

CMST 2064 Small Group Communication Syllabus

Fall 2016

Instructor Information

Instructor
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Office Location & Hours
Coates 317; TTh 11:00-12:00
or by appointment

General Information

Description

CMST 2064 is a course designed to familiarize students with the aspects of group leadership, group discussion, and the problems of communication in human relations. Aiming to develop students' skills in decision-making, problem-solving, and leadership, this course sets the foundation for enhanced involvement in interpersonal and small group experiences, increasing effective communication and productivity. With the broad overview of both theory and practices in small group communication, CMST 2064 provides an opportunity for students to further develop both communication and leadership competence.

Expectations and Goals

CMST 2064 will enable students to demonstrate an understanding of historical, cultural, and philosophical complexity that supports sophisticated discourse.

As a result of this course, students should:

1. Understand the principles of human interaction; of group functions, dynamics, and roles. Attain problem-solving and conflict management skills.
2. Master factual knowledge of interpersonal communication.
3. Recognize communication patterns and their implications for social relations.
4. Develop a responsible attitude towards communication, both in personal and professional setting.
5. Understand and utilize the verbal and nonverbal elements essential for exemplary communication.

Course Requirements

Required Text

Engleberg, I. N., & Wynn, D. R. (2012). *Working in groups* (6th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Course Format

This course will combine a group work and class discussion format.

Assignments

Students will be graded on their work on:

- **Exams (350 points).** There will be three exams held during the regular semester for 100 points each and a non-cumulative final exam for 50 points, held during final exam week. The examinations will follow the chapters and class discussions, consisting of multiple choice questions. Exams will consist of two parts: a group part and an individual part. Each group will work on the first part of the exam together. Immediately after the group part of the exam, each student will complete an individual exam as well. Both exams will

cover the same material and be worth 50% of the total exam grade. Both scores will be added to get the final exam grade.

- **Group activities (450 points).** At the beginning of the semester, the class will be randomly assigned into groups of four. The groups will complete several activities throughout the semester:
 - **In-class case studies (50 points).** Two group case studies will be assigned during the semester for 25 points each, asking you to apply what we have discussed up to that point in the semester. These case studies must be done in class and cannot be made up if missed without an excused absence. Guidelines for case study reports will be provided on Moodle and in class.
 - **Group social activity (50 points).** The first group assignment will be to meet with your group outside of class for a social activity that encourages communication. After the activity, each person will turn in a short paper (maximum 2 pages double-spaced) detailing her or his experience during the activity, as well as any initial perceptions gained through the activity.
 - **Group presentation (300 points).** This is your semester project. Each group will invent/identify, plan, and execute a service project/original product that can be accomplished/marketed within the Baton Rouge area. The group will present the project/product to the class in a 15-20 minute presentation at the end of the semester. The goal is to dazzle your classmates and make them want to buy the product/take part in the service project. The group will be graded on:
 - **Group progress report 1 and 2 (50 points each).** Written progress reports will be due according to the dates in the class schedule. This should include an analysis of your project goals and objectives, a timeline to accomplish these goals, specific activities, resources needed, time required, person(s) responsible, group minutes and agendas.
 - **The presentation (150 points).** Several components will comprise the 150 points, such as the scope and the complexity of the project, how much time and effort it required, impact on others, quality of the presentation, etc. Grading grid will be available on Moodle.
 - **Class rating (50 points).** Each group will rate the presentation they watched on the scale of 0-10, for a maximum of 50 points from the class. Group rating will be discussed closer to presentation dates.
 - **Group evaluation (50 points).** Groups are inherently interdependent, which means that that the actions of one group member impact 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. 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 exams or group meetings, knowing that the others will pick up the slack. Numerous other problems may occur. To ensure that the semester grade adequately reflects the amount of student's group participation, each student will grade his/her fellow group members at the end of the semester, along with an explanation for each grade. Specific grading criteria and grid will be provided on Moodle. To prevent thoughtless assignment of grades, you are not permitted to rate each group member the same.
- **Intergenerational group assignment (100 points).** We are in groups in every aspect of our lives, and not just among our peers. For this assignment, for the period of 6 weeks from the beginning of the semester, you will be asked to select an electronic game and play it with two family members or close friends, one of whom has to be at least 50 years old. You can select any game, as long as it is something you can play together with the persons of your choice. You will be required to play 2-3 hours per week for 6 weeks, starting on September 5, and ending on October 10. More information on this assignment can be found on Moodle.
- **Attendance and class participation (100 points).** Communication is an inherently participative activity. Class attendance is expected, and participation in group class activities is a part of being a group member. You are expected to come to class prepared, having read the assigned chapter/material, and prepared to take part in the discussion. Three points will be given for each class. Roll sheets will be passed around to keep a record of attendance. It will be your responsibility to sign the roll sheet each day to mark your attendance.

