

**SMALL GROUP COMMUNICATION**  
CMST 2064-03, 11:00-12:30 (50% online), M-F, 127 Coates  
Summer 2016

**Dr. Jean “Renee” Edwards**

Office Hours: M-W 1:00-2:00 (sometimes online)

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**CMST 2064 Small Group Communication.** (3) Aspects of group leadership; group discussion and the problems of communication in human relations

In this course, we will study how to work well in groups by focusing on its communication components: creating workable goals, the stages of group development, task and social maintenance roles, membership diversity, leadership, motivation, listening, conflict resolution, problem solving, critical thinking and argumentation, planning and conducting meetings, and issues of ethical behavior.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK**

Engleberg, I. N., & Wynn, D. R. (2013). *Working in Groups: Communication Principles and Strategies* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.

**COURSE GOALS**

Upon completion of the course students will be able to:

- Identify and apply basic group communication concepts
- Demonstrate effective group interaction skills
- Identify and apply group communication strategies and skills that facilitate the achievement of group goals
- Identify and demonstrate essential group discussion strategies and skills
- Explain and apply the principles and practices of ethical communication
- Apply a variety of creative problem solving and critical thinking skills

**ASSIGNMENTS**

Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Final Exam	10%
In-class Attendance and Participation	10%
Online Discussion and Participation	10%
Group Work: Problem-Solving Discussion	15%
Group Work: Group Presentation	15%

## GRADING SCALE

A+	97-100	<b>A = Excellence;</b> Distinguished mastery of course material,
A	93-96.99	exhibited by exceptionally well-prepared completion of assignments,
A-	90-92.99	demonstrating superior effort and understanding of principles
B+	87-89.99	<b>B = Noteworthiness;</b> good mastery of course material, exhibited by
B	83-86.99	above average preparation of assignments, demonstrating original
B-	80-82.99	application of course materials
C+	77-79.99	<b>C = Acceptability;</b> Sufficient mastery of course material, exhibited by
C	73-76.99	satisfactory completion of assignments, demonstrating basic preparation
C-	70-72.99	and correct techniques
D+	67-69.99	<b>D = Deficiency;</b> Inadequate grasp of course materials, exhibited by
D	63-66.99	incomplete preparation of assignments, significant tardiness, poor
D-	60-62.99	comprehension of material
F	0-59.99	<b>F = Unacceptability;</b> Failure to complete the assigned work during the scheduled time or to meet the academic standards of university-level work

Work submitted late (after a deadline) will receive a 10% deduction per day.

Please see the university guidelines, PS-22, for class attendance policies and valid reasons for absences. I understand that emergencies may occur on days when you have responsibilities in class. If this happens, please contact your group members and me as soon as possible so that we can discuss the situation.

## LSU COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

Louisiana State University is an interactive community in which students, faculty, and staff together strive to pursue truth, advance learning, and uphold the highest standards of performance in an academic and social environment. It is a community that fosters individual development and the creation of bonds that transcend the time spent within its gates. To demonstrate my pride in LSU, as a member of its community, I will:

- Accept responsibility for my actions;
- Hold myself and others to the highest standards of academic, personal, and social integrity;
- Practice justice, equality, and compassion in human relations;
- Respect the dignity of all persons and accept individual differences;
- Respect the environment and the rights and property of others and the University;
- Contribute positively to the life of the campus and surrounding community; and
- Use my LSU experience to be an active citizen in an international and interdependent world.

The continued success of LSU depends on the faithful commitment by each community member to these, our basic principles.

## NOTICE

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a coordinator in the Office for Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letter, please meet with me individually to discuss the provisions as soon as possible (no later than the 5<sup>th</sup> class day).

## **MOODLE**

Grades will be recorded in Moodle - you should check it regularly to make sure it is accurate. You must notify me of any problem within three days of grades being recorded. Missing grades will be counted as “zero.”

## **RESPONSIBLE GROUP PARTICIPATION**

As most students are aware, group projects can be challenging. One of the biggest problems occurs when members do not put similar time and effort into the outcome. Some members are highly engaged, even to the point that they take over the process. Other members may slack off. For the group projects in this class, you will receive two grades: one for the whole group (weighted more heavily at 66.7%) and one that reflects individual effort (33.3%). If your group includes members whose participation does not meet expectations, you should engage in open communication by dealing with each other tactfully and directly, either individually or as a group. After your conversation, if participation has not improved sufficiently, you should bring the problem to my attention. Group members whose work is significantly sub-standard may be counseled, disciplined, and/or removed from the group (thereby receiving a “0” on the assignment).

## **ONLINE COURSEWORK**

This is the first time I am teaching online and it is the first time CMST 2064 has been offered online here at LSU. If you have suggestions for improving the class, especially the online component, please feel free to share them with me. I have worked with the LSU Faculty Technology Center and the Online Learning Cohort to learn more about online teaching. Research on teaching suggests that students learn more in hybrid classes than they do in either fully online or fully in-person courses (this surprised me!). I also consulted with some undergraduates who have taken online courses at other universities – they did not like long video lectures or lectures that repeated material in the textbook. One said that her online class “made” her read the textbook, which she really liked (this also surprised me!).

