
INSTRUCTOR: Nancy Tobler

OFFICE HOURS: MW 1:00 to 2:00 Old Main 204

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OBJECTIVES:
This course is designed to provide an advanced understanding of small group theory. The only problem is that we do not have a beginning course in small group theory. Consequently, we will do some catch up work when needed to provide the necessary background. Small group work exists in all aspects of our lives. This course provides an opportunity to increase our understanding of this important area of communication. The best way to come to an advanced level of understanding of a knowledge area is to (a) read the literature, (b) decide what important questions still need to be addressed, (c) based on the literature design a method, (d) gather data, (e) analyze the data and (f) report on your findings. Based on your interests in the future, you may choose to do a basic or applied research project. If you are planning on attending graduate school, a basic research project is recommended and if you are planning on going into a profession, an applied study is recommended. The course will first look at basic human communication theory. The second goal will be to look at the four main theoretical approaches to small group theory. The third goal will be to discuss methods and the advantages and disadvantages of each method. The specific topics beyond these basics will be decided as a class.

Participation: 70 points
Class meetings will combine discussion of theory and exercises designed to apply theory. An understanding of the theory is vital to success of the class. The texts are research based. The class time will be used to both explain the theory and to apply the theory. Your attendance will be crucial. Participation points will be given based on your in-class activity. These are graded on a 0 to 5 scale. These cannot be made up. Two class periods can be missed without participation points being impacted.

Group Research Paper: 250 points
This may either be a basic research study or an applied study. You will need to work fast. 15 weeks is a short time to complete an entire study. We will need to pick an area of interest the second week of class.

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Project Proposal</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>CITI training</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review of Literature Presentation</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>Group member grade</td>
<td>50</td>
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Individual Analysis of Research Group: 100
Journal: 10 points
You need to keep a journal of your group meetings. Keep a record of each time your group meets. I anticipate at least 5 meetings. Your group may have more. Record who was present? What was the task for the meeting? As the quarter progresses you may see roles emerge, norms established, primary tension, secondary tension, take note of these group dynamics in your journal. Remain as objective as a participant can in your recording of the group meetings. Record as soon after the meeting as possible. Time has a way of distorting reality. What we are learning in class and the readings should be applied to your journal. It is a record of what is happening in your group and your continual analysis of the group progress. You will turn this in... DON'T write anything in this journal of a personal nature. Certainly, do not attack group members. That is not productive. Use your journal to keep track of your perceptions of the group process. The written journal is required. You cannot turn in a final paper without a journal.

Individual Final Paper: 75
You will have a final paper that analyzes your group as a site of study. This will be 5 to 7 typed, double-spaced and follow academic publishing standards. You should include appendixes or accompanying supporting material. You will be required to choose one topic to discuss, for example leadership emergence. The paper will briefly summarize what you saw and make suggestions as to what groups might do differently in order to be more effective. Your paper will combine the "reality" of your group meetings to the theory of how groups work or can work. The paper must be typed, double spaced, free from grammatical errors, a thorough examination of your topic area. The journal must be included, but need not be typed. The journal is the basis for the support of your paper.

Present Individual Paper: 15 points

Basic Theory Assessment: 15 points each, total 105.
Seven assessments were agreed upon, the first four chapters of Ellis and Fisher and the three of the first four chapters in Frey. Groups will divide up the chapter and then each individual member will report on a theory before class on the due date. The report should be short and concrete. We decided that one paragraph should be sufficient to explain a theory in your words. There may not be room to give an example. However, an example may be the best way to explain the theory. The assessments will be graded individually. Assessments are graded based on your understanding and clarity of presentation of the theory. Assessments will not be accepted late.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic and Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 27 M</td>
<td>Syllabus and Introductions and Group Rules</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 29 W</td>
<td>Rules and Journal entry due Sept. 4</td>
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<td>Sept. 3 M</td>
<td>No Class Labor Day</td>
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<td>Sept. 5 W</td>
<td>Blackboard. Basis of Theory. Models of Communication. (Draw a Model)</td>
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| Sept. 10 M | What is a group?, Group Satisfaction and Cohesiveness | **Assessment 1 & 2**  
  Ellis and Fisher Chap. 1 and 2 |
| Sept. 12 W | How to do a literature review. |
| Sept. 17 M | Group Meeting Time |
| Sept 19 W | CITO Training |
| Sept. 24 M | Structural Elements and Functional Elements | **Assessment 3 & 4**  
  Ellis and Fisher Chap. 3 and 4 |
| Sept. 26 W | Meet with Nancy to propose idea. |
| Oct. 1 M | Four Small Group Theories | **Assessment 1 & 2**  
  &  
  Johnson, S.D., & Long, L.M. “Being A Part and Being Apart: Dialects and Group Communication in Frey, L.R. New Directions in Group Communication |
| Oct. 3 W | Methods. Observation and Analysis of Groups | **Assessment 5**  
  Peterson, R.S. The Group Dynamics Q-Sort in Group Communication Research. Frey, Chapter 5 |
| Oct. 8 W | Practice Observation and Analysis |
| Oct. 10. M | Improving Effectiveness  
  Frey chapter 6 and chapter 7 |
| Oct. 15 M | Group Communication Processes  
  Frey chapter 9 and 10 |
| Oct. 17 W | Group Communication Processes |
| Oct. 22 M | Present Lit Review and Method Discussion |
| Oct. 24 W | Present Lit Review and Method Discussion |
| Oct. 29 M | Writing the Lit Review |
| Oct, 31 W | Practice Data Collection |
| Nov. 5 M | Data Collection |
Nov. 7  W  Data Collection
Nov. 12  M  Norms and Roles
Nov. 14  W  Leadership
Nov. 19  M  Technology and Groups
Nov. 21  W  No Class Thanksgiving Break
Nov. 26  M  Group Meeting Time
Nov. 28  W  Present Group Research Project
Dec. 3  M  Present Group Research Project
Dec. 7  W  Meet on Individual Papers
Dec. 10  M  9:30 to 11:20 Final Exam Present Individual Paper Analysis

