

**FCS 2420-50 Personal Development / Effective Communication**  
**2 Elective Credit Hours**  
**Syllabus – Fall 2006**

Instructor: Fran Cannard

Office: Department of Workforce Services

162 N. 400 East #B

Office Hours: Mon – Fri. 8:00 - 5:00

Phone: (435) 986-3510

E-mail: [fcannard@utah.gov](mailto:fcannard@utah.gov)

Course Credits: 2.0

Location of Class: EDFAM Room 115

Beginning/Ending Dates: August 24, 2006 through December 14, 2006

Meeting times for Class: Thursday 7:30 - 9:30

Pre- or Co-requisites: none

**Optional Textbook:** The text for this class is The Feeling Good Handbook, Dr. David Burns, M.D.

**Course Description:** Personal Development and Effective Communication fulfills elective credit and is open to all students interested in exploring topics related to personal growth and assertive communication. Topics covered will include: methods of exploring personality characteristics; the change process; identifying automatic thoughts and combating distorted thinking styles; identifying and clarifying values; setting and attaining personal and career goals; finding more creative solutions and making decisions; stress management; identifying different styles of communication; gender differences in communication; assertive listening; developing personal power; saying no; giving and receiving positive and negative feedback; dealing with anger; conflict resolution; and developing a social network. Concepts will be presented through lecture, class discussion, experiential exercises, and outside activities. Students completing this class will have a better understanding of communicating with themselves and those around them. Through practice and use of these skills, students will learn to communicate in an honest and mutually respectful manner, which may contribute to an improvement in work and personal relationships and a reduction in stress.

**Course Objectives:** Students who attend class, actively participate in class discussions and activities, and complete the written/experiential assignments should be able to:

1. Discuss the change process and identify how they respond to change.
2. Contemplate their personality characteristics from a number of different perspectives by utilizing formal and informal assessment methods.
3. Identify differences between gender-biased communications.
4. Demonstrate techniques and methods for improved decision making skills and problem solve more effectively.
5. Identify their automatic thoughts and distorted thinking styles and have the information to change thinking patterns.
6. Clarify personal values, beliefs, and motivations.
7. Learn methods for dealing with conflict and negotiation skills
8. Write personal action plan and have the tools and knowledge to accomplish personal goals.
9. Examine the effectiveness of their decision-making styles.
10. Identify the differences between passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive and assertive communication.
11. Exhibit theory and skills related to listening assertively.
12. Maintain personal power and communicate assertively.
13. Give and receive positive and negative feedback in a manner that promotes positive communication.

## Grading Criteria:

Grades are determined on a point system with a total of 740 points possible. Below is the maximum number of points you can receive for each graded component of this class.

A. **Class Attendance** and in-class activities are 20 points/week, 300 points total. Make sure you sign the roll each night you attend. Chronic lateness or leaving early will be noted and reflected in your final grade. There is no way to 'make-up' missed classes, however you can still turn in the homework for the class and negotiate for extra credit.

B. **Homework** includes interactive exercises applying material from the text and class discussion and is designed to relate the class material to your personal life. Completed assignments are worth 10 points each, or 140 points possible for the 14 homework assignments. Any assignments turned in late will receive a 50% reduction in possible points. All assignments should be written legibly or typed if at all possible.

C. **Papers** - There will be two major out-of-class written papers. Each paper will be worth 100 points for a total of 200 points possible. These must be typed, double-spaced, with 1" margins. Each should be in short essay format and include a brief introduction, the body covering major points and ideas and short summary. Spelling, punctuation and general grammar will be considered in grading papers. Lengths specified are minimums. Specific instructions for each of the paper are listed in the Homework section.

D. **Tests** - **Final Exam** - The final exam will be in class on the last night of class. It will consist of 2-3 short essay questions and 1-2 long essay questions. The Final Exam will be worth 100 points.

E. **Optional Extra Credit** - Your instructor may approve optional extra credit activities that students may wish to complete to make-up for missed or late assignments and absences. Each activity is worth a possible 5 to 50 points and students may complete up to 5 (five) optional extra credit assignments or a total of 50 extra credit points (enough to raise your grade from an A- to an A, C+ to a B-, etc). All extra credit must be approved prior to earning extra points. **BE SURE TO CLEAR IT WITH ME BEFORE YOU START THE PROJECT.** If you are interested in extra credit, but lack ideas for possible projects or activities, please talk to me. I am always happy to explore options with you and negotiate points commensurate with the activity.

