INSTRUCTOR: Angela McGowan, MA

OFFICE: Minne Hall, Room 233, Winona State Campus

CLASS TIME: M 5:40-9:40pm

OFFICE PHONE: 507-457-2909

EMAIL: amcgowan@winona.edu or mcgowan@augsburg.edu

CELL PHONE: 641-303-4269 (call in the event of an emergency)

OFFICE HOURS: Before class or by appointment

CLASSROOM: Please refer to Records & Registration on the Inside Augsburg page for latest information on room assignments.

Course Texts


RATIONALE

The ability to communicate effectively in groups or teams is of growing importance in our complex society. Groups are central to our democratic philosophy of governance. Organizations have become increasingly conscious of hiring individuals who can effectively participate in teams and lead decision-making group discussions. Committees, support groups, friendship groups, and meetings are a commonplace occurrence in our lives. The philosophy behind this course is simple. Individuals with some knowledge about group or team communication should be able to make a distinctive, if modest, contribution to any small group or team in which they participate. Equipped with information about (a) group communication theory, (b) group/team decision-making processes, and (c) potential communication problems in the group/team setting, a student who has completed this course should be able to both function effectively and assist with communication-related problems in group or team situations.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of COMM 355 you should:

1. understand the varied functions and practices of communication in small groups and teams;
2. recognize theories and research findings associated with the study of group and team communication;
3. have expanded your awareness of the various communicative stages of groups and teams;
4. have learned how to apply group communication theories and concepts to naturalistic groups and teams;
5. have developed your critical analysis skills by evaluating the communication in the group you participate in each class period;
6. have improved your critical thinking skills through writing assignments, active learning techniques, and classroom discussion.
COURSEWORK

Individual Work

Individual work will consist of: class participation, 2 application papers, discussion facilitation, and a final paper. For more details about these assignments, see the grading criteria and assignment sheet on Moodle.

- **In-class assignments/participation** will vary depending on the course material covered; this is in addition to daily attendance and active participation. These scores reflect your willingness to participate and your punctuality and attendance in class. Therefore, they cannot be made up because of absence or tardiness.

- The format of this class (group-centered learning) necessitates participation from class members to be successful. A portion of your final grade will reflect your participation and professional conduct in class.

- **Written Assignments** will occur in the form of application papers and a final paper. For more information on these assignments, refer to assignment guidelines handout.

  - **Application papers:** These 2 papers will ask you to apply theories and concepts learned in the course to groups in which you belong. Topics for journals are assigned based on lecture and reading material, as noted in the class schedule.

  - **Discussion facilitation:** This assignment is designed to improve your skill at asking good questions, and to give you a chance to practice group leadership skills. Facilitation duties ask that you take leadership of a class discussion on the day you are assigned. Each student will facilitate discussion during one class session; it must be a session when you are not part of the group presenting.

  - **Final Paper:** Theories learned in the course are applicable to multiple situations occurring throughout society. For the final paper, you are asked to come to terms with a current event that is socially/politically driven, and research the small group directly involved with the occasion. You will explore actual or potential pitfalls (which include anything that might reduce group effectiveness or outcomes) that may surface within the group. Additionally, you should thoroughly research a theory discussed during the course. Using your knowledge of the theory, you will propose a plan of action that the group can take to be effective and reduce the occurrence of pitfalls.

- **Readings** enhance your ability to engage in class discussion and demonstrate your preparedness for class. Therefore, you are required to complete the assigned reading for each class session.

- **Requirements:** Each speaking assignment has a series of minimum requirements pertaining to discussion question formation, reference page, PowerPoint, and the attachment thereof. Failure to complete these will result in a grade deduction for each missing requirement.
Group Work

Group work consists of: in-class assignments and a group presentation. For more details about these assignments, see the grading criteria and assignment sheet on Moodle.

- **In-class assignments** will vary depending on the course material covered. These scores reflect your willingness to participate and your punctuality and attendance in class. Therefore, they cannot be made up because of absence or tardiness.

- **Group presentation, PowerPoint, and reference page**: You and your group members will work together to create a lesson plan in which you teach the class about content read for a given class session. Each group will execute a presentation during 1 class session.

