

# CMST 2064: Small Group Communication Spring 2016

Adam J. Harvey

**Office Hours:** T/Th 9:00 – 10:25 am, Th 1:45 – 2:55 pm or happily by appointment ;-)

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**Class Meetings:** 2064-5 T/Th 7:30 – 8:50 am Coates Hall 204

2064-7 T/Th 10:30 – 11:50 am Coates Hall 237

**Textbook:** Engleberg, Isa N. and Dianna R. Wynn. *Working in Groups, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed.* Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon, 2013.

Other materials and articles via Moodle

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will study how to work well in groups by focusing on its 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.

## 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
- Apply a variety of creative problem solving and critical thinking skills

## 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.

#### **TECHNOLOGY USE**

Recording of any type within the classroom is strictly prohibited without the permission of the instructor. Cellular phones and electronic devices (ipads, tablets, laptops) should be silent and not be disruptive at any time during class. If you use technology inappropriately (for personal use during class unrelated to course), you will be asked to leave the class.

#### **ASSIGNED COURSEWORK**

To increase your communication effectiveness in groups, you are asked to complete reading assignments, writing assignments, and oral presentations. The course grade distribution is on a 1000 point scale where you earn points for completed assignments.

#### Overview of Course Assignments and Point Values

Class Discussion/Participation	100 points
Small Group Media Reflection	20 points
Diverse Groups	20 points
Group Social Activity	15 points
Diversity Reflection	15 points
Quizzes/Participation	100 points
Group Presentation	80 points
Paper 1/Paper 2 (30 points each)	60 points
Group Member Evaluations (4)	40 points
Group Game Activity	200 points
Midterm Examination	150 points
Final Examination	200 points

#### Grade Distribution = 1000 pt scale

A+ = 1000-980	A = 979-930	A- = 929-900
B+ = 899-870	B = 869-830	B- = 829-800
C+ = 799-770	C = 769-730	C- = 729-700
D+ = 699-670	D = 669-630	D- = 629-600
	F = 599-0	

## General Grading Standards

A = Work is polished and represents exceptional achievement well above expectations.

B = Work contains noticeable flaws, but represents solid, praiseworthy achievement.

C = Work contains a distracting number of flaws, but represents adequate achievement.

D = Work is substantially marred by flaws and represents substandard achievement.

F = Work is fatally marred by flaws or is missing.

Grades: All grades will be posted to Moodle and all assignments will be returned in class. If you do not understand why you received a specific grade, you will have one week to ask for clarification. Grades will not be discussed the day they are returned, nor will they be discussed over the telephone or through email. If you would like to go over the assignment or have questions concerning the grade, please come by during my scheduled office hours or schedule an appointment.

Extra Credit: No extra credit will be offered for the course. If you want a good grade, focus on the completion the regularly assigned credit like a boss.

Attendance: Any absences from class will negatively affect your final grade, as you will miss information and in-class activities vital to the successful completion of your coursework. From PS-22: Class attendance is the responsibility of the student. The student is expected to attend all classes. A student who finds it necessary to miss class assumes responsibility for making up examinations, obtaining lecture notes, and otherwise compensating for what may have been missed. The course instructor will determine the validity of a student's reason(s) for absences and will assist those students who have valid reasons. Valid reasons for absences include:

1. Illness
2. Serious family emergency
3. Special curricular requirements such as judging trips or field trips
4. Court-imposed legal obligations such as subpoenas or jury duty
5. Military obligations
6. Serious weather conditions
7. Religious observances.
8. Participation in varsity athletic competitions or university musical events

The student is responsible for providing reasonable advance notification and appropriate documentation of the reason for the absence.

Participation: You are expected to participate in all class activities. Activities are graded according to the quality of the work you produce, by the standards derived from the topics covered in the course. Your participation grade will be negatively affected if you frequently fail to attend class, if you fail to read assigned material, if you fail to bring printed material with you to class, if you are disruptively using technology (this includes texting, wearing headphones, and surfing the web).

Quizzes are frequently given at the beginning of class and cannot be made up. If you arrive late you will not be given extra time to complete the quiz. It is your responsibility to arrive in class on time, despite the devious machinations of traffic, weather, and alarm clocks.

Assignments: Assignments to be turned in must be typed. This includes papers, outlines, or any other material assigned to be completed outside of class. Handwritten work will NOT be accepted. If you do not own a printer or computer, utilize the computer labs located on campus to complete your work. All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late work **WILL NOT** be accepted.

If will not be able to attend class the day a written assignment or presentation is due, you will need to email me the assignment prior to the beginning of class as proof the assignment has been completed on time and provide a documented university approved excuse in order to turn in a paper copy and/or complete the presentation upon your return to class. See Attendance section (above) for university approved excuses.

