

New York City College of Technology
Humanities Department
Course Title: **Group Communication**
COM 1335; Section _____

Instructor's Name:
Contact Email:
Office:
Office Hour:

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Small group decision-making. Reviews research on communication in small groups, focuses on argumentation, leadership, group roles and norms as they affect critical thinking, communication, and being goal oriented in groups.

COURSE PREREQUISITE: ENG1101 or ENG1101CO or ENG1101ML
PATHWAYS Individual and Society

The minimum technological requirements for fully online sections of this course are a working camera and microphone. Students are expected to turn on cameras and microphones at their instructor's request.

RECOMMENDED/TYPICAL/REQUIRED TEXTBOOK (S) and/or MATERIALS*

Title: In Mixed Company: Communicating in Small Groups

Edition: 8th

Author: J. Dan Rothwell

Publisher: Wadsworth

Additional Electronic Resources

OpenLab – www.openlab.citytech.cuny.edu

City Tech Library - <http://library.citytech.cuny.edu/>

Daily articles on communication and leadership are available through the RSS feed on our OpenLab site.

SAMPLE SEQUENCE OF TOPICS AND TIME ALLOCATIONS*

Week 1 will provide students general overview of the course as well as a discussion of course assignments. The first day will start out with a discussion of the importance of communication within group contexts. Aside from job specific skills, excellent communication skills are the number one skill employers look for in potential employees. The second day will involve a discussion about the field of communication studies, paying particular attention to the importance of communication in group situations. Group work is challenging, and it can be frustrating when a member of your group does not do their work or skips group meetings. Communication is most often the way such situations are resolved. During the second session we will establish the ground rules for respectful communication within and between groups for the semester. This means being open to giving and receiving constructive feedback, particularly when it comes to members who are behaving counterproductively.

Readings: Chapter 1

Week 2 will begin discussing what theories are as well as how they apply to communication behaviors. The first session of the week will cover Chapter 2 and focus on communication competence. Research demonstrates that communication competence is directly related to the ability to produce multiple and varied messages. Session 1 will also involve students discussing the results of the Meyers Briggs test, which they

will have completed for homework. Session 2 will involve the discussion of Systems Theory, an important theory related to Group Communication. Groups are typically viewed as a communicative system; one with interconnected parts working together to form a whole in the context of a changing environment. Students will review case studies on “group communication as a system” available in Chapter 2 of the textbook.

Readings: Chapter 2

Week 3 focuses on the ways in which small groups develop as well as how those groups cultivate the “group dynamic” also known as group climate. These discussions will focus on Chapter 3 and 4 of the textbook. The first session of class, which discusses the development of small groups will be the day when we form the 8 small groups of three students. They will work on brainstorming the community project that they will undertake during the remainder of the semester. The second session of class focuses on establishing a strong group dynamic, or “climate”. The second session of class for the week will place students back in their groups and they will complete team-building exercises that will help cultivate a sense of commitment and culture within the group. This will be an important element for each of the groups as they work toward a shared project for the remainder of the semester.

Readings: Chapter 3, Chapter 4

Week 4 is a short week based on the college calendar. The only session of class for the week, students read about Cultural Theory, and explore the influence of culture on the formation and establishment of a group culture. Students will engage in team building exercises and complete (as a group) the case studies on the influence of culture for small group communication. Each of the eight groups will be responsible for one case study, reporting back to the class the influences of culture within their specific case. Each “report” will be delivered as a group and will last 1-2 minutes.

Week 5 focuses on Presentation Skills and Leadership. The first session of the week will review the presentation skills and strategies students may have learned in SPE 1330. Students will be developing and delivering oral presentations later in the semester, so it is important to emphasize the elements of an effective presentation. Students will watch several speech videos and evaluate the speakers to give them experience evaluating speakers. The videos will also provide students with models of both what they should strive to replicate as well as what they should avoid in order to make their presentation as effective as possible. The second session focuses on Chapter 5, which covers intra-group roles and elements of leadership. Class discussion will revolve around students’ own previous experience working in groups, paying special attention to both the various roles for group members as well as the elements of leadership. Finally, students will review several cases involving leadership within groups available in the Appendix of the textbook.

