

Nonverbal Communication with Michael Mackey

In this class, you will become more sensitive to nonverbal cues and their central role in creating meaning in human communication. You will become more aware of the nonverbal signals of others, the messages you send with your own nonverbals, and how nonverbal behavior can both enhance and impede effective communication. Nonverbal codes include vocal tones, facial expression, movement, eye behavior, touch, the use of space, and even smell. We will study how humans use nonverbal codes to express identity, as well as to send relational messages, such as establishing intimacy or asserting dominance. In addition, we will learn how cultural and gender identities profoundly influence our nonverbal behavior.

About the Instructor

I earned my M.A. and Ph.D in Communication Studies from the University of Minnesota, where I specialized in rhetorical studies and intercultural communication. My fascination for communication practices stems from my love of learning about other cultures. I have lived in four different countries: the U.S., Costa Rica, Uzbekistan, and Israel.

I have taught undergraduate students for over 20 years, primarily at the University of Minnesota and, for the last 17 years, at Portland Community College. I teach because I derive great joy in watching students grow and evolve. I believe learning should be fun and engaging, and I love watching students find and express their own passions. I want nothing more than for my students to succeed, and I am here to support you.



FAQs about our Distance Learning Course

Do I need a textbook for this class?

Yes! We have a wonderful textbook that we will use extensively, and the [PCC library has a digital copy](#) that you can check out and read online any time! We do use the textbook extensively, and it is not possible to complete weekly assignments without the book.

When is our Zoom class meeting time?

Tuesdays, 10:00--11:50am

How will the class be run?

We will have both:

- **“Asynchronous learning”**: Online modules that you complete independently on Desire2Learn Brightspace (D2L). These modules include readings, films, quizzes, and discussion posts. Expect to spend 5-8 hours per week on this independent learning.
- **“Synchronous learning”**: Weekly live meetings via Zoom on Tuesday mornings (see above).

What technology will I need for the class?

You will need a device (computer, tablet) equipped with a video camera, audio, and a microphone. In addition, you will need a reliable Internet connection for both attending live Zoom meetings and completing your independent work at home. It will be much easier to complete your work and participate in live meetings on a larger screen (laptop or computer) as opposed to a small smartphone screen. If you have any technology limitations, [PCC might be able to assist you](#).

Are weekly live Zoom meetings mandatory?

Our synchronous virtual meetings on Zoom are highly recommended. Many studies show a strong correlation between attendance and grades; students who regularly attend class tend to earn much higher grades on their work. By coming to live Zoom class, you will have the opportunity to ask questions and to learn from the questions of others that you did not even think to ask. Many of us simply learn more from live dialogue.

In addition, by regularly attending our live classes, you will gain a community of supportive classmates. Communication classes are the kind of collegial and interactive classes where great friendships develop.

I also recognize that your life is busy, and that you might occasionally miss a class. We will record our live classes so that you can later view them in the event of absence.

Must I turn on my video for Zoom class?

YES, I expect that you turn on your video. To build a community of trust and mutual support, we need to be present to one another. In addition, how could we study nonverbal communication if we cannot see each other’s nonverbal cues?! It is especially critical to turn on our videos for this subject.

That said, I understand that there are legitimate reasons to *momentarily* turn off your video (your toddler is having a meltdown in the background, your nudist roommate is passing by...). But the default position should be “video on.”

Instructor Contact

Don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions: michael.mackey1@pcc.edu

I hope to see you in class! -Michael