Final grades will be determined based on scores earned in these assignments. All work must be done during the semester and not made up after the fact.

Course Assignment	Percentage of the Grade	Maximum Points
Attendance and participation	10%	100
Intergenerational group activity	10%	100
Group activities	45%	450
Exams	35%	350
Total	100%	1000 points

Grading Scale

A+	97-100
A	93-96.99
A-	90-92.99
B+	87-89.99
B	83-86.99
B-	80-82.99
C+	77-79.99
C	73-76.99
C-	70-72.99
D+	67-69.99
D	63-68.99
D-	60-62.99
F	59.99 and below

Please note, in accordance with the Federal Buckley Amendment, grades will **not** be discussed through email, over the phone, or in class. You **must** discuss a grade in person during office hours within two (2) weeks of receiving the grade. After two weeks, discussion and changes to grades will **not** be possible.

Classroom Decorum

As this class largely consists of in-class exercises and group discussion, please respect the work and the presentations of your classmates.

- Listen to the questions, arguments, and presentations. Show support. You will be required at one point or the other to provide feedback to your peers.
- Do not use your phone during the class. Turn your ringtone off, however lovely I am sure it is. No new Pokemon have been added to the game, catch repeats outside class time.
- Do not use personal computers, tablets, and similar devices during the class, unless you are doing group work. You will learn how to deal with a distracted audience, but you don't need to play the part of that audience for your classmates.
- Be on time. Do not disrupt your classmates' work with your late arrival.
- Controversial subjects may arise. Be open-minded and considerate of your classmates views and opinions.

Course Schedule (Tentative)

Week 1	Topic	For this class
Tue, 08/23	Class introductions	
Thu, 08/25	Syllabus, course overview	Read the syllabus
Week 2	Topic	For this class
Tue, 08/30	Group formation and semester assignments	Be there.
Thu, 09/01	Introduction to Group Communication	Read Chapter 1
Week 3	Topic	For this class
Tue, 09/06	Group Development	Start of intergenerational group assignment, surveys due on 09/06 Read Chapter 2
Thu, 09/08	Group Membership	Read Chapter 3
Week 4	Topic	For this class
Tue, 09/13	Group Diversity	Read Chapter 4
Thu, 09/15	In-class exercises and exam review	Group social activity report due
Week 5	Topic	For this class
Tue, 09/20	Exam I	Review chapters 1-4
Thu, 09/22	Group Leadership	Read Chapter 5
Week 6	Topic	For this class
Tue, 09/27	Verbal and Nonverbal Communication in Groups	Read Chapter 7
Thu, 09/29	In-class exercises	Group progress report 1 due
Week 7	Topic	For this class
Tue, 10/04	Planning and Conducting Meetings	Read Chapter 12
Thu, 10/06	<i>Fall break, no class</i>	
Week 8	Topic	For this class
Tue, 10/11	Listening in Groups	Read Chapter 8
Thu, 10/13	In-class exercises and midterm review	End of intergenerational group assignment, surveys due on 10/17

Week 9	Topic	For this class
Tue, 10/18	Exam II - Midterm exam	Review chapters 5, 7, 8, and 12
Thu, 10/20	Conflict and Cohesion in Groups	Read Chapter 9
Week 10	Topic	For this class
Tue, 10/25	Structured and Creative Problem Solving in Groups	Read Chapter 10 <i>Intergenerational group activity reflection paper due</i>
Thu, 10/27	Semester assignment group work day	<i>Group progress report 2 due</i>
Week 11	Topic	For this class
Tue, 11/01	Making Presentations in Groups	Read Chapter 13
Thu, 11/03	In-class activities and exam review	Submit speech outline
Week 12	Topic	For this class
Tue, 11/08	Exam III	Review chapters 9, 10, and 13
Thu, 11/10	<i>Out-of-class group work, no class</i>	
Week 13	Topic	For this class
Tue, 11/15	Group presentation (x2)	
Thu, 11/17	Group presentation (x2)	
Week 14	Topic	For this class
Tue, 11/22	Group presentation (x2)	
Thu, 11/24	<i>Thanksgiving holiday, no class</i>	
Week 15	Topic	For this class
Tue, 11/29	Group assignments review	<i>Group evaluations due</i>
Thu, 12/01	Final exam review	
Week 16	Topic	For this class
Wed, 12/07	Final exam, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.	

