

CMST& 230: SMALL GROUP COMMUNICATION - Spring Quarter 2014

R201, DAILY, 8:30-9:20AM

Instructor: Mike Barthel Office hours: Wed 9:30-10:30am (R230L) & by appointment
Instructor Email: michael.barthel@bellevuecollege.edu
Course website: [http:// bc.instructure.com](http://bc.instructure.com)
Group in Society student study site: <http://www.sagepub.com/gastilstudy>

Course Description

This course reviews recent theory and research on small group communication and relates these writings to your own experiences in small groups. Topics covered include group formation, leadership, conflict, decision making, intergroup conflict, learning in groups, and more. The course's primary objective is to teach you to think critically about how you and others communicate in groups, thereby improving the experiences you (and your fellow group-mates) have throughout your life. After completing the course, you should have an integrated knowledge of contemporary theories of small group behavior, and you should better understand the relationship between theorizing about small groups and how you manage your own participation in them.

Course Outcomes

After completing this class, students should be able to:

1. Identify the language, listening, and nonverbal communication skills that are needed to promote a positive communication climate in a group setting.
2. Analyze the influence of culture on group interaction.
3. Identify the actions needed to conduct an effective meeting and promote group productivity.
4. Analyze the methods of decision making used by a group.
5. Evaluate how theoretical group problem solving models can be used to help a group accomplish a task.
6. Identify methods groups can use to stimulate critical and creative thinking while problem solving.
7. Evaluate how leadership theory can be used to help a group accomplish its goals.
8. Identify different methods for managing conflict within a group.

Assignments and Grading

The class will choose the grading system through networked small group discussions on the second day.

Grading System

Quizzes 10%
Two exams 30%
Group project 20%
Journal assignment 25%
Class participation 15%

- Seven quizzes you will complete this quarter test you on basic concepts and ideas introduced in the readings. They are designed to have a steady assessment of what you are learning as the quarter progresses. When calculating final grades, each person's lowest quiz score will be dropped. These in-class quizzes cannot be made up, but missing a quiz will count as your 'dropped' score.
- The two exams will include multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions that test your ability to understand key concepts and theories and apply that knowledge.

- The group project will be described in detail in Week 2. You and your fellow group members will be graded based on the quality of (a) the in-class presentation, (b) the group materials you produce, and (c) your critical self-evaluations. More details about that project will be given in the project description.
- Nine journal assignments will help you reflect on your experiences in small groups outside of class. Almost every week, you will turn in one-page journal entries—short analyses of a real small group that you participate in (or have participated in) outside of class. These will be turned in online. The assignment details are at the end of the syllabus.
- We will also take overall class participation into consideration when setting final grades. You should attend every one of the scheduled classes unless an emergency prevents you from doing so. Since this course is about small group communication, it is appropriate that you participate in class discussions and in-class group activities.

Grading Scale:

94-100%= A	73-75.9%= C
90-93.9%= A-	70-72.9%= C-
86-89.9%= B+	66-69.9%= D+
83-85.9%= B	60-65.9%= D
80-82.9%= B-	0-59.9%= F
76-79.9%= C+	

Required Text and Supplementary Readings

The principal reading for this course is a book, *The Group in Society*, by John Gastil (SAGE, 2009). Additional readings, and many good articles are available at the *Group in Society* student study site (<http://www.sagepub.com/gastilstudy/articles.htm>).

Policy on Computers/Phones/Mobile Devices in Class

Students are welcome to bring laptops and other electronic devices to class for taking notes or productively using the web, but as you know, there is tremendous potential for disruption and distraction with texting, emailing, and web-surfing during class. *Any texting, calling, or emailing must happen outside class time.* The research verdict is clear and negative on the utility of multitasking (http://blogs.computerworld.com/14789/the_multitasking_myth). Class is more enjoyable and productive for all of us if we keep our focus on the class for the duration of the time together.

DRC

The Disability Resource Center serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. If you are a student who has a disability or learning challenge for which you have documentation or have seen someone for treatment and if you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact us as soon as possible. If you are a student with a documented autism spectrum disorder, there is a program of support available to you.

The DRC office is located in the Library Media Center for the spring 2014 quarter or you can call our reception desk at 425.564.2498. Deaf students can reach us by video phone at 425-440-2025 or by TTY at 425-564-4110. Please visit the DRC website for application information into the program and other helpful links at <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc>. Please meet with me if you have any questions.

Classroom Conduct: When engaged in your role as a student, please be constructive in your comments. Students are expected to model the behavior discussed in the content of this course. You may certainly disagree and debate online during discussion; in this and at all times, you are required to treat your classmates with respect. Please consult with <http://bellevuecollege.edu/artshum/policy.html> to review the Arts and Humanities Division

statement of Student Procedures and Expectations and/or contact your instructor should you have any questions or concerns.

The final exam for this course will be held in class, the final week of the quarter.

IMPORTANT LINKS

Bellevue College E-mail and access to MyBC: All students registered for classes at BC are entitled to a network and e-mail account. Your student network account can be used to access your student e-mail, log in to computers in labs and classrooms, connect to the BC wireless network and log in to MyBC. For your account: <https://bellevuecollege.edu/sam>

Find current campus locations for all student labs by visiting the Computing Services website - <http://depts.bellevuecollege.edu/helpdesk/students/computerlabs/>

Public Safety: The Bellevue College (BC) Public Safety Department's well trained and courteous non-commissioned staff provides personal safety, security, crime prevention, preliminary investigations, and other services to the campus community, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Their phone number is 425.564.2400. Public Safety is located in K100 and on the web at: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/publicsafety/>

Academic Calendar: The Bellevue College Academic Calendar is separated into two calendars. They provide information about holidays, closures and important enrollment dates such as the finals schedule. **Enrollment Calendar:** <http://bellevuecollege.edu/enrollment/calendar/deadlines> On this calendar you will find admissions and registration dates and important dates for withdrawing and receiving tuition refunds.