Readings: Chapter 5

Week 6 will include the Midterm Exam as well as a discussion of Defective Decision Making and Problem Solving. The first class of the week students will take the midterm exam. The exam will be 50 questions, 38 multiple-choice and 12 true and false questions will come both from the textbook as well as classroom discussions. Because each question represents two points, the midterm examination will represent 20 total possible points, or 20% of the students’ final grade. The second session of Week 6 will involve the return of students’ midterm examinations. The exam will be discussed in questions from students will be answered by the instructor. The remainder of the class will involve discussions about Chapter 6, Defective Decision Making and Problem Solving. Class time will involve discussions based on the students’ own experience communicating in group situations, as well as discussing case studies available in the Appendix of the textbook.

Readings: Chapter 6

Week 7 is a short week because the college is closed on Tuesday. We will spend the second-class day of the week conducting a workshop for the students' presentation outline, as well as the delivery of their presentations. Project 2 Presentations will begin on Tuesday of the next week, so the workshop will provide students with additional feedback from the instructor as well as their peers. Such feedback will be important as the students continue to develop and revise their information to make their presentation effective.

Week 8 begins Project 2 Presentations. Each student will give a 4–6-minute presentation to the class describing their findings and proposing a project based on those findings. Because the course is capped at 25 students, we will need to complete this assignment over two separate class sessions. The instructor as well as peers will evaluate speakers. Speakers will then go back and watch their own speech video (a video recording of their speech) in order to complete a self-evaluation. The self-evaluation will be due the day after they deliver their speeches.

Week 9 will spend the entire week focusing on Effective Decision Making and Problem Solving. The first class session will focus on the 5 major characteristics of effective decision-making. Students will work within their group to review and discuss the characteristics of effective decision making, and attempt to formulate at least one new additional characteristic that can be added to the list of characteristics for effective decision making. Students will also work in groups to identify these characteristics within specific cases of group communication. Following the group work, the instructor will bring the class back together to have each group articulate why the characteristic that they developed is the best addition to the list. The second session of the week will focus on problem solving. Groups will engage in a series of puzzles requiring them to work together to solve the puzzles (problems). Students can self organize and groups have the option to combine to form larger groups in order to complete the tasks within the given time limits.
Readings: Chapter 7

Week 10 begins students' engagement with Critical Theory as they consider the elements of power within group dynamics. Power reflects a group's ability to influence the attainment of goals sought by both the individual as well as the group. Not only is power group-centered in small group situations, but these situations are ones where no single group member is completely powerless. Students will be encouraged to use class time to draft a reflection essay, where in they analyze the power dynamics of their own small group, the class as a whole, and then consider the three forms of power: dominance, prevention, and empowerment. The second session extends the consideration of power to answer questions such as: 1) Is information power?, 2) what role does the perception of expertise play in power dynamics?, 3) what are the primary drawbacks of punishment and rewards as power resources?, and 4) how does authority become legitimate? Finally, students will explore the verbal and nonverbal indicators of power
Readings: Chapter 8

NO CLASS – SPRING RECESS

Week 12 will continue with the concept of power to explore imbalances and their implications for potential conflict. The first class session will explore imbalances of power and how they have the potential to manifest through either verbal/nonverbal contempt OR through physical violence and other forms of

aggression. Research demonstrates that power is the single most important factor in someone’s ability to be persuaded. A person or group who is in a position of power is not easily persuaded, while a person or group who lacks power is typically more susceptible to persuasion. The second session of week 12 will focus on the process by which power is transacted. During class students will review a case of Patty Hearst and consider the role of influence and conformity. Students will be encouraged to pay special attention to concepts including coalition formation, noncompliance through covert noncompliance, and defiance through active resistance.

Readings: Chapter 9

Week 13 will focus on conflict management within and between groups. The first session of week 13 will focus on definitions of group conflict, and explore the differences between destructive and constructive conflict. Each group will then apply the five styles of conflict management to ten separate cases, identifying why that particular style of conflict management is most effective in that particular situation. The instructor will then bring the class back together to discuss each of the ten cases and facilitate a general discussion about the styles of conflict management. The second session of week 13 will focus on methods for transacting conflict by paying special attention to situational variables, spirals, and the four main strategies for negotiating. Students will work in groups to role play different scenarios between groups; students will be encouraged to craft messages strategically according the four negotiating strategies identified in Chapter 10. The class will then vote to determine which group was the most successful in transacting conflict through negotiation.

