
Small Group Communication
COMM 35550 Section 001 Call No.11726
Spring 2001 TR 10:45 A. M. - Noon MSP D301

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Office 1: MSP D207
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Office Hour: Tues. & Thurs. 10:30-10:45 A. M.
Office Hour: Tues. 8:00 – 8:50 A. M.
or by appointment

Course Description: This course is designed to introduce you to basic skills, principles, and concepts of small group communication. Students will understand how small groups develop as functional systems, including a grasp of major variables and dynamics. The course will emphasize how small group members communicate while influencing each other and coordinating their efforts. Students will be able to analyze their own behavior and adapt it to specific groups. This course will give some guidance in techniques and procedures that will serve students well in many small groups and organizations to which they belong.

Required Course Materials:

Brilhart, J. K., & Galanes, G. J. (1998). Effective Group Discussion (9th.edition). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.
Notebook

Grades: The School of Communication Studies supports the university policies of academic excellence as noted in the student handbook. All grades for this class will be assigned according to university definition only:

A=excellent; B=good; C=average; D=poor; and F=failure.

There are 500 possible points: **A** = 500 - 450; **B** = 449 - 400; **C** = 399 - 350; **D** = 349 - 300; **F** = 299 or lower.

Grades will not be curved. * You are expected to keep up with your own grades. You should know your standing in the course at any time during the semester. Grades will not be given over the phone or by e-mail.

Major Group Project	100 points_____
Minor Group Project	75 points_____
Exam 1	100 points_____
Exam 2	100 points_____
Exam 3	100 points_____
Participation, Attendance, & Evaluations	10 points_____
Group Journal	15 points_____
Total Class Points	500 points_____

Course Requirements:

Major Group Project: Your groups (consisting of 4-5 members) will choose a Kent State University or Kent/Ravenna community issue to analyze, examine, and recommend a policy change. For instance, parking at KSU, housing issues, the need for student representation on Kent City Council, etc. Your group will act as a team of consultants. You will be graded on how accurate your research was concerning your topic and how realistic your solutions are to the problem. One group grade will be assigned.

- ❖ Each group will write 8-10 pages for the group paper. Papers are due at the beginning of class of your major group project presentation date.
- ❖ Papers must address and include:
 - a) Why did your group select this problem? (introduction)
 - b) What exactly the problem or issue is?
 - c) Why we NEED to deal with this problem or issue?
(Why is this important? What difference does it make in the community?)
 - d) What solutions or suggestions can be made?
[highlight positive aspects and address negative aspects]
(You must provide at least two different solutions/suggestions)
 - e) What can be done NOW? (conclusion)

- ❖ You must also prepare a 30-minute group presentation (with at least one visual aid). Please tell me in advance if you will need a computer or TV/VCR.
- ❖ Presentations will be graded on:
 - a) nonverbal delivery (gestures, movement, posture)
 - b) verbal delivery (volume, pitch, variance)
 - c) transition use
 - d) language use
 - e) visual aid & visual aid effectiveness usage
 - f) time use (apportioning)
 - g) adaptation to audience (fielding questions, appropriate, etc.)
 - h) eye contact

Minor Group Project: You and a partner will choose a chapter from the class text and present the information to the class. In addition, you must find 3 outside sources (besides your class text) relating to the chapter and present that information to the class. You must include at least two activities to help illustrate the information. For your minor group project, your group must also turn in 12 possible test questions (on an IBM disk in Word) either multiple choice with five options (A, B, C, D, E) or short answer questions with the correct answers (and the page number of the answers, if applicable) over the material you presented and a typed reference list in APA style. Your group presentation should take at least 60 minutes of class time. Grades will be assigned by individual evaluations, peer evaluations, and a group grade. Note: Groups that present earlier in the semester will be graded more leniently than those groups presenting later in the semester, because of time differences.

Exams: Exams will cover information, course material, and activities presented in class and from the class text. There will be three exams. The last exam is NOT comprehensive.

Participation, Attendance, and Evaluations: I expect each student to participate in class. Hence, please do not talk to others, read, do other work, or sleep during class activities and presentations. Each day that a minor group project presents, you must complete an evaluation sheet on that groups' performance. Evaluations are due at the end of class.

Group Journal: Each student will keep a small group journal. In a notebook, each student will write about their observations from both their major and minor groups. Each student should keep a log of each meeting. Students should address the groups/group members: 1) time for all group meetings and the duration, 2) How members met task deadlines set by group, 3) The quality of useful ideas contributed, 4) The quantity of useful ideas contributed, 5) The quality of work, 6) The quantity of work, 7) How the group kept organized, cohesive, & progressive toward completion of the group's goals, and 8) How class information applies or does not apply to their group meetings. The group journal is due on April 24, Tuesday at the beginning of class.

