

Small Group Communication

CMST 2064

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Required Texts:

Engleberg, I.N. and Wynn, D.R. (2013). *Working in Groups, 6th Edition*. Pearson.

Various readings and videos to be posted on Moodle

Course Goals:

In this course, we will explore how we, as human beings, create socially significant messages which help us shape our identity, persuade others to take action, and shed light on the value systems of our culture. We will learn how individuals create and use messages to generate common meaning with others, to facilitate cooperative action, to perform social and cultural roles, and to reinforce or alter prevailing attitudes in our society.

This course will provide us with a variety of lenses through which to view and examine the communication process. At the end of the semester, we should have a richer understanding of the similarities and differences between the areas of communication and have acquired practical knowledge of the communication process itself.

Assignments:

The course is divided in to five units, each of which revolves around a particular section of your textbook:

- 1) Defining Small Group Communication
- 2) Group Development
- 3) Group Functioning
- 4) Groups and Conflict
- 5) Groups in the Future

Absences/Late Work:

If you're going to miss a major assignment, let me know ahead of time. To make up a missed assignment for full credit, you will need to provide documentation of the emergency that kept you away from class. This can be a doctor's note, an obituary, a letter from a coach, etc. If you miss an assignment for a non-emergency reason (like sleeping through it), come talk to me and we'll discuss making it up for a maximum grade of a C. Life happens, after all, but not without some consequences. In order to make up an assignment after an unexcused absence, you must be in overall good standing in the course. You must also present an outline proving that you were, in fact, ready to make your presentation that day, and you must schedule your make-up assignment within one week of missing class.

I will not accept late written work after the day it is due. If you miss turning an assignment in during the class period you're supposed to have it ready, you can turn in (paper copies only) by 5pm that day for increasingly reduced credit. After 5pm, work will no longer be accepted without proof of extenuating circumstances (see above).

Academic Misconduct:

Don't plagiarize. Any student found to have turned in material not their own (either downloaded from the Internet or written by another student) will immediately be reported to the Dean of Students. You can find the official LSU policies on plagiarism here: <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/instruction/plagiarism2.html>. Your work would be considered plagiarism in part or entirely if it involves any of the following:

- Submitting work that was written by someone other than you (an online source, a friend, etc.).
- Submitting work in which you use the ideas, metaphors or reasoning style of another, but do not cite that source and/or place that source in your list of references. Simply rewording a sentence does not make work your own.
- Submitting work in which you "cut and paste" or use the exact words of a source and you do not put the words within quotation marks, use footnotes or in-text citations, and place the source in your list of references.
- Submitting work that you have written together with a friend as if it was solely your own intellectual property.
- Submitting work for that you wrote verbatim for different course.

Students with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation 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.

Grading:

The class is based on accumulation of up to 1,000 points rather than on any kind of weird system of weighted percentages. Think of each assignment like getting achievements in a video game. Over time, you'll earn the appropriate number of achievements to get to your goal grade. (Or not, I suppose. And in this game you don't get to repeat levels until you beat the boss. It's a one-shot deal.) Here, so you're aware, are the point amounts for each of your graded assignments.

