

# CMST 2064: Small Group Communication

Department of Communication Studies  
Louisiana State University

|             |                       |            |                          |
|-------------|-----------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| Instructor: | Evan Mitchell Schares | Sections:  | 6 & 9                    |
| Email       | eschar4@lsu.edu       | Times:     | TTH at 7:30 & 1:30       |
| Office      | Coates 319            | Locations: | 204 Coates & 119 Tureaud |
| Hours       | TTH 9:00 – 11:00 AM   |            |                          |

## Course Catalogue Description

Aspects of group leadership; group discussion and the problems in human relations.

## Additional Description

In this course we study, as the short catalogue description alludes, problems and phenomena within group communication processes. Theoretically, we survey the ways people form groups through the inclusion of some and expulsion of others. We approach leadership critically and reimagine its possibilities. Further, we explore the assemblages of gender, sexuality, and race as both sources of oppression and liberation. Practically, we study group development, formation, problem solving, and critical thinking.

## Required Texts

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

Additional readings posted on Moodle.

## Assignments & Grading Scale

|                         |    |     |             |
|-------------------------|----|-----|-------------|
| Exam I                  | 10 | A+  | 96.9 – 100  |
| Exam II                 | 10 | A   | 93.0 – 96.9 |
| Teaching Portfolio [2x] | 20 | A-  | 90.0 – 92.9 |
| Discussion              | 20 | B + | 87.0 – 82.9 |
| Group Project           | 40 | B   | 83.0 – 86.9 |

Assignments are worth a total of 100 points. However, for each assignment you can earn fractions of points. So think of the semester out of 1,000 or 10,000 points. You cannot pass the course if you do not complete any of the teaching portfolios or the group project.

|     |             |
|-----|-------------|
| B - | 80.0 – 82.9 |
| C + | 77.0 – 79.9 |
| C   | 73.0 – 76.9 |
| C - | 70.0 – 72.9 |
| D + | 67.0 – 69.9 |
| D   | 63.0 – 66.9 |
| D - | 60.0 – 62.9 |
| F   | 0 – 59.9    |

## Assignment Descriptions

**Teaching Portfolio.** Twice in the semester, your group will facilitate a teaching lesson on a group communication theory. This will require you to familiarize yourself richly with primary sources. You must at a minimum:

- 1) Situate the theory and the theorist in history
- 2) Map its antecedent and subsequent theories
- 3) Clearly explain the theory's tenets,
- 4) Apply the theory in real-life situations,
- 5) Explain the theory's traction (i.e., other scholars who have taken and used the theory)
- 6) Provide handouts to the class of your theory.
- 7) End with questions for the audience to demonstrate an understanding of the respective theory

This is not an outline of your presentation but rather a tentative list of things to be covered in your lesson. Each teaching demonstration will be approx. 30-35 minutes long. These presentations should be of good quality, rehearsed with strong evidence of preparation. Along with a presentation outline, a bibliography must also be turned 1 week prior to your presentation in with at least 10 academic sources.

| <u>Theory</u>                 | <u>Date</u>  | <u>Group</u> |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Interpersonal Needs Theory | September 8  | _____        |
| 2. Critical Race Theory       | September 22 | _____        |
| 3. Muted Group Theory         | September 27 | _____        |
| 4. Groupthink                 | October 18   | _____        |
| 5. Spiral of Silence          | November 1   | _____        |
| 6. Standpoint Theory          | November 15  | _____        |

**Discussion.** Discussion is an integral component on the course, as we will learn collectively. To appropriately and effectively contribute in class you must have read the assigned readings. This may include rereading any material with which you are unfamiliar and consulting outside readings as necessary. I will not review each reading in class. Instead, in class we will analyze and apply the readings. There is no other way to earn discussion points. Further, if you are constantly on your phone, inattentive, or falling asleep, you are unable to earn discussion points and may be counted as absent. I track five components of discussion: argumentation, synthesize, readings, hypothesis, and questions. <sup>1</sup>

**Group Project.** In the second week, the class will be broken up into groups. Each group, after securing my approval, will engage in a semester-long project to better some aspect of either the LSU or the Baton Rouge community. This could take many forms and we will brainstorm and workshop frequently.

