

COM 320 Small Group Communication
Spring, 2015
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Office Hours: MW 2:30 - 4:30

Learning Objectives:

1. *Evaluate group interactions (assessed by in-class activities, group project);
2. *Communicate competently (effectively, appropriately, ethically) in groups (assessed by in-class activities, group projects, final);
3. Be able to help groups function more effectively (assessed by group project, in-class activities).

*Portfolio Requirement for Communication Majors: If you major or have an area of concentration in Interpersonal and Organizational Communication via the 2009-2010 or later bulletin, you will be required to create a portfolio as part of the sequence of required classes: COM 120, COM 308, and COM 480/499. This class offers opportunities to fulfill some of these objectives. Be sure to save your work (logs, journals, tests) for your portfolio! You may want to consider recording some of your groups sessions.

Textbook: Galanes, G.J. & Adams, K. (2013). Effective Group Discussion. Fourteenth Edition. Boston: McGraw-Hill. ISBN: 978-0-07-353434-3 or 0-07-353434-x

Teaching Philosophy

My job here is to facilitate your learning: to provide you with a variety of opportunities to learn the content of this course. This means I do my best to structure a course that makes sense to you and gives you opportunities to learn, apply, analyze and evaluate the concepts. I do not tell you what or how to think; I try to stimulate and stretch your abilities to do that thinking. To that end, I am generally willing to work with any student who is willing to work as well. But, I expect you to work. If you do your part; i.e., read and consider the material, be prepared for RATs and class, participate in exercises and group projects, and complete assignments thoroughly and on time, I absolutely enjoy doing my part. If you have questions or concerns about the class, assignments or content, you should consult with me about those either in person or via email. My services as a facilitator and guide come with the tuition you paid for the course, do not be shy about using them!

Class policies

Late work: While I do accept late work, each day (including weekends) late is subject to up to 20% reduction in points (which means after five days, you have pretty much earned a 0). If you are having a technical problem, have questions about the assignment, or are having other issues which make it difficult for you to complete the assignment on time, always let me know before the assignment is due. Plan for technological obstacles, i.e, if your computer or internet at home

goes down, what can you do (get to campus, go to a library etc.). As is stated elsewhere, waiting until the last minute, almost assures you will have technical problems!

Papers: Unless otherwise indicated, papers should be typed, double-spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins all the way around. APA format (use a cover page, name appears only on the cover page) and references whenever they are used (including the textbook).

My availability: I check my email multiple times a day during the week. I check it once or twice on Saturday. I do not do email on Sunday as that is reserved for family, football and, having some down time. So, you can expect me to get back to you fairly quickly, but not necessarily within a half hour or so. Remember, you can also call me in the office during office hours or come by. Because I'm very popular (mainly because I am Chair :), it's best to make an appointment in advance if you can.

Civility expectations: While you are not required to agree with everyone's opinions, you are required to respect them in class (including, email, blogs, discussion forums etc.). However, because you have an opinion, does not mean it is a valid opinion! Back up your statements with facts, direct experiences, concepts from the text, etc.

Academic Misconduct: Academic Misconduct, including plagiarism (using other people's ideas/ words and not giving them credit thus implying the work is your own original work), is taken very seriously at any learning institution. It is taken very seriously in this class. Please be aware of what academic misconduct is and the potential consequences (including dismissal from the university) of such behavior.

Divorcing a group member: In general, one of the things you need to learn is to work with group members who are very different from you. You do not have to like each other, but you do have to be mature and professional enough to work together. That being said, sometimes that is not possible. In that case here is what you need to do to kick a group member out of the group:

- 1) Meet as a group - I'm happy to meet with you if you like;
 - a. Talk about the specific behavior that is problematic: Be specific about behaviors, not attitudes or general personality traits etc.
 - b. Create a plan for moving forward that everyone can live with – write it, sign it, give me a copy
- 2) If that plan is violated or other issues arise, come to me - I decide whether the behavior warrants removing the student from the group.

Students removed from a group in this way will still be required to accomplish all assignments.

Helpful places on campus

Services for Students with a Disability: If you have a disability or acquire one and want to find out about what special services and accommodations are available, you may contact Services for Students with Disabilities in WALB 113.

Writing Center: Can help you with general writing problems or specific assignments (including APA research papers) in KT G19.

CASA (Center for Academic Support and Advancement): Offers many kinds of services to students including tutoring in KT G23.

Helmke Library offers research librarians who can help you find what you need.

Major Assignments

Group Projects (of course :)

Creative Groups: Create something as a group. Your creation needs to be complex enough to actively involve all group members and require several decisions to be made along the way. You will have 15 minutes (maximum) to present what you created and talk about it and the group process: i.e., why you chose your project, any challenges/rewards involved with this particular project. Project ideas due January 28. Due week of March 16. 15% of your semester grade.

