

## **Proposal**

**Title** - Nonverbal Communication in Mobile Phone Text Messages: Redefining Nonverbal Coding for the Digital Conversation

**Program of Study** – Strategic Communications

**Presentation Type** –PowerPoint

**Mentor(s) and Mentor Email** - Dr. Kristin Hark (khark@liberty.edu)

**Student name(s) and email(s)** – Carley B. Durante (cbmyers2@liberty.edu)

**Category** – Creative/Artistic.

**Abstract:** Within communication theory and scholarship, is it is no longer a question as to whether or not digital communication will redefine communicative practices of modern society. However, the question that must now be addressed is: *in what ways* has digital communication redefined the communicative practices of modern society? While there are several recent developments within the area of digital communication, much of the scholarly attention has been focused on computer-mediated communication (CMC), specifically the channels of email and instant messaging (IM). In a culture with growing dependence on constant communication and continuous interaction, there is a surprising lack of research devoted to the analysis of mobile mediate communication (MMC,) specifically text messaging. It is important to note that the purpose of this paper is not to ignore the importance of face-to-face (FtF) communication, nor is it designed to determine which mode of discourse is the preferred, the dominant, or the more necessary method in today's society. Rather, this paper aims to clarify *why* mobile text messaging is such a prominent channel for discourse by illustrating *how* the presence of digital nonverbals have sustained the integrity of FtF conversations within the text messaging conversation. Ultimately this paper will attempt to highlight how certain communication theory principles have transformed and evolved to meet conversational needs of millennials, or digital

natives, within mobile-mediated communication (MMC). Specifically, the elements of kinesics, vocalics, and chronemics will be reviewed and further defined to see if these elements translate to the digital elements of emojis, typed laughter, and excessive capitalization and punctuation.

*Keywords:* communication, nonverbal communication, nonverbal coding, kinesics, vocalics, chronemics, emoji, digital, mobile mediated communication, texting.

**Christian worldview integration:** Communication is a fundamental principle of the Gospel. Communication is what separates the Christian faith from all others—we have the ability, the right, to communicate openly and freely with our loving God. My Christian worldview informed my research design in that I wanted to be ethical and fair in the creation of my study. In addition, because I am studying text message language, the nature of text messaging is relational, and it is my hope that through this study students, parents, children, teens, and adults alike will have a better understanding of cross-generational communication. Furthermore, the findings of my study demonstrate a universality of language (emojis) and if language codes become universal, the translation of the Gospel may as well become more easily translated, tangible, and relevant. My research is impactful within culture at large because it is right in line with current studies regarding mobile phone use, text messaging, and understanding the “emoji language.” Last year the Word of the Year by Oxford Dictionary was in fact, an emoji. Emojis are at the center of language, media, relationships, and culture. Therefore I hope this study will be enlightening and educational to upcoming, current, and future generations.