

COMM 4100: Small Group Communication
Course Syllabus
Southern Polytechnic State University
Fall 2013

INSTRUCTOR: Kami J. Anderson, Ph.D.

PHONE: (678) 915-7330

OFFICE HOURS: Mondays

OFFICE: J316

12:00NOON – 2:00PM

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All other times by appointment

Course Description

This course covers the study of the theory and practice of group interaction and teamwork as it applies to group process. We will focus on such topics as the function of roles in groups, conflict resolution, leadership in the small group, gender differences, listening and negotiation skills, and managing meetings. A collaborative project and workshop activities reinforce these principles.

This course has four broad objectives. The first is that you are aware of both your role and your impact on groups in which you participate. The second is that you are aware of others' roles and impact on groups in which you participate. The third is that you are able to apply basic principles of communication to improve or enrich your experiences in group situations. The last objective is to heighten your sense of curiosity and challenge in our learning environment.

Learning Outcomes

- Be aware of theories and terms related to small group communication
- Participate as a team member on a group project
- Analyze small group communication through group observation
- Be able to analyze groups and apply group communication theory to them; and
- Analyze interpersonal group dynamics

Required Textbook:

Communicating in Small Groups (10th ed) by S. Beebe & J. Masterson.

* You must save all of your work (and grades) from this class until at least the day after the final*

RULES OF DISCOURSE

As this is a course which may focus on subjects of a personal nature, it is expected that all students should feel comfortable, expressing opinions and beliefs for the sake of intercultural enlightenment. Therefore, the expectation is all students will actively participate in not only their assignments but class discussions as well. Every student is expected to demonstrate: **MUTUAL RESPECT OF THE OPINIONS OF HIS/HER COLLEAGUE**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS*

ATTENDANCE: You are expected to attend all classes. Absences require a physician's note that you are to be excused. Do not be late for class. **Coming to class late or leaving early without permission from Dr. Anderson will be counted as an absence for the entire class period.**

All students are allotted a maximum of three (3) unexcused absences for the semester. Absences beyond the allotted amount may result in a 10-point reduction in your final grade for EACH occurrence

Inform Dr. Anderson if an emergency prevents you from submitting an assignment on an assigned date. **If you are absent on the day an assignment is due, a grade of zero (0) will be assigned** unless you present a doctor's note within 24 hours. If you are absent or tardy for any reason, you are responsible for finding out what material was covered and whether any announcements were made **from your colleagues, not Dr. Anderson.**

TEXT: The text for this course is available at the university bookstore. Weekly reading assignments from the text are listed on the course schedule. You will be expected to have read the material *before* you come to class.

Journal - 150 points total - Your journal represents your learning throughout the semester and should be started the first week of school. You will be synthesizing, applying, and questioning what you learn. Each chapter from our text, accompanied by the corresponding class time requires one entry. There will be 15 total entries, worth a maximum of 10 points each. A complete entry requires the following information and should be no longer than one typed (double spaced) page.

1. How can or have you applied the chapter to your life?
2. How does the chapter apply to your current group? (use an outside group for first 3 chapters)
3. Offer
 - a) a critique of the chapter/class time **-OR-**
 - b) a humorous insight about the chapter/ class time
4. What is your group currently doing well? (use an outside group for first 3 chapters)
5. Where / how is your group (not individuals) lacking? (use an outside group for first 3 chapters)

Film Reaction Paper: -100 points total- We will be watching a film in class that deals with issues of group communication. You will write a reaction to the film, based on your readings from our textbook. Use specific examples from the film and support from your text. **1 - 2 pages**

Outside Group/Analysis -100 points total- We are in groups in every aspect of our lives. For this assignment you will choose ONE group in your life (outside of class) and analyze it based on the information from your text and from our class discussions. You should identify at least three major points of analysis. Be specific and refer to your text for research/support. This will be included in your submission of your journal entries. **1 - 2 pages**

Group Project 200 points- This is your semester project. You may handle it as creatively as possible. You must produce a 30 minute presentation for the class on the day assigned to your group. You may

generate a video, a slide presentation, a play, a symposium, a debate, a television game or reality show, etc. Whatever format and topic you choose; it should be a cohesive group decision in which everyone participates. The topic must be an innovative presentation of a concept, theory or practice of small group communication. This is a group grade, unless a group member does not perform according to group expectations.

Team Progress Reports #1 & #2 – 100 points each – Written and oral periodic progress reports will be due according to the dates in the class schedule. This should include an analysis of your goals and objectives, a time line to accomplish these goals, specific activities, resources needed, time required, person(s) responsible, group minutes and agendas.

Team Assessment Instrument – 100 points – As a group; make a list of elements that should create a good group experience. Then create an assessment instrument that you can use to evaluate your group experience. This can include a short answer quantitative form or a qualitative questionnaire or a combination of both. When your work is complete, use your method to individually assess your group experience. Submit this in a group packet along with submitted progress reports from the planning to the production stages. The assessments are done individually while the minutes and agendas are submitted as a group and initialed by each member.

Participation - 100 points - Communication is an inherently participative activity. For that reason a portion of your final grade will be based on your participation in class. Basis for participation points will include, but is not limited to: asking thoughtful questions during lectures, taking part during class discussions, being energetic in activities, attendance, and showing respect for classmates & instructor. Students are expected to be present for each class session and to participate verbally. Your presence and your verbal contributions, based on your personal experience or reading, count for a significant percentage of your grade in the course. Your regular attendance (or lack thereof) will be reflected in your participation grade.

