

COM 320: Small Group Communication – Syllabus (Spring 2014)

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M: 10:30 to 11:30 am

T: 1:30 to 3:00 pm

R: 1:30 to 3:00 pm

Also by appointment, just e-mail

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. 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, examples of the interactions of real world groups, and the students' 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.

Accommodation: Students with disabilities who need accommodation (seating placement, arrangements for examinations, 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 may also contact the Office of the Dean of Students for additional information on accommodation: <http://www.purdue.edu/odos/drc/welcome.php>.

Attendance: Attendance is strongly encouraged. Attendance will be taken during the first two weeks, per university policy. You will be assessed on 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.

Availability: I am available in person during class, during office hours, and (by appointment) outside of office hours. I am also available by e-mail. I have a family and a rifle platoon, so I

only check and respond to e-mail during the work week, and I am writing a dissertation and going on the job market, so I only check and respond to e-mail once per day. Sometimes messages do fall through the cracks or are accidentally grabbed by a filter, so if I have not replied after a few days, please re-send the message.

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.

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.

Grading: Your grade in the class will be determined based on a combination of individual knowledge and group work. Individual knowledge is assessed through quizzes, writing exam questions, and exams. Group work is assessed through two group projects and a large final project.

Quizzes: There will be several short online quizzes throughout the semester. The quizzes will cover the assigned readings used for in-class discussion. They must be completed before class. Because quizzes are administered electronically and are completed outside of class time, **quizzes cannot be made up** except in extreme and unforeseeable circumstances as required by university policy.

Exam Questions: Students will sign up to be part of a team that leads discussion on one of the discussion days. Students leading discussion will be responsible for writing and submitting exam questions based on the day's content and discussion. These students will also make sure that discussion stays on topic and moves forward.

Exams: There will be a midterm exam and a final exam. The final exam will not be cumulative. The exams will consist primarily of multiple choice questions drawn from the pool of questions posted online by students leading discussion. I may also add a limited number of short answer questions to the exams, depending on how the class is progressing. Do not miss exams. **You will only be allowed to make up exams for legitimate university authorized reasons with official documentation.**

Group Projects: Students will be responsible for participating in two group projects. These projects will be accomplished through meetings conducted outside of class time. 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. Grades for group projects include an individual component—**group members should not expect to all receive the same grade.** Groups meeting outside of class are expected to meet a minimum of

once per week, but will often need to meet more often. **Groups are expected to complete and turn in minutes from each meeting. Not turning these in will hurt your group's grade significantly.**

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. **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. I grade on a full scale (A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F). In general, modern society interprets the anchor 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. 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.

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

Individual Knowledge

Quiz Average 10%

Exam Questions 15%

Midterm Exam 15%

Final Exam 15%

Total 55%

Group Component

First Group Project 10%

Second Group Project 15%

Large Final Project 20%

Total 45%

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>.

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 Order of Material (Spring 2014)

##	Date – Day	Class Format	What Happens?
01	2014-01-14 – T	<i>First Day of Class</i>	
02	2014-01-16 – R	Lecture Group/Team Comm., Advantages, Disadvantages, Primary, Secondary, Virtual, Competency	Practice Questions Submitted Ch. 1 (B&M)
03	2014-01-21 – T	Lecture Roles, Norms, Status, Power, Trust, Culture	Sign up to Lead Discussion Ch. 5 (B&M)
04	2014-01-23 – R	Discussion FreeInternet (Differing Views) Speaking Eagles Debate Team	Groups & Proj. 1 Assigned Case 2 (Black) Case 5 (Black)
05	2014-01-28 – T	Lecture Preparing to Collaborate Giving Meetings Structure; Meeting Facilitation, Leadership, and Participation	Ch. 4 (B&M) Appendix A (B&M)
06	2014-01-30 – R	Discussion School Health Advisory Team Preparedness Group	Case 1 (Black) Case 4 (Black)
07	2014-02-04 – T	Lecture Making Decisions	Ch 10 (B&M)
08	2014-02-06 – R	Discussion Grocery Co-op Student Government	Case 20 (Black) Case 21 (Black)
09	2014-02-11 – T	Lecture Problem Solving	Proj. 1 Due Proj. 2 & Class Proj. Assigned Ch 11 (B&M)
10	2014-02-13 – R	Discussion Jury Decision Making	Class Project Meeting 1 Case 16 (Black)
11	2014-02-18 – T	Lecture Creativity & Brainstorming	Ch 12 (B&M)
12	2014-02-20 – R	Discussion Utilizing Expertise	Class Project Meeting 2 Case 18 (Black)
13	2014-02-25 – T	Review	Student-led Review Session
14	2014-02-27 – R	Exam	Midterm Exam
15	2014-03-04 – T	Lecture Conflict and Diversity, Conflict Management Styles Conflict Management	Sign up to Lead Discussion Ch 8, part 1 (B&M, pp. 172-187)
16	2014-03-06 – R	Discussion	Class Project Meeting 3

		A Matter of Respect Sea Kayaking Expedition	Case 12 (Black) Case 13 (Black)
17	2014-03-11 – T	Lecture Difficult Group Members, Groupthink, Achieving Consensus	Ch 8, part 2 (B&M, pp. 187-207)
18	2014-03-13 – R	Discussion Student Group	Class Project Meeting 4 Case 15 (Black)
	2014-03-18 – T	No Class	(Spring Break)
	2014-03-20 – R	No Class	(Spring Break)
19	2014-03-25 – T	Lecture Defensiveness/Supportiveness, Confirmation/Disconfirmation, Cohesion, Networks, Size, Productivity Effects	Ch 6 (B&M)
20	2014-03-27 – R	Discussion Basketball Team	Class Project Meeting 5 Case 10 (Black)
21	2014-04-01 – T	Lecture Perspectives on Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Emergent Leadership	(April Fool's Day) Ch 9 (B&M)
	2014-04-03 – R	No Class	(Regional Convention)
22	2014-04-08 – T	Lecture How People Join Groups, Individual Affiliative Decisions, Leaving Groups, The Investment Model	Ch 3 (B&M)
23	2014-04-10 – R	Discussion Community Choir	Class Project Meeting 6 Case 7 (Black)
24	2014-04-15 – T	Lecture Verbal Dynamics, Listening, Nonverbal Communication in Groups	(Taxes Due) Ch 7 (B&M)
25	2014-04-17 – R	Discussion Hospital Ethics Committee School Board Group Disc.	Class Project Meeting 7 (Holy Thursday) Case 17 (Black) Case 22 (Black)
26	2014-04-22 – T	Review	Student-led Review Session (Earth Day)
27	2014-04-24 – R	Exam	Final Exam
28	2014-04-29 – T		
29	2014-05-01 – R		Last Day to Complete Class Project
UNK			

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.