The FCS department uses the following percentages to assign letter grades:

A = 100% - 95%	B = 87% - 84%	C = 77% - 74%	D = 67% - 64%
A- = 94% - 91%	B- = 83% - 81%	C- = 73% - 71 %	D- = 63% - 60%
B+ = 90% - 88%	C+ = 80% - 78%	D+ = 70% - 68%	F = 59% and below

## Institutional and Class Policies

**Academic Integrity:** Failure to comply with academic integrity, honesty, and behavior standards of Dixie College may result in course failure or administrative withdrawal from this class. Inappropriate classroom behavior may also result in an administrative withdrawal. You will be notified in the following way:

1. A verbal request to comply with behavioral expectations of the class.
2. One written warning to inform you that you have not made the required behavioral adjustment.
3. Administrative withdrawal.

**Withdrawal:** If you decide to drop the class, it is up to you to turn in a drop card to the registrar to make sure you are off the enrollment list for the class. Final day to withdraw is November 17<sup>th</sup>. Last day to drop the class is September 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Student Support Services:** If you are a student with a physical or mental impairment and would like to request accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center (652-7516) in the Student Services Center, Counseling and Advisement Room #201. The Disability Resource Center will determine your

eligibility for services based upon complete professional documentation. If you are deemed eligible, the Disability Resource Center will further evaluate the effectiveness of your accommodation requests and will authorize reasonable accommodations that are appropriate for your disability.

**Library Services:** If you would like help from a librarian, please access this site: <http://library.dixie.edu/>

**Writing Help:** You can receive help with writing papers by physically visiting the writing lab in the Browning Learning Center or by accessing the Online Writing Center via the DSC home page ([www.dixie.edu](http://www.dixie.edu)), then clicking on 'Academics' in the blue border on the left and finally clicking on 'Online Writing Lab' from the list under the "Other Academic Links" on the bottom right of that page. Or, the URL for the Online Writing Center is <http://dsc.dixie.edu/owl/>

**A Last Note:**

Students are asked to explore issues dealing with their personal lives using their own experience as a reference point. For purposes of demonstrating understanding of these topics for purposes of assigning a grade, no student is asked to share information about their personal lives that may be uncomfortable or considered inappropriate in a classroom setting. Students are encouraged to alter personal facts or substitute family identities when completing assignments or during discussions and in class exercises to maintain family confidences. If any topic or exercise is offensive to you as a student, you may negotiate alternative assignments with the instructor prior to the assignment due date.

FCS 2420-50 Personal Development / Effective Communication  
CLASS SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	SUGGESTED READING	ASSIGNMENT	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Wk 1 Aug 24	Course Overview Fear and Change	Chapter 12	Assignment 1	
Wk 2 Aug 31	Self-Exploration and Discovery	Chapter 1 AND 2	Assignment 2	Assignment 1
Wk 3 Sep 7	Automatic Thoughts Distorted Thinking	Chapter 4 AND 5	Assignment 3	Assignment 2
Wk 4 Sep 14	Values Clarification, Attitudes & Motivation	Chapter 6	Assignment 4	Assignment 3
Wk 5 Sep 21	Problem Solving Decision Making	Chapter 7	Assignment 5	Assignment 4
Wk 6 Sep 28	Stress Management	Chapter 8	Assignment 6	Assignment 5
Wk 7 Oct 5	Balancing Work and Home Responsibilities	Chapter 9	Assignment 7	Assignment 6
Oct 12	Semester Break	No Class		
Wk 8 Oct 19	Gender and Cultural Awareness	Chapter 10	Assignment 8	Assignment 7
Wk 9 Oct 26	Communication Styles Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication	Chapter 18	Assignment 9 Mid-Term Paper	Assignment 8
Wk 10 Nov 2	Thinking and Feeling Assertive Listening	Chapter 19	Assignment 10	Mid-Term Paper Assignment 9
Wk 11 Nov 9	Centering Self-Talk Affirmations	Chapter 20	Assignment 11	Assignment 10
Wk 12 Nov 16	Personal Power Saying No	Chapter 21	Assignment 12	Assignment 11
Nov 23	Thanksgiving Break	No Class		
Wk 13 Nov 30	Giving and Receiving Feedback Conflict Resolution and Negotiation	Chapter 22	Assignment 13	Assignment 12
Wk 14 Dec 7	Putting it all Together - Defining Life Purpose Goal Setting and Using Plans	Chapter 10	Assignment 14 Final Paper	Assignment 13
Wk 15 Dec 14	Final Exam	Chapter 14, 15, 16 or 17 - pick one		Assignment 14 Final Paper

# FCS 2420-50 Personal Development / Effective Communication

## HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

### Homework 1 Assignments:

- Identify and list three personal or academic goals on which you will focus during the next 15 weeks of class.
- Describe how you typically react to change.
- Explain in your own words how fear affects your life and how you have dealt with it in the past.