SUMMARY OF COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Use this sheet to keep record of your total points earned for this course:

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS	DUE DATE	POSSIBLE POINTS	POINTS EARNED
Exams (350 points/35%)			
Exam 1 (chapters 1-4)	09/20	100	_____
Exam 2 (chapters 5, 7, 8, 12)	10/18	100	_____
Exam 3 (chapters 9, 10, 13)	11/08	100	_____
Exam 4 (group work impact)	12/07	50	_____
Group activities (450 points/45%)			
Social activity	09/15	50	_____
In-class case study 1	__/__	25	_____
In-class case study 2	__/__	25	_____
Group evaluation	11/29	50	_____
Group presentation			
Group progress report 1	09/29	50	_____
Group progress report 2	10/27	50	_____
The presentation	__/__	150	_____
Class rating	__/__	50	_____
Other assignments (200 points/20%)			
Intergenerational group activity	10/25	100	_____
Attendance and class participation	12/01	100	_____
Total points		1000	_____

Additional Information and Resources

Attendance and Participation

Attendance will be taken every class. Your attendance at each class meeting is expected. You are expected to attend all classes just as you would be expected to go to work every day if this was any other job. Your class participation grade will be determined based on in-class discussion participation, assignments/exercises, and analysis of in-class presentations throughout the semester.

Plagiarism

There will be no tolerance for plagiarism. You are to assume that all assignments in this course are individual assignments unless explicit instructions are provided for a group project. Any student found to have presented material not their own (either downloaded from the internet or written by another student) will immediately be reported to the Dean of Students. The Internet has made plagiarism very easy and very tempting. Hundreds of sites offer papers, research, writing, and editing. The ease with which such material is available over the Internet does not lessen the seriousness of claiming material from the Internet as your own. See the LSU policies on plagiarism here:

<http://www.lib.lsu.edu/instruction/plagiarism2.html>.

Extra Credit

No extra credit assignments will be allowed.

Missed In-Class Assignments and Exams

If you know that you will miss a scheduled exam due to a university-approved absence, please speak to me before the exam date so we can make appropriate arrangements. If you have an excused absence, accompanied by a note describing the date a reason of your absence, you can make up a missed exam within one week of its date. No make-ups will be allowed after this time and zero (0) points will be given for that assignment.

A brief make-up period will be allowed for exams missed due to an unexcused absence, with every day between the original exam date and the make-up date carrying a 10% penalty to the exam grade.

No make-ups will be allowed for missed deadlines on out-of-class assignments.

Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitations Act of 1973 states: "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 can be arranged." After you receive the accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.

Do you have a major?

Business leaders and other professionals recognize the importance of developing communication skills and analysis. Alan Greenspan, for example, stated, "To succeed, you will soon learn, as I did, the importance of a solid foundation in the basics of education - literacy, both verbal and numerical, and communication skills." We hope this course contributes to your success.

To learn more about communication, you may want to major or minor in the Department of Communication Studies. The program explores how people sustain and change, experience, and make sense of the world through symbolic action. Students develop conceptual skills to analyze written, oral, and visual messages. Students gain practical experience in such areas such as public speaking, group decision-making, performance, and film. Such skills are elemental to careers in business, government, law, social services, and the arts.

A major in Communication Studies requires 36 hours including 12 hours of core classes and 12 hours at the 3000 or 4000 level. A minor requires 15 hours with one core class and 6 hours at the 3000 level or above.

More information is available at www.lsu.edu/cmst or by contacting our undergraduate advisor Mr. Kent Filbel (kfilli@lsu.edu), whose hours are posted at his office, 135 Coates Hall.