

Small Group Communication

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1:00-1:50pm

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Office Hours: Monday 2:00-3:45pm
Thursday 10:00am - 12:00pm
(or by appointment)

Required Materials

Adams, K.A., & Galanes, G.J. (2011). *Communicating in groups: Applications and skills* (8th edition). Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Meyers Briggs Type Inventory Test - \$30. This test will be arranged through the Career Services Office. Details will be provided.

Canvas – You will need to use this when contacting me or your classmates, turning in your work, and receiving grades and course notifications. Please speak with me immediately if you do not know how to use this.

The Course

The purpose of the course is to provide an introduction to the basic concepts of group dynamics and interpersonal communicative behavior including topics in: group interaction; member characteristics that influence groups; the effect of the environment, group size and structure; leadership and social influence; communication process; and conflict resolution and decision making.

Course Objectives

1. Develop an awareness and appreciation of the dynamics and complexities of the small group communication process and development;
2. Effectively prepare for group meetings and discussions;
3. Participate in group meetings through the use and understanding of agendas, discussion techniques, technological aids, decision methods, and public discussion.
4. Understand the basic principles of human communication theory;
5. Recognize and reduce semantic problems in small group communication and problem solving.
6. Encourage positive group development and satisfaction through the understanding and management of group roles, responsibilities, climate, cohesiveness and group-think;
7. Positively manage conflict in a small group effectively;
8. Analyze, evaluate, and critique small group effectiveness, decision making, interaction, and process.

University Policies

The Americans with Disabilities Act

Students with ADA-documented impairments may be eligible for reasonable accommodations. Veterans may also be eligible for services. Accommodations are coordinated through DRC in Rm 101 of the University Inn, 7-2444 voice, 7-0740 TTY, or toll free at 1-800-259-2966. Please contact DRC as early as possible. Alternate format materials (Braille, large print or digital) are available with advance notice.

Academic Misconduct

In accordance with university policy (as articulated in the Student Code, see: <http://www.usu.edu/studentservices/pdf/StudentCode.pdf#page=4>), academic misconduct—including cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism—is not tolerated in this course. Do not turn in work for this class that you have turned in for other classes. You do not have my permission to submit work from this class to fulfill requirements in other classes. Plagiarism is submitting someone else's work as your own as well as quoting others without giving credit. Any quotation or paraphrasing of sources must be cited in text or in the footnotes/endnotes. Plagiarism can result in an E for the assignment, an E for the course, and other disciplinary measures. If at any time you are unsure whether your actions constitute academic misconduct, please see the instructor in order to clarify the matter.

Class Climate

Each of us will aim to create *a space that encourages others to share their ideas* and personal experiences. We will maintain a classroom that is a safe and productive place to learn. We will each need to be open to observing, discussing, and reflecting upon our own and others' communicative behaviors in order to learn. Opinions will be varied, but when such variation is organized in a meaningful way, we can be enriched by our diversity. Given our differences, we must be sensitive to the ways in which our communication in class affects each member of the class, taking care not to overpower, degrade, or offend anyone. ***To cultivate an open space, we must participate, prepare, and stay open.***

- Although you may be unfamiliar with a critical perspective, *your participation is necessary*. Remember that each student brings varying levels of experience and ultimately, we are all learning. Your participation is evaluated by active engagement with the course material, constructive contributions to class discussions, and willingness to participate in class activities.
- Come to class prepared. This means *not only reading, but also thinking about the reading*. What will you contribute each day of class? If you do not understand the material, try to focus on one problematic aspect and consider why you do not understand (is it the author's writing, a word or the way it's used, an unfamiliar concept?) or focus on an aspect that you do understand and consider how it relates to the rest of the text.
- Finally, staying open involves *conscientiously creating a respectful environment and challenging yourself to consider new ideas*. The manner with which you present your comments and questions must be thoughtful. You should use *inclusive language* in all discussions, presentations, and essays. (If you are unsure about how to phrase something, I would be glad to help.) In addition to your verbal feedback, your nonverbal feedback should be attentive and considerate. While many of you will be delighted with the course content, some of you may feel threatened or upset. Knowing this in advance should prepare you for difficult times. Be honest about your own biases and consider how you might use your feelings to create a more complex understanding of the material.

Course Policies

Make-up and Late Work

The nature of assignments in this class render make-up work impossible. If you are not here to participate in presentations with your group, you will not receive a grade or be allowed to make-up that assignment. No make-up exams will be given without evidence of a medical emergency.

Submission of Written Work

All written assignments are to be turned in using Canvas. You will **not** need to turn in a paper copy as well. Only one group member needs to upload the assignment per group. NOTE:

All written assignments are due by the date listed before the start of class (this means you must submit your papers before you come to class). As a rule, I do not grade late assignments.

All written assignments should conform to APA style standards. This manual is available online or at the library. I also recommend The OWL at Purdue. Finally, be sure that your essays are mechanically correct; spelling and grammar should be accurate.

