

CMST 2064 Small Group Communication Syllabus Fall 2018

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Office:

Office Hours: 10:30 am-11:30 am MWF, 11:00am-12:00pm Tuesday and Thursday

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General Information:

Description

CMST 2064 is a course designed to familiarize students with the aspects of group leadership, group discussion, and the problems of communication in human relations. Aiming to develop students' skills in decision-making, problem-solving, and leadership, this course sets the foundation for enhanced involvement in interpersonal and small group experiences, increasing effective communication and productivity. With the broad overview of both theory and practices in small group communication, CMST 2064 provides an opportunity for students to further develop both communication and leadership competence.

Expectations and Goals

CMST 2064 will enable students to demonstrate an understanding of historical, cultural, and philosophical complexity that supports sophisticated discourse.

As a result of this course, students should:

1. Understand the principles of human interaction; of group functions, dynamics, and roles. Attain problem-solving and conflict management skills.
2. Master factual knowledge of interpersonal communication.
3. Recognize communication patterns and their implications for social relations.
4. Develop a responsible attitude towards communication, both in personal and professional setting.
5. Understand and utilize the verbal and nonverbal elements essential for exemplary communication.

Course Requirements

Required Text

Engleberg, Isa N. & Wynn, Dianna R., **Working In Groups: Communication Principles and Strategies** 7th ed.

Course Format

This course will combine a group work and class discussion format. You will need your book in class.

Student Requirements:

As this class largely consists of in-class exercises and group discussion, please respect the work and the presentations of your classmates.

Listen to the questions, arguments, and presentations. Show support. You will be required at one point or the other to provide feedback to your peers.

Do not use your phone during the class.

Do not use personal computers, tablets, and similar devices during the class, unless you are doing group work. You will learn how to deal with a distracted audience, but you don't need to play the part of that audience for your classmates.

Be on time. Do not disrupt your classmates' work with your late arrival.

Controversial subjects may arise. Be open-minded and considerate of your classmates' views and opinions.

If you are found using your cellular phone 5 points will be deducted from your class participation grade.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance will be taken every class. Your attendance at each class meeting is expected. You are expected to attend all classes just as you would be expected to go to work every day if this was any other job. Your class participation grade will be determined based on in-class discussion participation, assignments/exercises, and analysis of in-class presentations throughout the semester.

Participation points from in-class activities cannot be made up either. If you miss a participation activity because of a university excused absence, you must provide documentation the NEXT day you are in class in order for those points to be excused.

Missed In-Class Assignments and Exam

If you know that you will miss a scheduled exam due to a university-approved absence, please speak to me before the exam date so we can make appropriate arrangements. If you have an excused absence, accompanied by a note, describing the date and reason of your absence, you can make up a missed exam within one week of its date. No make-ups will be allowed after this time and zero (0) points will be given for that assignment.

No make-ups will be allowed for missed deadlines on out-of-class assignments.

I understand that emergencies occur on days when assignments are due and in these situations you should contact me immediately. Email me and we can discuss

the situation. Be sure to do this immediately so we can make new arrangements for turning in an assignment at a later time. **Additionally, you must present valid documentation (doctor's note, etc.) the first day you return to class. If you are able to present a valid university excuse, your grade will not suffer. However, you will not be able to turn in an assignment late without a valid university excuse.**

Attendance and class participation (100 points). Communication is an inherently participative activity. Class attendance is expected, and participation in group class activities is a part of being a group member. You are expected to come to class prepared, having read the assigned chapter/material, and prepared to take part in the discussion. Everyone will begin with 100pts. For each class missed 3 pts will be deducted from your 100pt total. Attendance will be kept each class.

Plagiarism

There will be no tolerance for plagiarism. You are to assume that all assignments in this course are individual assignments unless explicit instructions are provided for a group project. Any student found to have presented material not their own (either downloaded from the internet or written by another student) will immediately be reported to the Dean of Students. The Internet has made plagiarism very easy and very tempting. Hundreds of sites offer papers, research, writing, and editing. The ease with which such material is available over the Internet does not lessen the seriousness of claiming material from the Internet as your own. See the LSU policies on plagiarism here: <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/instruction/plagiarism2.html>.

Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states: "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 of Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations can be arranged." After you receive the accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.

