

## Speech 225: Small Group Communication

Autumn 2007

M-F 12:30am-2:40pm; Room R211

**Instructor:** Whitney Anspach

**Office Hours:** M & W 2:50-3:50 in R230, and by appointment

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### Required Readings

Rothwell, J. D. (2004). *In mixed company: Communicating in small groups and teams (5<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth / Thomson Learning.

Any additional readings will be available as pdf documents on our course website.

*Note:* The assigned readings are critical to your understanding and appreciation of course concepts. I have tried to select a textbook and supplementary reading that will introduce you to important theoretical concepts and provide concrete examples of issues related to small group communication. In some cases, the readings will provide valuable background for issues we will discuss further in class. At other times, the readings will supplement what we discuss in class by addressing issues and concepts that we do not have time to cover in class sessions. Please complete the day's listed readings prior to coming to class.

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### Course Description

The focus of this course is exploring how to effectively communicate in small groups. Throughout the quarter we will examine aspects of group process, including leadership, conflict management, decision-making, conformity, and critical thinking. At the end of the course you will be able to do the following:

- Define small group communication.
  - Identify types and functions of groups.
  - Describe the phases of group development.
  - Explain the "group think theory" and develop strategies for responding to its symptoms.
  - Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively in a group context.
  - Demonstrate the ability to conduct an effective meeting.
  - Demonstrate the ability to think critically and stimulate critical thinking in a group.
  - Define and demonstrate group leadership.
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### Course Format and Expectations

Format:

One of the major goals of this course is provide you with the tools and experiences needed to succeed in small group settings. As such, you may find that we do more small group exercises and activities during class than you have done in previous courses. Furthermore, almost all of the assignments for this course have a group component. In other words, most of the assignments you pass in - including exams - will be done in cooperation with members of your assigned group. Descriptions of these assignments are provided below.

### Expectations:

Your active participation in the learning process is expected and valued. We will address a variety of topics, many involving controversies that touch upon our personal values and beliefs. I encourage you to share your thoughts, concerns, and opinions in class—we will have a stimulating learning environment and a richer learning experience if we can discuss a wide range of perspectives. At the same time, the issues we will address can be highly emotional ones and we won't always agree with one another. It is vital that everyone feels safe to air her or his ideas and opinions. Please be sensitive and respectful to other viewpoints when making comments and contributing to discussion.

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## Learning Assessment

In order to earn a passing grade in this course you will need to submit **all** of the assignments listed below and take all exams. Submission of all assignments and exams constitutes a necessary, but insufficient condition for passing the course. In other words, you need to submit all assignments and exams *and* need to earn 63% of the total possible points in order to pass the course. Unfortunately, I am unable to offer incompletes for this course.

Cooperative Exams (3 X 100 pts each)	300
Symposiums (2 x 100 pts each)	200
Final Essay Exam	150
In-Class Participation	100
Group Participation	75
<b>Total:</b>	<b>825</b>

### Grading Scale:

94-100 = A	73-75 = C
90-93 = A-	70-72 = C-
86-89 = B+	66-69 = D+
83-85 = B	60-65 = D
80-82 = B-	0-59 = F
76-79 = C+	

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## Assignment Descriptions

*(More detail will be provided for each of these assignments in class and on the course website.)*

### 3 Cooperative Exams

You will work with members of your assigned group on each of the three cooperative exams. Together you will be able to check your individual knowledge of key concepts and points presented in the text. *Study guides for each exam will be distributed one week prior to the exam.*

#### Cooperative Exam #1

This exam will cover material introduced in the first three chapters of the text. The format will be multiple-choice and true-false. **Multiple-choice questions will have four possible answers.** You will choose all answers deemed correct (more than one may be correct, even all four). True-false questions will follow standard form.

I encourage you all to use the self-quizzes for each chapter that are available on the *In Mixed Company's* companion website: <http://communication.wadsworth.com/rothwell6>.

### Cooperative Exam #2

This exam will cover material introduced in Chapters 4 through 6. The same procedure used for Exam #1 will be used for this test except that any FALSE answer on the True/False will require a reason to explain the false answer.

### Cooperative Exam #3

This exam will cover material introduced in Chapters 7 through 11. The same procedure used for Exam #2 will be used for this exam.

