

**COMM 3480**  
**Interpersonal Communication**  
**Section 001 – T/TR 12:30-1:45pm**

Instructor: Melinda Weathers, Ph.D.

Location: 303 Daniel Hall

Office: 410 Strode Tower

E-mail: mweath3@clemson.edu

Office Hours: T/TH, 11:00am-12:00pm & 3:30-4:30pm,

Phone: 864.656.1567 (email is best)

M, 2:00-4:00pm (online),  
or by appointment

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

**Course Description:**

It is an undeniable fact that the most important features of our lives could not exist without interpersonal communication. Effective interpersonal communication is a key ingredient in the formation, development, and maintenance of satisfying personal relationships. Interpersonal communication is the principal means for coordinating human action. It is the primary source of relational satisfaction. Interpersonal communication is, in short, the essence of human relationships.

Interpersonal relationships of all types commonly meet with problems. Insight into interpersonal communication processes is fundamental to finding and implementing solutions to relational problems. Individuals who understand the communication processes and problems that occur in relationships should be able to achieve mutual satisfaction in their own relationships. At the very least, individuals with a background in communication should be able to assess and increase their own awareness of the importance of interpersonal communication in their lives. The focus of the course is a relational view of communication—one that explores how relationships are created, negotiated, maintained, and terminated. Class sessions will include lectures, guided discussions, and student presentations.

*Completion of COMM 2010 with a minimum grade of C is a prerequisite for the course.*



**Course Objectives:**

These are the objectives I hope you accomplish in this course:

1. You will have a firm understanding of the concepts and theories of interpersonal communication and be able to apply them to actual relationships.
2. You will be able to identify, analyze, and evaluate interpersonal communication problems.
3. You will increase your awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the many facets of interpersonal communication processes to understand how communication is used to develop, negotiate, maintain, and terminate a variety of relationships.
4. You will be more effective in your own relationships through an understanding of specific communication skills and strategies to enhance interpersonal communication in a variety of relationships.

## **CRITICAL THINKING**

### **CT2 Description:**

This class is a Clemson Thinks2 (CT2) seminar developed to increase and enhance your critical thinking skills. What is critical thinking? For this class, we will work with the definition from the Delphi report: "We understand critical thinking to be purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based" (Facione, 1990; 1998). The judgments we will focus on are those regarding knowledge claims in research, popular culture, and news.

What are critical thinking skills? Critical thinkers strive to:

1. Determine the relevance of information for evaluating an argument or conclusion.
2. Recognize flaws and inconsistencies in an argument.
3. Evaluate competing causal explanations.
4. Evaluate hypotheses for consistency with established facts.
5. Determine whether an artistic interpretation is supported by evidence in the work.
6. Recognize the salient features or themes in a work of art.
7. Evaluate the appropriateness of procedures for investigating a question of causation.
8. Evaluate data for consistency with established facts, hypotheses, or methods.

### **CT2 Objectives:**

These are the CT2 objectives I hope you accomplish in this course:

1. Explore complex challenges associated with impacts, meanings, and uses of communication.
2. Analyze communication research, news, and narratives using multiple lenses.
3. Identify historical patterns in communication research, news, and narratives.
4. Communicate complex ideas effectively.
5. Identify, recognize, and describe various approaches to studying communication.
6. Succinctly summarize and present communication scholarship.
7. Demonstrate uses of selected multimedia communication tools.
8. Apply class concepts to current events and news.

## **REQUIRED TEXT**

### **Required Book:**

The following book is required and may be available at the Clemson University Bookstore. Most online retailers also sell this book.

- Guerrero, L. K., Andersen, P. A., & Afifi, W. A. (2011). *Close encounters: Communication in relationships* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.