We will use the online portion of the class to cover basic material and the in-person component of the class to practice skills important for small group communication. Written assignments will ask you to draw connections between theory and practice.

## **MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

### **1. Exams (50% of final grade)**

Exams 1 & 2 will be objective tests of your comprehension of material primarily from the textbook. The textbook includes a number of tools for helping you with the material including the Chapter Outline at the beginning of each chapter and the Summary Study Guide at the end of each chapter. The Final Exam will be an open book, online essay that you complete during the exam window.

### **2. In-class Attendance and Participation (10%)**

For the days we meet in person, attendance and engagement are important. In addition to participating in exercises and activities, you will observe and evaluate other groups doing their problem-solving

discussions and group presentations. DO NOT use technology or engage in other activities during class time for personal reasons (unrelated to the class). Cell phones and other devices should be silent and not disruptive. For most in-class activities, you will receive full credit (100%) if you are here and participate. Some in-class activities may be graded on a 0-100% scale.

### 3. Online Discussion and Participation (10%)

For online days, engagement and participation are important. Your work will be evaluated in two ways (each is 5% of the final grade).

For the first component (5%) you will receive full credit for completing 1-2 page written assignments fully and submitting them on Moodle by the posted deadlines. For example, you will write answers to questions over textbook material. Other assignments will be analyses in which you link concepts from the textbook to activities conducted in class or out-of-class, videos or movies you watch, and case studies in the textbook. You may participate in an online, asynchronous discussion with your group and make a contribution to a “voicethread.”

For the second component (5%), on July 5, you will submit a portfolio that includes your best written work. You should select four assignments for which you did your best analyses of small group communication and wrote clearly and correctly. Your portfolio will be evaluated using the following criteria:

	<b>A level</b>	<b>B level</b>	<b>C level</b>
Content	-Student uses correct terminology, appropriate information to make their point, and good use of examples and counterexamples -Posts are concise and to the point -Student elaborates statements with accurate explanations and evidence	-Some vocabulary is used correctly; some is not -Ideas are correct, but posts are meandering and not concise -Some use of facts or examples are used, but more needs to be used to more effectively convey their point	-Comments demonstrated an incorrect grasp of basic class concepts -Didn't make direct connections to relevant course material -Student does not provide support for their ideas. -Ideas are difficult to understand
Style	-Correct grammar and spelling	-Some grammar usage and spelling mistakes	-Numerous grammar usage and spelling mistakes

### 4. Group Work: Problem-Solving Discussion (15%)

For this assignment, you and several classmates will assume that you work for a large corporation, the 2064 Company. Because of your successful history with the company, you have been assigned by your manager to a group that includes employees from different divisions of the corporation. Your group will be tasked with making an important corporate decision based on research you conduct individually and as a group. As a final step in making your decision, you and your teammates will hold a problem-solving discussion *in class*. You and the group will be evaluated according to the quality of your group discussion (10%). Each individual member will be evaluated by other group members for their level of participation (5%).

### 5. Group Work: Group Presentation (15%)

For this assignment, you and your group will develop and deliver a presentation to the class on some topic; the topic will either be assigned or based on interests in the class. Your grade will be based on the quality of the presentation (10%) and your individual contribution to the group effort (5%).

## DAILY SCHEDULE

### Notes:

1. Assigned reading must be completed BEFORE class
2. Face-to-face meeting days are in **bold**
3. Online meeting days are labeled and highlighted

Date	Day	Topic	Assignment	Class vs Online
June 6	M	Intro to Class and Each Other		
June 7	T	Small Group Communication	Ch 1	
June 8	W	Group Development	Ch 2	
June 9	TH	Group Membership	Ch 3	ONLINE
June 10	F	Diversity in Groups	Ch 4	ONLINE
June 13	M	Group Leadership	Ch 5	
June 14	T	EXAM 1 + Activity	Ch 1-5	
June 15	W	Listening in Groups	Ch 7	ONLINE
June 16	TH	Conflict and Cohesion	Ch 8	ONLINE
June 17	F	Problem Solving in Groups	Ch 9	ONLINE
June 20	M	Critical Thinking and Argumentation in Groups	Ch 10	ONLINE
June 21	T	Planning and Conducting Meetings	Ch 11	ONLINE
June 22	W	Technology and Virtual Groups	Ch 12	
June 23	TH	EXAM 2 + Activity	Ch 7-12	
June 24	F	Research Day		ONLINE OPTION
June 27	M	Problem Solving Discussion – 2-3 groups		
June 28	T	Problem Solving Discussion – 2-3 groups		
June 29	W	Principles of Group Presentations	Appendix	
June 30	TH	Group Time + Activity		
July 1	F	Virtual Group Meetings		ONLINE
July 4	M	HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY		
July 5	T	Nonverbal Communication	Ch 6	ONLINE
July 6	W	Group Presentations – 2-3 groups		
July 7	TH	Group Presentations – 2-3 groups		
July 8	F	Review and Wrap-up		ONLINE
July 9	SA	FINAL EXAM		ONLINE