The Course: This interdisciplinary course surveys and explores the various forms of nonverbal communication, particularly as they relate to the intersection of human nature and culture. Among the topics to be addressed are the relationship of verbal to nonverbal communication, mimesis, facial expressions, eye behaviour, kinesics, posture, body language, body adornment, dress codes, proxemics, chronemics, imagery, prosody, music, touch, and violence. The course will also address how these forms intersect with the sensory modalities of audition, vision, haptics, taste, and scent.

Nonverbal messages tend to communicate emotions, attitudes, or directions, and they can contradict, emphasize, regulate or substitute for verbal messages. Though often ambiguous, nonverbal cues are sometimes more reliable than verbal messages, and we will explore how these numerous parameters of communication function in interpersonal, organizational, cultural, and intercultural contexts.

Students will consider key debates surrounding the study of nonverbal communication by examining general theories of human interaction and emotional expression, including mimetic theory, social learning theory, equilibrium theory, affect-based theories, and symbolic interactionism – along with the functional, interpersonal adaptation, and parallel process models of communication. Students will also investigate how topics such as evolutionary psychology, semiotics, and neuroscience can elucidate our understanding of nonverbal cues in the greater communication context.

Course Learning Objectives:

1. To provide an introduction to thinking about the various forms of nonverbal communication within a framework that increases awareness of their roles in human evolution, as well as in historical and contemporary cultural contexts.

2. To survey the various dynamics of nonverbal communication in specific interpersonal, intercultural, mass media, and online contexts.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

On completion of this course students should be able to:
1. Account for the fundamental differences between verbal and nonverbal communication.

2. Describe and explain the characteristics and functioning of the various forms of nonverbal communication as they relate to cognitive and affective experience.

3. Identify, compare, contrast, and analyse these forms – particularly as they are manifested in interpersonal, cultural, intercultural, social networking, and mass media contexts.

4. Demonstrate an ability to understand and distinguish between complex theoretical debates relating to the study of nonverbal communication.

5. Present theoretical scholarly arguments in both oral and written forms.

**Assessment and Evaluation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment/Activities</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminar attendance and participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprise reading content tests</td>
<td>(2 x 2.5%) = 5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Written Responses</td>
<td>(25% + 25%) = 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final written exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Assignments:**

**Seminar attendance and participation** 20% -- Each student will be responsible for leading discussion around one of the weekly readings/recordings or a portion thereof (see presentation schedule on moodle). If students wish to switch dates/articles, they should make the necessary arrangements and then notify me of any changes.

The following rubric should guide the observations of presenters (as well as the rest of the class) in our ongoing discussions of weekly materials:

- **a)** how do the themes of mimesis, nature-culture, and affect-feeling-emotion pertain to our discussion of this week’s readings?
- **b)** item’s most interesting aspects?
- **c)** item’s problematic aspects?
- **d)** author’s/broadcaster’s oversights?
- **e)** item’s confusing aspects?
- **f)** general thoughts/commentary? AND....
Students are required to come to each class prepared to discuss the materials allocated for that week. This means that they should keep notes regarding the main points and strengths/weaknesses of each course item. While they can also make contributions to the learning environment of the course through our online Moodle domain (and are encouraged to do so), online participation will only make up in part for physical absence from classes.

**IF A CLASS IS CANCELLED DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER OR THE LIKE, THAT WEEK’S SESSION WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE CONDUCTED ONLINE ASYNCHRONOUSLY.**

Surprise content tests (2 x 2.5% = 5%) -- There will be four surprise content tests, each related only to that week’s readings.

**Two Response Essays -- Total = 50%.**

Substantially and critically engage topics from the two course blocks [weeks 2-6 for response #1 and weeks 7-11 for response #2].