*WARNING: There is a 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the textbook available. I work from the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.*

*While the content is identical, some of the chapters are in a different order. This has caused confusion in the past. Please be aware that if you use the 4<sup>th</sup> edition, you must pay attention to the content of the chapters (see course schedule at end of this syllabus for chapters that differ). I will not accept work that does not correspond with the assigned material.*

## **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES**

Your course grade will be determined from the number of points you earn over the course of the semester. *There are no extra credit opportunities.*

Final Course Grades, 550 total points

- A. 495+ points
- B. 440-494 points
- C. 385-439 points
- D. 330-384 points
- F. < 329 points

Assignment Points

• In-Class Activities (5)	50 points
• Chapter Summary Forms (10)	100 points
• Discussion Leader Assignment	50 points
• Midterm Exam	100 points
• Final Exam	100 points
• CT2 Assessment (2)	20 points
• CT2 Written Assignments (2)	80 points
• Participation and Discretionary Points <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Everyday Examples of IPC</li><li>• Twitter</li><li>• Teaching Evaluation</li></ul>	50 points

Interpret letter grades on assignments and for the course as a whole according to this rubric:

- A. *Excellent*. The student's work and contributions to the class are exemplary.
- B. *Very Good or Above Average*. The student's work and contributions to the class are consistently and remarkably strong.
- C. *Acceptable or Average*. The student's work meets and sometimes exceeds expectations for undergraduate performance in courses of this nature.
- D. *Problematic or Below Average*. The student's work may sometimes meet expectations for undergraduate performance in courses of this nature, but is sometimes deficient or flawed.
- F. *Failing*. The student's work does not meet the expectations for undergraduate performance in courses of this nature.

**In-Class Activities:** There will be five (5) unannounced activities (e.g., quizzes, exercises, surveys, etc.) given during the semester. You must be in attendance at the time the activity is given. Each activity will cover readings assigned for that class period. *There are no make-up activities.*

**Chapter Summary Forms:** For ten (10) of the fourteen (14) chapters, students are required to fill out a Chapter Summary Form. Filling out the form helps prepare students to successfully participate in class discussion. You will summarize relevant theories, including the theorists, key claims or propositions, applications, and significance. At the end of the summary form, each student is required to raise two discussion questions regarding concepts and theories in each chapter. You should also answer each question that you pose. See separate handout on Blackboard for detailed instructions. *Late Chapter Summary Forms will not be accepted.*

**Discussion Leader Assignment:** Each student will serve as a class “expert” on one theory or topic area related to a specific week’s readings. The student’s job is to briefly present the theory/topic to the class (5-10 minutes) and lead an exciting class discussion about the topic (45-50 minutes). Students are expected to do some extra reading/research on the topic and **creatively** present the topic to the class. More importantly, students need to develop questions, exercises, or other class activities designed to **engage** the class in thinking critically about the concepts. Students should incorporate additional readings/research into the presentation. The entire presentation and discussion should not exceed 65 minutes. Think about ways of using the time wisely. *There are no make-up presentations.*

Visual aids and creative approaches are **required**. This is not a typical “teaching demonstration.” I do not want you to teach the class about the theory/topic in the traditional sense. Instead, I want you to foster interaction and discussion among students regarding the theory/topic. This is a much harder task to do, and as such should take you and your group some time to come up with creative approaches. Think about experiences that you’ve had in the past or examples that have been used in other classes—what about them helped you better learn the material? These are the approaches that should be taken into consideration for this assignment.

Discussion Leader assignments will be assessed along these lines:

- *Theoretical Connection and Accuracy* – the degree to which your work connects cogently with the reading to which you are assigned, as well as additional readings, and the accuracy and specificity with which your work represents the selected theory.
- *Clarity and Effectiveness* – the degree to which your work effectively translates and applies theoretical principles to a specific practical communication problem.
- *User/Audience Centeredness* – the degree to which your work demonstrates consideration of and appropriateness for a specific user or audience.
- *Creativity* – the degree to which your work demonstrates unique thinking, unexpected connections, innovativeness, novelty, and/or expression outside of convention.
- *Writing and Design Quality* – your writing and design should be effective, organized, and free of errors; it should also present a clear, theoretically informed perspective on communication.
- *Presentation* – your oral presentation to the class should be rehearsed, organized, precise, appropriate for an everyday audience, engaging and/or persuasive, supported as appropriate by thoughtfully crafted visual aids, and no longer than 65 minutes.

