

COM 320: Small Group – Syllabus (Spring 2015)

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BRNG 2161 by appointment or:
10:00 to 11:00 am, Tue., Wed., Thu.

Textbooks: Both are required.

Beebe, S. A. & Masterson, J. T. (2011). *Communicating in small groups: Principles and practices* (10th ed.). Pearson Higher Ed.

Black, L. (Ed.). (2010). *Group communication: Cases for analysis, appreciation, and application*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt

Course Overview: This class focuses on communication in small groups and teams. During the course, students will learn about current theories underlying our understanding of groups. Students will apply current theories to examples of the interactions of real world groups, and the students' own experiences, including group projects. **This class will require participation in group activities outside of the regularly scheduled class meetings.**

Availability: I am available in person during office hours, and by appointment in addition. My office hours are scheduled for your benefit, but some students go an entire semester without stopping by. I like students! Feel free to come by for any reason or no reason at all—even after you're done taking the class. I check and respond to my e-mail once every day, except on the weekend. I do not check my e-mail at the same time every day, so I cannot guarantee a response within 24 hours. Sometimes messages do fall through the cracks or are zapped by overzealous spam filters—if I have not replied after a few days, please re-send the message. You can also call when I am in the office.

Classroom Environment: You are an adult; be respectful to others. Students who are not respectful will be asked to leave. Electronic devices should be silenced and may only be used for minor tasks during the occasional lull in classroom activity. You may not leave electronic devices out or use them in a sustained fashion--not even for such activities as taking notes or accessing copies of readings for the class. (Studies consistently show that students perform best in class when they hand-write their notes.) The sound on my phone will be on during class because our university distributes emergency information via text message. If you will benefit from using an electronic device, please see the next paragraph.

Access: All students have the right to an accessible environment. Students who think they would benefit from accommodation (seating placement, arrangements for examinations, exceptions to policies, etc.) should inform me 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 should also contact the Office of the Dean of Students for additional information on accommodation:

<http://www.purdue.edu/odos/drc/welcome.php>.

Campus Emergencies: There are two predominant types of emergencies: evacuation and shelter-in-place. I am familiar with the proper course of action in both cases, so please follow those directions. After 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.

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. 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>. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

A. Plagiarism:

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. Misrepresentation:

1. Re-using work from another course.
2. Re-using work from a previous semester in this course.

C. Cheating

Grading

Assigned Materials: The entire content of assigned materials is important. Some content will not be reviewed in class. Assigned materials will generally be written, but I reserve the right to assign other media. You should approach these media the same way you would approach other assigned materials. Content from assigned materials which has not been discussed in class **will** affect your grade.

Attendance: Attendance is strongly encouraged. The classroom environment encourages discussion, which promotes clear understanding of and familiarity with course content. Attendance will be taken in each class. Content from class meetings which has not been covered in assigned reading or media **will** affect your grade. You will not be penalized for missing up to one-week's worth of classes. Each absence beyond this will result in a one percentage point (1%) deduction from your final average grade. Being late for class 3 times is considered one absence. To have absences excused, students **must** provide **printed** documentation which excuses the absence. Documentation for foreseeable absences must be submitted prior to the absence. Documentation for unforeseeable absences must be submitted within 7 days of returning to class. Students who are concerned that this penalty will affect their final grade should refer to the "extra credit" section below.

Reading Discussion: Students are encouraged to engage with the contents of course readings during the course of the week by posting to twitter using the course hashtag. Stupid, superficial, and humorous reactions to the readings are awesome and encouraged! They should, however, be balanced with engaged, analytic, and thoughtful responses. See the assignment sheet and grading rubric for more detailed descriptions.

Group Journal: Students will be responsible for analyzing the actions of their groups and group members by keeping individual group journals. There will be a minimum of one journal entry per meeting. The group journal provides an opportunity for students to apply the principles of the course to the groups that they are working in during the semester. See the assignment sheet and grading rubric for more detailed descriptions.

Group Project: Students will be responsible for participating in a group project. 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. Grades for group projects include an individual component—**group members should not expect to all receive the same grade. Groups are expected to complete and turn in minutes from each meeting. Not turning these in will hurt your group's grade significantly.** See the assignment sheet and grading rubric for more detailed descriptions.

