

COMM 212, Team and Small Group Communication

Kurtis D. Miller

Instructor	Office
Kurtis D. Miller, PhD. kurtisdmliller.com kdmiller@tusculum.edu 423-636-7300 Ext. 5783	Library 126 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm, Mon/Thu 10:00 am – Noon, Wed also by appointment

Course Description: 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.

The syllabus for this course is subject to change at any time. This includes, but is not limited to, such elements as required assignments, grading requirements/scales and the course calendar. Updates will be communicated through the Moodle announcement system.

General Education Student Learning Outcomes

This course is a part of the General Education Program. The following learning outcomes will be assessed:

1. Writing: Students will structure evidence to convincingly support their arguments. The [Community Group Observation](#) will be used to measure this learning outcome.
2. Public Speaking: Students will create messages appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context. The **Assessment Worksheet** provided in the final weeks of the class will be used to measure this learning outcome.
3. Public Speaking: Students will evaluate personal communication strengths and weaknesses. The **Assessment Worksheet** provided in the final weeks of the class will be used to measure this learning outcome.

Other Learning Outcomes

1. Students will employ communication theory in the area of team and small group communication. The [Community Group Observation](#) will be used to measure this learning outcome.
2. Students will understand the location of team and small group communication as a field within communication studies. The **Assessment Worksheet** provided in the final weeks of the class will be used to measure this learning outcome.

Required Texts and Materials

The textbook for this course is “Communicating in Small Groups: Principles and Practices” (Beebe & Masterson). We will be using the 10th Edition. You will also need to bring standard classroom and note taking supplies with you each day.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance will be taken regularly. Attendance records will be kept and reported to the extent required by law and university policy. Participating regularly in class is assessed as a portion of your [Professionalism](#) grade.

Late Work Policy

Late work may be turned in up to 1 calendar day after the deadline. Late work will lose 10% of the available points. Late preparation materials for prepared presentations may be turned in more than 1 calendar day after the deadline, but will earn zero points. Prepared presentations may not be delivered if reasonably complete preparation materials have not been turned in at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled presentation time. Late or missing work will also result in penalties to your [Professionalism](#) grade. Using technology is a basic expectation of students at this level of study – issues with technology are not an excuse for late or missing work. If you need assistance with technology, contact [Information Services](#).

Alternate Deadlines

In some rare cases an emergency may require you to miss class and turn in work after the assigned due date. These situations are handled on a case-by-case basis and, depending on the situation and documentation, this work may be assigned an alternate deadline. Coursework assigned an alternate deadline is graded for full credit, but will not receive feedback.

Alternate deadlines will not be assigned for absences that can be planned for – this includes school-sponsored events, such as athletics.

Classroom Behavior

We are a community of learners, and your classmates are entitled to the standard professional courtesies. Show respect for every person in the classroom. Complete your assigned work on time. Be ready for classroom discussion and activities. Ask questions. Be supportive audience members. Any member of an activity group should be prepared to present the work of the entire group. Each student is required to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times. Racist, sexist, or other offensive or discriminatory language will not be tolerated. Keep all devices (phones, tablets, laptops, headphones, etc.) out of sight, unless their use is required for a classroom activity. Unprofessional behavior in the classroom will result in penalties to your [Professionalism](#) grade.

Assignments and Grading

Your final grade will be determined by the total points received out of 1,000 points possible. Your points will accumulate through the semester. The largest portions of your final grade comes from **Content Knowledge** and **Group Projects**. You will also be graded on your **Professionalism**. **Extra credit** is available for this class.

Grading Scale

The grading scale for the class is below. When determining final grades I will round up decimals to the next full point. I will not round up multiple points. There are many extra credit opportunities; see above for more information.

Total Points	Grade	Quality Points ¹
930+	A	4.0 per semester hour
900+	A-	3.7 per semester hour
880+	B+	3.5 per semester hour
830+	B	3.0 per semester hour
800+	B-	2.7 per semester hour
780+	C+	2.5 per semester hour
730+	C	2.0 per semester hour
700+	C-	1.7 per semester hour
680+	D+	1.5 per semester hour
630+	D	1.0 per semester hour
less than 630	F	0.0 per semester hour

Content Knowledge

Demonstrating content knowledge contributes 500 points to your final grade. You will complete a [Community Group Observation](#). The report from this observation contributes 200 points to your final grade. Your understanding of the course material will be assessed through multiple choice quizzes in class and a final exam. The lowest two quiz scores will be dropped and the average of

your remaining quiz scores will contribute 100 points to your final grade. The final exam will draw heavily from the quizzes given in class and will contribute 200 points to your final grade.