**Midterm and Final Exams:** Dates of exams are listed in the course schedule in this syllabus. *There are no make-up exams.*

#### **CT2 Assessment:**

CT2 courses are assessed on the basis of their achievement of their learning outcomes, as measured by student improvement on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST). Taking the CCTST is a mandatory requirement of the class, but your score will *not* have a major impact on your course grade. The test will be administered at the beginning and near the end of the course.

**CT2 Written Assignments:** Two written assignments must be turned in on the days indicated on the course schedule in this syllabus. These must be typed and double-spaced. Explicit instructions for the assignments are detailed below. *Late CT2 Written Assignments will not be accepted.*

This assignment stresses clarity and accuracy of thought. Use the following simple rules:

- If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
- Never use the passive when you can use the active.
- Never use a foreign phrase, scientific word, or jargon if you can think of an everyday equivalent.
- Ask someone to read a draft and find places where you have been unclear. If they say something is unclear, change it until they understand.

### *First Written Assignment*

You are to choose an interpersonal communication related article in which you are interested. The article should be from a peer-reviewed journal or other scholarly source (e.g., Chronicle of Higher Education). Once you have chosen an article, I need to approve it. Read the article so that you thoroughly understand it. Then write a paper that includes:

1. The main issue or problem the author is focusing on in this article.
2. The main purpose of the article.
3. The information being used by the author and its relationship to the main issue.
4. The conclusion(s) being drawn by the author.
5. The implications of the conclusion(s).
6. The main concepts being used in the article which relate to the main issue.
7. The point of view of the author.
8. The author's assumptions.
9. Once you have clearly established the author's logic as detailed in one through eight above, add the following to your paper:
10. Discuss the significance of the issue that is the focus of the article. Why is it important? On what do you base your assertions regarding its significance?
11. What potential problems do you see in the author's reasoning? What potential problems are there with the author's use of information? Does the information used appear relevant, significant, valid, and sufficient for the conclusions being drawn? Do you have enough information to determine whether the information is relevant, significant, valid?
12. What point of view is ignored by this author, or has not been considered in dealing with the issue?

### *Student Assessment of Papers*

On the day the paper is due, students will be assigned to groups. Each group will receive the same number of papers as they have members in their group, to be assessed (but they will receive none of their own papers). Each group will assess the papers (along with the selected articles) they are assigned, providing commentary on each criteria point listed below. The paper will then be returned to the student, with comments.

Papers of the highest quality in this assignment will include the following:

1. Questions outlined above are answered clearly and precisely, with detail and/or examples to support each point appropriately.
2. The main issue and purpose are clearly stated.
3. A clear connection between the information used and the author's main issue is drawn. The author's use of information is made clear.
4. The concepts being used are made clear.
5. The implications actually follow from the conclusions, or any fallacies in the author's reasoning about the implications are clearly described.
6. The point of view and the author's assumptions are clearly stated. The assumptions described are all inclusive. In other words, the student writer has clearly and completely stated all the assumptions on which the author has based his reasoning.
7. The importance of the issue is clearly stated and well thought through, and supported with implications that accurately follow from conclusions.
8. Problems regarding the author's reasoning are clearly and accurately stated. All potential problems with the author's reasoning are included.
9. Opposing points of view are accurately included.

### *Second Written Assignment*

Once the papers are assessed in groups, they will be returned to the writers to be rewritten. You will rewrite the paper, taking into account the group assessment, and modifying the paper for ultimate clarity and precision. You will submit this paper to me, along with the article, original paper, and its assessment, for grading. I will use the same assessment criteria for grading as used in the group assessment process.

