

Group Communication COMM 210-504

Course Description: Definition, structure, and functions of groups; group productivity, codes in verbal and nonverbal communication; problem-solving, role-playing, decision making; leadership and organization; interview principles and techniques.

Groups and teams are a fact of life from families and roommates to extracurricular teams to the workplace, so we know that you will find the work in this class very relevant to your life. For students who are “all in”, you are going to enjoy this class, make friends and acquaintances, network, discover a feeling of accomplishment and gain a solid set of communication skills that will serve you well in your future pursuits!

Learning outcomes:

The successful student will:

1. Analyze, identify, and utilize the necessary interpersonal skills for effective facilitation of small groups
2. Analyze, identify, and utilize appropriate leadership communication in small groups
3. Analyze, identify, and utilize roles of effective group members, leaders, and followers
4. Explain the dynamics of power in the management of conflict in small groups
5. Demonstrate the standard agenda as a method for effective decision making and problem solving situations in small groups
6. Perform common group tasks using group communication technologies
7. Demonstrate critical thinking, decision making and problem solving as applicable in a variety of group settings through writing and presentations
8. Demonstrate appropriate use of consensus to reach a decision
9. Differentiate between facts, inferences and a variety of reasoning fallacies
10. Distinguish between creative and critical thinking
11. Demonstrate efficiency in team building techniques
12. Perform effectively as a team member in a service-learning project

Course Director: Prof. Nancy Street, n-street@tamu.edu

Required Texts and Materials:

Rothwell, J.D. (2013). *In Mixed Company: Communicating in Small Groups and Teams*. (8th edition) Boston, MA: Wadsworth.

***Please note that due to the required participation in small group work outside of class, this course involves a commitment of about three hours per week/50 hours per semester outside of class period. Other commitments such as work or participation in extra-curricular activities do not dismiss or reduce what is required of you in this course. Remember that your group members are counting on you, too. Consider this before continuing in the course.**

Grade Distribution:

The course grade will be calculated from these assignments with these weights.

Exam One: 10%

Exam Two: 10%

Exam Three: 10%

Fish Bowl Discussion: 20%

Fish Bowl Analysis Paper: 20%

Group Project: 30%

Group Charter 20%

Group Project Proposal 20%

Group Task Accomplishment 20%

Group Project Talk 20%

Group SMORE 20%

The final course grade will be assigned as follows:

A=89.5-100

B=79.5-89.4

C=69.5-79.4

D=59.5-69.4

F=0-59.4

Students may rest assured that this scale will be applied uniformly. Please do not request that the scale be applied to your grade in a different manner.

Course Information:

TR 11:10 Bolton 003

Office: Bolton 202A

Office hours: TR 2:00-5:00 and by appointment

Email: stacy-h-aschenbeck@tamu.edu

Extra credit is never offered on an individual basis. If it is offered it will be made available to the entire class.

[Americans with Disabilities Act Policy Statement](#)

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, in Cain Hall, Room B118, or call 845-1637. For additional information visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>.

[Academic Integrity Statement and Policy](#)

Do not cheat in this course. Do not commit scholastic dishonesty of any kind. Students who commit scholastic dishonesty will earn an F* on the transcript for this course. See the Aggie Honor System website for additional information on Scholastic Dishonesty and the Honor Council Rules and Procedures <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/>

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

Assignments

Readings:

Knowing all the material covered in the readings will be essential to your success in exams and assignments. I will highlight certain topics in class, but you will be responsible for all the information in your text.

Exams:

You will take your exams in groups. Before the group exam each of you will take an individually accountability quiz. If you score more than 10 points lower than your group, you will receive the average of your individual grade and the group grade.

Group Project:

Each group will work with a non-profit organization that is not affiliated with Texas A&M this semester. The group will need to identify a problem within the organization and use the concepts from this course to create a solution for the organization. In order to earn a high grade on this project you will need to spend time with your organization, create or provide a tangible product or service for that organization that is not currently being done or would not be done without you, and help to meet the organization's needs. Be sure not to simply provide possible ways to implement a solution, but do everything in your power to actually enact a real solution.

Fish Bowl Project:

After spending the semester studying and practicing group discussion, process, procedure, and theory, you will be graded on a group discussion. Each group will be expected to navigate through a problem-solving scenario using the Standard Agenda while being observed by the class. Your grade will be based on the group's ability to apply skills and theoretical concepts learned in the class as well as your ability to structure the deliberation according to the Standard Agenda Model. More information forthcoming.

Fish Bowl Project:

Your course final paper will be an analysis of your observations of your classmates' Fish Bowl Discussions. Using your notes from the group discussion, you will write a 4-5 page essay that analyzes the 6 steps of the Standard Agenda by comparing and contrasting the group performances with specific examples. More information forthcoming.

Attendance

CLASS IS GOING TO BE SO GREAT THAT I THINK THAT YOU'LL WANT TO ATTEND EACH AND EVERY SESSION, HOWEVER, ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED AT EACH MEETING OF COMM 411.

STUDENTS SHALL ARRIVE ON TIME AND STAY FOR THE ENTIRE CLASS PERIOD. ATTENDANCE IS DOCUMENTED BY THE STUDENT'S FULL SIGNATURE ON THE DAILY SIGN-IN SHEET. STUDENTS MAY HAVE THREE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES HOWEVER NO MAKE-UP WORK IS AVAILABLE FOR UNEXCUSED ABSENCES ON THE DAY OF AN EXAM OR PRESENTATION.

THE COURSE GRADE WILL BE REDUCED BY ONE LETTER GRADE FOR EACH UNEXCUSED ABSENCE IN EXCESS OF THREE. THREE TARDIES EQUAL AN UNEXCUSED ABSENCE.

MAKE-UP WORK IS AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS WITH EXCUSED ABSENCES IN ACCORDANCE WITH STUDENTS RULES. PLEASE SEE STUDENT RULE [HTTP://STUDENT-RULES.TAMU.EDU/RULE07](http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07) TO DOCUMENT AN EXCUSED ABSENCE. I WILL NOT ACCEPT THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY EXPLANATORY STATEMENT FOR ABSENCE FROM CLASS. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES, STUDENTS MUST PROVIDE WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXCUSED ABSENCE, FROM A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER FOR ILLNESSES OR INJURIES TOO SEVERE OR CONTAGIOUS FOR A STUDENT TO ATTEND CLASS, OR FROM THE APPROPRIATE OFFICIAL ABLE TO DOCUMENT OTHER UNIVERSITY EXCUSED ABSENCES.