

COM 320: Small Group Communication – Syllabus (Fall 2013)

Kurtis D. Miller
mille518@purdue.edu
BRNG 2161

Office Hours:

T: 1:30 to 3:00 pm

R: 1:30 to 3:00 pm

F: 10:00 to 11:00 am

Also by Appointment, just e-mail

Textbook: Beebe, S. A. & Masterson, J. T. (2011). Communicating in Small Groups: Principles and Practices (10th ed.). Pearson Higher Ed.

Course Overview: This class focuses on communication in small groups and teams. In order to further the students' understanding of these processes, a number of current theories and concepts will be introduced. Students will draw connections between these ideas and their own experiences. A number of group projects will be incorporated so that class members can have a chance to observe the phenomena and apply the strategies that are discussed in assigned readings and media, or which are presented in class. **This class will require participation in group activities outside of the regularly scheduled class meetings.**

Readings: The entire content of assigned readings is important. Some content will not be reviewed in class. I occasionally assign other media, such as audio/video podcasts. You should approach these media the same way you would approach other assigned materials. Quizzes and exams will include content from assigned readings and media, including content that was not discussed in class.

Attendance: Attendance is strongly encouraged. Attendance will be taken during the first two weeks, per university policy. Quizzes and exams will include content from class meetings which has not been covered in assigned reading or media. The classroom environment also encourages discussion, which promotes clear understanding and familiarity with course content.

Office Hours: My office hours are scheduled for your benefit, but unfortunately some students go an entire semester without stopping by. I enjoy the opportunity to interact with my students interpersonally. Feel free to come by if you just want to talk, if you have a question or a complaint (about this class specifically, or anything else), or for no reason at all—even after you're done taking the class.

Disabilities: Students with disabilities who need accommodation (seating placement, arrangements for examinations, etc.) should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course so appropriate arrangements can be made. Accommodations cannot be retroactive, so work from the beginning to ensure you get the most possible from this course. Students may also contact the Office of the Dean of Students for additional information on accommodation: <http://www.purdue.edu/odos/drc/welcome.php>.

Quizzes: There will be several quizzes throughout the semester (**approximately 10**). The quizzes will cover both the reading and the content of lectures. When figuring the quiz average, each student's lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Each quiz will include 3 questions worth 4 points each for a total of 12 points. Questions answered correctly will receive all 4 points; partially correct answers will receive 2 points; incorrect answers will receive no points. If you come to class after a quiz has been given, you have missed the quiz. **Quizzes cannot be made up**, but your lowest quiz grade is dropped and missed quizzes can be corrected for half credit.

Quiz Corrections: Students may correct wrong or partially correct answers to earn half of the points they lost on incorrect answers back. Corrections are due the class after graded quizzes are returned. **Important:** Corrections must be written **on the back** of the quiz, and must include either a page number from the reading where the answer was located, or a timestamp if the answer is in assigned media. **If and only if** the answer cannot be found in assigned reading or media, then the correction should include the date of the lecture.

Corrections turned in late, written on the front of the quiz, or corrections without page numbers / timestamps will receive no points—even if the answer is correct.

Exams: There will be three exams. They will include a variety of question types, but most will be short answer. You will already have seen many of the questions on the exams on your quizzes (seriously, people—ctrl-c, ctrl-v, I'm not trying to do a bunch of extra work here). The final exam will be given during our assigned final exam slot. The final is semi-cumulative and will be longer than the first two exams. These additional questions on the final will come from the first two exams. **I do not accept corrections on exams.**

Group Work: Students will be responsible for participating in three group projects. Two of these projects will be accomplished through meetings conducted outside of class time. The third is a large, full class project which will be conducted through the course of the semester. These projects are an important part of the course because they are an opportunity to apply the principles discussed in class in the real world through personal experience. Groups meeting outside of class are expected to meet a minimum of once per week. **Groups are expected to complete and turn in minutes from each meeting.**

Components of group work will be graded on a “check” system (✓+, ✓, ✓-, 0). A good performance will typically receive a ✓. Work which goes beyond what is reasonably expected will receive a ✓+. Grades for group projects include an individual component—**group members should not expect to all receive the same grade.**

Grading Disputes: You must wait 24 hours after receiving a grade to discuss it with your instructor. This ensures that you have the opportunity to prepare and bring supporting information prior to the discussion. A meeting should be scheduled either during office hours or outside of them if necessary. I will not discuss grades (good or bad) in front of other students, in the classroom before/after class, in the hallway, or if you run into me around campus or in town. I cannot discuss the grades of other students, and will not discuss student grades in the presence of other students, friends, family, etc. **Grades and scores are considered final unless the instructor is contacted within two weeks of their return.**

Extra Credit: Participation in research is not a requirement of this course. However, students may earn a bonus of 1% on their final grade in the course for each 1% a student earns through participation in research administered through the Department of Communication's Research Participation System, up to a maximum of 2%.

This opportunity allows you to see how we develop the communication theories that underlie the principles and advice covered in this course. The sessions usually last between 30 minutes and one hour. For information about times and dates of specific studies visit the Department of Communication's Research Participation's website at <http://purdue-comm.sona-systems.com/>. The website will allow you to register for the study of your choice. Please note that if you sign up to participate in a study and fail to show up without canceling your appointment in advance (up to 2 hours before the study), you will be automatically restricted from signing up for any studies for 30 days.