Ellis and Fisher  Chapter 1
Group
Interaction
Principle of Groupness
Principle of Nonsummativity
System
structure
function
evaluation
Collective Structure
Leaderless Group Discussion
Group Hate
Self-disclosure
Reciprocity
Trust
Risk

I. What is meant by the term "process"?
   A. Four elements of process?
      1. Acts or action
      2. Change in time
      3. Progress over time
      4. Goal
   B. Components of a process are interdependent.
   C. Process involves structure and action.

II. What is meant by the term "group"?
   A. A smorgasbord of definition
      1. Groups defined by what they share or have in common
         a. Perceptions
         b. Goal
         c. Common fate
      2. Groups are defined by their organizational properties
a. Roles  
b. Norms  
3. Groups are defined by the interaction among members

B. The principle of "groupness"
C. The group as a system of communication behaviors  
   1. Principle of nonsummativity  
   2. Group as a system  
      a. Structure  
      b. Function  
      c. Evolution  
   3. Communicative behaviors are the central components of a group

D. Leaderless Group Discussion (LGD)  
   1. A LGD is characterized by self-determination  
   2. A LGD is composed of members with similar initial status  
   3. A LGD is a zero-history group  
   4. A LGD reflects the group process in its natural state

E. The size of the "small" group  
   1. Upper limits  
   2. Dyad as a group

III. Why work in Groups?  
   A. Groups perform best as complexity of task increases  
   B. Groups are better at judgment decisions

IV. Individual and the Group  
   A. An individual's self-concept develops simultaneously with the group process  
      1. Social comparisons and the group process  
      2. Self-disclosure and the group process  
      3. Interpersonal trust and the group process  
      4. Risk and the group process.

Chapter 2 Key Terms and Outline

Task Dimension  
Social Dimension  
Cohesiveness  
Productivity  
Groupthink  
Interpersonal Attraction  
Bonding Competence  
Group Satisfaction  
Feedback  
Interaction Management  
Status  
Motivation  
Group Identification
I. Interdependence of Social and Task Dimensions
   A. Task and social dimensions of the group process are indistinguishable from each other in interaction

   B. Productivity and cohesiveness
      1. Productivity and cohesiveness the output of the task and social dimensions
      2. Productivity and cohesiveness affect each other reciprocally

   C. How to promote cohesiveness in groups.
      1. Encourage external threats
      2. Create history
      3. Establish interdependent goals
      4. Accomplish something
      5. Develop relationships and shared norms
      6. Promote acceptance for group members

   D. Groupthink

II. The Social Dimension
   A. Perspectives on the socioemotional climate
      1. Increasing interpersonal attraction
         a. Increase frequency of interaction
         b. Reciprocate liking and interaction
         c. Self-disclosure
         d. Develop bonding competence
         e. Establish member satisfaction
            -Participation
            -Types of messages
            -Feedback
            -Interaction Management
            -The status hierarchy
            -Motivation
      2. Extent to which members identify with the group

   B. Symbolic convergence
      1. Dramatizing messages
      2. Group fantasies

   C. Social Tension
      1. Primary tension
      2. Social tension
      3. Managing social tension by confronting the tension
III. The Task Dimension defined

IV. The Task Dimension individual versus group decision making
   A. Group polarization
   B. Efficiency and Speed
   C. The group task
      1. The principle of nonsummativity
         a. Assembly effect
         b. Psychological independence

