NOTE: This course requires 15 hours of service learning at a local elementary school.

The primary goal of this course is to learn and practice ways of communicating that will create the most supportive conditions, applicable in a variety of settings, in which young people can learn and grow. Think back to the settings and classrooms where you were most successful as a child, where you felt the most comfortable expressing yourself, where you clearly understood what was expected of you and how you could achieve those expectations. Can you identify the characteristics or behaviors of those professionals that most contributed to your success (or lack thereof)? Can you further define those behaviors? Will you be able to acquire them yourself?

How can we as youth workers and teachers raise our awareness of and appreciation for how we communicate with youth so that we make the most of the opportunities we have with them? How can we develop a reflective practice of examining our communication styles, in order to always strengthen ourselves as youth-serving professionals?

Answering these questions and many others are the outcomes for this course. As we learn and practice new communication skills, we'll also refine old ones. We'll deliberately examine ourselves as learners and teachers. We'll find answers and create more of our own as we discuss, read, listen, demonstrate, practice, observe and write – all different ways to experience communication. Come to class ready and willing to learn, participate, be challenged, take some risks, and assume responsibility for your own and your classmates' education.

The Honors Section of G203 includes a service-learning component which will provide the opportunity for you to both observe other adults communicating with children in classrooms and youth-serving agencies and participate yourself. You will reflect on your observations and participation as you begin to focus on how you can be a more effective communicator working with young people.