

The newly revised edition of this groundbreaking textbook provides a comprehensive overview of the theory, research, and applications of nonverbal communication.

Authored by three of the foremost scholars in the field and drawing on multidisciplinary research from communication studies, psychology, linguistics, and family studies, *Nonverbal Communication* speaks to today's students with modern examples that illustrate nonverbal communication in their lived experiences. It emphasizes nonverbal codes as well as the functions they perform to help students see how nonverbal cues work with one another and with the verbal system through which we create and understand messages and shows how consequential nonverbal means of communicating are in people's lives. Chapters cover the social and biological foundations of nonverbal communication as well as the expression of emotions, interpersonal conversation, deception, power, and influence. This edition includes new content on "Influencing Others," as well as a revised chapter on "Displaying Identities, Managing Images, and Forming Impressions" that combines identity, impression management, and person perception.

Nonverbal Communication serves as a core textbook for undergraduate and graduate courses in communication and psychology.

Online resources for instructors, including an extensive instructor's manual with sample exercises and a test bank, are available at www.routledge.com/9780367557386

Judee K. Burgoon is Professor of Communication, Family Studies and Human Resources and Director of Research at the Center for the Management of Information at the University of Arizona. She has authored or edited over 300 articles, chapters, and books on nonverbal and interpersonal communication and deception.

Valerie Manusov is Professor of Communication at the University of Washington. She is the editor of *The Sourcebook of Nonverbal Measures: Going beyond Words* and the co-editor of *The SAGE Handbook of Nonverbal Communication*.

Laura K. Guerrero is Professor of Communication at Arizona State University. Her book credits include *Close Encounters: Communication in Relationships*, *The Nonverbal Communication Reader*, and *Nonverbal Communication in Close Relationships*.

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NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

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**Nonverbal
Communication**

Second
Edition

Judee K. Burgoon, Valerie Manusov,
and Laura K. Guerrero

 **ROUTLEDGE**



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Preface and Acknowledgments

This text follows a long lineage of books by Judee K. Burgoon. When she developed the idea for the first version of a nonverbal textbook, *The Unspoken Dialogue*, there were no textbooks on nonverbal communication. By the time it was published, however, two books were already on the market, and several others soon followed. Now there are upwards of 60 books, both popular and scholarly, dedicated to this topic, attesting to the intense interest that nonverbal communication has attracted.

Judee soon realized that tackling the literature on nonverbal communication would require a team effort and invited Thomas Saine to join her in writing the first book. Thomas was not primarily a nonverbal communication scholar, but he *was* a scholar whose deep interest in interpersonal communication topics led him to take a leap of faith to team up with a junior author whose interest *was* deeply steeped in nonverbal communication. We are all deeply grateful to his recognition that this area would bear so much fruit.

When it came time to revise *The Unspoken Dialogue*, Thomas, who had moved on to new interests, was replaced by two new scholars who, as former PhD advisees, matched Judee's tireless interest in this topic and whose extensive research efforts had taken them into many applied facets of nonverbal communication. The new team of Judee K. Burgoon, David B. Buller, and W. Gill Woodall authored three editions of *Nonverbal Communication: The Unspoken Dialogue* that greatly expanded the coverage of the functions of nonverbal communication and introduced extensive comparison of verbal to nonverbal signals. To Dave and Gill, we are indebted for further solidifying our theoretical and research foundations and for taking us into many important applications.

As new interests drew Dave and Gill to different research opportunities, it was time to reconstitute the team. This time, Judee was joined by two veteran nonverbal communication scholars, Laura K. Guerrero and Kory Floyd, who brought to the first edition of *Nonverbal Communication* the broadening of the bio-evolutionary and sociocultural underpinnings of nonverbal communication as well as a deep understanding of interpersonal communication that further strengthened our foundations. We thank Kory deeply for the substantial insights he brought to the volume, in particular to the biological, physiological, and evolutionary aspects of nonverbal communication. Like his predecessors, Kory found himself in demand elsewhere, which opened the possibility of adding a new author to the team, hence the addition of another long-time nonverbal expert, Valerie Manusov.

This new version of *Nonverbal Communication* continues our commitment to a research-rich but student-engaging approach to the ever-growing, multidisciplinary area of nonverbal communication. This edition is a significant update of the last one, removing one chapter, combining two others, and adding a third. It reflects significant technological and social changes in our world and includes more scholarship from researchers around the globe. Chapters offer measures to allow students to be a part of the research we cite and include nonverbal

communication “in the news” that reflects how central nonverbal communicating is to our very humanness.

The volume could not have been completed without the editorial and technical assistance of our new editor, Brian Eschrich; editorial assistant Grant Schatzman; production editor Alf Simmons; and copyeditor Kate Fornadel. We are grateful to the entire team for making the process timely and as effortless as possible. We also thank Ben Compton for his work on the indices and the instructor’s manual. And, as ever, we thank our families for their patience as we crafted this new edition.