Each group will consist of approximately eight members. In each group, there will be one *Group Coordinator & Liaison*. The GCL ensures effective execution of the semester-long project (this is not a position of absolute authority over the group). All of the GCLs will meet outside of class approximately once a month to update me and the other GCLs of their group's progress. Professional and stylized update reports will be turned in at each meeting. In each group, there will be two subgroups (*Events & Communications*) composed of the rest of the group. Both Events and Communications will be headed by a Lead. For efforts expected in the group project, please see the section "Manage Your Time."

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to my former teacher and advisor Dr. Catherine Helen Palczewski at the University of Northern Iowa for her discussion criteria.

## Course Policies

### Attendance & Work Expectations

Attendance is expected and is the responsibility of the student. I track attendance daily. Once class has begun and you are not present, you are absent. Even when you are absent you are still responsible for the course content. You are allowed two absences/late arrivals with no questions asked. After you exhaust two (which is a week of class), each additional absence/tardy will result in a 1/3 reduction of your grade. For example, if you are absent three times (which is a week and a half of coursework) your final grade will go from an A- to a B+. *Unless it is university excused, there is no need to email me about your absences or late arrivals* . Please refer to the LSU policy handbook for university-excused absences.

Further, though your attendance is expected, your attendance does not constitute presence. Students who are constantly late, on their cell phones, or who are falling asleep are neither engaged nor present and, as a result, not able to earn discussion points.

Even if students have a reasonable cause to miss class, they are still responsible for demonstrating achievement of the learning goals and other course content and it is their responsibility to communicate any absences or other problems in a timely manner. In other words, you must assume responsibility for relaying any information that may hinder your participation/success in class **BEFORE HAND**.

### Presentation of Work

Scheduled class time for presentations and other course activities ought to be considered sacrosanct and is nonnegotiable. As a whole, I will not accept late work/exams/presentations.

There is zero tolerance for disruptions during speeches. A disruption is any action that distracts the audience's attention or interferes with the delivery of a speech. Examples include entering the room after a speech has begun, cell phone ringing, whispering, etc. The penalty for disrupting someone speech will result in a zero for you on that particular assignment.

### Grade Appeals

Students are welcome to discuss grade appeals with me on any assignment or test if you believe it to be graded incorrectly. However, you must submit your appeal in writing during the class period immediately following the return of the graded assignment. In the appeal, you must

1. Identify which assignment or test question you are appealing.
2. Justify why your answer or performance was correct or worthy of a higher grade and quantify the amount sought. To make your case compelling, you must cite course readings or lecture notes.
3. If applicable, include the original test or assignment.

### Technology Policy

The goal of all course policies is to help create a successful course experience for you as the student; this includes your ability to learn course material and to do so in an effective classroom environment. Generally, cell phones and other electronics are not to be used. Students who use these inappropriately will be considered absent. However, there will be times throughout the course where computers and other electronics may be used when explicitly stated such as for in-class workshops and other activities. Please see me if you have any questions or concerns.

## Manage Your Time

Success in a three-unit college course is based on the expectation that students will spend, on average, three hours per week in class and 6 hours per week outside of class reading, writing, preparing, studying, rehearsing, discussing and otherwise engaging with course materials. If you find that you are spending significantly more time than this on the course, please come and see me as early as possible to discuss better study strategies. If you choose to spend significantly less time than this on the course, please adjust your expectations for your final grade accordingly.

## LSU Code of Student Conduct & Plagiarism

To demonstrate my pride in LSU, as a member of its community, I will: (1) accept responsibility for my actions; (2) hold myself and others to the highest standards of academic, personal, and social integrity; (3) practice justice, equality, and compassion in human relations; (4) respect the dignity of all persons and accept individual differences; (5) respect the environment and the rights and property of others and the University; (6) contribute positively to the life of the campus and surrounding community; and (7) use my LSU experience to be an active citizen in an international and interdependent world.

Any student found to have turned in material not their own (either downloaded from the internet or written by another student) in part or in whole will immediately be reported to the Dean of Students.