Major Graded Assignment Overview: The following is a general overview of major assignments. More detailed prompts will be provided on Moodle outlining specific details of each assignment.

- *Social Activity* –For this assignment, students should meet with their group for a social activity outside of class. Then, each person is required to write a 2-page typed (double space, 12 pt font) reflection.
- *Small Group Media Assignment* – For this assignment, students will watch an episode of a television show in class. Then, students are required to write a reflection of the characters on the show, demonstrating their knowledge of small group communication concepts. This should be 2-pages typed (double space, 12 pt font, Times New Roman).
- *Diverse Groups Assignment* – For this assignment, students will work in class in their groups to explore the dynamics of a group containing diverse group members. In class, students will select members for this diverse group, then discuss in class how the group would function with a specific task. Then, each group will submit one paper reflecting on the group and how successful the group was in completing the task. This should be 2-pages typed (double space, 12 pt font, Times New Roman).
- *Diversity Reflection*– For this assignment, students will write a 1-2 page typed (double space, 12 pt font, Times New Roman) reflection on the diversity panel that speaks in class.
- *Quizzes/Participation* – Substantial quizzes will occur at random and unannounced. This will typically occur near the beginning of class. Participation within this category refers to participation in class activities. For example, if we decide to have a rap battle in class

between the groups, and you attempt to prove your skills as a lyrical master, whether good or bad, you receive credit for participation. If you refuse to participate, you do not.

- *Group Presentation*– Throughout the semester, each group will complete a presentation addressing group issues exemplified in a film or television show. More information will be posted on Moodle.
- *Paper 1/Paper 2*– At the midpoint of the semester and the end of the semester, you will apply what we have discussed by writing papers to demonstrate your mastery of small group communication concepts that are applied to your experiences within your assigned groups. These should be 2-3 pages in length and will be worth 40 points each.
- *Examinations*– You will complete a midterm and final examination for this course. It will include information from the textbook, activities, and classroom lectures/discussion.
- *Group Member Evaluations*– You will complete an evaluation of your group members four times throughout the semester, providing feedback on their communication, participation in group meetings and activities, and overall contributions to the group.
- *Game Activity*– This group activity is designed to encourage students to learn how to apply the theoretical ideas learned in class to practical situations. In this assignment each group will design a game to help explain one of the ideas discussed in the book. Each group will present the game to the class. During this time, the group should provide an explanation of the purpose of the game, directions for playing the game, and a “example” round to demonstrate how to play the game. The assignment will be graded on three things: 1. instructor evaluation, 2. peer evaluation, 3. class evaluation of the game. A more detailed grading sheet will be posted on Moodle closer to the due of the assignment.

Plagiarism: Please see the Student Code of Conduct (an excerpt of which appears below)

6. Plagiarism is defined as the lack of citation or the unacknowledged inclusion of someone else's words, structure, ideas, or data. When a Student submits work as his/her own that includes the words, structure, ideas, or data of others, the source of this information must be acknowledged through complete, accurate, and specific references, and, if verbatim statements are included, through quotation marks as well. Failure to identify any source (including interviews, surveys, etc.), published in any medium (including on the internet) or unpublished, from which words, structure, ideas, or data have been taken, constitutes plagiarism; Plagiarism also includes:
  - 6a. Falsifying or fabricating any information or citation in any academic exercise, work, speech, thesis, dissertation, test, or examination.
  - 6b. Submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructors; (from the [Student Code of Conduct](#) section 8.1.6)

The “I Hate to Work in Teams” Kind Confrontation Policy: I think this goes without saying, but please be aware that the grades I assign to your group’s project paper and your presentation may be the same for everyone in the group. Since each team member could be graded equally, regardless of her/his contributions to the project, I expect you to engage in “kind confrontation”

with any member that the team perceives as not fulfilling commitments, missing team meetings, leaving early/arriving late, and not coming prepared. What is kind confrontation? It is the ability to deal with each other directly, assertively, tactfully and effectively to insure that everyone does her/his share of the work and fulfills commitments to the team. If it is determined by members of the team that another member is not fulfilling her/his commitments, then I expect you to kindly confront that member, either one-on-one or as a team, to discuss this, prior to bringing the issue to my attention. If this kind confrontation is not effective, then I expect you to let me know immediately if someone is not responding constructively to your group's efforts to integrate, motivate and support her/him. Please be advised that once the issue is brought to my attention, then I will kindly confront that team member. I reserve the right to privately counsel and, if necessary, remove and discipline (with a failing grade for this assignment) any member who is unwilling or unable to meet her/his obligations to the group. If you choose not to engage in kind confrontation and choose to carry that member along, you have nobody to blame but yourself.

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.

\*\*\*This syllabus included information from the syllabus of Dr. Amy Fannin and Wade Walker. \*\*\*