Readings: Chapter 10

Week 14 begins four separate class sessions of Project 2 Presentations. Throughout the semester students will have been working within one of eight separate groups of students. This four separate class session block will be the time when each group delivers the findings of their research to the class. Because each group’s presentation should be around 30 minutes long, we can schedule no more than two presentations per single class period. Therefore, the next four separate class sessions will each include two groups presenting their research. During the presentations, the students who are not presenting will be evaluating the effectiveness of their peers. The instructor, using effectiveness in conveying a business/professional content as well as demeanor, will evaluate each of the students presenting.

Week 15 continues the four class sessions of Project 2 Presentations.

Week 16 is a “wrap-up” week. The first-class session of the week will involve a review for the final exam, which covers chapters 6 through 10 from the textbook. We will spend the entire class session discussing the structure and content that will be covered on the final exam. The second session of the week will be the final class of the course. Students will take the final exam, which is comprised of 50 questions each of which count for two points apiece. The Final Exam represents 20% of the final grade.

COURSE INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES/ASSESSMENT METHODS

| LEARNING OUTCOMES | ASSESSMENT METHODS |
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| 1. Demonstrate professionalism and composure across various communication | 1. Identify and adapt to changes in audience characteristics. 2. Incorporate language that captures and maintains audience interest in message. |

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| technologies. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Identify and manage misunderstandings. 4. Demonstrate situational credibility. 5. Demonstrate competence and comfort with information. 6. Recognize time constraints of a communication situation and know how to operate within them. 7. Manage multiple communication goals effectively. 8. Adapt messages to the demands of the situation/context. |
| 2. Possess an understanding of the how to prepare and deliver professional speeches. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draw relationships between prior knowledge and the information provided by the speaker. 2. Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of inference. 3. Identify the types of verbal and nonverbal information. 4. Draw valid inferences from the information. 5. Identify the information as evidence to support views. 6. Assess the acceptability of evidence. 7. Identify patterns of reasoning and judge the validity of arguments. 8. Analyze the information and inferences in order to draw conclusions. |
| 3. Demonstrate active listening skills. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listen with an open mind. 2. Distinguish facts from opinions. 3. Identify main points from supporting details. 4. Demonstrate awareness that one's knowledge, experience, and emotions affect listening. 5. Use verbal and nonverbal behaviors that demonstrate willingness to listen to messages when variables such as setting, speaker, or topic may not be conducive to listening. |
| 4. Display observational and critical evaluation skills by critiquing speeches in a professionally appropriate fashion in oral/written format. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draw relationships between prior knowledge and the information provided by the speaker. 2. Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of inference. 3. Identify the types of verbal and nonverbal information. 4. Draw valid inferences from the information. 5. Identify the information as evidence to support views. 6. Assess the acceptability of evidence. 7. Identify patterns of reasoning and judge the validity of arguments. 8. Analyze the information and inferences in order to draw conclusions. |

GENERAL EDUCATION INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES/ASSESSMENT METHODS

| PATHWAYS LEARNING OUTCOMES INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY | ASSESSMENT METHODS |
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| 1. Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view. | Students will be assessed on ability to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognize and be able to use basic reasoning. 2. Support arguments with relevant and adequate evidence. 3. Identify facts, issues, and problems relevant to the topic. 4. Research effectively information required for message preparation. 5. Demonstrate competence and comfort with information. 6. State intentions and purposes when appropriate. |
| 2. Evaluate evidence and arguments | Students will be assessed on ability to: |