College Calendar: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/enrollment/calendar/holidays/1314.asp> This calendar gives you the year at a glance and includes college holidays, scheduled closures, and quarter end and start dates.

Course Schedule

Week/Day	Topic/Task in class	Reading due	Assignment/ Quiz due
Week 1: Introduction to Small Groups			
April 7	Introduction to the course		
April 8	Introductory activity		
April 9	The importance of studying small groups / defining groups	GIS, ch. 1	
April 10	Surowiecki discussion Hamburg cell activity	Surowiecki, <i>The Wisdom of Crowds</i> , chapter 1	Quiz
April 11	Methods of studying groups		
Week 2: Small Groups In Society			
April 14	What is a good theory? Embedding groups into society	GIS, ch. 2	Journal entry 1
April 15	Self-organized work groups activity		
April 16	Project intro Groups activity		
April 17	Juries	GIS, ch. 3	Journal entry 2
April 18	Jury activity		
Week 3: Group Decision Making			
April 21	Polarization and group decision-making		Quiz
April 22	Decision-making activity		Journal entry 3
April 23	Structuring decision-making	GIS, ch. 4	Quiz
April 24	Structuring: discussion		Journal entry 4
April 25	Mapping decision-making activity		
Week 4: Discussion Procedures			
April 28	Moon landing activity		
April 29	Parliamentary forms	Reading TK	
April 30	Group work day		
May 1	Group composition activity	GIS, ch. 5	
May 2	Group composition lecture		Quiz
Week 5: Idea and Information Flow			
May 5	IDEO activity		
May 6	Nominal group activity Exam review		
May 7	Exam 1 pt. 1		
May 8	Exam 1 pt. 2		
May 9	Group work day		

Week/Day	Topic/Task in class	Reading due	Assignment/ Quiz due
Week 6: Team Leadership			
May 12	Team roles lecture	GIS, ch. 6	Journal entry 5
May 13	Team roles activity		
May 14	Status differentials activity		
May 15	Family communication	GIS, ch. 7	Quiz
May 16	Group work day		Journal entry 6
Week 7: Group Bonding and Social Identity			
May 19	Some Kind of Monster activity		
May 20	Personal conflict styles activity		
May 21	Social identities lecture	GIS, ch. 8	Quiz
May 22	Noogler exercise		Journal entry 7
May 23	Group work day		
Week 8: Groups and Terrorism; Learning and Growth in Groups			
May 26	HOLIDAY; NO CLASS		
May 27	Public Conversation exercise		
May 28	Emotional groups lecture	GIS, ch. 9	Quiz
May 29	Support group activity		Journal entry 8
May 30	Group work day		
Week 9: Group presentations			
June 2	Group presentations		
June 3	Group presentations		
June 4	Group presentations		
June 5	Group presentations		
June 6	Group presentations		
Week 10: Synthesis and Wrap-Up			
June 9	Social groups integration	GIS, ch. 10	Journal entry 9
June 10	Deliberation exercise		
June 11	Exam review		
June 12	Exam 2 pt. 1		
June 13	Exam 2 pt. 2		

Journal assignments (in order by number)

Each student will pick one real-life group in which they are, or were, an active member, and all of your journal entries will focus on this real-life group. The group should be one to which you still belong, but if not, it should have been a fairly long-lived group. It can be from 3 to about 30 people, and must have made decisions of some kind. (Even a social group might make decisions about how to spend the weekend, where to eat, etc.)

Journal entries should be about one page single-spaced (approx. 400-500 words). They must be turned in online, and will not be accepted over email or in hard copy format. They are due by the beginning of class on the date listed on the syllabus.

Complete these only after doing the reading for the corresponding week.

1. Describe your journal group in general terms. How large is it? How often does it meet? What kinds of decisions does it make? What are its most important features? (Be sure to protect the anonymity of the group members in your descriptions.)
2. How does the behavior of your journal group reflect the larger organization, community, or society in which the group exists? Give an example of specific group behaviors that illustrate this connection.
3. Who influences whom in your journal group? If you want to persuade someone in the group, what strategies do you deploy? What's the most effective means of influencing *you* in this group?
4. What procedures—formal or informal—does your journal group use to conduct its discussions? When there is a disagreement, how does it reach a final decision?
5. Who are the leaders in your journal group, or is there only one? What kind of leadership style(s) are used in your group? How effective are the leaders in your group?
6. How strong are the personal ties among the members of your journal group? What are the key relational dialectics in your group (see Table 7.1 in *GIS*), and how are they managed?
7. Groups often converge on a set of symbols and self-understandings that define them as a unique group. What are some of the ritual ways of speaking or describing itself that you've witnessed in your journal group? Try to recall the origins of these.
8. Over time, how has your group grown and developed? Reference Table 9.1 in *GIS* and explore how your group's behavior relates to the different developmental stages.
9. Look through the array of concepts in Figure 10.2 and trace one set of concepts that relates to your experience in your journal group. Connect at least four concepts, including a factor that influences your group process, one process and one outcome feature, and a way in which the group outcome, in turn, influences other factors.