## Disability Accommodation

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 the Office of Disability Services (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations may be arranged. If you do have accommodations and receive a letter from ODS it is, of course, up to you to disclose them to me. However, per ODS policy, *“accommodations do not apply retroactively. Additionally, accommodation letters must be given to the instructor at least three business days prior to receiving accommodations.”*

## TITLE IX & Sexual Misconduct Policy

In accordance with Title IX and other applicable law, Louisiana State University (“LSU”) is committed to providing a learning, working, and living environment that promotes integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free of discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual misconduct which includes sex discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and retaliation. LSU prohibits sex discrimination and sexual misconduct. This policy applies to all persons without regard to sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression.

Sex discrimination and sexual misconduct violate an individual’s fundamental rights and personal dignity. LSU considers sex discrimination and sexual misconduct in all of its forms to be serious offenses. This policy has been developed to reaffirm these principles and to provide recourse for individuals whose rights have been violated.

## Tentative Course Schedule

I will post any changes to the course on Moodle or will I will announce them in class. If I announce a change in class and you are absent, you are still responsible for any changes.

Week 1  
Introductions & Thinking Critically

| Day            | Readings                | Assignment | Key Terms  | Discussion Prompts   |
|----------------|-------------------------|------------|--|--|
| Tuesday, 8/23  | Chapter 1               |            | Group communication, interaction, interdependence, types of groups, advantages & disadvantages of groups, virtual groups, theory, group dialectics                 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take stock of all your group affiliations and memberships.</li> <li>2. If group work is so common and yet so often can be unproductive, why work in groups?</li> <li>3. Pick 3 group dialectics and reflect on a time you experienced dissonance.</li> </ol>       |
| Thursday, 8/25 | Chapter 10 & bell hooks |            | Critical thinking, argumentation, structuring arguments, supporting arguments, refuting arguments, talking back, dialogue, coming to voice, speaking as political, | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do social media affect public argument?</li> <li>2. What role does argument play within group work?</li> <li>3. For hooks, how is talking back a political and revolutionary act?</li> <li>4. How does one's social location affect their argument?</li> </ol> |

Week 2  
Who's in & Who's out?

| Day           | Readings   | Assignment | Key Terms   | Discussion Prompts  |
|---------------|------------|------------|---|---|
| Tuesday, 8/30 | Chapter 2  |            | Tuckman's Group Development Stages, socialization, group goals, hidden agendas, norms, (non)conformity, motivation, exclusion         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do norms operate within group settings?</li> <li>2. How does tension motivate and enervate group processes?</li> <li>3. The book states exclusion is a norm within group formation. What role does exclusion play?</li> </ol> |
| Thursday, 9/1 | Palczewski |            | Citizenship as group politics, Expulsion/exclusion, abjection, privilege, body argument, constitutive outside, appeals to citizenship | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In what ways did the Prison Special highlight women's civic agency and civic vulnerability?</li> <li>2. In this case, who was excluded and how?</li> <li>3. How do we heal and move forward?</li> </ol>                           |

Week 3  
Group Theories & Memberships

| Day           | Readings        | Assignment/Activity               | Key Terms   | Discussion Prompts   |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Tuesday, 9/6  | West & Turner 3 |                                   | Theory, levels of generality, different approaches to knowing (positivistic, interpretive, critical), ontology, epistemology, axiology, | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide 3 examples of ways you think like a theorist in your daily life/</li> <li>2. Do you see communication as lawlike or rule governed? Explain.</li> <li>3. What is the difference between inductive and deductive logic?</li> <li>4. How do you characterize your own thinking? (empirical, critical, etc.?)</li> </ol> |
| Thursday, 9/8 | Chapter 3       | <b>TP 1: Interpersonal Needs.</b> | Interpersonal Needs Theory (FIRO), team-role theory, communication apprehension, assertiveness/passivity                                | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take stock of your communication for a day. Can you think of a type of communication that does not fall under the FIRO theory?</li> <li>2. In what ways is assertive/passivity gendered or sexed?</li> <li>3. How rigid/fixed/flexible are group roles?</li> </ol>   |