Students who do not wish to participate in research may request (by e-mail) 1 or 2 short writing assignments to complete in order to earn this bonus.

Grading Policy: Grades are a system of communication, and as such must be used in similar ways by everyone in order for them to have meaning. In general, modern society interprets grades as follows:

- A: Far Above Average, No/Few Flaws, Innovative, Among the Best
- B: Above Average, Has Some Flaws, Exceeds Requirements
- C: Acceptable, Not Above Average, Met Requirements, Followed Directions
- D: Substandard, Barely Sufficient, Missed a Few Requirements, Trying
- F: Learned Essentially Nothing, Not Trying

Work which satisfies the requirements of an assignment is not "A" level work—it is "C" level work. Although this is not a grammar or writing class, professionalism is expected. All work should be relatively free of significant (i.e. distracting or confusing) spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors because these undermine a professional appearance.

Calculating Final Grades: Final grades are a weighted average of Exams, Quizzes, and Group Projects:

Individual Knowledge	Group Component
First Exam 10%	
Second Exam 10%	First Group Project 15%
Final Exam 15%	Second Group Project 15%
Quiz Average 15%	Full Class Project 20%
Total 50%	50%

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty is bad, and will not be tolerated in this course.

Purdue has strong policies against academic dishonesty. Anyone engaging in academic dishonesty will be reprimanded and subject to disciplinary action which can result in a minimum of a ZERO on an assignment, but may include failure of the course or expulsion from the university. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

A. Plagiarism, which includes:

1. Copying someone else's work and claiming it as your own.
2. Paraphrasing someone else's work and claiming it as your own.
3. Collaborating with another person and claiming the work solely as your own.

B. Using work from another course or from a previous semester. For example, you may not reuse papers from another course. The work must be original to this course and this semester.

C. Cheating on a quiz.

Students are advised to become familiar with Purdue's Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities to resolve questions about this matter. The following publication from the Office of the Dean of Students may prove helpful as well:

<http://www.purdue.edu/odos/aboutodos/academicintegrity.php>.

Classroom Environment: Please be respectful to other students. Electronic devices (including computers) will not be used in a way that is distracting. The instructor will determine what is "distracting." I will treat you as adults, and expect that you will behave with common courtesy. Students who cannot show this basic level of respect will be asked to leave.

Campus Emergencies: In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control. Information about course changes related to campus emergencies can be accessed via Blackboard.

For all COM Majors & Minors: If you are planning to count this class toward your requirements for either the COM major or the COM minor, you must earn at least a C- in this course.

COM 320: Small Group Communication – Course Schedule (Fall 2013)

Day	Date – Day	Planned Class Format	What Happens?
01	2013-08-20 – T	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 1	
02	2013-08-22 – R	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 1	
03	2013-08-27 – T	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 1	
04	2013-08-29 – R	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 1	Groups Assigned
05	2013-09-03 – T	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 1	
06	2013-09-05 – R	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 1	
07	2013-09-10 – T	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 1	
08	2013-09-12 – R	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 1	
09	2013-09-17 – T	Discussion	Student-led Review Session
10	2013-09-19 – R	Exam	First Exam
11	2013-09-24 – T	Presentation	Group Theory Presentations
12	2013-09-26 – R	Presentation	Group Theory Presentations
13	2013-10-01 – T	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 2	Group & Class Projects Assigned
14	2013-10-03 – R	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 2, Meeting	Class Project Meeting
15	2013-10-08 – T	No Class	(October Break)
16	2013-10-10 – R	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 2, Meeting	Class Project Meeting
17	2013-10-15 – T	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 2	
18	2013-10-17 – R	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 2, Meeting	Class Project Meeting
19	2013-10-22 – T	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 2	
20	2013-10-24 – R	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 2, Meeting	Class Project Meeting
21	2013-10-29 – T	Presentation, Meeting	Class Project Meeting Committee Project Proposals
22	2013-10-31 – R	Presentation, Meeting	Class Project Meeting Committee Project Proposals
23	2013-11-05 – T	Discussion	Student-led Review Session (Election Day)
24	2013-11-07 – R	Exam	Second Exam
25	2013-11-12 – T	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 3, Meeting	Surprise Class Project Meeting
26	2013-11-14 – R	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 3, Meeting	Class Project Meeting
27	2013-11-19 – T	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 3, Meeting	Class Project Meeting
28	2013-11-21 – R	No Class	(NCA)
29	2013-11-26 – T	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 3, Meeting	Class Project Meeting
30	2013-11-28 – R	No Class	(Thanksgiving)
31	2013-12-03 – T	Lecture/Discussion: Unit 3, Meeting	Class Project Meeting
32	2013-12-05 – R	Discussion	Student-led Review Session
	UNK	Exam	Final Exam

This schedule is subject to change during the course of the semester based on progress in the course. Additional readings will be assigned to supplement the text.

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. Information about changes will be distributed in class and/or on the Blackboard web page.