Group Projects

Participation in group projects contributes 400 points to your grade. The [Small Group Project](#) will be completed in the middle of the semester and contributes 150 points to your final grade. The [Final Group Project](#) will be completed at the end of the semester and contributes 250 points to your final grade.

Professionalism

Displaying basic [Professionalism](#) is an expectation in this class and one of the most useful skills to have when you graduate. You will receive an overall professionalism grade at three points during the semester. Your average of all three grades contributes 100 points to your final grade.²

Extra Credit

Students can earn up to a maximum of 55 points in extra credit toward their final grade. Students will earn 10 points of extra credit by completing the Syllabus Check assignment on Moodle. Students may also earn up to 45 points of extra credit by participating in debate team practice sessions, 15 points for each session. Additional extra credit opportunities may also be announced as they become available. Extra Credit may not be turned in after the last class meeting.

Email Policy

Email is the primary and preferred method of communication for most student issues. I check and respond to my email once daily, except weekends and holidays.

The privacy of student educational records is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). I will not respond to any communication about a student which does not come from an official school email address. I do not accept assignments by email. Brief emails asking questions which are already answered in course documents (syllabus, calendar, assignment descriptions, etc.) may not receive a reply.

Engaging in professional communication with your professors and the university staff is important. Some students benefit from the below email template, which comes from a post I wrote to help students with [writing professional emails](#). Whether you are in my class or any other class at the university, this template should work well. Just replace the information in brackets as needed:

²Keaton, A. F. (2015). Teaching students the importance of professionalism. *Teaching Professor*, 29(6). <https://www.magnapubs.com/newsletter/the-teaching-professor/114/Teaching-Students-the-Importance-of-Professionalism-13541-1.html>

Subject: [class number and section]: [your issue]

Dear [Title Last Name – if you can't find out, use "Professor" to be safe],

I am in your [time] [class name] class on [days class meets]. I have checked the [syllabus/assignment instructions/rubric/textbook/class resources] for an answer, but it does not adequately answer my question. I need some additional help with [your issue].

[Second paragraph explaining your question. Describe where you looked for answers, what you found, and how that information is not enough for you to have a clear answer to your question. You may also include other relevant aspects of your situation.]

[OPTIONAL third paragraph where you propose answers or next steps.]

Thank you,

[Your First and Last Name]

Final Exam Policy

A final exam is a required part of this course. Final exams are administered only during three days of Final Exam Week in accordance with the established schedule. Consult the syllabus and the Tusculum website to determine when your exams will take place and do not make travel, family, or any other plans that conflict with any of your final exams. If you see that there will be an unavoidable conflict, drop this course before the Add/Drop period concludes and sign up for a different section.

Grade Disputes

If you believe that you have been graded unfairly, wait 24 hours after receiving the grade, review the rubric, and schedule a meeting to discuss it with me. I will not discuss your grades publicly. Come to this meeting prepared to provide evidence supporting the need for a grade change. Grades are considered final one week after they are posted in Moodle.

University Policies

The following policies apply to *all* courses at Tusculum University.

Minimum Grade for a Course to Count Toward a Major or Minor

Grades below C- earned in the student's major and minor will satisfy the course prerequisites requirement; however, grades below C- cannot be counted in the total number of hours required in the major and minor.

Tusculum Communication Policy

All students are responsible for checking their personal Tusculum University email account each day, as it is the university's only official communication tool.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty Policy

Cheating and plagiarism are violations of Ethics of Social Responsibility – one of the outcomes that has been identified as essential to the Civic Arts. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty. It consists of knowingly presenting in writing or in speech the intellectual or creative work of others as if it were one's own. This includes:

1. Failing to identify direct or word-for-word quotations by use of appropriate symbols and reference to the source.
2. Restating in your own words the work (ideas, conclusions, words) of another without reference to the source.
3. Presenting as your own the creative work (for instance, music or photographs) of another without proper acknowledgment. Besides plagiarism, other forms of academic dishonesty include the following:
4. Submitting the same work in two or more courses without significant modifications or expansion and without the approval of the instructors involved.
5. Submitting purchased, borrowed, copied or specially commissioned work as if it were one's own.
6. Knowingly permitting others to submit your work under their names.
7. Copying the work of others during an examination or other academic exercise.
8. Knowingly allowing others to copy your work during an examination or other academic exercise.
9. Using "cheat sheets" or any other unauthorized form of assistance during an exam, quiz or other academic exercise.
10. Manipulating or fabricating data to support erroneous conclusions.

Academic Accommodations and Students with Disabilities

Tusculum University makes available to qualified students with disabilities those reasonable accommodations or services as are necessary to provide such students with unrestricted access to the learning environment and the opportunity to demonstrate academic achievement. In order to procure services or classroom accommodations, the qualified student is responsible for self-identifying and directing all requests or accommodations or services to the Academic Resource Center counselors. Contact information: Counseling and ADA Services, 423-636-7300, ext. 5402; counselingandadaservices@tusculum.edu; Room 233, Garland Library.