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| critically or analytically. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draw relationships between prior knowledge and the information provided by the speaker. 2. Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of inference. 3. Identify the types of verbal and nonverbal information. 4. Draw valid inferences from the information. 5. Identify the information as evidence to support views. 6. Assess the acceptability of evidence. 7. Identify patterns of reasoning and judge the validity of arguments. 8. Analyze the information and inferences in order to draw conclusions. |
| 3. Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Structure a message for effectiveness with an introduction, main points, useful transitions, and a conclusion. 2. Choose appropriate and effective organizing methods for message. 3. Identify their communication goals. 4. Use summary statement(s) in appropriate contexts. 5. Outline the key points and sub-points of their spoken message. 6. Accomplish their communication goals. 7. Select the most appropriate and effective medium for communicating. |
| 4. Identify and engage with local, national, or global trends or ideologies, and analyze their impact on individual or collective decision-making | <p>Students will be assessed on ability to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and adapt to changes in audience characteristics. 2. Incorporate language that captures and maintains audience interest in message. 3. Identify and manage misunderstandings. 4. Demonstrate situational credibility. 5. Demonstrate competence and comfort with information. 6. Recognize time constraints of a communication situation and know how to operate within them. 7. Manage multiple communication goals effectively. 8. Adapt messages to the demands of the situation/context. |
| 5. Articulate and assess ethical views and their underlying premises. | <p>Students will be assessed on ability to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate an awareness of personal, ideological, and emotional biases. 2. Demonstrate awareness that each person has a unique perspective. 3. Demonstrate awareness that one's knowledge, experience, and emotions affect listening. 4. Use verbal and nonverbal behaviors that demonstrate willingness to listen to messages when variables such as setting, speaker, or topic may not be conducive to listening. 5. Identify instances of bias and prejudice in a spoken message. 6. Specify how bias and prejudice may affect the impact of a spoken message. |
| 6. Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the relationship between the individual and society, including, but not limited to, | <p>Students will be able to review a case-study of professional communication and show how communication is used to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manage and resolve group conflicts effectively. 2. Approach and engage in conversation with new people in new settings with confidence. |

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| anthropology, communications, cultural studies, history, journalism, philosophy, political science, psychology, public affairs, religion, and sociology | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Negotiate effectively. 4. Allow others to express different views and attempt to understand them. 5. Effectively express ideas while respecting others' rights. 6. Convey empathy. 7. Understand and value differences in communication styles. 8. Exhibit open-mindedness about and receptive of another's point of view. 9. Motivate others to participate and work effectively as a team. 10. Understand and implement different methods of building group consensus. 11. Set and manage realistic agendas. |
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SCOPE OF ASSIGNMENTS and other course requirements*

Project 1

A basic self-understanding of personality traits and behavioral preferences is critical to success when working in small groups. When members of a team understand each other's personality traits and their differences and similarities, it can pave the way for smoother interpersonal relationships and more productive teamwork. It can also help the team understand its strengths and weaknesses as a group, helping them plan to take advantage of strengths and shore up weaknesses.

Team Project 1 is an assessment of the team's Myers Briggs Type Inventories (MBTI) and how those personality types might affect the group and its work. For the first part of project 1, you will take the MBTI online at <http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/JTypes1.htm>

Then you will bring a printout of your results to class on February 7th. On the results web page of the HumanMetrics web site, under your "Strength of the preferences %" number, you will see a link to "_____ type description by D. Keirsey." Follow that link and print out the description, read it, and bring it to class on February 7th as well. The MBTI is 72-question test to which respondents answer yes or no, and it takes about 30 minutes to complete.

After you are assigned to teams, your team will complete the MBTI Teamwork Analysis Exercise, which I will provide to you in class. Part 2 of Project 2 is a 10–12-page report on your findings from the analysis. Your report will include: a description of the role of personality types in small group interactions, a summary of each team member's personality type and how it might affect small group interactions, an analysis of your team member's specific personality types in relationship to each other and the implications for small group interactions, and a summary that includes steps your group will take to build on group strengths and overcome group weaknesses indicated by your MBTI teamwork analysis.

Project 2

The first part of Project 2 is due March 20th. This is the Needs Assessment (8 points). Be prepared to give a five-minute presentation to the class describing your findings and proposed project. The second part of project #2 is due May 1st. This is the Final Paper (14 points). In addition to completing a final paper about your group's community action project, as a group you are also required to present your project to the class in a 30-minute presentation (8 points).

The Needs Assessment is a report based on your team's research regarding a community need that you will address in your community action project. This project should be 6-8 pages, follow APA format, using a cover page, proper headings, citations, and page numbering. Your team will identify and research a significant problem that requires action, and provide a written report that assesses the needs inherent in the problem and recommends specific action to be taken by the group. In your report, describe the problem related to your project area, identify the target audience affected by the problem (e.g., community group, nonprofit organization, campus group, etc.), identify the needs related to the audience, identify the action your group will take given the needs of the audience, describe the small group communication processes used to accomplish your tasks, evaluate your performance of those processes, and indicate how you as individuals and as a group will be modifying your future behavior to achieve better small group results more effectively.