*You may be asking these questions right about now. How will individuals be held accountable for their knowledge? Couldn't we all just ace our exams if there is a "nerd" in our group? The answer? Individual Accountability Exams.*

### General Exam Procedure

Here is how this works. Every exam will begin the same. You and the other members of your group will take the exam together without using your notes or the textbook. *Note: Each group member will be given a copy of the test, one copy will serve as the group's final answer sheet.*

After your group has completed this group exam, you will all have to take a shorter, individual exam without any assistance from anyone else. The individual test is composed of multiple-choice and true-false questions covering exactly the same material as the group test.

### Grading the Cooperative Exam

All members of the group will receive the score on the group test unless individuals earn an insufficient score on the individual accountability measure.

Failure to score 80% or above on the individual test will result in the reduction of that **individual group member's** test score as follows:

Between 70 and 79	= loss of 5 points from group score
Between 60 and 69	= loss of 10 points
Between 50 and 59	= loss of 20 points
Below 50	= loss of 30 points

Thus, if the group score is 87 and the individual group member scores 65 on the individual test, that individual will receive a 77 for the test (87 minus 10 points).

*Please Note:* Any **group member** scoring a perfect 100 on the individual test will receive a bonus of 5 points.

## 2 Symposiums

The symposium format is a public discussion forum in which you and the other members of your assigned group will present short prepared speeches on a central discussion question or topic. The audience (your classmates) will participate in a question-and-answer session following the formal presentation of speeches. There will be two symposiums during this class.

### Symposium #1

Your group needs to work as a team to do **one** (1) of the following.

- Option 1: promote a new product and advertise it
- Option 2: present a creative solution to a problem on our campus
- Option 3: address a problem facing the local community.

## Symposium #2

Your group must critique an art form (e.g., special effects in movies, black-and-white photography, comic books, types of music videos, body building, body art, impressionist paintings, etc.). Research the history of the art form, searching for specific criteria central to an evaluation of that form. Establish a list of criteria for evaluating the chosen art form. Document the relevance of the criteria by citing testimony of experts. Explain the criteria, then as a group, choose "good," "bad," and "mediocre" examples of the art form and justify the evaluation in terms of the criteria.

### General Requirements

1. 3-minute speech per group member.
2. Group time limit is 3 minutes multiplied by the number of group members.
3. Each group must submit a detailed, written outline of your presentation with appropriate citations.

### Grading the Symposiums:

Group Grade for Presentation	= 40pts
Group Grade for Written Outline	= 20pts
Individual Grade	= 40pts
<b>Total</b>	<b>= 100pts</b>

## Final Essay Exam

Similar to the previous exams in this course, your final exam will have both a group and an individual component. We will view a film in class that illustrates concepts and theories we will have studied throughout **the entire quarter**. (*The film will also be made available on library reserve in case your group would like to refer back to portions of the text.*) Your assignment in this final essay exam will be to choose **three** (3) of six possible essay questions to answer as a group. You will be given further details and guidance on how best to write essays in a small group setting. You will also be given time in class to work as a group on these questions. The last question of this exam must be answered individually.

## Participation - Course and Group

Your participation in this course is evaluated in two ways - one by me and one by the members of your assigned group.

I assess your general level of participation (**worth 100 pts**) in the course by tracking both your attendance throughout the quarter and your engagement with the activities and discussions that take place during class. For example, you will be expected to hand in worksheets from in-class activities throughout the quarter. Please see the [Attendance Policy](#) below for more details on absences and tardiness.

### Group Participation (75 pts)

A third of your group participation grade (25 pts) is earned through the evaluation of all of the other members of your group. You will be asked at two (2) points throughout the quarter to assess each member of your group using a multiple choice style grading sheet provided for you. Your evaluations of each member will remain anonymous. (**Due dates will be announced in class.**)

The other two-thirds of your group participation grade (50pts) will be based in large part upon the evaluations created by your fellow group members. This participation component is intended to provide another way to reward those group members who actively and consistently contribute to the success of their groups.

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## General Policies

Attendance Policy: Class attendance is essential for participation and will be checked at the beginning of each meeting. If you come in late, it is your responsibility to make sure that you are counted as present. Students more than **5 minutes** late will receive an absence for the class. If you are unable to make it to class, please contact me via e-mail so that this information is recorded. Students with 10 or more absences will not receive credit for the course.

Late Written Assignments: For purposes of equity and fairness for all students, you will be given a reasonable amount of time to complete all written assignments. Deadlines for all assignments will be announced in class and are listed in the syllabus. An assignment is on time when it is delivered to me **at the beginning of class** on the day it is due. (*Any assignment passed in after that time will be considered a day late.*)

If you know you will be absent on the day an assignment is due or there is an activity planned, make arrangements with me prior to this. In the event that you do not turn in your assignment on the day/time it is due, you will be assessed the following academic penalty: late written assignments will receive a one point grade reduction for every day they are late (i.e. B+ to C+).