Tutoring

Free tutoring services are provided by Tusculum University. The campus Tutoring Center is located in the Garland Library on the Greeneville campus. Tutoring is available in English and

Mathematics, including Statistics, in the Tutoring Center, Rooms 317-318, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. For all other subjects, sign in at the Garland Library Circulation Desk (Main Floor/2nd floor), 7:00 PM – 9 PM, Sunday through Thursday. Tutoring is available during the stated hours on a walk-in basis, and you can also schedule an appointment by emailing tutoring@tusculum.edu. In some circumstances, written approval to meet in other public locations can be obtained from the Tutor Coordinator. Please note that the faculty reserves the right to require students to attend tutoring sessions.

Title IX

Tusculum University is committed to providing a safe learning environment that is free of all forms of sex and gender-based discrimination and harassment, including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking. If you or someone you know has experienced any form of sexual misconduct, you are strongly encouraged (but not required) to contact the Title IX Co-Coordinators at (423) 636-7318 or email either of them: jgresham@tusculum.edu or mcooney@tusculum.edu. Please note that all Tusculum University faculty members are considered “responsible employees,” meaning any situation involving sex or gender-based discrimination shared with faculty must be reported to the Title IX Co-Coordinators. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, contact Dr. Michell Temple (Garland Library 233; tel. 423-636-7402; counselingandadaservices@tusculum.edu). For more information regarding Title IX reporting options and links to available resources, please visit <https://web.tusculum.edu/titleix/>.

Inclement Weather Policy

When Tusculum University classes are cancelled due to inclement weather, students will receive direction on how to complete scheduled and assigned activities on the Moodle site. In the case of inclement weather and the University is not closed, students and faculty are to exercise good judgment concerning personal safety related to traveling. If the University does not close and students miss class, they are responsible for contacting the course instructor prior to the class. Tusculum University will post information regarding closings or changes in the schedule on the home page of the university website, as well as to the Tusculum Facebook page and the Twitter feed. All students are encouraged to sign up for the Pioneer Alert system by following the instructions at <http://www3.tusculum.edu/pr/inclement-weather-policy/>.

Student Veterans

For information on support provided by Tusculum to veterans, contact Dale Laney, Director of Veteran Services, 121 Garland Library, tel. 423-636-7371, or dlaney@tusculum.edu.

Section Information

Spring 2020

T/F, 9:30 – 11:45, Location TBD

Calendar

The calendar for this course is subject to change. Updates will be communicated through the Moodle announcement system.

#	Date	Topic
1	T, 1/14	Welcome, Defining Groups and Teams Handout
2	F, 1/17	Group and Team Principles and Practices
3	T, 1/21	Small Group Communication Theory
4	F, 1/24	Assessment Pretest Small Group Communication Theory, cont.
5	T, 1/28	Small Group Project Assignment, Group Formation
6	F, 1/31	Group Formation, cont.
7	T, 2/04	Preparing and Recording Meetings
8	F, 2/07	Guest Lecture
9	T, 2/11	Relating to Others in Groups and Teams
10	F, 2/14	Relating to Others in Groups and Teams, cont.
11	T, 2/18	Improving Group Climate
12	F, 2/21	Improving Group Climate, cont.
13	T, 2/25	Small Group Project Presentations
14	F, 2/28	Small Group Project Presentations
-	T, 3/03	<i>No Classes, Spring Break</i>
-	F, 3/06	<i>No Classes, Spring Break</i>
15	T, 3/10	Final Group Project Assignment, Enhancing Group and Team Communication Skills
16	F, 3/13	Enhancing Group and Team Communication Skills, cont.
17	T, 3/17	Community Group Observation Due , Class Discussion
18	F, 3/20	Guest Lecture
19	T, 3/24	Managing Conflict
20	F, 3/27	Managing Conflict, cont.
21	T, 3/31	Leadership
22	F, 4/03	Leadership, cont.
-	T, 4/07	<i>No Classes, Good Friday</i>
23	F, 4/10	Making Decisions and Solving Problems
24	T, 4/14	Making Decisions and Solving Problems, cont.
25	F, 4/17	Using Problem-Solving Strategies
26	T, 4/21	Using Problem-Solving Strategies, cont.
27	F, 4/24	Enhancing Creativity in Groups and Teams
28	T, 4/28	Final Group Project Due , Enhancing Creativity in Groups and Teams, cont.
29	F, 5/01	Course Evaluations, Make-up/Review

#	Date	Topic
30	T, 5/05	Assessment Post-test, Final Exam at 10:00 am