Quizzes (5) – 100 points

Video Responses (5) – 50 points

Analysis Essays (2) – 400 points

Midterm Debate – 200 points

Final Essay – 250 points

Week 1		Homework
8-Jun	Course Intro/Activity	Read E&W Ch. 1
9-Jun	Defining Group Communication	Watch/Respond to "A Common Person's Guide to Bronies" [Moodle]
10-Jun	Balance	Read <i>Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl</i> Ch. 7.11.42-11.20.1942 [Moodle]
11-Jun	Advantages/Disadvantages of Groups	Read De Dreu, "Workplace Conflict" [Moodle]
12-Jun	Ethics (Quiz)	Watch/Respond to "14 Children and Pregnant Again!" [Moodle]
Week 2		
15-Jun	Group Dynamics	Read E&W Ch. 2
16-Jun	Group Development	Watch/Respond to "Five Mafia Families" [Moodle]
17-Jun	Group Evolution	Read E&W Ch. 3
18-Jun	Group Membership	Read E&W Ch. 4
19-Jun	Diversity in Groups (Quiz)	Read E&W Ch. 5
Week 3		
22-Jun	Group Leadership	Read Goodger, "Ritual Solidarity and Sport" [Moodle]
23-Jun	Solidarity	Read Elias & Dunning, "Dynamics of Football" [Moodle]
24-Jun	Planning Day	Continue Planning
25-Jun	Planning Day	Continue Planning
26-Jun	Track and Field Day	Write Track & Field Analysis; Read E&W Ch. 6
Week 4		
29-Jun	Verbal & Nonverbal Communication in Groups	Read E&W Ch. 7
30-Jun	Listening in Groups	Read E&W Ch. 10
1-Jul	Critical Thinking & Argument in Groups (Quiz)	Read Parliamentary Debate Assignment and Resolution [Moodle]
2-Jul	Parliamentary Debate Rules	Read Heinrichs Ch. 21 [Moodle]
3-Jul	NO CLASS	
Week 5		
6-Jul	Caucus	Read Heinrichs Ch. 22
7-Jul	Caucus	Debate Research
8-Jul	Parliamentary Debate	Debate Research
9-Jul	Parliamentary Debate	Negotiate
10-Jul	Negotiation and Consensus	Read Cheney, "The Rhetoric of Identification" [Moodle]
Week 6		
13-Jul	Identification	Read E&W Ch. 8
14-Jul	Conflict & Cohesion	Read E&W Ch. 9
15-Jul	Problem-Solving	Watch/Respond to "Sesame Street: Sibling" / "Conflict" / "Empathy" [Moodle]
16-Jul	Family Conflict	Read MacLean Chs. 2&3 [Moodle]
17-Jul	Groups in Crisis (Quiz)	Read MacLean Chs. 4, 5, & 6 [Moodle]
Week 7		
20-Jul	Groups in Crisis	Watch/Respond to "Night of the Living Dead" OR "Escape! Breakout from Alcatraz" [Moodle]
21-Jul	Groups in Action	Prepare for Zombie Party
22-Jul	Zombies!	

23-Jul	Zombies!	
24-Jul	Zombies!	Write Zombie Response; Read E&W Ch. 12
Week 8	Technocracy	
27-Jul	Technology and Virtual Groups	Join/Explore an Online Community
28-Jul	Participating in Online Communities	Final Essay
30-Jul	Finals	
31-Jul	Finals	
1-Aug	Semester is Over!	

Video Response Form

To be completed for each of the videos you are assigned as homework throughout the course

In one brief paragraph, summarize the plot of what you saw:

In another brief paragraph, describe an argument that the video makes about small group communication.
Give an example from what you saw that supports your claim.

Essay: Track and Field Response

Length: 2-3 pages, double-spaced, excluding References

Font: Times New Roman

Header: Your name, the course name and number, and the assignment name, single-spaced

Citation Style: APA

Minimum Number of Distinct Citations: 3

This essay asks you to reflect on your experience planning our class's Track & Field event.

You should spend approximately one page discussing the planning process and approximately one page discussing the actual execution of the event.

Please also include an introduction and a conclusion, and otherwise make sure your grammar and spelling are commensurate with a formal essay.

Include examples of the following phenomena in your analysis: Group Dynamics, Group Development, Group Evolution, Group Membership, Diversity in Groups, Group Leadership, and Solidarity. Include examples from the events that illustrate these theories as you discuss them.

Be sure to include APA-format in-text citations of at least three different credible sources as you write (they can be drawn from our in-class readings from this unit or your own research), as well as a References page at the end of the essay.

Parliamentary Debate Assignment

The parliamentary debate assignment mimics the styles of argumentation found in governing bodies, including the U.S. Congress, British Parliament, as well as many workplaces and political organizations.

While different in style from the value and proposal debates, the parliamentary style will require you to draw on all the skills you have developed up to this point in the semester. You must also do so with far less individual speaking time and in cooperation with your “party.”

The parliamentary debate will center around a bill. The class will be broken into two parties, one in favor of the bill (Government Party) and the other against (Opposition Party).

During the “Parliamentary Caucuses,” both groups will collaborate and develop their strategy for supporting their position. This should involve doing research, assigning roles, anticipating opposition arguments, and anything else that will help your side prevail.