SPECIAL POLICIES and PROCEDURES

PLAGIARISM will not be tolerated in any form. Students will be subjective to a grade of “F” or possible academic expulsion, if such unethical practices are employed. This course is taught in compliance with policies of the ADA and EEOC. Detailed information on these policies is available upon request or can be found on the Southern Polytechnic State University Website.

ADA PROCEDURES: Southern Polytechnic State University is committed to providing an educational environment that is accessible to all students. In accordance with this policy, students in need of accommodations due to a disability should contact the Dean for Special Student Services for verification and determination of reasonable accommodations as soon as possible after admission to the University, or at the beginning of each semester.

GRADE BULLYING (*this concept was conceived by Dr. Ryan McGeough at Upper Iowa University, adapted by Kelsey Harr-Lagin at Southern Polytechnic State University and now adopted by your professor*):

The grades you receive in this class are a direct reflection of the work you put into this course. If you produce less than excellent work throughout the course of the semester and take no initiative to compensate for that during the academic semester, Dr. Anderson is NOT responsible nor is she obligated

to work with you after the semester has concluded to ensure you get an excellent grade in this course. To that end, the following criteria must be met in order for Dr. Anderson to consider grade changes at any point in time:

- 1) **Has met with Dr. Anderson in person to discuss grades and progress no less than two weeks after the second speech presentation has ended.**
- 2) **Has submitted ALL assignments on time OR has no outstanding assignments.**
- 3) **Has a written record of our email communication that demonstrates your personal initiative to improve your standing in the course.**
- 4) **Has completed the above prior to the start of November.**

It is assumed that you will put forth your best effort throughout the entire semester. It is poor planning and preparation on your part to pressure a professor to give you a grade you may or may not deserve at the end or close of a semester.

GRADING CRITERIA

Final grades will be based on the quality of written and oral assignments completed, as well as, the active, consistent and meaningful contributions made in class. All written work is to be submitted on time, typed (doubled-spaced) and proof read. Points will be deducted for unedited work. Late assignments will not be accepted. Students will be expected to keep a copy of all work submitted and a record of the points earned based on the criteria below.

SPECIAL NOTE: Because of the difficulty of scheduling and the limited time framework,

1. No make-up assignments or exams will be permitted without a medical excuse or other pertinent documentation.
2. More than TWO (2) unexcused absences may result in a one-letter grade reduction. (For example, an A would be reduced to a B, etc.). In the event of an absence, the student is responsible for keeping current with all assignments.

<u>AREA A. Group Assignment</u>	POINTS
1. Final Project	200 _____
Final Packet – 100	
Oral Presentation - 100	
<i>Total points possible</i>	200 <i>Total rec'd</i> _____
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<u>AREA B. Written Assignments</u>	
1. Film Reaction Paper	100 _____
2. Outside Group Analysis	100 _____
3. Journal	150 _____
<i>Total points possible</i>	350 <i>Total rec'd</i> _____
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<u>AREA C...ASSESSMENTS</u>	
1. Progress Reports #1 & # 2 (100 points each)	200 _____
2. Team Assessment Instrument	100 _____
<i>Total points possible</i>	300 <i>Total rec'd</i> _____
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<u>AREA D...ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION</u>	
1. ATTENDANCE	50 _____
2. CLASS PARTICIPATION	100 _____
<i>Total points possible</i>	150 <i>Total rec'd</i> _____
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FINAL GRADE POINTS 1000	<i>TOTAL REC'D</i> _____

GRADING SCALE

A = 90 -100 points B = 80 - 89 points C = 70 - 79 points D = 60 - 69 points F = 59 – below

**The instructor reserves the right to make any changes to assignments and projects in the course.*

SMALL GROUP COMMUNICATION Weekly Course Schedule

Week	Dates	Chapter(s)	Readings, Assignments, etc
1	August 19	Foundations of Group and Team Communication	Read Chapter 1
2	August 26	Chapter 1 – Introducing Group and Team Principles and Practices	Read Chapter 2
3	September 2	Labor Day – No Classes	<i>Assignment: As a group, find one concrete example of a theory in Chapter 2</i>
4	September 9	Chapter 2 – Small Group Communication Theory	Read Chapter 3
5	September 16	Chapter 3 – Group Formation	Read Chapter 5
6	September 23	Managing Group and Team Relationships Chapter 5 – Relating to Others in Groups and Teams	<i>Read Chapter 6; Progress Report #1 Due</i>
7	September 30	Chapter 6 – Improving Group Climate	<i>Read Chapter 7 – Team Assessment Instrument Due</i>
8	October 7	Chapter 7 – Enhancing Group and Team Communication Skills	<i>Read Chapter 8</i>
9	October 14	Chapter 8 – Managing Conflict	Read Chapter 8; <i>Film Reaction Analysis Due</i>
10	October 21	Chapter 8 – Managing Conflict	Read Chapter 4; <i>Progress Report #2 Due</i>
11	October 28	Managing Group and Team Tasks Chapter 4 – Preparing to Collaborate	Read Chapter 10
12	November 4	Chapter 10 – Making Decisions and Solving Problems	Read Chapter 11
13	November 11	Chapter 11 – Using Problem-Solving Techniques	Read Chapter 12; <i>Journals Due</i>
14	November 18	Chapter 12 – Enhancing Creativity in Groups and Teams Group Meetings in class	
15	November 25	Group Meetings	
16	December 2	<i>Final Projects Due</i>	
	<i>December 6-10</i>	<i>FINAL EXAM PERIOD</i>	