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**POLICIES**

**Attendance**: Attendance is a necessity due to the nature of the course. Your involvement and participation are required – whether it be as a presenter, discussion facilitator, or listener. This course is based on communication, and we cannot communicate if you are not present. Since we only meet 7 times, you are expected to attend every class session.

1. **Lateness**. Late arrivals disrupt class and waste everyone’s time. Arrive to class on time. Penalties will occur if you arrive late.

2. **Courtesy**. Students should observe commonsense, traditional rules of behavior in class (including not chewing gum or wearing a hat when delivering a presentation). As an audience member, please do other students the courtesy of giving interested attention to their presentations. Do not read, sleep, do homework, text message or anything other than listen, take notes, smile, and nod. Failure to follow this guideline will result in a loss of overall participation points.

3. **Presentation day**. If you are absent on a day when you are due to present, and we have not agreed in advance that you should present on another day, you will receive a zero for the assignment.

   - **Excuses not accepted**: I had a test in another class, things are busy at work, I don’t feel like I can do it, I’m not ready, I’m too nervous, I have not prepared enough, I might be sick, I lost my voice, or the speech would be better in a few days.

   - Most importantly, we must discuss your reason and agree that it merits an excuse **before** you miss class.

   - **Dressing on your presentation day**: Speakers should wear appropriate clothes for speaking. On speaking days, aim for something dressier than daily wear, and choose clothes emphasizing intellectual accomplishments rather than revealing physical charms. Speakers may not wear hats, nor chew gum, while they speak.

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**E-mail Courtesy**:

1. Write what the e-mail is about in the subject line
2. Open with a greeting/salutation
3. Sign the e-mail with your full name.
**Missed Presentations:** If you are absent on a day when you are scheduled to present, and we have not agreed in advance that you could present on another day, you will receive a zero for the assignment. There will be almost no excuses accepted for presentation days.

**Writing Considerations:** All work turned in for a grade must be typed, double spaced, and cited according to the APA style manual. All papers, essays, and outlines must be in Times New Roman Font, Size 12. Deductions will occur for not following instructions. For written work, late work is lost work. Thus, I do not give extensions for written assignments. Specific guidelines and additional assignments for each task will be discussed at a later date.

**APA Citations:** All written work must be submitted in APA format. If you have not used APA style before, or need information on how to format your Reference Page and papers, please go directly to the APA website and check the links at [http://www.apastyle.org/elecsource.html](http://www.apastyle.org/elecsource.html) and [http://www.apastyle.org/faqs.html](http://www.apastyle.org/faqs.html).

**Academic Honesty:** I strongly believe that academic misconduct hurts you as a student, your peers, the university, and me. Therefore, in this course academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and will result in a lowered or failing grade for the assignment or the course, depending on the situation.

If I suspect you have plagiarized, I will ask to see the sources of your information and you will not receive a grade until I have verified the source of every idea in question. If you have copied someone else’s words or ideas without giving appropriate credit, I will follow the procedures set forth in the undergraduate catalog.

1. **Plagiarism.** If you use the words or ideas of someone else, you must cite the original source of information in your written and spoken work, including your presentations and essays. If you do not cite your sources, you will be plagiarizing. Copying someone else’s words or ideas without giving that person credit is a very serious offense.

   *Unless the information is common knowledge, give the source credit even when you are paraphrasing (not directly quoting) source’s words. Remember, it is better to over-cite sources than to under-cite.*

2. **Cheating.** Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids or other devices in any academic exercises is not acceptable.

3. **Fabrication.** All sources and facts cited in a speech must be real; inventing facts or sources is academic dishonesty and will be treated accordingly.

4. **Multiple Submission.** The submission of substantial portions of the same academic work (including oral reports), for credit more than once without authorization is dishonest.

5. **Behavioral Integrity.** Behavioral integrity shall consist of demonstrating behaviors that are consistent with expected professional behaviors in the classroom.

The primary responsibility for ensuring adherence to the principle of academic and behavioral integrity rests with students and faculty.

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**Do not request your grades via email.**

Keep all assignments submitted throughout the entire semester in a single folder, along with your grade sheet, to keep track of your own grades.
Grading:

Final grades are based on an absolute point total established by the instructor. Your final grade is a function of the number of points earned in the course divided by the total number of points, yielding a percentage. The scale shown is used to compute final grades. Borderline grades may, at the discretion of the instructor, receive the next higher grade. Borderline cases are defined as scores within two (and only two) points of the next highest grade. You will be given the higher grade based upon your attitude, participation, and improvement on assignments.