New Week 4  
Diversities

| Day         | Readings  | Assignment/Activity | Key Terms  | Discussion Prompts   |
|-------------|-----------|---------------------|--|--|
| Tues, 9/13  | Chapter 4 |                     | Types of cultures, types of diversities, ethnocentrism, stereotype, prejudice, discrimination, individualism/collectivism, time cycles, gender/generational/religious identities, muted group theory | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are there parts of your identity that contradict one another? How do you navigate this?</li> <li>2. Give at least three reasons it is important to you personally to study communication/diversity.</li> <li>3. When have you talked with someone so incredibly different from you? What does it mean if you cannot think of any?</li> </ol> |
| Thurs, 9/15 |           | <b>Workshop I</b>   |  |  |

New Week 5  
Listening & Leadership

| Day        | Readings  | Assignment/Activity | Key Terms                                    | Discussion Prompts                              |
|------------|-----------|---------------------|--|---|
| Tues, 9/20 | Chapter 7 |                     | Listening, types of listening, strategies of | Why is the study and understanding of listening |

|             |                              |                                   |   |   |
|-------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
|             |                              |                                   | effective listening   | important in a field of communication?<br><br>2. Why do we think it more difficult to listen to those we perceive as different from us?   |
| Thurs, 9/22 | Chapter 5 & Cramner OR Logan | <b>TP 2: Critical Race Theory</b> | Leadership, types of leaders, leadership and power, 5m model of leadership effectiveness, diversity and leadership, critical race theory, race, intercultural communication, White leader prototype | 1. What is leadership? What else may leadership look like?<br><br>2. In what ways do stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination operate to control who has access to leadership? |

Week 6  
Verbals & Nonverbals as Group Forming

| Day           | Readings   | Assignment/Activity             | Key Terms   | Discussion Prompts  |
|---------------|--|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Tuesday, 9/27 | Chapter 6 (124 – 132) & Defrancisco & Palczewski | <b>TP 3: Muted Group Theory</b> | “I,” “you,” and “we” language, challenging language, offensive language, language as violence, muted group theory, PUD, resignification, talking back                   | 1. Why is recognizing both the liberatory and oppressive potential of language important?<br><br>2. What is the ethical debate of speaking for others? How can we? Should we? Do you agree or disagree?   |
| Thursday 9/29 | Chapter 6 (133 – 144) & Brouwer                  |                                 | Nonverbal communication, appearance, facial/vocal/physical expressions, gendered and cultural factors, tattoo remembering, progenic tattoo, postmemory, resignification | 1. What is your code for touching others while talking? How does your background factor in?<br><br>2. What is an inappropriate form of nonverbal communication?<br><br>3. Have these tattoos been resignified?<br><br>4. Could anyone get them? Should anyone get them? |

Week 7  
Prep & Rest

| Day            | Readings     | Assignment/Activity | Key Terms | Discussion Prompts |
|----------------|--------------|---------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Tuesday, 10/4  |              | <b>Workshop II</b>  |           |                    |
| Thursday, 10/6 | Fall holiday |                     |           |                    |

Week 8  
Good Luck!

| Day      | Readings | Assignment/Activity | Key Terms | Discussion Prompts |
|----------|----------|---------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Tuesday, |          | Exam Review         |           |                    |

|                    |  |        |  |
|--------------------|--|--------|--|
| 10/11              |  |        |  |
| Thursday,<br>10/13 |  | Exam I |  |

Week 9  
Groupthink & Conflict

| Day          | Readings                | Assignment/Activity      | Key Terms  | Discussion Prompts  |
|--------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| Tues, 10/18  | West & Turner<br>14     | <b>TP 4: Group Think</b> | Groupthink, assumptions of the theory, antecedents conditions of groupthink, symptoms of groupthink, ways to prevent group think                                 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Document at least 3 instances where you engaged in group work with too much cohesiveness.</li> <li>2. What are the consequences of group think?</li> <li>3. How can we prevent it?</li> </ol> |
| Thurs, 10/20 | Chapter 8 &<br>Halstead |                          | Types of conflict, negotiation, mediation, conflict and diversity, group cohesion, group think, Black lives vs. All lives Matter, the problem of color blindness | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do biases and prejudices affect group conflict and cohesion?</li> <li>2. What kind of conflict exists in Black vs. All Lives? How can we listen to heal?</li> </ol>                       |