**Response Essay #1:** Referring to each of the ‘required’ items in the first half of the syllabus and to relevant material presented within weekly seminars, address how the themes of mimesis, nature/culture, and affect/feeling/emotion are manifested in each item from the course materials, and explore the connections that exist between them. Your work will address each course item in sequence, as it relates to all three themes, and organise your writing with title headings for each item. Despite these sectional divisions, your paper should take the form of an expository piece of writing that is characterized by continuity between sections, and should feature a proper introduction and conclusion. In the event that a theme does not relate to a particular course item, be sure to make mention of this in your essay, but then elucidate how it might nonetheless be applied. Refer to each of the forms of nonverbal communication covered within the first part of the course. Papers should include any relevant critiques of ideas presented – 2500-3000 words -- #1 due Mar. 1 (25%)

**Superior papers will be free of writing errors, be of professional copy (i.e. justified margins, use of pagination, proper indenting, proper integration of quotations, double-spaced, proper use of citation method etc.), and will make observations and arguments that go beyond those discussed in class. Include references in a consistent bibliographic style of your choice.**

Response Essay #2: Referring to each of the ‘required’ items in the second half of the syllabus and to material presented within weekly seminars, again address how the themes of mimesis, nature/culture, and affect/feeling/emotion overlap across these course materials, and how they otherwise interrelate. Your paper should take the same form as the first Response Essay, attend to each of
the forms of nonverbal communication covered within the second part of the course, and in the event that a theme does not relate to a particular course item, be sure to make mention of this in your essay, but then elucidate how it might nonetheless be applied. Papers should include any relevant critiques of the ideas presented in course materials – 2500-3000 -- #2 due Apr. 5 (25%).

**Final written exam** 25% -- to be announced -- Students will be required to account for the fundamental differences between verbal and nonverbal communication, and describe/explain the characteristics and functioning of the latter in various settings. They will also be required to engage with some of the theoretical debates relating to nonverbal communication study as these pertain to interpersonal, intercultural, mass media, and online contexts.

**READING SCHEDULE**

**Week 1: Introduction: What is Nonverbal Communication? (Jan. 11)**

Introductions - no readings

**Week 2: Mimesis – Preverbal Communication and the Origins of Symbolic Thought: Communicating Emotion, Desire, and Violence (Jan. 18) – 55 minutes, 38 pages**


*Recommended:*


Week 3: Intersecting Nature and Culture (Jan. 25) – 45 pages


Recommended:


Week 4: Affect and the Face (Feb. 1) – 34 pages


Recommended:


Week 5: The Relationship of Verbal to Non-Verbal Communication (Feb. 8) – 44 pages


**Week 6: Prosody and Paralinguistics: Vocal Expression (Feb. 15) – 35 long pages**


**Recommended:**


**READING WEEK (Feb. 22)**

**Week 7: Kinesics - Body Language and Eye Behaviour (Mar. 1) – 61 pages**


**Recommended:**


Week 8: Proxemics and Touch (Mar. 8) – 48 pages


Recommended:


Week 9: Chronemics, Silence, et al. (Mar. 15) – 35 pages


Recommended:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronemics


Week 10: Dress Codes and Body Adornment (Mar. 22) - 26 pages


Recommended:


http://www.onpointradio.org/2008/02/tattoos-from-maori-to-america,


Week 11: Further Contextualisations – Environments, Social Situations, and the Presentation of Self (Mar. 29) – 42 pages


Recommended:


Week 12: /Conclusions, Synopsis, and Review (Apr. 5)

NO READINGS

**POLICIES:** Do not submit papers to any administrative office. Since the university uses software that can check for plagiarism, you must submit papers directly to me both in hard copy and electronically. If you are unable to submit papers on time in class, wait until next class to submit your hard copy, but be
sure to send it electronically. Hard copies must be identical to electronic copies or risk a mark of 0%. Retain a copy of your paper for your own files.

**Late penalties/Academic Honesty:** For each of your assignments in this course, you will lose 3% per day (including weekends) for every day it is late. If an assignment is going to be late *for any reason*, you must make special arrangements with me, otherwise it may not be accepted.

York University policy stipulates that all students read and understand the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty available in the section ‘For Students’ at [http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity). Students may want to refresh their knowledge of such issues by completing the Academic Integrity Tutorial online at [http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/](http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/).


Effective time management is critical for university students. Adhering to the schedule for assignments supports the development of this skill. In this regard, therefore, consider the following:

“What information consumes is rather obvious: it consumes the attention of its recipients. Hence a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention, and a need to allocate that attention efficiently among the overabundance of information sources that might consume it” (Herbert A. Simon).