

COMM 112, Section S01: Small Group Communication
2:30-3:45 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday
209 Armstrong Hall
Fall 2015

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Office hours: 9:00-11:00 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday, 2:30-4:30 p.m. Friday, by appointment

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the small group communication process. Through lecture, group projects and presentations, and individual assignments, you will develop an understanding of the small group communication process and learn how to communicate effectively when working in a small group.

In conjunction with the Center for Service and Learning, and working in a group of five members, you will volunteer with a community partner for a total of **6 hours outside of class**. Prior to or on the first visit, your group will meet with the community partner and discuss the partner's expectations, requirements, and needs.

- Each member must register at iserve.wvu.edu within the first two weeks of class.
- Each group will have a designated liaison who will serve as the point of contact between the group and the community partner.
- Each group will complete each visit as a group (i.e., any one group member is not allowed to complete his/her volunteer hours individually).
- Each group will perform the volunteer duties as assigned and deemed necessary by the community partner.
- Each group will complete three course projects centered on their experience working with their community partner. These projects do not require the community partner either to aid the group in completing each project or to evaluate each project.
- Each group will receive feedback from the community partner via the forms disseminated by the Center for Service and Learning.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES MISSION STATEMENT:

Rooted in the social science perspective, the Department of Communication Studies is committed to preparing our students to be competent communicators at theoretical and applied levels. Our faculty is dedicated to developing students' critical thinking, reasoning, and decision-making skills with the intent of empowering students to construct and deliver context-specific messages in their relational, vocational, and community endeavors.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

As developed by the Department of Communication Studies, four outcome goals are associated with COMM 112. Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. cite evidence of the impact of communication on human behavior in interpersonal and/or organizational contexts;
2. examine the relationship between communication and culture;
3. examine ethical issues in various communication contexts; and
4. analyze the role of communication in conflict and conflict management.

As part of the West Virginia University General Education Curriculum (Objective 4, which is Issues of Contemporary Society: Students are expected to apply knowledge, methods, and principles of inquiry to contemporary problems, ideas, and/or values and Objective 6, which is The Individual in Society: Students are expected to develop an awareness of the human experience, including both personal and social dimensions), this course addresses three primary objectives. As such, by the end of the semester, you should be able to:

1. Communicate more effectively in a small group, which will be evidenced by being able to:

- define small group communication;
- list and define the primary and secondary characteristics of a small group;
- develop a code of ethics for small group membership;
- differentiate between leader and leadership;
- differentiate among the models of small group development;
- define relational communication; and
- identify the components of effective small group communication.

2. Articulate the alternative viewpoints and cultures of small group members, which will be evidenced by being able to:

- explain the ways in which individuals are attracted to small groups;
- identify the “ideal” small group member in terms of communication traits;
- identify the “ideal” small group in terms of communication components;
- explain how diversity influences the small group communication process;
- differentiate among decision-making techniques used in the small group;
- differentiate among conflict-handling styles; and
- explain the difference between a supportive and a defensive small group communication climate.

3. Demonstrate the role small groups play in an increasingly interdependent world, which will be evidenced by being able to:

- explain the small group socialization process;
- identify the outcomes associated with successful small group socialization;
- differentiate between how formal and informal small group roles emerge; and
- explain how groupthink occurs in the small group.

COURSE SUPPLIES

Myers, S. A. (2014). *Small group communication*. Littleton, MA: Tapestry Press.

Myers, S. A., & Anderson, C. M. (2008). *The fundamentals of small group communication*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

3 scantron sheets (blue, #30423).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Three examinations. Each examination will consist of 50 true/false, matching, and multiple choice questions. Questions will be recall, comprehension, and application in nature. All questions will be taken from the lectures, class discussion and activities, and homework. Each examination is worth 100 points.

2. Group projects. For these projects, you will work with 2-4 classmates in a group. You will be assigned to a group no later than the fourth week of class. We will be partnering with the WVU Center for Service & Learning, which means that your group will be working with a community partner (a) at the partner's site (b) outside of class.

Group projects will consist of several in-class activities and several out-of-class projects, many of which are designed around your group's work with your community partner. For the in-class activities, you must be present in class the day the activity is assigned. For the out-of-class projects, you will meet and work with your group outside of class. For some out-of-class projects, you also may have to prepare and deliver an in-class presentation. On each in-class activity and out-of-class project, all group members receive the same grade.

The guidelines, requirements, and grading rubrics for all out-of-class projects will be discussed in class on the day the project is assigned and distributed through eCampus.