Week 10  
Making it Work: Applied Communication

| Day          | Readings   | Assignment/Activity | Key Terms   | Discussion Prompts  |
|--------------|------------|---------------------|---|---|
| Tues, 10/25  | Chapter 9  |                     | Decision making vs. problem solving, statements of fact, policy, value, and conjecture, agenda of procedures, creativity, brainstorming, types of techniques, | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are some of the realities in decision making? Think of 3 specific examples based on your own experience.</li> <li>2. How can creativity be used in group problem solving?</li> </ol> |
| Thurs, 10/27 | Chapter 11 |                     | Types of meetings, dealing with disruptive behaviors,   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If meetings are so common and yet so often to be unproductive, why meet?</li> <li>2. How do you manage difficult participants during a meeting?</li> </ol>                                |

Week 11

| Day        | Readings            | Assignment/Activity            | Key Terms  | Discussion Prompts  |
|------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Tues, 11/1 | West & Turner<br>24 | <b>TP 5: Spiral of Silence</b> | Publics, opinions, assumptions of the theory, consonance, the hard core, | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When have you felt embarrassed about offering your own opinion? What motivated your decision to speak or remain silent?</li> <li>2. When have you been the hard-core minority? How did you behave?</li> </ol> |



|             |  |                     |  |  |
|-------------|--|---------------------|--|--|
|             |  |                     |  | 3. Comment on the influence of the Internet on public opinion. |
| Thurs, 11/3 |  | <b>Workshop III</b> |  |  |

Week 12  
Group Project Workshops - NCA

| Day          | Readings | Assignment/Activity | Key Terms | Discussion Prompts |
|--------------|----------|---------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Tues, 11/8   |          | <b>Workshop IV</b>  |           |                    |
| Thurs, 11/10 |          | <b>Workshop V</b>   |           |                    |

Week 13

| Day          | Readings         | Assignment/Activity            | Key Terms   | Discussion Prompts  |
|--------------|------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Tues, 11/15  | West & Turner 29 | <b>TP 6: Standpoint Theory</b> | Feminism, standpoints, assumptions, situated knowledges, essentialism | Do you believe all standpoints are partial?<br><br>Think of 3 examples of situated knowledge in specific contexts.<br><br>What are the limits of difference that ground a standpoint? |
| Thurs, 11/17 | TBD              |                                |   |   |

Week 14

| Day          | Readings     | Assignment/Activity | Key Terms | Discussion Prompts |
|--------------|--------------|---------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Tues, 11/22  |              | <b>Workshop VI</b>  |           |                    |
| Thurs, 11/24 | Thanksgiving |                     |           |                    |

Week 15  
Good Luck!

| Day         | Readings | Assignment/Activity | Key Terms | Discussion Prompts |
|-------------|----------|---------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Tues, 11/29 |          | Exam Review         |           |                    |
| Thurs, 12/1 |          | Exam II             |           |                    |

Week 16  
Presentations of Group Project

| Day        | Readings | Assignment/Activity       | Key Terms | Discussion Prompts |
|------------|----------|---------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Tues, 12/6 |          | Sec 9: Dec 6, 10:00 – 12  |           |                    |
| Wed, 12/7  |          | Sec 6: Dec 7, 7:30 – 9:30 |           |                    |

### Additional Readings

- Brouwer, D. C., & Horwitz, L. D. (2015). The Cultural Politics of Progenic Auschwitz Tattoos: 157622, A-15510, 4559, . . . . *Quarterly Journal Of Speech, 101*(3), 534-558.
- Cranmer, G. A., & Harris, T. M. (2015). "White-Side, Strong-Side": A Critical Examination of Race and Leadership in Remember the Titans. *Howard Journal of Communications, 26*(2), 153-171.
- Halstead, J. (2016, July 25). The Real Reason White People Say "All Lives Matter" [Web log post].
- Logan, N. (2011). The White Leader Prototype: A Critical Analysis of Race in Public Relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 23*(4), 442-457.
- Palczewski, C. H. (2016). The 1919 Prison Special: Constituting white women's citizenship. *Quarterly Journal Of Speech, 102*(2), 107-132.
- West, R. L., & Turner, L. H. (2007). *Introducing communication theory: Analysis and application*. Boston: McGraw-Hill. (Select chapters)