

# Communication Studies 2064

## Small Group Communication

**Instructor:** Laura Oliver  
10:30-11:50AM  
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11:30AM T/Th  
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**Class Schedule:** T/Th

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### **Required Textbook**

Engleberg, I. N. and Wynn, D. R. (2017). *Working in groups* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. ***You do not need to purchase an access code. Older editions of the book are no prohibited, but you will still be required to have knowledge of the current edition.***

### **Course Objective:**

The purpose CMST 2064 is to help students come to a basic understanding of small group communication. We live, work, and play in groups; therefore, it is important to understand how to most effectively and efficiently communicate in these groups. Through a combination of lectures, activities and discussions, this class will help you become a more effective group member. In this class we discuss the following ideas:

1. Theories of small group communication
2. Group cohesion
3. Group dynamics and roles
4. Functions of groups
5. Problem-solving in groups
6. Conflict in groups
7. And much, much more!!

### **Student Requirements:**

**Attendance/Participation:** Attendance will be taken each class period by the instructor. For each unexcused absence, 1 point will be deducted from 25 points; the remaining points will comprise your participation grade. Points from in-class activities cannot be made up. If you miss a participation activity because of a university excused absence, you must provide documentation the NEXT day you are in class in order for those points to be excused.

- *Refrain from* talking on the cell phone, checking email, text message, or other similar behaviors; if you do so, you will be asked to leave class for the day.
- *Refrain from* sleeping in class; if you do so, you will be asked to leave class for the day.
- *Refrain from* surfing the web, reading, or other similar activities; if you do so, you will be asked to leave class for the day.

- Do observe general norms of common courtesy, including (but not limited to) listening to fellow students, respectfully discussing issues of disagreement, refraining from talking when others are talking, and coming to class when “impaired”. Failure to conduct yourself in a respectful manner will result in your being asked to leave class for the day.

**Notes:** Lectures will frequently include material that is not in the textbook. You will be expected to know this material for the exams and assignments. Lectures will not be provided online.

**Exams:** Two exams will be given during the semester, a mid-term exam and a final exam. The date of the mid-term exam is listed on the course schedule and the final exam date is listed in the course schedule book.

You **must** take your exam on time unless you are traveling with a university-sanctioned organization or have a major health or family emergency. Major emergencies include severe illness, hospitalization, or death in the family. Medical conditions such as a cold or a headache are not sufficient reasons to postpone an exam. The common excuses of having airline reservations prior to or work scheduled during an exam time are *not* acceptable grounds for taking an exam early. Please make appropriate arrangements now, while you still have months to plan.

If you need to reschedule an exam due to illness, you must receive my approval **24 hrs prior to** the time of the exam (unless, of course, you are medically incapacitated). Furthermore, for any rescheduled exam, you must provide written documentation of the authenticity of your excuse.

**Student honesty:** Plagiarism is a completely unethical and unacceptable practice that will not be tolerated on any level. It is an egregious offense to the owner of the material that has been plagiarized, as well as a dishonest form of communication to the audience of a plagiarized piece of work. The University’s Code of Student Conduct defines “academic misconduct” as including, but not limited to “cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give an unfair academic advantage to the student” (LSU’s Code of Student Conduct, section 5.1, found on Judicial Affairs webpage August 17, 2004).

The penalty for plagiarism or cheating may include failing the assignment, failing the course, or expulsion from the University. All acts of suspected plagiarism will be investigated and will be handled through the proper University channels.

**Make up and late policy:** I understand that emergencies occur on days when assignments are due and in these situations you should contact me immediately. Email me. Be sure to do this immediately so we can make new arrangements for turning in an assignment at a later time. **Additionally, you must present valid documentation (doctor’s note, etc.) the first day you return to class. If you are able to present a valid university excuse, your grade will not suffer. However, you will not be able to turn in an assignment late without a valid university excuse.**

Late work not associated with an *excused* absence will not be accepted.

**Emailed assignments will not accepted.** In case the case that you cannot turn in an assignment 24hrs **before** it is due, you have the opportunity to request an extension, once.

**Disabilities:**

The Americans with Disabilities Act and 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 of Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive the accommodations letters, **please meet with me as soon as possible to discuss the provisions of these accommodations.**

**Assignments:** Students will be randomly assigned to groups at the beginning of the semester in order to enhance the small-group learning experience. For assignments that call for group work, please complete with your **assigned** group, unless otherwise stated.