**Participation and Discretionary Points:** Students are expected to attend each class session. When you miss class we miss your participation. This class is based largely on an interactive, experiential classroom that fosters meaningful dialogue. In this regard, I do not assume the traditional lecturer role, but instead promote a classroom where I position myself as a guide. In doing so, I intend for you to learn as much from yourself and fellow classmates as you do from me.

### *Everyday Examples of Interpersonal Communication*

These assignments are designed to allow you to be creative with interpersonal theory/concepts and explore unusual connections between theory and practice. Throughout the semester, you will be responsible for preparing various creative and unique approaches to “everyday examples” of interpersonal communication. These days are listed in the course schedule in this syllabus. You will be given instructions for the “everyday example” exercises the class period prior. For some exercises you will be randomly assigned to a group, for others you will work in pairs or even by yourself. Some exercises will require you to bring materials and/or props to class to complete the assignment. Again, you will be informed of any supplies that you will need the class period prior. You will “present” your exercises on our class Twitter feed, so please make sure you have an active account. You will spend approximately 50 minutes in class on your “everyday example” exercises. *There are no make-up exercises.*

### *Twitter*

You will be required to run a Twitter account throughout the semester. As previously stated, interpersonal communication is the essence of human relationship. As such, **you will** have many experiences (directly and indirectly) that you can link to various interpersonal concepts/theories that we discuss throughout the semester. You should “tweet” about these life events – both during class/lecture and on your own time. You will be assessed on the frequency and content of your tweets, the degree to which you incorporate comments from and acknowledge other Twitter users (including re-tweets), your use of hashtags, and the strategy of who you follow on Twitter. You should use #COMM3480 in your course-related tweets. Twitter is a public forum, so please post appropriate content! #thinkB4Utweet

### *Teaching Evaluation*

Students are expected to complete an evaluation form of the course at the end-of-semester. Students may login to MyCLE (i.e., Blackboard) to find links to the Online Course Evaluation.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance Policy:** You are expected to attend every class session, unless otherwise stated in the syllabus or ahead of time by the professor. **Students with more than two absences will be docked 10 points per class.** Attendance will be taken each class. It is your responsibility to ensure that if you are present you are counted as such. If you participate in University activities, please notify me within the first two weeks of class of any classes that you will miss.

Along with attending class, I also expect you to be in class on time. I make an effort to begin and end class on time. I expect the same from you. If you are late, please make all efforts not to disturb the class. Excessive tardiness will result in a grade penalty.

*It is critical that you stay in touch with me by phone or e-mail when you are experiencing illness or difficulty. If you wait until your problems are over to talk to me, I may have no option but to fail you based on course policies. This is a communication course; communicate with me to discuss options!*

**Assignment Deadlines:** All written work is expected in class on the day it is due. I do not accept papers by e-mail, fax, left under my office door, left in my mailbox, or left with the main office. **Late assignments will not be accepted.** All presentations will only be accepted on the day you are assigned to present. If you do not show up on your presentation day your grade will result in a ZERO.

*Papers and assignments should be prepared in MSWord format, 12-point font, with one-inch margins on all sides, stapled in upper left corner, and follow current APA documentation format, unless otherwise noted. Papers that do not meet these guidelines will receive less credit.*

**Cell Phone and Laptop Policy (if needed):** All electronic devices should be put away (with cell phones turned off or on "silent") while class is in session. My cell phone receives CU Safe Alerts, and I will keep it on so that we will be alerted in case of an emergency. This policy means: no laptops; no mp3 players; no IM'ing; no e-mailing; no Tweeting; no YouTubing; no Facebooking; no Instagraming; etc. If it runs on battery power and is not medically necessary, turn it OFF and put it out of sight. Failure to comply with this policy will result in a grade penalty.

**Coursework Reuse Policy:** In this class, you may not reuse work (in part or as a whole) that you have submitted or developed for other classes (previous or concurrent). Any exception to this policy must be explicitly negotiated with me in advance. Violations of this course policy will be treated as violations of the Clemson Academic Integrity Policy.