- **Prime Minister Speech:** The Government Party is responsible for electing/appointing their party leader. This opening speech should articulate the general argument in favor of the bill. *It should last no longer than four minutes.*
- **Opposition Leader Speech:** The Opposition Party must also elect/appoint a leader. This speech should articulate the general argument against the bill. *It should last no longer than four minutes.*
- **Several statements** will follow these opening speeches, starting with the Government Party and alternating between teams from that point forward. *These speeches should last no longer than two minutes.*
- **Preparation Time:** There will be an intermission of *five minutes* in length so that the teams may work together on their leaders’ final responses.
- **Opposition Rebuttal:** Once all party members have had their say, the leader of the Opposition Party will return to the platform to deliver a final refutation of the bill. *This speech should last no longer than three minutes.*
- **Prime Minister Rebuttal:** The leader of the Government Party gets the last word and *can speak for no longer than three minutes.*

Here are some other important parts of the process:

- Each side gets a grand total of *ten minutes of preparation time* to use however they see fit.
- A member of one party may ask a speaking member of the opposing party a question during their speech. The speaker, however, has the option of refusing to recognize the questioner. Answering questions does count against speech time.

Essay: Zombie Crisis Response

Length: 2-3 pages, double-spaced, excluding References

Font: Times New Roman

Header: Your name, the course name and number, and the assignment name, single-spaced

Citation Style: APA

Minimum Number of Distinct Citations: 3

Our Murder Mystery Party was meant to be fun, and I hope you enjoyed employing your persona toward finding meaning in a chaotic situation. But underneath the fun you should be able to find undercurrents of small group communication practices at work.

This essay, like the last one, is an opportunity to reflect on your experience. Follow a similar format with an introduction/conclusion/and responsible grammar and spelling practices.

Once again, you need to cite three distinct sources from this unit or your own research throughout your analysis and include a References page.

Here are issues to look for as you reflect on your experiences:

- What fostered identification in the group and motivated cohesion?
- What crises was the group facing?
- How did you solve problems together using communication?
- How did your small group communication help solve the puzzle?
- What conclusions can you draw about communication in small groups based on this experience?

Final Essay: Communication in Online Groups

Length: 4 ½ to 5 pages, double-spaced

Font: Times New Roman

Header: Your name, the course name and number, and the assignment name, single-spaced

Citation Style: APA

Minimum Number of Distinct Citations: 5

For this essay, we're tying it all together – all the theory from throughout the course. This needs to be a formal essay with an introduction and conclusion and good grammar and spelling and at least five citations and a references page.

Your assignment is to join an online community of some kind. You may already be a member of one, in which case your case study can build on this already-established experience. If you are not, here are examples of communities you can join. *(If you wish to join a community that's not on this list, run it by the instructor before you start working and writing.)*

Facebook groups (active ones)

Runescape or other free online MMORPGs that have a chat function

World of Warcraft or similar pay-to-play games (if you already have an account)

Subreddits (accessible, active ones)

Dating sites or apps (like E-Harmony or Tinder)

Snapchat

Yik-Yak

Second Life

Message Boards/Forums

Blogspot (or any other blog-hosting site, including Tumblr)

YouTube

A Skype call or Google Hangout with more than three people

Chatroulette (if you have multiple people on your end of the chat)

Once you have established yourself in these communities, you must go out of your way to interact with other people in order to complete this assignment. You may attempt to cooperate with others to solve problems, you may start conflicts, or you may help resolve conflicts started by others. If you troll people for this assignment (which is within the realm of possibilities) please attack ideas rather than people and avoid hate speech – trust me, people are easy enough to rile up without all that nonsense.

With this stimulus, please use your experience to discuss the following concerns:

- 1) Does the definition of “Small Group Communication” change in a virtual environment?
- 2) How do groups form and change digitally? Who leads them, and how do those people become leaders?
- 3) How do people listen and think critically online? How does their behavior affect the communication process in ways that are different from face-to-face interaction?
- 4) How do virtual groups stay cohesive in the face of a crisis (or do they)? How are problems addressed?
- 5) Does your experience mesh with the textbook’s notion of virtual groups? Why or why not?

You may cite sources from throughout the course for this, as well as your own independent research as you see fit.

On the last page of the essay, please include a Screenshot of your participation in this community.