

SMALL GROUP COMMUNICATION

CMST 2064-08, TTH 10:30-12:00, 111 Coates

Spring 2018

Dr. J. Renee Edwards

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 3:00-4:00 (except once per month with advance notice); also by appointment and whenever my door is open

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

CMST 2064 Small Group Communication. (3) Aspects of group leadership; group discussion and the problems of communication in human relations

In this course, we will study how to work effectively in groups by focusing on communication components: creating workable goals, the stages of group development, task and social maintenance roles, membership diversity, leadership, motivation, listening, conflict resolution, problem solving, critical thinking and argumentation, planning and conducting meetings, and issues of ethical behavior.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Engleberg, I. N., & Wynn, D. R. (2013). *Working in Groups: Communication Principles and Strategies* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.

COURSE GOALS

Upon completion of the course students will be able to:

- Identify and apply basic group communication concepts
- Demonstrate effective group interaction skills
- Identify and apply group communication strategies and skills that facilitate the achievement of group goals
- Identify and demonstrate essential group discussion strategies and skills
- Explain and apply the principles and practices of ethical communication
- Demonstrate creative problem solving and critical thinking skills

EVALUATION

Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Final exam	15%
Attendance, participation, assignments	15%
Group work: Problem-Solving Discussion	15%
Group work: Group Video and Group Presentation	15%

A+	97-100	A = Excellence; Distinguished mastery of course material, exhibited by exceptionally well-prepared completion of assignments, demonstrating superior effort, and understanding of principles
A	93-96.99	
A-	90-92.99	
B+	87-89.99	B = Noteworthiness; good mastery of course material, exhibited by above average preparation of assignments, demonstrating original application of course materials
B	83-86.99	
B-	80-82.99	
C+	77-79.99	C = Acceptability; Sufficient mastery of course material, exhibited by satisfactory completion of assignments, demonstrating basic preparation and correct techniques
C	73-76.99	
C-	70-72.99	
D+	67-69.99	D = Deficiency; Inadequate grasp of course materials, exhibited by incomplete preparation of assignments, significant tardiness, poor comprehension of material
D	63-66.99	
D-	60-62.99	
F	0-59.99	F = Unacceptability; Failure to complete the assigned work during the scheduled time or to meet the academic standards of university-level work

Adapted from Mr. Kent Filbel

Work submitted late (after its due date and time) will receive a 10% deduction per day.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Exams (55% of final grade)

Exams 1 and 2 (20% each) will be objective tests of your comprehension of material primarily from the textbook and lectures. The textbook includes tools for helping you with the material including the Chapter Outline at the beginning of each chapter and the Summary Study Guide at the end. The Final Exam (15%) may also include an essay section.

2. Attendance, participation, and other assignments (15%)

In addition to participating in exercises and activities, you will observe and evaluate the presentations of other groups. DO NOT use technology or engage in other activities during class time for personal reasons (unrelated to the class). Cell phones and other devices should be silent and not disruptive. For most activities, you will receive full credit if you are here and participate. Some assignments will be graded on a 0-100% scale.

Five points will be deducted from this grade for each unexcused absence. Please see the university guidelines, PS-22, for class attendance policies and valid reasons for absences. I understand that emergencies may occur on days when you have responsibilities in class. If this happens, please contact your group members and me as soon as possible so that we can discuss the situation.

You will also submit assignments for a few out-of-class activities including a social activity with your group and an analysis of a movie or TV program.

3. Group Work: Problem-Solving Discussion (15%)

You will be assigned to work with three or four classmates at the beginning of the semester and stay

with this group throughout the term. Your first major assignment will be to participate in a problem-solving discussion. You will individually (and collectively) do research on a significant and controversial issue with the goal of identifying a solution for it. You may choose from topics provided or, with approval, select a different topic. Each group will have a different topic. As a final step in the process, you and your teammates will hold a problem-solving discussion *in class*. Evaluation will be based on the quality of your group discussion, including how well you followed the Standard Agenda. Your grade will also be based on your individual contribution and peer evaluation.