**Classroom Climate and Student Conduct:** At all times, we will maintain a classroom learning environment that is respectful of and safe for a range of people and perspectives. Civility and tolerance of diversity are demanded of students in our class. I will not allow behavior that is violent, threatening, sexist, racist, or otherwise disparaging. Please speak with me immediately if you are uncomfortable with some aspect of your class experience.

Additionally, students should respect the presentation times of their classmates. Students who interrupt a speaker verbally or nonverbally (such as by walking in late during a presentation or working on iPads, laptops, or cell phones) may lose points off their FINAL COURSE GRADE. Students who appear uninterested or unininvolved in a particular presentation (texting, working on a laptop, etc.) may be asked to provide a synopsis of the presentation once it is completed.

**Clemson E-mail Accounts:** Students must activate their Clemson e-mail accounts to receive important messages related to this class. This is the only e-mail account I will use to contact you. Make sure it's activated and you know how to use it! You are responsible for checking your Clemson e-mail account regularly for assignments and information.

**Consultations:** My door is always open to students. E-mail is the most reliable way to reach me. If you cannot reach me, call the department office. Please do not wait until the week an assignment is due to realize that you are unsure of what is expected. It is my intention to do everything I can to help you learn the material of the course. If you do not understand an assignment, ask. Meet with me during my regular office hours or make an appointment. The excuse, "I didn't know what was expected," will not be accepted as justification of poor performance. *Remember, you are responsible for your end of this course: You get out of it what you put into it. If you are having a problem that impacts your performance, it is your responsibility to inform me.*

**Incompletes or Withdrawals:** It is extremely unlikely that an incomplete will be assigned. Students requesting an incomplete must be passing the course, must still complete all of the assignments, quizzes, and exams allowable (not all can be made up if missed), must provide compelling evidence justifying an incomplete, and must sign an incomplete contract with the course instructor. Mid- to late-semester withdrawal requests are evaluated by the Dean's office on a case-by-case basis.

**Waiting Policy:** In the event that I am late for class, please wait 15 minutes. After that time, class will be considered cancelled. In such instances, please check for messages at your email account or elsewhere online (e.g., Blackboard or Twitter).

### **UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE POLICIES**

**Academic Integrity Policy:** Students are expected to live up to the ideals and standards of the Clemson Academic Integrity Policy. Those who violate the policy in any way will face sanction. The policy:

As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson's vision of this institution as a "high seminary of learning." Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form.

*Academic dishonesty is further defined as:*

- *Giving, receiving, or using unauthorized aid on any academic work;*
- *Plagiarism, which includes the intentional or unintentional copying of language, structure, or ideas of another and attributing the work to one's own efforts;*
- *Attempts to copy, edit, or delete computer files that belong to another person or use of Computer Center account numbers that belong to another person without the permission of the file owner, account owner, or file number owner.*

Any breach of the principles outlined in the Academic Integrity Statement is considered an act of academic dishonesty. All academic work submitted for grading contains an implicit pledge and may contain, at the request of an instructor, an explicit pledge by the student that no unauthorized aid has been received. It is the responsibility of every member of the Clemson University community to enforce the Academic Integrity Policy.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** Clemson University seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need accommodations should make an appointment with Arlene Stewart, Director of Student Disability Services, to discuss specific needs within the first month of classes. Students should present a Faculty Accommodation Letter from Student Disabilities Services when they meet with instructors. Please be aware that accommodations are not retroactive and new Faculty Accommodation Letters must be presented each semester.