3. Peer evaluation. At the end of the semester, you will complete a peer evaluation on each group member. In this evaluation, you will rate each member's contribution to the in-class group activities and out-of-class projects as a whole. The scores from each member's evaluation will be averaged to compile an evaluation score.

If you are absent on the day the peer evaluation is completed in class, you will receive 0 points for this assignment. If you fail to complete the minimal hours required for your group work with your community partner, you will receive 0 points for this assignment.

EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES

1. In-class work/homework. You can receive 10 points of extra credit by completing in-class activities and homework, which will be collected at various points throughout the semester. To receive credit for in-class activities, you must be present in class. To receive credit for homework, you must submit the assignment when it is due. Late in-class activities and homework will be accepted at the discretion of the instructor. Homework is considered late either once it is collected or when class ends on the day the assignment is due.

The 10 points of extra credit will be given only if you have completed 90% of the designated point value of the assigned in-class activities and homework. What this means is that at the end of the semester, you will receive either 10 points or 0 points based on the percentage of the designated point value of your completed activities and homework.

2. Participation in research projects. Periodically, you will be given the opportunity to participate in research projects being conducted by faculty members and graduate students in the Department of Communication Studies. Up to 10 points of extra credit can be earned by participating in these projects.

COURSE POLICIES

1. All course correspondence will be conducted through MIX and eCampus. Make sure you are able to access your MIX account and eCampus while you are enrolled in this course. Get in the habit of checking your MIX account before coming to class.

2. There is no mandatory attendance policy; however, attendance is expected. Any missed work generally cannot be made up. The only exception to this policy applies to the in-class group activities and the peer evaluation, in which a class is missed due to attendance at a sanctioned University function. Proof must be provided that verifies attendance at the function **prior** to the function. If you leave class early and/or arrive at class late, you may not receive credit for any in-class activities.

Regardless of your attendance record, you are responsible for all information presented in class, contained within the workbook, and conveyed through e-mail messages sent by your instructor, including any change(s) related to the course syllabus, the course schedule, or any other announcements. You are responsible for obtaining any information missed due to absences from one of your classmates. If you are absent on the days that an in-class group activity is conducted or the peer evaluation is completed, you will receive 0 points for the respective assignment.

3. All electronic (or distracting) devices (e.g., cell phones, iPods) should be turned off and put away before class begins. If any device appears to be in use during an examination, you will receive 0 points for the examination and you may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Keep in mind that any point deductions can be applied without informing you about the deducted points.

4. Should you miss one of the examinations, you will have an opportunity to take the missed examination on the Saturday morning of final examination week at 10:00 a.m. in Armstrong Hall. It is strongly recommended that you do not miss any of the three examinations. Each make-up examination will consist of 10 essay/short answer questions and you will need to show your WVU ID card to take the make-up examination.

5. Late work (i.e., group out-of class projects or any assignment related to a project) will be penalized at the rate of 20% of the total points of each assignment per day. Work is considered late either once it is collected or when class ends on the day the project or assignment is due. After three days, the late project assignment will not be accepted.

No late in-class/homework will be accepted. An assignment is considered late once I either have collected it or class has ended. There are no exceptions.

6. Assignments will not be accepted via e-mail or fax or as e-mailed attachments unless otherwise directed by the instructor.

7. The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Thus, rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course will be enforced. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the Student Conduct Code at http://studentlife.wvu.edu/office_of_student_conduct. Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see your instructor *before* the assignment is due to discuss the matter. Any instances of suspected academic dishonesty, plagiarism, or cheating will result in a grade of zero for the assignment and may result in a grade of F for the course and a referral to the Office of Student Conduct.

Plagiarism is the use of direct quotations without identifying them as such, or the summarizing or paraphrasing of other quotations. If you do not specifically identify the sources of ideas rather than your own, you are plagiarizing.

Cheating is the unauthorized giving or receiving of information in examinations, quizzes, assignments, or other class assignments. If someone else submits in-class work, homework, or extra credit in your name or takes an examination or quiz in your name, this also is considered cheating.

You are solely responsible for the preparation and presentation of your assignments. Each assignment must be your own work. When working collaboratively, it is acceptable to ask for criticism and help, but such input should be limited and acknowledged when appropriate. When writing a paper, it is recommended that you have someone proofread and critique your work, but it is not acceptable that s/he rewrite entire sections in the process.

