-Assessments - Students will complete pre- and post-assessment instruments measuring their relationship communication style, conflict resolution approaches, preferred boundary-setting techniques, etc. • Discussion Board or Class Discussion – Topics for class discussion can include effective vs. ineffective communication in relationships, active listening, setting and respecting boundaries, conflict resolution, and healthy vs. toxic relationships

Instruction Type(s)

Lecture, Online Education Lecture

IGETC Area 4: Social and Behavioral Sciences

4G. Interdisciplinary, Social & Behavioral Sciences