- G-20 Redfern Health Center
- <http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/sds/>
- 864-656-6848
- sds-l@clemson.edu

**Title IX (Sexual Harassment) Statement:** Clemson University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, veteran's status, genetic information or protected activity (e.g., opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in any complaint process, etc.) in employment, educational programs and activities, admissions and financial aid. This includes a prohibition against sexual harassment and sexual violence as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

- 111 Holtzendorff Hall
- <http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/access/title-ix/>
- 864.656.3181

**Writing Center:** The Writing Center provides free tutorial sessions for all students needing help with any writing project. It is best to make an appointment to ensure seeing a Writing Center consultant. You can also utilize the ONLINE Writing Center. Your tuition dollars pay for this whether you use it or not—so use it!

- [http://www.clemson.edu/caah/english/about/resources/writing\\_center/](http://www.clemson.edu/caah/english/about/resources/writing_center/)

## Tentative Schedule

*Close Encounters: Communication in Relationships (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.).*

Readings should be completed *before* the day on which they are listed. In *every* class, readings will be supplemented with lecture material that is not in the book. Exams are based on *all* course materials.

Aug 20	Introductions, Course Overview, Discussion Leaders Sign-Up	Syllabus
Aug 25	Conceptualizing Relational Communication <b>Due: Chapter Summary Form</b>	Chap 1 No book yet? See Blackboard
Aug 27	Everyday Examples of IPC	Letter Writing Assignment
Sep 1	<b>CCTST TESTING</b>	
Sep 3	Identity and the Social Self <b>Due: Chapter Summary Form</b>	Chap 2 No book yet? See Blackboard
Sep 8	Social Attraction <b>Due: Chapter Summary Form</b>	Chap 3
Sep 10	... cont.	Discussion Leaders
Sep 15	Uncertainty and Expectancy <b>Due: Chapter Summary Form</b>	Chap 4
Sep 17	... cont.	Discussion Leaders
Sep 22	Initiating and Intensifying Relationships <b>Due: Chapter Summary Form</b>	Chap 5 4 <sup>th</sup> ed., see Blackboard
Sep 24	<b>Group Work Day</b>	
Sep 29	Affection, Immediacy, and Social Support <b>Due: Chapter Summary Form</b>	Chap 6 4 <sup>th</sup> ed., Ch. 7 Discussion Leaders
Oct 1	Everyday Examples of IPC	Jam Sessions
Oct 6	Love and Attachment <b>Due: Chapter Summary Form</b>	Chap 7 4 <sup>th</sup> ed., Ch. 8
Oct 8	<b>Midterm Review Study Day</b> <b>Assign: Midterm Exam Study Guide</b> <b>Due: Submit CT2 Article for Approval</b>	
Oct 13	<b>Fall Break</b>	
Oct 15	Midterm Exam	<b>Chapters 1-7</b>

Oct 20	Relational Maintenance <b>Due: Chapter Summary Form</b>	Chap 9 4th ed., Ch. 10
Oct 22	Interdependence and Equity <b>Due: Chapter Summary Form</b>	Chap 10 4th ed., see Blackboard Discussion Leaders
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Oct 27	Student Assessment of Papers <b>Due: CT2 First Written Assignment</b>	
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Oct 29	Dominance and Power <b>Due: Chapter Summary Form</b>	Chap 11 4th ed., Ch. 12
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Nov 3	Privacy and Secrets <b>Due: Chapter Summary Form</b>	Chap 12 4th ed., see Blackboard Discussion Leaders
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Nov 5	<b>CCTST TESTING</b>	
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Nov 10	Relational Transgressions <b>Due: Chapter Summary Form</b>	Chap 13 Discussion Leaders
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Nov 12	Conflict <b>Due: Chapter Summary Form</b>	Chap 14 4th ed., Ch. 11
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Nov 17	Disengagement and Termination <b>Assign: Teaching Evaluations</b> <b>Due: Chapter Summary Form</b>	Chap 15 Discussion Leaders
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Nov 19	<b>Final Review Study Day</b> <b>Assign: Final Exam Study Guide</b> <b>Due: CT2 Second Written Assignment</b>	
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Nov 24	Final Exam	<b>Chapters 9-15</b>
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