

COMM 320: Small Group and Team Communication

Spring 08

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Office Hours: Mondays 12pm - 1pm & by appointment

Required Reading

1. Hirokawa, R. Y., Cathcart, R. S., Samovar, L. A., & Henman, L. D. (2003). Small Group Communication Theory & Practice: An Anthology. Boston: Roxbury Publishing Company.
2. Selected articles and chapters from edited books. Readings will be posted to Blackboard as PDF files.

Course Rationale

Participation in small groups is a staple part of our familial, social, cultural, and professional life experiences. Since small group interaction and decision making profoundly impacts our lives, it is essential that we develop the ability to understand, analyze, and influence the development and decision making processes of such groups.

This course aspires to help students understand theoretical, empirical, and practical aspects of small group communication. Students will be exposed to group communication phenomenon through three different lenses: as group member, as academic theorist, and as consultant. Students will participate in a group project and numerous in-class activities. Students will also learn and apply academic theory and research toward understanding group phenomenon. Finally, students will learn to make practical suggestions to improve group decision making.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should (1) improve their effectiveness in small groups; (2) increase their ability to describe and explain small group phenomenon; and (3) learn facilitation and consulting skills.

Course Evaluation

Exams (50%): There will be a midterm exam and a final exam (non cumulative). Each exam will account for 25 % of your overall grade.

Group Service Project (5%): Students will be assigned to a small group that will perform a service project of some kind. The primary objective is to engage the group in planning and coordinating to perform unpaid service for some organization. The group will give a report on their project, but a formal paper is not required. This assignment will provide rich data for the Analysis paper (see below) and will be factored into the peer evaluation for the larger group project.

Group Project (25%): Students will be assigned to small groups that will work on a project throughout the semester. Groups will be responsible for creating their own projects, but must secure instructor approval **before** the project is started. Groups will observe an ongoing group on or off campus. Each group will provide a written report to the instructor and make a presentation to the class. The group will receive a grade based on the quality of the project. However, part of each group member's grade will be determined by peer evaluation of each member's participation in the group project. Therefore, all group members will not necessarily receive the same grade for the group project.

Important: You must obtain permission from the group to observe proceedings. Even groups that meet publicly (e.g., school board) should be notified. Confidentiality must be strictly maintained.

Analysis Paper (15%): This paper affords each student the opportunity to reflect on the processes of her or his group. Each student will write a 4 - 7 page analysis that applies course content (group norms, leadership emergence, conflict management, group socialization, etc.) toward understanding and critiquing one's own group. Each student should keep a journal throughout the group project to help refresh memory and for documentation in the paper.

Participation (5%): The participation grade will reflect the students contribution to class discussions.

Policies

Written Work: All written work must be typed and conform to APA style.

Attendance in Class: Participation is crucial to the success of this course. Students should plan to attend class regularly and be prepared to contribute. Inferior attendance will quickly lower a student's participation grade.

Participation in Group Project: Students must participate in the group projects. If a student fails to contribute to the group, that student will not receive credit for the group project and likely fail the class.

Late Work: Please make every attempt to turn in your assignments and take the exams on the specified dates. Late assignments will incur a one grade drop per day that the assignment is late.

Email Account: Students must have an active email account. Some activities may require email and/or access to the internet.

School of Communication Academic Integrity Policy

The School of Communication is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical support. It endorses and acts on the SCampus policies and procedures detailed in the section titled: "University Student Conduct Code." See especially Appendix A: "Academic Dishonesty Sanction Guidelines." The policies, procedures, and guidelines will be assiduously upheld. They protect your rights, as well as those of the faculty.

It is particularly important that you are aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, fabricating data for a project, submitting a paper to more than one professor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone but yourself. If you have doubts about any of these practices, confer with a faculty member.

Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Tentative Schedule

1/14	<u>Course Overview</u>
1/16	Why groups don't totally suck. Chapter 12 Group Assignments Made
1/21	Martin Luther King Day, university holiday
1/23	<u>Part 1: The Nature of Groups</u> Introduction, chapters 1, 2, & 3
1/28	<u>Individuals in Groups</u> MBTI & Groups (retrieve book chapter from Blackboard)
1/30	<u>Part 3: Organization of Groups</u> Introduction, chapters 7 & 8 Both Group Project Proposals Due
2/4 & 2/6	<u>Social Influence in Groups</u> Chapter 11 Groupthink Video Abilene Paradox Video
2/11 & 2/13	<u>Managing Conflict</u> Nicotera (retrieve book chapter from Blackboard) Group Service Project Update Due
2/18	President's Day, University Holiday
2/20	<u>Part 2: Theories of Small Group Communication</u> Introduction, chapters 4, 5, & 6
2/25 & 2/27	<u>12 Angry Men Video and Discussion</u>
3/3	Group Presentations on Service Project Midterm Review
3/5	Midterm Exam
3/10	<u>Giving Feedback</u> Chapter 10
3/12	<u>Part 8: Analyzing Group Communication</u>

	Introduction, chapters 23 & 24
3/17 & 3/19	Spring Break
3/24 & 3/26	<u>Part 6: Leadership in Groups</u> Introduction, chapters 16, 17, 18
3/31 & 4/2	<u>Group Facilitation</u>
4/7	<u>Part 7: Diversity in Groups</u> Introduction, chapters 19, 20, and 21
4/9	<u>Special Topics</u> Chapters 9, 13, 14, & 15
4/14	<u>Special Topics Continued</u>
4/16	<u>Group Day</u>
4/21 & 4/23	Group Presentations
4/28 & 4/30	<u>Special Topics Continued</u> Final Exam Review Individual Analysis Paper Due on 4/30
5/12	Final Exam @ 8am - 10am

Name: _____

I prefer to be called: _____.

My preferred email address is: _____.

Major: _____. If Business Major, have you taken or do you plan to take MOR or BUCCO classes?

By taking this class, I hope to:

For Group Projects, the best times for me to meet with my team would be (please include days and times):

For Group Projects, times when I absolutely cannot be available to meet are (please include days and times):