Grading Rubrics

Group Consulting: Find a group, committee, team etc. that will allow you to observe them on multiple occasions as well as talk with some of their members. Determine in what ways this group functions well and in what ways they could improve. Be sure to at least consider: 1) decision making processes, 2) conflict management norms/techniques, 3) leadership, 4) task, maintenance and self-centered role functions, and 5) cohesiveness. You will need at least three separate observations of the group and interviews of at least two group members. By February 16th, you will need to submit a plan for when each part of this project (i.e., observations, interviews, decisions regarding improvement, paper writing, presentation) will occur and who will have responsibilities for different tasks. Outcome: One paper (5-7 pp., double-spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 point font). Estimates: 2 pp- describe the group, your observations and methods of analysis; 2-3 pp. describe and support your analysis and conclusions drawn; 1-2 pp. recommendations for improving group functioning with support. One 20-25 minute presentation of your findings made as if you were presenting it to the group (whom you are welcome to invite). Due April 27th or 29th. 12. 25% of your semester grade. Grading Rubric

Individual Work

Journal entries: You are required to post a 250-500 word journal entry in Blackboard at the end of each unit which talks about the primary "take-aways" for you from that unit. These reflections should be used for two purposes: 1) to continually reflect on and improve your group skills as we move through the semester; and 2) to write the end of semester self-reflection. More specific

prompts will be provided in Blackboard. Due the day before we debrief at noon. 10% of your semester grade.

Reflection paper: The primary objectives for this course is for you to come away with improved knowledge and skills of group membership and functioning. This paper is one of the ways you will demonstrate that you have accomplished those objectives. Write a 2 - 4 page paper (double-spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 point font) detailing at least 3-5 ways (apply the concepts, theories, etc. we have discussed and learned about) that you are or could be a stronger group member and/or help groups function more effectively. Use the journal reflections you have written as well as both working on and working within your project groups to inform this paper. Due May 1. 10% of your semester grade.

Who knows?

Midterm: More information will follow. March 6. 10% of your semester grade.

Final: More information will follow. May 4, 1:00 pm. 10% of your semester grade.

Both individual and group:

RAT (Readiness Assessment Tests): One of the primary complaints about working in groups is when "other" members come unprepared and expect the rest of the group to catch them up or carry them. The RAT helps alleviate this. These are essentially reading quizzes to encourage all group members to be prepared (via having done the assigned reading) to help their group with that unit's projects. There is both an individual and a group component to RATs. Due at the beginning of each unit. 10% of your semester grade (TBD% for the Individual portion; TBD% for the group portion).

In-class exercises: I don't think you will learn a lot about groups and improving your own group skills by listening to me talk about it. So, expect to be doing many in-class exercises applying what you have read in the textbook. This makes attendance especially important since you cannot make up group exercises on your own. Some of these will be points awarded to groups; others will be points awarded to individuals. Due during each unit. 10% of your semester grade.

Grading Breakdown:

90 - 93% A-		94 - 100% A
80 - 82% B-	83 - 86% B	87 - 89% B+
70 - 72% C-	73 - 76% C	77 - 79% C+
60 - 62% D-	63 - 66%; D	67 - 69% D+
	0 - 59% F	

Agenda (subject to revision, if necessary)

1/12: Syllabus; orientation

1/14: Meet your group; Group Project Day (look ahead at PERT)

1/16: Unit One: Evaluating Groups (Chapter 12) RAT

1/19 Martin Luther King Jr Day - no class

1/21- 1/26: Unit One Exercises: Observation plan: SYMLOG analysis website (select "Behaviors in a group")

1/27: Unit One Journal Entry due *by noon*

1/28 Debrief Unit One Exercises

1/30 Group Project Day; *Creative Project Ideas Due*

2/4: Unit Two Understanding Groups (Chapters 1-3) RAT

2/6 Systems Theory Exercise: Analysis due 2/9; Discussion forum begins

2/6-2/11: Virtual Groups Exercises: *Discussion forum 2/6-2/11; face to face 2/9; chat 2/11*

2/12: Unit Two Journal Entry due *by noon*

2/13: Debrief Unit Two

2/16 Group Project Day; *Consulting Plan Due*

2/18: Unit Three Group Development (Chapters 4-6) RAT

2/20 Cultural diversity and Roles Exercise

2/23 - 2/25: Application of theories, roles, culture and socialization exercise; Talk about the midterm & presentation dates

2/26: Unit Three Journal Entry Due *by noon*

2/27: Debrief Unit Three exercises

3/2 Midterm Video: Chapters 1-6 & 12

3/4 Group Project Day

3/6 *Midterm Due*; Group Project Day

3/9 - 3/13 Spring Break

3/16 *Creative Project Presentations*:

3/18: *Creative Project Presentations*:

3/20 Group Project Day - Consulting Project

3/23: Unit Four Leadership (Chapters 7-8) RAT

3/25 Group self-evaluation

3/27: Leadership exercises

3/30: Leadership analysis and evaluation, paper due 4/1

3/31 Unit Four Journal Entry Due *by noon*

4/1: Debrief leadership analysis and evaluation - paper due

4/3 Group Project Day

4/6: Unit Five Group Processes (Chapters 9-11) RAT

4/8 - 10: Procedures exercises

4/13: Conflict exercises

4/15: Negotiation cases

4/17 Negotiate the final

4/19: Unit Five Journal Entry Due *by noon*

4/20: Debrief Unit Five

4/22 & 24 Group Project Days: Polish Presentations and Papers

4/27: Group Consulting Presentations: ??? and ???

4/29: Group Consulting Presentations: ??? and ???

5/1: Reflection Papers Due and catch up day

5/4: 1:00 - 3:00 pm Final