8. Be prepared to spend a significant amount of time outside of class working on your

group projects. Remember that failure to complete the minimal hours required for your group work with your community partner will result in 0 points for the peer evaluation.

9. The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise your instructor and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (304-293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>.

10. If you choose to withdraw from this course, you must do this yourself through the STAR system. You are not automatically withdrawn from this course if you stop attending class and I am unable to administratively withdraw you for nonattendance.

11. All in-class work/homework will be returned to you at some point during this course. It is your responsibility to pick up and keep all in-class work/homework. Any in-class work/homework that you fail to pick up will be discarded at the end of the semester.

12. A group member who is uncooperative and/or fails to contribute to the group projects can be dismissed from the group, but only after discussing this issue with your instructor. The remaining group members all must agree with this dismissal, write a formal letter identifying the reasons why the group member is being dismissed, and provide a copy of the letter to both your instructor and the group member. Should this occur, the group member is responsible for completing any and/or all group project(s) singly.

13. A quiz can be given at any time in the semester. Grades received on any quiz will count as an in-class activity.

14. Be on time for each of the three examinations. Once the first person has completed the examination and exited the room, no latecomers will be permitted to take an examination.

15. Any additional policies will be distributed in class as needed.

GRADING SCALE

A = 450-500

B = 400-449

C = 350-399
D = 300-349
F = 0-299

GRADING LOG

| | | |
|--|-----------|----------|
| Examination #1 | _____ | /100 |
| Examination #2 | _____ | /100 |
| Examination #3 | _____ | /100 |
| In-class group activity #1 | _____ | /10 |
| In-class group activity #2 | _____ | /10 |
| In-class group activity #3 | _____ | /10 |
| In-class group activity #4 | _____ | /10 |
| In-class group activity #5 | _____ | /10 |
| Group project #1 | _____ | /20 |
| Group project #2 | _____ | /40 |
| Group project #3 | _____ | /40 |
| Peer evaluation | _____ | /50 |
| Subtotal | _____ | /500 |
| Extra credit: In-class work/homework | _____ | /10 |
| Extra credit: Participation in research projects | _____ | /10 |
| TOTAL | _____ | /500 |

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Please note that this schedule is subject to change. All reading should be completed prior to class.

ICA = In-class group activity GP = Group project

| Date | Topic | Reading | Due |
|-------------|---|----------------|------------|
| 8/18 | Introduction to course | | |
| 8/20 | Components of small group communication | Chapter 1 | |
| | | | |
| 8/25 | Center for Service and Learning speaker | | |
| 8/27 | In-class group activity #1/Meet your group! | | ICA #1 |
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| 9/1 | Relational communication | Chapter 10 | |
| 9/3 | Relational communication continued | | |
| | | | |
| 9/8 | Small group member traits | Chapter 3 | |
| 9/10 | Traits continued | | |
| | | | |
| 9/15 | Diversity among small group members | Chapter 4 | |
| 9/17 | Diversity continued | | GP #1 |
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| 9/22 | In-class group activity #2 | | ICA #2 |
| 9/24 | EXAMINATION #1 | | |
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| 9/29 | The small group socialization process | Chapter 2 | |
| 10/1 | Socialization continued | | |
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| 10/6 | Models of small group development | Chapter 5 | |
| 10/8 | In-class group activity #3 | | ICA #3 |
| | | | |
| 10/13 | No class--Fall Break | | |
| 10/15 | Small group tasks | Chapter 6 | |
| | | | |
| 10/20 | Tasks continued | Chapter 7 | |
| 10/22 | Small group decision-making procedures | | GP #2 |
| | | | |
| 10/27 | Procedures continued | | |
| 10/29 | EXAMINATION #2 | | |
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| 11/3 | Small group member roles | Chapter 8 | |
| 11/5 | Roles continued | | |

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|-------|--|------------|--------|
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| 11/10 | Small group leadership | Chapter 9 | |
| 11/12 | Leadership continued | | GP #3 |
| | | | |
| 11/17 | In-class group activity #4 | | ICA #4 |
| 11/19 | No class--NCA | | |
| | | | |
| 11/24 | No class--Fall recess | | |
| 11/26 | No class--Fall recess | | |
| | | | |
| 12/1 | Small group conflict | Chapter 11 | |
| 12/3 | In-class activity #5 | | ICA #5 |
| | | | |
| 12/8 | Peer evaluations and course assessment | | GP #4 |
| 12/10 | EXAMINATION #3 (8:00-10:00 a.m.) | | |