

**Seminar in Communication Processes (COMM 5820)**  
**Group Processes**

**Spring 2018**  
**M 6:00-8:50; GAB 327**

Instructor: Iftekhar Ahmed

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Office Hours: M 5:00 – 6:00 PM; T 9:00 - 11:00 AM; by appointment\*

\*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.

**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

**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.

**Discussion Questions:** This is an individual written assignment. Three times during the semester, I will propose either theoretical or methodological questions for you to answer. You need to 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 e-mail within seven days from the date you receive the question. (150 points total; 3x50)

**Research Paper Proposal:** As a pair, you will develop and submit a proposal for a research paper following *Small Group Research* or *Group Dynamics* guidelines. This paper contains a total of 250 points. A research proposal usually contains a thorough literature review followed by hypothesis or research questions, a brief method section, and range between 3000 – 4000 words excluding tables and references. We will discuss more about this assignment during 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> weeks of class. Proposals are due by March 18, 2018.

**Complete Research Paper:** As a pair, you will develop and submit a research paper based on your proposal for this course. The final paper contains a total of 500 points. The paper will usually be between 8000 - 9000 words including everything. We will discuss about possible topics during early semester, decide on additional readings based on your topic choice, and discuss data and analysis issues. You can submit draft versions for comments. A final version of the paper is due on May 7, 2018.

### **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 (6<sup>th</sup> Edition) writing style and formatting plus additional instructions (if any) provided by the journal of your choice. Use the following subject head when you e-mail me your submissions: 5820\_SP18\_ [Your last name or your group number]\_[Paper title: PROP or RP or DQ]. Please submit all versions through e-mail to my official e-mail address.

**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. Research proposal or the final project submitted after 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 paper). 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.

**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.

**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.

**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)

**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.

**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.

**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.

### Daily Schedule

Date	Topic
1/22/2018	Introduction and Overview
1/29/2018	Perspectives of Small Groups I
2/5/2018	Perspectives of Small Groups II
2/12/2018	Group Development and Structuring Processes
2/19/2018	Task Groups, Teams, and Teamwork I
2/26/2018	Task Groups, Teams, and Teamwork II
3/5/2018	Task Groups, Teams, and Teamwork III
3/19/2018	Task Groups, Teams, and Teamwork IV
3/26/2018	Virtual Groups and Networks I
4/2/2018	Virtual Groups and Networks II
4/9/2018	Virtual Groups and Networks II
4/16/2018	Methodology in Group Research I
4/23/2018	Methodology in Group Research II
4/30/2018	Concluding Discussions

**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.