Final Project: Students will also be responsible for a large final project. Class time will be provided for meetings to help accomplish this project. This project is an important part of the course because it is an opportunity to observe how sub-groups interact as parts of a larger group system in order to pursue a common goal. Students are entirely responsible for this project, including determining how it will be graded.

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 a solid case **with documentation** to support your claims. A meeting should be scheduled with the instructor to contest a grade. 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. **Your grades and scores are considered final unless you initiate contact 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. Work which satisfies the requirements of an assignment is not "A" level work—it is "C" level work. Professionalism is expected. Although this is not a grammar or writing class, it is a communication class. All work should be free of significant (i.e. distracting or confusing) spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors, as these impair communication.

Late Work Policy: ***ALL written assignments must be turned in for you to pass this course!*** Late assignments are accepted. Late work turned in within 7 days of the original due date will be graded pass/fail for ½ credit. Late work turned in later than 7 days after the original due date will be graded pass/fail but will earn no points. Students turning in late work will not receive grading feedback. Regardless of your performance on any other course material, you must turn in AND

pass ALL of your written assignments by the end of the last class period of the semester in order for you to pass the class.

Calculating Final Grades: Final grades are a weighted average:

Weights		Grade Cut-offs	
Reading Discussion	20%	A+ 97-100	C+ 77-79
Midterm Group Project	15%	A 93-96	C 73-76
Midterm Group Journal	15%	A- 90-92	C- 70-72
Final Group Project	20%	B+ 87-89	D+ 67-69
Final Group Journal	30%	B 83-86	D 63-66
		B- 80-82	D- 60-62

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

Syllabus

Calendar

Due	Week	Subject	Readings & Resources
01/15 Twitter, Google Drive, and IFTTT user accounts	Week 1 T–01/13 R–01/15	Course Overview , Defining Groups and Teams , Twitter Discussion Set-up , Roles in Groups	Syllabus , Safety Information , Ch. 1 (B&M) , Twitter Discussion Assignment
	Week 2 T–01/20 R–01/22	Group Norms, Cohesion, and Status , Discussion	Ch. 5 (B&M) Cases 2 & 5 (Black)
	Week 3 T–01/27 R–01/29	Power , Planning & Recording Meetings , Groups Assigned, Discussion	Ch. 4 (B&M) , Appendix A (B&M) , Cases 1 & 4 (Black) , Project 1 Assignment , Group Journal Assignment , Agenda Rubric , Minutes Rubric ,
	Week 4 T–02/03 R–02/05	Group Problem Solving , Class Project Assigned, Discussion	Ch. 10 (B&M) , Cases 20 & 21 (Black) , Class Project Advice
	Week 5 T–02/10 R–02/12	Group Decision Making , Conflict in Groups Discussion	Ch. 11 (B&M) , Case 16 (Black)
	Week 6 T–02/17 R–02/19	Group Creativity & Brainstorming , Discussion	Ch. 12 (B&M) Case 18 (Black)
02/24 Project 1 Due 02/26 Peer Evaluations Due	Week 7 T–02/24 R–02/26	Project Presentations	Peer Evaluation Submission Link
	Week 8 T–03/03 R–03/05	Conflict Management in Groups , Discussion	Ch. 8, part 1 (B&M, pp. 172-187) Case 12 (Black)
	Week 9 T–03/10	Conflict (Continued), Group Climate ,	Ch. 8, part 2 (B&M, pp. 187-207),

	R-03/12 Discussion	Ch. 6 (B&M), Case 15 (Black), Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions
	Week 10 T-03/17 Spring Break R-03/19	
	Week 11 Group Climate (Continued), T-03/24 Discussion R-03/26	Case 10 (Black) Ch. 9 (B&M)
	Week 12 Leadership , T-03/31 Discussion R-04/02	Case 10 (Black) Ch. 9 (B&M)
	Week 13 Joining and Leaving Groups , T-04/07 Discussion R-04/09	Ch. 3 (B&M) Case 7 (Black)
04/16 No Class, Regional Conference	Week 14 Joining and Leaving Groups (continued), T-04/14 Listening & Nonverbal Communication in Groups , R-04/16 Discussion	Ch. 7 (B&M) Cases 17 & 22 (Black)
04/24 Final Day to Complete Class Project	Week 15 T-04/21 R-04/23	
04/28 Final Project Journals Due	Week 16 Discussion T-04/28 R-04/30	