### Homework 2 Assignments:

- List three major influences, people, life events or experiences that have shaped who you are today and/or have influenced the direction you think you would like your life to take.
- Describe a personal or professional challenge that you have faced during your life. In what ways did this challenge help you to discover more about yourself? If you had to go through this or a similar experience again, what would you do the same and what would you choose to do differently.
- After taking the test(s) in class, identify three new things you learned about yourself or three things you knew, but think the test results confirmed or re-enforced.

### Homework 3 Assignments:

- Think of a time during the last week when you felt an emotion strongly. Using Ellis' Cycle, identify the **Activating Event**, **Belief**, **Consequence**, and how you **Disputed** (if you did) the belief. What was the result?
- Consider the 15 Distorted Thinking Styles. Identify three you tend to use and describe how you use them, including your Automatic Thoughts (or what you may say to yourself) in each situation. What are the pros and cons of continuing to use each in your life?
- Keep a Thought's Diary or Daily Mood Log for one day this week. During that day, make an effort to capture and record your automatic thoughts as they happen.
- Pick one of the Automatic Thoughts from your diary. Complete the Identifying Distortions exercise using that example. What was the result?

### Homework 4 Assignments:

- Complete the Daily Time Schedule and Pie of Life assignments. Based on the results, write a one-page assessment of how you spend your time. Did where you spent your time match up with your values? Why or why not? Were you surprised by your results?
- Identify a personal value and describe the role it plays in your life. Which of the seven steps of the valuing process do you think you practice in relation to this value?
- How would you propose teaching values to children?

### Homework 5 Assignments:

- Think about a situation this past week when you ended up in a disagreement with someone because of something you said. Write how you could have approached this situation using an "I" statement. Include the actual words you could have used. Would this have made any difference in the exchange?
- Describe how you approach decisions. How would you describe your decision making "style"?
- Consider a personal "problem" or situation similar to the exercise involving Bobby in class. Using the ideas about viewing the problem from a different perspective presented, list three different ways you could view that situation. Based on each view, describe the logical "solution" based on each different perspective.

### Homework 6 Assignments:

- List three major "stressors" that currently affect your daily life.
- Identify your stress symptoms or warning signs. How do you know when you are stressed?
- From the information presented in class, identify one technique you could use to help you cope with each of the three major stressors you listed above. Spend two hours during this week using one or more of the stress reduction techniques identified above. Report on and evaluate how the experience affected your ability to cope with your

current stress levels. Include any changes in your stress symptoms or warning signs.

### Homework 7 Assignments:

- Using the information from class, describe your current support system. Do you think it is adequate in all areas of your life? How could you improve on your current safety net?
- List what you consider your personal boundaries in work or family situations. List some strategies that will help you defend against these boundaries being 'crossed'? How can knowing these help you separate your work and personal life?
- Identify one task you can delegate this week. Describe the process you used and the outcome of your delegation effort. Evaluate your effort by determining whether or not you used all ten steps as described in class. What was the outcome.

### Homework 8 Assignments:

- Describe one instance when your lack of knowledge about a cultural belief or difference resulted in an embarrassing, awkward or hurtful experience for either you or the other person. How could this pain have been prevented?
- Observe two people in a mixed gender interaction. Describe how the interaction did or did not demonstrate the 12 male and female characteristic described in class.
- Describe five characteristics of your typical pattern of interacting or relating to others. For each characteristic identified, determine if you think it is most strongly related to your personality, cultural influence or due to gender. Give your reasoning for each characteristic.

### Mid-Term Assignment:

The Mid-Term is worth 100 points. The paper should be a minimum of three pages, typed, double-spaced. Make sure you address each section listed below. Watch your favorite TV show this week – it can be a sit-com, reality based, news, documentary, or just about any type program. Based on what you have learned so far this semester, identify one person or character in the show that you think could benefit from the ideas and principals you have learned so far. You are now their "personal coach." Identify the top three to five major problem areas in their life. Using at least five of the concepts learned, design an action or treatment plan to help them improve their current situation. Include in your paper

1. A **brief** description of the show and character you are "coaching"
2. Identify and describe their top three to five problem areas
3. A description of what techniques from class you would use to address each problem area and why you think that one is the most appropriate from among the ones presented. Include how you think it will help this person and the intended outcome from that particular approach or intervention.