Grading Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Scale</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-90</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Exceptional work, inspired, rare. Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89-80</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Strong, consistent work, insightful. Achievement that is significantly above what is required for the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79-70</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Basic, adequate work fulfilling all requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>69-60</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Below par, revealing minimal participation/knowledge. Achievement that is worthy of credit, even though it does not meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59-50</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Achievement not worthy of credit. Will be given for no shows and didn't knows.</td>
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Incompletes:

Only under extreme circumstances or emergencies will I give an incomplete. Incompletes require documentation for consideration and must be arranged in advance with the instructor. If you do not arrange an incomplete, I will assume that you accept the grade you would be assigned given your total points at the end of the semester.

A Word on Grading

After a grade is returned, participants have one week to resolve questions about the grade with the instructor. If you wish to discuss a grade, you must set up an appointment with the instructor no later than one four days after the assignment is returned. Prior to the meeting, it is asked that you go through your speech, the critique sheet filled out by the instructor, and compare the feedback the qualifications for the letter grade you are seeking. A grade will be assumed agreed upon if unquestioned after one week upon return to the participant.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Points</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Your Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application Paper (2@ 30 points)</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion facilitation</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>140</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL POINTS FOR COURSE (approximate)</td>
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<td>400</td>
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If you want to find out where within that category you are, use the following scale:

360-400 A  320-344 B  280-303 C  263-244 D
345-359 B+  304-319 C+  264-279 D+  243-0 F

Method of Instruction
This is not a lecture course. I believe the classroom should be a dynamic place of discovery and growth. Therefore, instead of listening passively, you will spend a significant portion of class time taking part in learning activities, experimenting with new ideas, developing skills, and working with your classmates to understand and apply research methods. Creating an active learning environment requires two things from each of us:

We must all arrive prepared and well informed. Please set aside time outside of class to carefully and thoughtfully read the assigned material.

We must be comfortable experimenting and trying out new ideas. The majority of in-class activities are not graded based on a set outcome. Instead, you will be graded on how enthusiastically you approach learning opportunities, suggest new ideas, support and encourage your classmates, and apply information and activities to life-world situations.
# Course Schedule

(This schedule is tentative; if changes are made you will be notified in class.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
<th>Reading/Preparation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session 1:</strong> Jan. 11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Course Introduction - Print syllabus</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read chapters: Hirokawa: Part I</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Burtis: Chapters 1, 3</td>
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<td><strong>Session 2:</strong> Jan. 25</td>
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<td>Read chapters: Hirokawa: Part II</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Burtis: Chapter 4</td>
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<td><strong>Session 3:</strong> February 8</td>
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<td>Read chapters: Hirokawa: Part III</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Burtis: Chapter 5</td>
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<td><strong>Session 4:</strong> February 22</td>
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<td>Read chapters: Hirokawa: Part IV</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Burtis: Chapter 6</td>
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<td><strong>Session 5:</strong> March 6</td>
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<td>Read chapters: Hirokawa: Part V</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Burtis: Chapter 7</td>
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<td><strong>Session 6:</strong> March 15</td>
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<td>Read chapters: Hirokawa: Part VI</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Burtis: Chapter 8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Session 7:</strong> March 29</td>
<td>Due: Final Paper</td>
<td>Read chapters: Hirokawa: Part VII</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Burtis: Chapter 9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Notes on Assignment Due Dates:

**Application papers.** Topics for application papers are assigned based on lecture and reading material, as noted in the class schedule. You may pick which 2 journal prompts you would like to explore. Therefore, the deadline for this paper is dependent upon which journal prompt you choose and what day we discuss that material.

**Group presentation.** We will have 1 group presentation during 4 class sessions. Consequently, the deadline for this presentation is dependent upon when your group is assigned to present.

**Discussion Facilitation.** Student(s) will lead class discussion each night following the group presentation. Consequently, the deadline for discussion facilitation is dependent upon what night you are assigned.

**Final Paper.** The final paper is due the last night of class. You submit a final copy of your paper, as well as share your findings with the class.

This syllabus is a guideline for the course. As such, its terms may be altered when doing so is, in the opinion of the instructor, in the best interests of the class.