Assignments

Social Activity (25points): The first assignment you will be given is a group assignment, and has been a very popular assignment in previous semesters. You must meet with your group outside of class for a social activity that encourages communication. After the activity, each person will turn in a short paper detailing her or his experience during the activity, as well as any initial perceptions gained through the activity.

Students will be graded on their work on:

- **Exams (500 points).** There will be three exams held during the regular semester for 150 points each and a final exam for 50 points, held during final exam week. The examinations will follow the chapters and class discussions, consisting of multiple choice questions. Exams will consist of two parts: a group part (25 questions) and an individual part (25 questions). Groups will work on the first part of the exam together. Immediately after the group part of the exam, each student will complete an individual exam as well. Each part of the exam will cover the same material and be worth 50% of the total exam grade. Both scores will be added to get the final exam grade.

- **Group activities (400 points).** At the beginning of the semester, the class will be randomly assigned into groups of four or five. Besides class work, the groups will complete several activities throughout the semester:
 - **In-class case studies (50 points).** Two group case studies will be assigned during the semester for 25 points each, asking you to apply what we have discussed up to that point in the semester. These case studies must be done in class and cannot be made up if missed without an excused absence. Guidelines for case study reports will be provided on Moodle and in class.
 - **Group presentation 1 (150 points).** This is a project for the first half of the semester. You will be assigned a topic at the beginning of the semester and address it in a 10-minute presentation in October.
 - **Group presentation 2 (150 points).** This is a project for the second half of the semester. Each group will invent/identify an original product/business idea that can be marketed within the Baton Rouge area. The group will present the project to the class in a 15-minute presentation at the end of the semester. The goal is to dazzle your classmates and make them want to buy the product/take part in the project. Further guidelines are available on Moodle. You can start working on this project whenever your group agrees to tackle it, at the beginning of the semester or after the first presentation is done.
 - Two classes will be dedicated during the semester purely to project group work, check the schedule for dates.
 - Several components will comprise the 150 points for each presentation, such as the scope and the complexity of the project, how much time and effort it required, impact on others, quality of the presentation itself, etc. The grading grid will be available on Moodle.

Group evaluation (25 points). Groups are fundamentally interdependent, which means that the actions of one group member impact the entire group. Much of the work done in this class will be done in your groups and will require the full participation of all the group members. Unfortunately, this does not always happen. One group member may have trouble delegating tasks, takes control, and does most of the work. Another group member may slack off, not contribute to group exams or group meetings, knowing that the others will pick up the slack. Numerous other problems may occur. To ensure that the semester grade adequately reflects the amount of student's group participation, each student will grade his/her fellow group members at the end of the semester, along with an explanation for each grade. Specific grading criteria and grid will be provided on Moodle.

Grading Scale

A+	97-100
A	93-96.99
A-	90-92.99
B+	87-89.99
B	83-86.99
B-	80-82.99
C+	77-79.99
C	73-76.99
C-	70-72.99
D+	67-69.99
D	63-68.99
D-	60-62.99
F	59.99 and below

Please note, in accordance with the Federal Buckley Amendment, grades will **not** be discussed through email, over the phone, or in class. You **must** discuss a grade in person during office hours within two (2) weeks of receiving the grade. After two weeks, discussion and changes to grades will **not** be possible.

Course Assignment	Percentage of the Grade	Maximum Points
Attendance and participation	10%	100
Group activities	40%	400
Exams	50%	500

Do you have a major?

Business leaders and other professionals recognize the importance of developing communication skills and analysis. Alan Greenspan, for example, stated, "To succeed, you will soon learn, as I did, the importance of a solid foundation in the basics of education – literacy, both verbal and numerical, and communication skills." We hope this course contributes to your success.

To learn more about communication, you may want to major or minor in the Department of Communication Studies. The program explores how people sustain and change, experience, and make sense of the world through symbolic action. Students develop conceptual skills to analyze written, oral, and visual messages. Students gain practical experience in such areas such as public speaking, group decision-making, performance, and film. Such skills are elemental to careers in business, government, law, social services, and the arts.

A major in Communication Studies requires 36 hours including 12 hours of core classes and 12 hours at the 3000 or 4000 level. A minor requires 15 hours with one core class and 6 hours at the 3000 level or above.

More information is available at www.lsu.edu/cmst or by contacting our undergraduate advisor Mr. Kent Filbel (kfilli@lsu.edu), whose hours are posted at his office, 135 Coates Hall.