### Homework 9 Assignments:

- Based on what you know about yourself, which communication pattern do you tend to use in most situations. Explain how you came to your conclusion. Why is it important to recognize your communication behaviors?
- It is usually pretty easy to point out the "draw-backs" of non-assertive communication, but it is the perceived benefits of those styles that will often keep people from changing their behavior to a more assertive pattern. What are the benefits you experience from communicating passively? What about aggressively? And finally, passive-aggressively?
- Observe two people in conversation where you cannot quite hear or understand what is being said or the conversation is in a language you don't understand. Describe the interaction and the assumptions you can make about the nature of the relationship, topic under discussion and emotional state of the participants based on your observation of their non-verbal communication – those elements that are other than the actual words exchanged.

### Homework 10 Assignments:

- Identify and record three related thoughts, feelings, and wants. Use the following format: When I think about \_\_\_\_\_, I feel \_\_\_\_\_, and I want \_\_\_\_\_. Complete three different sentences. (IE. When I think about what a beautiful day it is, I feel restless and I want to go outside and play Frisbee in the sun.)

- Which are the most likely assertive communication blocks that you use and why? What would you likely say to yourself to rationalize or justify your position?
- When you and a friend/family member are talking, how would you like them to respond? What words, phrases, or "non-verbals" would be particularly effective in encouraging you to continue talking and would communicate to you that they are really listening and concerned about you or the topic.
- Practice assertive (reflective) listening one time this week. Briefly describe the interaction and identify at least two techniques mentioned in class that you tried during the exercise that seemed helpful during the interaction. How was this experience different from times when you did not listen assertively?

### Homework 11 Assignments:

- Choose two one-hour blocks of time during the next week during which you are willing to practice centering. It is helpful if you pick a time during which you are likely to experience stress or conflict. When you begin to notice yourself responding physically or emotionally to a situation or during an interaction, practice the centering techniques presented in class. Write about your experience.
- The concept of Self-talk was introduced earlier with the discussion of automatic thoughts. Identify three self-defeating things you continue to tell yourself.
- Think of a topic or area in your life that causes you pain or about which you tend to be sensitive and you would like to address. Write three possible affirmations following the rules discussed in class that would help you develop or improve in this area.
- Using the idea of an Anger continuum from class, describe the emotional stages you go through prior to getting really angry. Identify the point at which you would need to intervene to avoid getting angry all together.

### Homework 12 Assignments:

- Use power language this week and report your experience. What did you learn about yourself and others as you used power language? What transpired from using power language? How did using power language feel to you? How did the others respond?
- Write your personal Bill of Rights with at least ten rights identified.
- Practice saying NO one time this week. Describe your experience.

### Homework 13 Assignments:

- Identify two instances during the week in which you were given the gift of feedback or unsolicited information – one in which the information was positive, the other negative. In each case, identify your response. Include whether or not you encouraged the information by "opening it up" or discouraged it by "closing it down". Was your response a conscious decision or simply a reaction to the information?
- Describe your typical method of conflict resolution. During a major or minor disagreement this week, practice your negotiation skills. Contrast this interaction with your normal style of conflict resolution.

### Homework 14 Assignments:

- Identifying one longer-range goal that you will commit to working on past the end of the semester. Create an action plan for accomplishing that goal including at least two objectives with at least two activities each.

### Final Paper Assignment:

**Instructions:** Write a three page (minimum) paper reflecting on what you have learned in this class, how you have grown or changed as a result of this experience, and how you think it will (or will not) be helpful to you in your current and future relationships and why. Although there will certainly be things you liked or disliked about this class, this paper is to be a personal examination, not a class evaluation; each person will have an opportunity to provide feedback by completing a class evaluation during the last night of class. This is an opportunity for personal evaluation, exploration and integration. Think back to your life situation the first night of class. Are you the same? Do you still use the same communication styles? Handle difficult situations in the same manner? Is anything different? What are your ideas of why or why not? If you feel you have changed, don't hesitate to take credit for your personal progress or "pat yourself on the back" for the risks you have taken that have resulted in personal growth this semester. Remember to organize your paper by including a brief

introduction, main body or essence of what you want to convey, and a conclusion or summary. Make sure to check your spelling and punctuation.