Make-Up Assignments and Examinations:

According to KSU policy, if you miss an exam, group assignment, or presentation, it must be one for the following types of reason: death in immediate family, severe documentable personal illness, religious observance, participation in an approved athletic event, or direct participation with university disciplinary hearings. If you have an unexcused absence, you cannot make up any missed presentation or test. Additionally, because of time constraints, the instructor may elect not to grant make-ups for any reason. Please note: I do NOT accept late work for any reason!

Attendance Policy

The value of regular class attendance cannot be overstated. Students are expected to prepare for and attend class regularly and to be on time. Much of the material in this course will be presented experientially and cannot be repeated outside class.

Therefore, the attendance policy is as follows:

Total absences beyond 5, either excused or unexcused, will lower your class grade one letter grade.

Total absences beyond 8, either excused or unexcused, is grounds for failing the course.

Students with perfect attendance will earn 10 extra credit points. Students with one absence will earn 5 extra credit points. Note: an excused absence is still considered an absence.

Plagiarism & Cheating:

The instructor will adhere to KSU's student cheating and plagiarism policy. Cheating and plagiarism constitute fraudulent misrepresentation for which no credit can be given and for which appropriate sanctions are warranted and will be applied.

Caveat

You have a responsibility to your group members. As a group, you may drop a member because of absences or lack of productivity. I reserve the right to act as a moderator to determine how the situation should be handled.

Special Considerations:

In accordance with university policy, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester or when given an assignment for which an accommodation is required. **Students with disabilities must verify their eligibility through the Office of Student Disabilities Services (SDS) in the Michael Schwarz Center (Phone 672-3391).**

Course Registration Policy:

It is the policy of Kent State University that students are not permitted to attend classes for which they are not officially enrolled. It is the student's responsibility to ensure proper enrollment in classes. You are advised to review your official class schedule during the first two weeks of the semester to ensure proper enrollment. Should you find an error in your class schedule, you have until Friday of the second week of classes to correct it. If registration errors are not corrected by that date and you do continue to attend and participate in classes for which you are not officially enrolled, you are advised now that you will not receive a grade at the conclusion of the semester.

Course schedule

This schedule is tentative. You are responsible for any changes announced in class.

Week 1:	Jan. 16	Class introductions, syllabus
	Jan.18	Chapter 1: Introduction to small groups
Week 2:	Jan. 23	Chapter 2: Small groups as a system
	Jan. 25	Chapter 2: Small groups as a system
Week 3:	Jan. 30	Chapter 3: Human communication processes
	Feb.1	Chapter 3: Human communication processes
Week 4:	Feb. 6	Chapter 4: Verbal & Nonverbal
	Feb. 8	Chapter 4: Verbal & Nonverbal
Week 5:	Feb. 13	Chapter 5: Culture
	Feb. 15	Chapter 5: Culture
Week 6:	Feb. 20	<i>Review</i>
	Feb. 22	EXAM # 1
Week 7:	Feb. 27	Chapter 6: Members
	Mar. 1	Chapter 7: Norms
Week 8:	Mar. 6	Chapter 8: Individuals
	Mar. 8	Chapter 9: Leadership
Week 9:	Mar. 13	Chapter 9: Leadership
	Mar. 15	Chapter 10: Designated Leader
Week 10:	Mar. 20	<i>Review</i>
	Mar. 22	(Last day to withdraw) EXAM #2
Week 11:	Mar. 27	☺ SPRING BREAK ☺
	Mar. 29	☺ SPRING BREAK ☺
Week 12:	Apr. 3	Chapter 11: Problem-Solving
	Apr. 5	Chapter 12: Decision-Making
Week 13:	Apr. 10	Chapter 13: Conflict
	Apr. 12	Chapter 14: Techniques
Week 14:	Apr. 17	Chapter 15: Group discussions
	Apr. 19	Major Group Project Work Day
Week 15:	Apr. 24	<i>(Group journals are due)</i> Major Group Project Presentations
	Apr. 26	Major Group Project Presentations
Week 16:	May 1	Major Group Project Presentations
	May 3	Conclusions, Evaluations, & Review
Finals Week:	May 9	EXAM #3 Wednesday 12:45 – 3:00 P.M. D301 MSP