4. Group Work: Group Video and Presentation (15%)

For this assignment, your group will develop and create an informative and entertaining video about a topic relevant to small group communication. In addition to the video, the group will submit a storyboard, a script, and a set of three multiple-choice questions based on information presented in the video. The group will also do a formal presentation in which each member talks for 3-5 minutes about some component of the group project. The talks should be informative, well-prepared, and rehearsed. One member will serve as a moderator, introducing each speaker and his or her topic. The moderator will also invite questions from the audience.

Evaluation of the overall group will be based on (1) how informative and interesting the video is (grades will *not* be based on the technical quality of the production unless the video was done haphazardly and at the last minute) and (2) the quality and cohesiveness of the group presentation. Individual grades will be adjusted according to individual contributions, peer evaluation, and quality of the individual's presentation.

RESPONSIBLE GROUP PARTICIPATION

As most students are aware, group projects can be challenging. One of the biggest problems occurs when members do not put similar time and effort into the outcome. Some members are highly engaged, even to the point that they take over the process. Other members may slack off. For the group work in this class, your grade will reflect the performance of the overall group as well as your individual effort. One of your responsibilities will be to provide feedback about individual contributions to the group project.

If your group includes members whose participation does not meet expectations, you should engage in open communication by dealing with each other tactfully and directly, either individually or as a group. After your conversation, if participation has not improved sufficiently, you should bring the problem to my attention. Group members whose work is significantly sub-standard may be counseled, disciplined, and/or removed from the group (thereby receiving a "0" on the assignment) (adapted from Dr. Amy Fannin).

MOODLE

Grades will be recorded in Moodle - you should check it regularly to make sure it is accurate. You must notify me of any problem within three days of grades being recorded. Missing grades will be counted as "zero."

ADA NOTICE

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, if you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may

require accommodations, please see a coordinator in the Office for Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of the accommodations as soon as possible (at least two weeks before implementation).

LSU COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

Louisiana State University is an interactive community in which students, faculty, and staff together strive to pursue truth, advance learning, and uphold the highest standards of performance in an academic and social environment. It is a community that fosters individual development and the creation of bonds that transcend the time spent within its gates. To demonstrate my pride in LSU, as a member of its community, I will:

- Accept responsibility for my actions;
- Hold myself and others to the highest standards of academic, personal, and social integrity;
- Practice justice, equality, and compassion in human relations;
- Respect the dignity of all persons and accept individual differences;
- Respect the environment and the rights and property of others and the University;
- Contribute positively to the life of the campus and surrounding community; and
- Use my LSU experience to be an active citizen in an international and interdependent world.

The continued success of LSU depends on the faithful commitment by each community member to these, our basic principles.

CMST 2064 TOPICS AND SCHEDULE (all dates tentative)

Date	Topic	For today
Jan 11	Introduction to the course and each other.	Review syllabus
Jan 16	Intro to small group communication	Read chapter 1
Jan 18	Group development	Read chapter 2
Jan 23	Group membership	Read chapter 3
Jan 25	Group leadership	Read chapter 5
Jan 30	Flex Day	
Feb 1	Review	
Feb 6	EXAM 1	
Feb 8	Conflict and cohesion	Read chapter 8
Feb 13	Happy Mardi Gras	
Feb 15	Problem solving in groups	Read chapter 9
Feb 20	Critical thinking and argumentation	Read chapter 10
Feb 22	Planning and conducting meetings	Read chapter 11
Feb 27	Review + group work	
Mar 1	EXAM 2	
Mar 6	Diversity in groups	Read chapter 4
Mar 8	Nonverbal communication	Read chapter 6

Mar 13	Problem-solving discussions	1 group
Mar 15	Problem-solving discussions	2 groups
Mar 20	Problem-solving discussions	2 groups
Mar 22	Listening in groups	Read chapter 7
Mar 27 & 29	Have a great spring break!	
Apr 3	Technology and virtual groups	Read chapter 12
Apr 5	Career Services Presentation TBA	
Apr 10	Principles of group presentations	Read Appendix
Apr 12	Group work	In class group time
Apr 17	Group presentations	1-2 groups
Apr 19	Group presentations	1-2 groups
Apr 24	Group presentations	1-2 groups
Apr 26	Review for final	
May 4, Friday	FINAL EXAM, 3:00-5:00	