Chapter 3 Key terms and Outline

Communication Networks
Network size
Reachability
Density
Centrality
Gatekeeping
Boundary Spanning
Internal Star
External Star
Information Overload
Kinesic Behavior
Paralinguistic
Proxemics
Territory
Resident Advantage
Personal Space
Spatial Ecology
Sociopetal
Sociofugal

I. Feedback Responses
   A. Feedback is inevitable
   B. Communication is a two-way process
   C. Feedback responses are reinforcing and attempts to control

II. Characteristics of Messages
   A. Desirable characteristics of feedback
      1. Be specific and clear
      2. Support comments with evidence
      3. Separate issue from person
      4. "Sandwich" negative messages between positive ones
      5. Pose situation as a mutual problem
      6. Soften negative messages
      7. Good timing
      8. Proper manner of delivery
B. Ambiguous messages

III. Communication Networks
   A. Three approaches to networks
      1. Relational
      2. Positional
      3. Cultural
   
   B. Network measurements
      1. Network size
      2. Reachability
      3. Density
      4. Centrality
   
   C. Comparison with different types of networks
   D. Network structures and understanding group processes
      1. Centrality
      2. Coalitions

IV. Gatekeeping
   A. The gatekeeper within the group decision making
   B. The boundary spanner between networks

V. Social Structure and Status

VI. Barrier and Breakdowns-- A Fallacy

VII. Nonverbal Communication and Group structure
   A. Proxemics
      1. Territoriality and Personal space
         a. Territory as space ownership
         b. Personal space and distance zones
            -intimate
            -personal
            -social
            -public
      2. Group Spatial Ecology

Chapter 4 Key Terms and Outline

Pragmatic Perspective
Communication
   Process
   Code
   Messages
Content Dimensions
Relationship Dimensions
Act
Interact
I. Pragmatics and Communication

A. The nature of communication
   1. Defined as a process of people exchanging messages which are formulated according to principles of a code, in a context.
   2. Character of Communication
      a. Communication is a sequence of actions performed in time
      b. Engaging in communication is relating with another
      c. Limiting effect of communication
      d. Communicative relationships evolve during interaction
      e. The communicative process is a system of communication

B. One cannot not communicate
   1. Communication is defined as behavior and if behavior has no opposite then one cannot not communicate.
   2. Communication need not be successful nor intentional to be communication.

C. Content and relationship dimensions of messages
   1. Content is the information or topic of a message
   2. Relationship is the style or how the message is said or done providing information about how the content is to be taken.
   3. These dimensions are inseparable in every communicative act much like the take and social dimension of group interaction are inseparable.

D. Analysis of interaction
   1. Individual actions serve many functions in the process of group communication.
   2. Many different category systems of communicative functions should be used to understand group processes

E. Punctuation of interaction
1. Punctuation is organizing elements in order to give meaning to a series of elements.
2. To punctuate or order differently is to change the interpretation of the sequence of elements.
3. Most important unit of analysis if the interact or double interact.

II. The Theoretical Perspective: Modern Systems Theory

A. The principle of wholeness
   1. A system’s components are affected by every other component so that changes in one component necessarily effects changes in all others
   2. Nonsummativity

B. Principles of structure, function, and evolution
   1. Structure refers to spatial relationships
   2. Function refers to actions or what members do
   3. Evolution refers to a group’s history or changes over time in structure and function.

C. Principle of openness
   1. Open systems takes in and process new information
   2. Open systems are self-regulating

III. Feedback Sequence

A. Feedback is a sequence of actions, a loop, functioning to maintain normal operation of the system.
B. Growth and change occurs because of feedback loops

IV. Dimensions of Communicative Behavior

A. The content dimension
   1. Examination of acts that function to influence the opinions of group members: decision proposals
   2. Functions of decisions proposals
      a. Interpretation
      b. Substantiation
      c. Clarification
      d. Modification
      e. Agreement
      f. Disagreement

B. The relationship dimension
   1. Examination of acts that function to control another
   2. Three categories of control modes
      a. one-up
      b. one-down
      c. one-across
   3. Two kinds of social relationships
      a. Symmetry
         - submissive symmetry
b. Complementary

V. Group Information Processing and Structuration
   A. Theory of group Structuration
      1. Use of rules and resources by group members as tools of interaction.
      2. Groups structure themselves over time.

VI. Nonverbal Functions and Group Interaction
   A. Clarification
      1. Nonverbal displays which function to clarify a message
      2. Displays such as loudness and pitch
   B. Control
      1. Nonverbal cues which signal control
   C. Emotional states

D. Interpersonal relations
   1. inclusion/exclusion cues
   2. confirmation/disconfirmation cues
   3. control cues
   4. emotional cues