***Case studies:*** Two group papers will be assigned during the semester, one midway through and one at the end of the semester, asking you to apply what we have discussed up to that point in the semester. These papers must be done outside of class and **cannot** be made up if missed without an excused absence. In the case of an excused absence, a valid university excuse **must be presented on the student's first day** back in class in order to make up the paper. **25 points each**

***Social Media Audit:*** At the end of the semester, each group will present a video and live presentation in which they will attempt to sell an original service to the class about the status of a local and non-profit organization's social media. Several components will comprise the 125 points, and more details will be provided closer to the assignment, but each group member must participate in each section of the presentation and the class will vote on the most effective presentation. **125 points**

***Quizzes:*** Five 10-point quizzes will be given throughout the semester. These quizzes will generally be unannounced (read "pop" quiz) and will typically serve as review quizzes from lectures covered since the previous quiz. **Missed quizzes can not be made up. This includes quizzes that are missed because a student comes in late to class after a quiz has been taken up. Valid university excuses must be submitted the day the student returns to class in order to make up a missed quiz. 50 points**

***Social activity:*** The first assignment you will be given is a group assignment. You must meet with your group outside of class for a performative social activity that encourages communication. After the activity, each person will turn in a short paper detailing her or his experience during the activity, as well as any initial perceptions gained through the activity. **25 points**

***Group evaluation:*** Groups are inherently interdependent in nature; this means that the actions of one group member impacts the entire group. Much of the work done in this class will be done in your groups and will require the full participation of all the group members. Unfortunately, this does not always happen in groups, as many students have realized due to negative group experiences. One group member may have trouble delegating tasks, takes control, and does most of the work. Another group member may slack off, not contribute to group quizzes or group meetings, knowing that the others will pick up the slack. Other numerous problems may occur. All of these problems have negative impacts on groups. In an attempt to ensure that the semester grade adequately reflects the amount of group participation a student has done, I will ask each student to rate his/her fellow group members on a scale of 1-25 at the end of the semester, along

with an explanation for each rating. In order to prevent thoughtless assignment of grades, you are NOT permitted to rate each group member the same. You must assign a different point value--0 (weakest)-25 (strongest)--to each group member. No. Decimal points are not allowed. I will record the average grade for each group member as her/his group evaluation score. **25 points**

**Extra Credit:** *You and your group will have an opportunity to give back to the planet and hopefully create new relationships with mother nature. The objective here is to see if you can keep a plant alive for approximately 20 weeks. Seeing how much growth you can accumulate on a plant in a semester will be even better. You and your group will need to all agree on the project as it requires TLC and group work to make the growth happen. You will choose a plant (pothos, peace lily, or ivy) or succulent (cactus, jade plant, or string of pearls) to keep a semester. Each week you will upload a picture of your plant with any updates along the way. The more weeks you can keep your plant alive and thriving, the more points you can accumulate! Each week is worth 2 points. Additional extra credit opportunities to arise as the semester develops. Do not ask for extra credit.*

**Grading:**

A total of 500 points are available in this class. The following will explain the breakdown of the final grade:

1. Social activity	<b>25 points</b>
2. Case Study #1	<b>25 points</b>
3. Case Study #2	<b>25 points</b>
4. Social Media Audit	<b>125 points</b>
5. Exam 1	<b>100 points</b>
6. Exam 2	<b>75 points</b>
7. Group evaluation	<b>25 points</b>
8. Quizzes	<b>50 points</b>
9. Attendance/Participation	<b>50 points (1 point is deducted for each unexcused absence)</b>

**Grades will be posted on Moodle, however you are adults and should be responsible enough to keep track of your own grades. I do NOT round up grades.** Plus/Minus Grading scale (based on final percentages):

485-500—A+	(97-100%)
465-484—A	(93-96%)
450-464—A-	(90-92%)
435-449—B+	(87-89%)
415-434—B	(83-86%)
400-414—B-	(80-82%)
385-399—C+	(77-79%)
365-384—C	(73-76%)
350-364—C-	(70-72%)

335-349—D+	(67-69%)
315-334—D	(63-66%)
300-314—D-	(60-62%)
Below 299—F	(59% and below)