Attendance and Participation Policies

Regular class attendance is a requirement. Attendance will be taken every day and excessive absences or tardiness will negatively affect your grade. This course exists in the classroom, not in the text. Therefore, much of what we learn in this class will result from actual interaction with other class members through activities, discussions, and group work. You must be here to have this interaction.

This course also requires you to meet with your group outside of class frequently. Attendance will be taken at all group meetings and will impact your final grade.

Grading Criteria

If you have any questions and/or concern about your classroom performances and/or earned grades, please make an appointment to confer with Dr. Heaton as soon as possible. This course requires more than a casual effort and deals with specific terminology and the ability to apply your learning to course projects. I do not anticipate offering extra credit. I will use the following criteria in evaluating your work during this course.

- A = Exceptionally well prepared and executed completion of assigned work indicating effort, individualized style, and demonstrating a thorough grasp of large portions of the course material. An A means the student far exceeded the requirements of the assignment.
- B = Creative, well-prepared work, demonstrating unusual effort, talent, or grasp of the material that is distinctly superior to an "average" or "C" effort.
- C = Satisfactory completion of assigned work at a level of effort and competency normally expected of the majority of students (basic completion, average performance, and reasonable effort).
- D = Unsatisfactory completion of work indicating misperceived objectives or failure to grasp key concepts but with reasonable effort.
- F = Failure to complete assignments through a lack of reasonable effort, or failure to attain passing average on either exams or assignments.

Grade Distribution:

A	93% and above	C	73 – 76%
A -	90 – 92%	C -	70 – 72%
B +	87 – 89%	D +	67 – 69%
B	83 – 86%	D	63 – 66%
B -	80 – 82%	D -	60 – 62%
C +	77 – 79%	F	59% or below

Course Assignments

Title	Description	Point Value
Group Work		75%
The Perfect Date Presentation	The purpose of this assignment is to provide you with an introduction to the small group problem solving process, and the opportunity to present a persuasive group presentation.	
MBTI Team “Plan of Action”	Once your group has had an opportunity to discuss each member’s individual analysis, the group as a whole will be asked to write a plan of action focused on dealing with the collective strengths and weakness of the group.	
Community Action Project (CAP)(3 phases)	Please see provided assignment sheet.	
Individual Work		25%
In-Class Participation Activities (No Make Ups)	The purpose of each activity is to provide you with an opportunity to work together in collaborative groups on tasks designed to create greater depth and knowledge.	
Myers Briggs Type Inventories (MBTI) Individual Analysis	A basic self-understanding of personality traits and behavioral preferences is critical to success when working in small groups. When members of a team understand each other's personality traits and their differences and similarities, it can pave the way for smoother interpersonal relationships and more productive teamwork. It can also help the team understand its strengths and weaknesses as a group, helping them plan to take advantage of strengths and shore up weaknesses.	
Project Journals	At the conclusion of each project, this assignment will give you the opportunity to reflect on your as well as your team’s performance.	
Peer Evaluation Form	Allows you to evaluate each group member (anonymously).	
Test on Text and Lecture Material		

Tentative Course Schedule

Week #	Dates	Topic	Reading	Assignments Due
1	1/06	Welcome Course Policies Introductions	Chapter 1	Be prepared to discuss Chapter 1 on Wednesday
	1/08	Introduction to the Study of Small Groups		
	1/10			
2	1/13	Orientation to Small Group Systems	Chapter 2	
	1/15			Group Assignments
	1/17			
3	1/20	No Class – MLK Jr. Day		
	1/22	From Individuals to Group	Chapters 4 & 10 We will not be discussing chapter 10 in class but you are responsible for the information.	MBTI Tests must be completed no later than today.
	1/24			
4	1/27	MBTI Presentation by Derek Jack	Chapter 5	
	1/29			
	1/31			
5	2/03	Communication Principles and Small Groups	Chapter 3	
	2/05			
	2/07			MBTI Individual Analysis Due
6	2/10	“The Perfect Date” Presentations		
	2/12			
	2/14		Group “Plan of Action” Due	
7	2/17	No Class – President’s Day (We will not be meeting on Tuesday February 18th)		
	2/19	Handling Conflict in Small Groups	Chapter 8	CAP Meetings with Dr. Heaton
	2/21			CAP Meetings with Dr. Heaton
8	2/24	Group Problem Solving Procedures	Chapter 7	Group “Plan of Action” Due
	2/26			
	2/28			Perfect Date Individual Journal Due
9	3/03	Understanding and Improving Group Throughput Processes	Chapter 6	
	3/05			
	3/07			
10	3/10	No Class		
	3/12	Spring Break		
	3/14	Spring Break		
11	3/17	Leadership	Chapter 9	
	3/19			
	3/21			
12	3/24	This week is a buffer to catch up or work on assignments		
	3/26			
	3/28		CAP Individual Journal #1 Due	
13	3/31	Group Work		
	4/02			
	4/04		Exam Due	

14	4/07	Group Work		CAP Final Paper due
	4/09			
	4/11			
15	4/14	CAP Presentations		
	4/16			
	4/18			
16	4/21	CAP Presentations		
	4/23			
	4/25			
Final Exam Monday April 28 th 11:30am CAP Individual Journal #2 Due				