Statement on Academic Integrity: You should know that plagiarism is a serious violation of your contract as a student and will be treated severely. It is important for you to understand that plagiarism is *any* representation of another person's words or ideas in a manner that makes it seem as if they were your own, in either oral or written form. Obviously, this means that you may not copy another person's papers. Students caught cheating on an exam or assignment will not receive any credit for that portion of the class and will be reported to the Dean of Student Programs.

Special Needs: Please contact the DSS at 564-2498 or go in person to the DSS reception area of the Student Services Building if you have special needs. If you have a documented disability and need a type of accommodation, please meet with me as soon as possible.

Classroom Conduct: When engaged in your role as a student, please be constructive in your comments both in the classroom and online. Always treat your classmates with respect. Please consult with [www.bcc.ctc.edu/artshum/policy.html](http://www.bcc.ctc.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.

## Tentative Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Reading
1	Mon 24 Sept	-Introduction to the Course  -Communication Models & Competence	None
	Wed 26 Sept	-Gender & Communication  -Interconnectedness & Dealing w/Difficult Group Members	Chapter 1 (pp. 8 - 35)  Chapter 2 (pp. 40 - 50)
2	Mon 1 Oct	-Groups as Systems Continued	Chapter 2 (pp. 50 - 66)
		-Phases of Group Developing	Chapter 3 (pp. 71 - 93)
	<b>Group Assignments Announced</b>		
3	Wed 3 Oct	-Group Polarization & New Comers  -Details of Symposium Assignment	-Chapter 3 (pp. 94-106)  -Appendix A (pp. 392 - 405)
	Mon 8 Oct	-Exam Review  -In-class group work for symposiums	
3	Wed 10 Oct	<b>Exam 1 (Chapters 1 - 3)</b>	
		Competition	Chapter 4 (pp. 109-124)
4	Mon 15 Oct	-Group Climate  -Ways of Listening	-Chapter 4 (pp. 124 - 136)  -Ueland <i>The Art of Listening</i>
	Wed 17 Oct	-Roles in Groups  -In-class group work for symposiums	Chapter 5 (pp. 139-150)
5	Mon 22 Oct	<b>Symposium Presentations: Groups 1 &amp; 2</b>  <b>Symposium Presentations: Groups 3 &amp; 4</b>	
	Wed 24 Oct	<b>Symposium Presentations: Groups 5</b>	
		-Leadership  -Defining "Teams"	-Chapter 5 (pp. 150 - 174)  -Chapter 6 (pp. 178 - 186)

Week	Date	Topic	Reading
6	Mon 29 Oct	-A Good Working Team -Discuss Symposium 2 -Exam Review	Chapter 6 (pp. 187 - 208)
	Wed 31 Oct	<b>Exam 2 (Chapters 4 - 6)</b>	
		-In-class group work for symposiums	Appendix B (pp. 406 - 410)
7	Mon 5 Nov	-Ways of Thinking  -Groupthink	Chapter 7 (pp. 212 - 246)
	Wed 7 Nov	-Discussion Procedures  -Conducting Effective Meetings  -Creative Problem Solving	Chapter 8 (pp. 250 - 289)
8	Mon 12 Nov	<b>NO CLASS: Staff Professional Development Day</b>	
	Wed 14 Nov	-Information and Expertise  -Addressing Power Imbalances  -Assertive Communication	Chapter 9 (pp. 293 - 335)
9	Mon 19 Nov	-Defining Conflict and Conflict Resolution Styles  -In-class group work for symposiums	Chapter 10 (pp. 338 - 357)
	Wed 21 Nov	<b>Symposium Presentations: Groups 1 &amp; 2</b> <b>Symposium Presentations: Groups 3 &amp; 4</b>	
10	Mon 26 Nov	<b>Symposium Presentations: Groups 5</b>	
		Applied Conflict Resolution	Chapter 10 (pp. 357 - 368)
	Wed 28 Nov	-Technology and Small Groups -Exam Review -Discuss Final Essay	Chapter 11 (pp. 371 - 390)
11	Mon 3 Dec	<b>Exam 3 (Chapters 7 - 11)</b>	
		-Film Viewing for Final Essay	
	Wed 5 Dec	-Film Viewing Continued for Final Essay  -In-class group work for final essays	
12	<b>Wed 12 Dec</b>	<b>Final Essays Due In-Class by 1:20pm</b>	