Part 1

Foundations

1 Introduction and Overview

The word not spoken touches us as music does the mind.

—William S. Cohen

Humans are social creatures. We spend most of our waking hours in contact with other people—learning, working, playing, dating, parenting, negotiating, buying, selling, persuading, or just plain talking. We not only communicate with people face to face; we watch them on television and videos, listen to them on talk radio, interact with them through cell phones and chat rooms, and meet with them on Zoom. With so much of our daily lives consumed by communication, our ability to navigate the waters of daily living—and our prospects for happy, healthy lives—depends on the ways in which we (and others) communicate. And our ability to communicate is enhanced when we know more about the communication process. A major part of that process is the “unspoken dialogue”: the nonverbal aspects of communication to which former Senator Cohen’s poem alludes.

This textbook is about that unspoken dialogue: all those messages that people exchange beyond (and alongside) the words themselves, with an emphasis on the intricacies of the communicative forms. Be it mundane greetings at the grocery store or delicate international negotiations, the nonverbal aspect of communication plays a crucial role in our lived experiences. Human relating hinges on the ability to express ourselves nonverbally and to understand the nonverbal communication of others.

Despite the awareness of the importance of communication generally, and nonverbal communication specifically, some consider the study of nonverbal communication trivial or suspect. This sardonic observation by Aldous Huxley (1954) reflects such a view:

[T]he subject is for academic and ecclesiastical purposes, non-existent and may be safely ignored altogether or left, with a patronizing smile, to those whom the Pharisees of verbal orthodoxy call cranks, quacks, charlatans and unqualified amateurs.

(pp. 76–77)

Such cynicism is belied by the publication of thousands of articles, books, documentaries, and investigative reports on the subject, however. In contrast to Huxley’s gloomy assessment, there is a strong body of knowledge about nonverbal communication that springs from the academic disciplines of communication, psychology, psychiatry, sociology, geography, anthropology, linguistics, semiotics, and biology, among others. This body of information is so vast and diverse, in fact, that making sense of it is no small task, especially given that scholars from different fields may approach nonverbal behavior with diverse perspectives, assumptions, and methodologies. To capture this complexity as well as possible, it is important to take a

multidisciplinary approach (that is, drawing not just from the communication discipline), and the ideas and research that we discuss in this book do so.

In this text, we explore multiple facets of nonverbal communication, first through some important *foundations*: (1) the complex nature of nonverbal communication and (2) the various codes (systems of cues) that constitute it and then through an investigation of the primary *functions* or (3) the many purposes nonverbal cues can serve. We embed it in a larger framework about what are called *cultural codes* in which all of our communication with others exists. This view helps to make sense of some of the variety in nonverbal communicating while also accepting its biological and evolutionary foundations. It also explains the ways in which nonverbal cues become patterned, the meanings that they are given, the ways in which they are complicated, and how all of this changes overtime, at least to some extent. Importantly, we ground our conclusions in the large body of multidisciplinary research, providing some explanation of what forms this research can take, and we bring in real-world examples to illustrate the ideas. Our hope is that you come away from reading it with an understanding that the unspoken dialogue *matters in fundamental ways* and that having this understanding and knowledge enhances your experience with nonverbal communication.

The Importance of Nonverbal Communication

You may have heard that 93% of all meaning is derived from nonverbal behavior. As scholars of nonverbal communication, and as people who value its communicative importance, you might think that statistic would be something we'd want to claim is accurate. Yet, if true, the estimate would mean that only 7% of meaning comes from verbal content (i.e., the words themselves), and a quick observation of communication shows that the statistic does not apply to most of our exchanges nor to what we see and hear from TV, films, and online. More specifically, this claim was based on specific results from a few early studies by Mehrabian and his colleagues (e.g., Mehrabian & Ferris, 1967; Mehrabian & Wiener, 1967) yet talked about as if it applies to all communication.

To help set the record straight, we want to explain their claim a bit more. In those studies, the researchers' purpose was to (1) see how people determined the attitude of the speaker or (2) assess what cues influenced the persuasiveness of a message by comparing what behaviors people used to make their determination (brief and/or scripted words, vocal cues, and body cues that are tied to the social influence function, covered in Chapter 13). The study on attitudes, for example, used only a single word alongside changing voice and body cues to get estimates about what a speaker was feeling about a topic. As such, the nature of the studies' design worked to overstate the importance of the nonverbal cues (even if their findings were accurate for the specific applications the authors were testing), and it should not be applied outside of those studies in the broad way that it is. So, the 93% estimate is *not* the way to show the importance of nonverbal cues in an overall sense.