The Group Action Project includes a 30-minute presentation and a 12–15-page final report detailing your project action. The team will implement the action identified in the Needs Assessment, submit a 12–15-page final report based on the project, and present an oral presentation based on the project. Your project should involve the coordination of resources beyond member participation. Please do not plan simply to volunteer at a soup kitchen; instead use your Needs Assessment to mobilize campus groups to supply ongoing support for a food bank. The final report must follow APA format, using a cover page, proper headings, citations, and page numbering. The presentation must be a Power Point (or some other presentation software) presentation.

Your written and oral reports should be detailed and specific, covering four areas: (1) Summary of the Problem; (2) Project Implementation (what you did); (3) Project evaluation regarding how well you did and what changes might be made to improve the project (Base your evaluations in part on written evaluations from at least three representatives of the target audience and from team members; these evaluations should be included as appendix items in the report); and (4) a critique of your application of small group processes, including describing the small group communication processes used to accomplish your tasks, evaluation of your performance of those processes, and how you as individuals and as a group modified your behavior to achieve better results as a small group more effectively.

Staple your original, graded Needs Assessment to your final report paper; papers handed in without the original, graded Needs Assessment will be considered late and will not be graded until the Needs Assessment is provided.

Exams

There are two exams in this course, a mid-term and a final, and both are cooperative. You will be randomly assigned to groups of three to four students to complete the group portion of the examination, for which you will have approximately 30 minutes. Then all individuals will complete the individual portion of the exam on their own. The group section of the exam accounts for 75% of your score; the individual section accounts for 25%. The individual section covers exactly the same material as the group section, with a proportionate number of questions from each chapter of the text.

The exams will cover the assigned readings, class discussions, lectures, and activities. The mid-term will cover chapters 1-5 of the text. The final will cover chapters 6-10 of the text. The format will be multiple choice, true-false, and short-answer questions. Multiple-choice questions will have four possible answers. You will choose all answers deemed correct (more than one may be correct—even all four). True-false questions will follow standard form.

Peer Evaluations

After project 2 is complete and you have done your presentation to the class, you will fill out a copy of the peer evaluation form for each member of your team and submit completed forms on May 15th. Your final score for the course will be docked 4 points if you do not submit your evaluations.

METHOD OF GRADING – elements and weight of factors determining the students’ grade*

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| Team Project 1 | = | 10 points |
| Team Project 2 | = | 30 points |
| Midterm Exam | = | 20 points |
| Final Exam | = | 20 points |
| Peer Evaluations | = | 20 points |
| Total | | 100 possible points |

PLAGIARISM AND NYCCT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:

“Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion.” (See pp. 73-76 in the student handbook). The following are some examples of plagiarism:

- Copying another person’s actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes attributing the words to their source.
- Presenting another person’s ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging the source.
- Using information that is not common knowledge without acknowledging the source.
- Failing to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignments.
- **Internet Plagiarism** includes submitting downloaded term papers or parts of term papers, paraphrasing or copying information from the internet without citing the source, and “cutting and pasting” from various sources without proper attribution.
- Speech assignments must be paraphrased into your own language and properly cited.

Accessibility Statement

City Tech is committed to supporting the educational goals of enrolled students with disabilities in the areas of enrollment, academic advisement, tutoring, assistive technologies and testing accommodations. If you have or think you may have a disability, you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments as provided under applicable federal, state and city laws. You may also request services for temporary conditions or medical issues under certain circumstances. If you have questions about your eligibility or would like to seek accommodation services or academic adjustments, you can leave a voicemail at 718 260 5143, send an email to Accessibility@citytech.cuny.edu or visit the Center’s website at <http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/accessibility/> for more information.

Students who miss a scheduled presentation or exam due to illness or medically related emergencies will be referred to the Center for Student Accessibility. The CSA will review any documentation requested and give the student a letter to share with the relevant instructor if accommodations need to be made.

HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is the conviction of the Humanities department that a student who is not in a class for any reason is not receiving the benefit of the education being provided. Missed class time includes not just absences but also latenesses, early departures, and time outside the classroom taken by students during class meeting periods. Missed time impacts any portion of the final grade overtly allocated to participation and/or any grades awarded for activities that relate to presence in class.

HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT COMMITMENT TO STUDENT DIVERSITY:

The Humanities Department complies with the college wide nondiscrimination policy and seeks to foster a safe and inclusive learning environment that celebrates diversity in its many forms and enhances our students' ability to be informed, global citizens. Through our example, we demonstrate an appreciation of the rich diversity of world cultures and the unique forms of expression that make us human.

Updated D. Scannell March 2021