

Group Processes (COMM 5120)

Fall 2019

M 6:00-8:50; AUB 202

Instructor: Iftekhar Ahmed

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Office Hours: M 8:30 – 10:30 AM; by appointment*

Course Description

This is a graduate level survey course for communication students. This course is designed to provide orientation to conceptual aspects of small group and theoretical and practical examination of task group processes. This course will examine the role of communication and technology in group development, maintenance, decision making, leadership, and performance.

Specific objectives of the course include the following:

- a. To familiarize participants with group communication theories, concepts, and issues
- b. To familiarize participants with task group/team processes
- c. To familiarize participants with methods commonly used in group research and to consider methodological difficulties that communication research must overcome
- d. Identify trends in theory development and methodological changes over time
- e. To familiarize participants with commonly used methods and techniques of applied group communication and team training

Course Requirements

Readings: This course will use selected readings from journals, books, and other scholarly sources. Details of reading materials are provided as a supplement to the syllabus. You should do the readings assigned for each day and come prepared to talk.

Journal: This is an individual written assignment. You need to keep a journal of readings and discussions where you synthesize your understanding of reading/discussion materials, and pose questions and comments about discussed topics/articles. Weekly journal entry usually ranges from 250 – 300 words. You will submit your journal entry every Friday. There will be a total of 10 entries during the semester. (100 points total; 10X10)

Discussion Questions: This is an individual written assignment. Two times during the semester, I will propose either theoretical or methodological questions for you to answer. You need to

*It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to schedule an appointment outside of office hours with me, and give me at least 48 hours advanced notice of needing a meeting.

prepare an answer based on the assigned texts and class discussions plus some additional exploration of the topic. Answers should be turned to me via Canvas within seven days from the date you receive the question. (100 points total; 2x50)

Team Training Assignment: As a group, you will develop and submit a proposal for a 2-hour team training session to improve organizational efficiency. This assignment will follow the method and guidelines that we use to develop organizational training sessions. This assignment is divided into four major sections: Investigation, Analysis, Content Development, and Delivery. We will discuss more about this assignment during 2nd and 3rd weeks of the semester. (300 points total)

Brief Analysis Paper: This is an individual assignment. You will develop and submit an analysis of a particular group communication topic of your choice. Your topic can be theoretical (e. g., “Conflict” or “Leadership”) or applied (e. g., “How to conduct better meetings?”). You will need to do some research on your topic. The analysis paper contains a total of 300 points. The paper will usually be between 2000 - 2500 words excluding title page and references. We will discuss about possible topics, organization of the paper, and formatting during early semester and decide on additional readings based on your topic choice. You can submit draft versions of your analysis paper by November 29, 2019 for comments. A final version of the paper is due by December 10, 2019. (300 points total)

General Course Policies

Submissions: Submit word documents only. All submissions need to be typewritten (8.5 X 11 letterpage, 12 point Times New Roman font, double spaced, 1 inch margin all sides). The papers will generally follow APA (6th Edition) writing style and formatting plus additional instructions (if any) provided by the instructor. All submissions will be done via Canvas.

Late Submissions: Except under the most extreme circumstances (and documentation of those circumstances is required), late work will be penalized. If you encounter an emergency situation of some kind, it is best to communicate with me about it earlier rather than later. Any assignment submitted after the deadline will be graded for half credit. This is a severe penalty, but it is better than zero points (plus, you get the feedback on the assignment). It is not fair to others who met the deadlines if I accept your's late. I will not accept any submissions more than one week late.

Incompletes: Grades of Incomplete are governed by university policy. A faculty member can award an Incomplete only in cases where students meet these conditions: (1) the student has completed 75% of the work for the semester, and (2) the grade is warranted by a military or medical excuse.

Attendance: Attendance in this course is vital to your grade. Class sessions will employ case readings and application of content material. Students should come prepared to discuss the readings and the cases. Hence, it is important that students keep up with the readings.

Classroom Etiquette: Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at <http://policy.unt.edu/policydesc/code-student-conduct-and-discipline-18-1-11>

Emergency Situations: In case of university closure due to emergency situations, such as inclement weather or a widespread infectious disease (e.g., swine flu), I will communicate with you via e-mail.

Academic Integrity: All students shall adhere to the Code of Student Conduct outlined in the graduate catalog. Its provisions include the following statements regarding academic dishonesty:

Cheating. The willful giving or receiving of information in an unauthorized manner during an examination, illicitly obtaining examination questions in advance, using someone else's work for assignments as if it were your own, or any other dishonest means of attempting to fulfill requirements for a course.

Plagiarism. The intentional or unintentional use of another's words or ideas as if they were your own without giving credit to the source, including but not limited to failure to acknowledge direct quotations.

Policies and procedures regarding adjudication of acts of academic dishonesty are available in the UNT Policy Manual at [http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student Affairs- Academic Integrity.pdf](http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student%20Affairs-Academic%20Integrity.pdf)

Access: I cooperate fully with the Office of Disability Accommodation to provide reasonable accommodation to students who require it. Students who wish to self-identify should register with the ODA by the second class day.

ODA Statement: The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will

provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940-565-4323.

Library Copier: Students conducting research in the Communication Studies Library associated with departmental coursework have access to a printer/photocopier located in the office adjacent to the library. We encourage students to make use of this resource to print research accessed online in the library or to copy essays from any of the department's holdings. Students may not use this resource for other purposes, such as printing courses assignments, class notes, scripts, etc. Students who use the copier for uses other than those outlined above will lose copying privileges.

Disclaimer: This syllabus should not be considered a binding contract on the part of the instructor, who reserves the right to change any aspect of the course without prior notice.