

Advances in Nonverbal Communication
Communication 650
Spring 1991

Instructor: Joseph Cappella
313 Annenberg

Meetings: ANNS 319, Th 1-3

Overview

"Advances in Nonverbal Communication" focuses on recent research and thinking in the nonverbal aspects of communication. Domains of application and concern range from the physiological basis and origins of nonverbal behavior to the importance of nonverbal behaviors in politics, health care delivery, and teaching. The course does not consider painting, sculpture, or the arts, the design of buildings or public space, or film; while these topics could reasonably be treated in a course in nonverbal communication, they are best left to special treatment in their own right.

Students can expect to leave the course with an appreciation for the way that the microscopic features of behavior which accompany verbal action affect in significant ways the perception of such actions in the interpersonal or social arena. Five broad areas are taken up during the course of the semester: (1) An introductory section sets the theoretical groundwork for the study of nonverbal behavior. (2) The second section treats the relationship between nonverbal and verbal processes in recognition of the fact that the two are coordinated activities. (3) The third, fourth, and fifth sections consider the role of nonverbal behavior as signs of individual and social differences, as indicators of emotional state, and as the language of interpersonal relations and attachment. (4) The final section explores the social functions of nonverbal behavior in influence and persuasion, as well as its role in health care, the courts, and education. Within each of these broad areas, issues of current concern to theory, research and social practice are considered.

The course is designed for graduate students with at least some background in nonverbal communication. For those without such background, a reading of one of the basic texts by Knapp (2nd ed.), Nonverbal communication in human interaction or by Burgoon, Buller, & Woodall, Nonverbal communication: The unspoken dialogue, or Harper, Wiens and Matarazzo, Nonverbal communication would provide a sufficient basis.