**Film Analysis: Interpersonal Communication “Crash”**

*Crash* (2005) was directed by Paul Haggis. The film is about racial and social tensions in Los Angeles and the distance it creates among strangers. “This compelling urban thriller tracks the volatile intersection of a multiethnic cast of characters struggling to overcome their fears as they careen in and out of one another’s lives. In the gray area between black and white, victim and aggressor, during the next 36 hours, they will collide” (Description on the back of the DVD case). *Crash* won the Oscars for Best Picture and Best Original Screenplay at the 78th Academy Awards. The film stars Don Cheadle, Ludacris, Sandra Bolluck, Matt Dillon, Brendan Fraser, Tony Danza, and more.

**PURPOSE:** Apply communication theories and concepts of conflict management, disconfirming and confirming messages, and communication climates. In your paper, you will analyze how communication theory can be applied in a variety of conflict scenarios and climates observed in the film. To support your analysis, incorporate quotes and examples from the film, key concepts from your textbook, and other credible communication sources.

**REQUIREMENT:** This paper should be approximately three to five pages in length, typewritten, 12 point font size, 1 inch margins, double spaced, proofread, and your own work. Make sure to include traditional essay components such as an introduction paragraph and a conclusion paragraph.

**TOPIC:** Your paper should address the following three subjects: A, B, & C.

A. We have already studied how conflict can occur within small group communication. For this assignment, please learn how Robert Blake and Jane Mouton’s theory of conflict management (pg. 249-251) applies to interpersonal conflict within intercultural communication situations.

1. Identify a specific scene in the film “Crash” in which a character’s is using one of Blake & Mouton’s styles of conflict management (Figure 10.1 pg. 250). After you identify a scene in which a particular conflict management style is used by a character, provide evidence and explain how their communication matches the communication associated with that particular style. Also, elaborate on the effects that the character’s conflict management style had on the situations they were involved in. Make sure to cite your textbook, quotes/examples from the movie, and/or other credible communication source to support your argument. Please note, as you watch the film, you will be able to identify each of the five styles of conflict (None are left out of the film).

    i. The styles are: Competing, Avoiding, Compromising, Collaborating, and Accommodating
2. Choose one particular conflict scenario from the movie, summarize the scenario, and analyze how the characters could change their communication and conflict management styles to improve how the conflict was resolved. Apply key communication concepts from our class to help improve interpersonal conflict. Again, make sure to provide quotes or examples from the movie and your textbook that support your observations.

B. How does the communication climate (pgs. 198-201) impact how interpersonal conflict is resolved?

1. Analyze a communication situation from the film in which a supportive climate was developed. Emphasize how confirming messages were used (pg.199). What impact did using confirming messages have on the way that the interpersonal conflict was resolved? Make sure to provide quotes or examples from the movie and your textbook that support your observations.

2. Analyze a communication situation from the film in which a defensive climate was developed. Emphasize how disconfirming messages (199) were used. What impact did using disconfirming messages have on the way that the interpersonal conflict was resolved? Make sure to provide quotes or examples from the movie and your textbook that support your observations.

C. Why is it valuable to study communication between strangers, friends, life-partners, or family matter (chp. 7)?

The film “Crash” talks about the need to shorten the distance between strangers and lesson interpersonal conflict. Identify, explain, and synthesize how interpersonal communication skills and theory can help people lesson interpersonal conflict. Include key concepts from Chp 7 “Communicating in Social and Professional Relationships” as well as communication skills we have learned in previous units including but not limited to: perception, nonverbal communication, language, listening, etc.

FORMAT

1. With the final draft of the paper, you will need to turn in a typed bibliography (reference list) of your sources written in APA format (pg. 299).
2. Your paper should be well organized and easy for your readers to follow.
3. You must research your topic well. It is important to be ethical in your writing. Part of this will involve using accurate and current information that is well researched.
4. For this paper you will need at least 3 credible sources, and they must be cited in-text with attributive tags, and cited in your bibliography. You may not receive credit for questionable sources (Wikipedia, .com websites, blogs, etc.), so be sure to check their credibility; when in doubt, email me & ask.
5. Your paper is due in a traditional, college-level essay structure. Please include:
   a) an introduction with a thesis statement,
   b) body paragraphs that elaborate on your main ideas,
   c) a conclusion with a thoughtful reflection on your main points as well as any insights you gained as a result of your analysis.

RESOURCES FOR WRITING

• Refer to Chapters 7 & 8 in *Communication Matters* for communication concepts and theories as a foundation for your analysis.
• Refer to Chapter 12, pg. 299 and the Purdue OWL for APA format. The Purdue OWL APA website is at [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/).
• Refer to DACC library websites and free-access databases, grouped by academic division and subject to begin your research. To access, visit the website: [http://dabccwww.nmsu.edu/library/best_web/index.shtm](http://dabccwww.nmsu.edu/library/best_web/index.shtm)

EVALUATION

Rubric for Film Analysis Paper “Crash” (200 points) Total pts earned:________

i. **Organization and Development—50 points**
   Points Earned:____
   a. Does the paper have a clear introduction that includes the thesis and a preview of the main ideas to be discussed? (15 points)
   b. Does the paper have a conclusion that summarizes the main ideas and provides appropriate closure? (15 points)
   c. Is the thesis adequately developed through elaboration and supporting material in the paper’s body? (10 points)
   d. Do the paragraphs have clear topic sentences that are adequately developed? (10 points)

ii. **Content—100 points**
   Points Earned:____
   a. Does the paper focus on the assigned topic? (10 points)
   b. Does the paper adequately provide relevant, clear responses to each of the directions stated in the guidelines? (70 pts total)
      a) Conflict Management Styles: 1 (20pts) and 2 (15 pts)
      b) Communication Climate: 1 (10 pts), and 2 (10pts)
c) Importance of forming and maintain social relationships: 15 pts

c. Are the communication theories and concepts thoughtfully explained, defined, and applied, thereby demonstrating an understanding of them? (10 points)

d. Does the student use directly quote or paraphrase the film, the textbook, and another academic communication source to support his or her analysis? (10pts)

iii. Mechanics and Style—50 points

Points Earned:_____

a. Is the paper mechanically sound? (spelling, punctuation, etc)? (10 points)

b. Does the paper abide by the assigned standards for font size, margins, etc.? (10 points)

c. Is the paper well written with complete sentences and clear expression? (10 points)

d. Does the author appropriately cite at least three sources (the textbook, the film, and other academic sources) within the paper? (10 points)

e. Is the bibliography written in APA format? Does it include at least three sources (the textbook, the film, and other academic sources)? Are all the sources in the bibliography also cited within the paper? (10 points)