But there are many other ways of doing so. As we will see throughout this book, nonverbal communication is *consequential*. By that we mean that nonverbal cues play a role in some of the most glorious and most devastating aspects of our lives. They are key in bonding with partners and with babies (positively consequential), and they play a role in bias against other groups, abuse, and sexual harassment (negatively consequential). As such, Huxley's (1954) view that nonverbal cues are "fluff" is simply not accurate. Rather, the power of nonverbal messages is indisputable. There are several possible reasons why by their very nature they are so central to our lives.



Photo 1.1 The omnipresence of nonverbal communication is present in interactions such as this. What nonverbal behaviors do you see?

Nonverbal Communication Is Omnipresent

Nonverbal cues pervade virtually every communicative act. In face-to-face (FtF) interactions, all the nonverbal forms come into play. Body, face, voice, appearance, touch, distancing, timing, and physical surroundings all have a part in creating messages, with or without anything being said. A friend's gestures, facial expressions, posture, and eye contact may reveal interest. A supervisor's vocal pitch, loudness, and tempo may signal dominance. A political candidate's physical attractiveness, dress, and grooming may connote credibility (or its lack). A lover's close proximity and touch, and the environment in which they chose to interact with you, may establish intimacy. A group leader's temporal behaviors, such as verbal pacing, and giving undivided attention may create conversational coordination. A religious sanctuary's architecture, furnishings, and artifacts may dictate what degree of decorum and formality is to be followed and how we feel and communicate within that space.

Even in mediated communication, such as television broadcasts, online conversations, or telephone calls, where some nonverbal features are not available, several important ones remain. The decision to talk to someone by phone rather than in person (that is, the choice of *communication modality*) can, for example, itself be a nonverbal message of detachment or non-urgency, and people have been found to make strategic modality choices based on the nature of the message they want to send to another (Oeldorf-Hirsch & Nowak, 2018). Chronemic (temporal) and vocalic (sound) features are also still present when we call someone on the phone.

Even text-only communication can have nonverbal elements, as emails and text chats have features embedded in them to capture some nonverbal nuances: Use of different font colors, punctuation, and capitalization are all instances of adding nonverbal cues back into an otherwise verbal medium (Luangrath et al., 2017, call this *textual paralanguage*). In particular, researchers have found that, similar to nonverbal cues in FtF settings, emoticons have *illocutionary force* (that is, they function to clarify what a person's words mean or how they

are meant to be taken; Dresner & Herring, 2010). Online classes and group meetings allow people to see one another's faces (and choice of backgrounds/environments; see Box 1.1), such that some kinesic (body movements) and environmental cues are still present. Further, social media provide opportunities to use photographs about what is important to us; we also show our approval or anger about a post with nonverbal likes, hearts, and "caring" or angry faces.

Box 1.1 Books as Backdrops

In a May 2020 *New York Times* article, Amanda Hess discussed the greater use of TV broadcasts based in people's houses. She asserted that the new norms dictated by COVID-19 meant that people could be strategic as to what environmental cues they used during a broadcast. In particular, Hess said that as "industry shelters in place, the bookcase has become the background of choice for television hosts, executives, politicians and anyone else keen on applying a patina of authority to their amateurish video feeds."

As examples, Hess noted that then-presidential candidate Joe Biden went quiet for a while but, when he "re-emerged, it was in front of a carefully curated wall-length bookshelf punctuated with patriotic memorabilia like a worn leather football and a triangle-folded American flag." Migrants' rights activist Minnie Rahman's background featured her *Encyclopaedia Britannica* collection, and British politician Liam Fox's "bold grab at credibility is somewhat undermined by the hardback copy of *The Da Vinci Code*."

This link between bookcases and credibility appears to be a feature of many chosen backgrounds. There was even an anonymous Twitter account, called Bookcase Credibility, which emerged to comment on its use. Its tagline is "What you say is not as important as the bookcase behind you."

Whereas we might take issue with the strength of that claim, according to Hess, the "bookcase offers both a visually pleasing surface and a gesture at intellectual depth. Of all the quarantine judgments being offered right now, this one feels harmless enough. One gets the sense that for the bookcase-background type, being judged by their home libraries is a secret dream finally realized."

Excerpts from Amanda Hess, "The 'Credibility Bookcase' Is the Quarantine's Hottest Accessory," May 1, 2020, *New York Times*.

Nonverbal Behaviors Are Multifunctional

One of the basic arguments in this text is that nonverbal communication serves important functions for communicators. In the examples we have given already, we talked about how we use nonverbal cues to instigate judgments or assessments of others (impression formation), to let others know they are important to us (these are called relational messages), to reveal aspects of ourselves (identity displays), and to persuade others about something in which we believe (social influence). These are just some of the many communicative functions in which nonverbal cues are central.

Functions are the purposes, motives, outcomes, or goals of communication. They are different than the specific meanings nonverbal cues can have. If someone you like sits close to you, you may determine that their behavior means they like you (depending on other cues in the setting). But the underlying function of the nonverbal cue is to (potentially) send a relational message. Or you may want to show others that you belong to a particular political