

## **CMST 230: Small Group Communication**

Fall 2013 - Online

**Instructor:** Dr. Whitney Anspach

**Office Hours:** By appointment via Skype or In-Person

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### **Required Readings**

Galanes, G., & Adams, K. (2013). *Effective group discussion: Theory and practice* (14th ed.). New York, NY: The McGraw Hill Companies, Inc.

ISBN 978-0-07-353434-3. Note: It is important to use the 14th edition as it differs greatly from previous editions.

Additional readings and lectures will be available as PDFs on the Canvas site.

*Note:* The assigned readings are critical to your understanding and appreciation of course concepts. I have tried to select a textbook that will provide concrete examples of issues related to our course learning goals. The reading will provide valuable background for issues we will address further in online lectures and assignments.

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### **Course Description**

This course is designed for the student to explore small group communication theory and concepts and to develop an ability to apply this knowledge to everyday small group experiences. After completing this course, you will have a better understanding of the behaviors needed to create, lead, and sustain an effective group.

### **Learning Outcomes for This Course**

By the end of this course, students will be able to do the following.

1. Define small group communication.
2. Identify types and functions of groups.
3. Describe the phases of group development.
4. Explain 'groupthink' theory and develop strategies for responding to its symptoms.
5. Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively in a group context.
6. Demonstrate the ability to conduct an effective meeting.
7. Demonstrate the ability to think critically and stimulate critical thinking in a group.
8. Define and demonstrate group leadership.

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## Course Format and Expectations

### Format:

You will be engaged in activities and discussions designed to aid your understanding of the concepts explored in this class. Computer use is required to access the courses materials on BB Canvas. Please note that this area of study contains complex theories and difficult jargon. I will do my best to assist you, **but a college reading level and college writing level in English is needed to succeed in this course.**

### 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. I do not offer incompletes for this course. **Note: if you earn a zero for plagiarizing an assignment, you will earn a zero for that portion of the course, and this will be reported to the Dean.**

### Assignments

First Week Assignments	= 15
Discussion Board Posts (11 x 40 points)	=440
Quizzes (3 X 100 points)	=300
Group Work:	=260
Discussion Post (1 x 40 points)	
Group Project (120 points)	
Com. Analysis Paper (100 points)	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>=1000 + 15 (First Week)</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 on Canvas.)

### Discussion Posts and Responses:

Each *online discussion response* will be evaluated based on the following requirements:

1. *Completeness*: Each online discussion response has two parts; a.) your *initial response* and, b.) your *comments* to two of your colleagues' responses. First, your *initial response* should be *fully developed* addressing the question with adequate examples from your life experience and thoughtful explanation of why or how. (A complete initial response is typically a *minimum* of **200** words in length). Next, after you complete your initial response to an online question, you should read through several of your colleagues' responses and choose at least two to provide a comment to. Often a student will choose to comment on a response that was most helpful to him/her in understanding the course material better or one that he/she found interesting or intriguing. Any comment to a colleague should adequately explain *why* you found your colleague's response helpful, interesting or intriguing. (A complete comment to a colleague is typically **100** words in length.)
2. *Appropriate Integration of Course Terms*: your *initial response* should appropriately integrate *course terminology* and concepts from the assigned reading.
3. *Format*: course terms (key terms from the chapter reading) used in your initial response should be typed in bold, or in all CAPITAL letters so that they stand out on the screen. In addition, course terms should have *page references* to the course textbook.
4. *College Level Writing*: organization, grammar and spelling count for both your initial response and comments to colleagues.

### Discussion Responses

The majority of your class participation grade will come from my evaluation of your *Discussion Posts & Responses*. You are required to post at least two (**2**) substantive and well written responses to your peers' discussion posts **each time a post is due**. Please see the course calendar for discussion post response deadlines.

*For example, if you post twelve responses for the first round of discussion posts and zero responses after that you will only earn credit for **two** responses.*

Given that there are **11** required discussion posts, you will need to submit a minimum total of **22** substantive and well written responses by the end of the quarter.

## Discussion Posts

There are eleven (**11**) required discussion posts this quarter (in addition to the one post you will be crafting with your assigned group). You will be provided with a topic and/or debatable claim to discuss for each of these required posts.

**Exemplary discussion posts** should meet the following requirements:

- A clearly stated thesis statement (or key argument)
- Evidence from relevant course materials (e.g., lecture content or the course texts) to support your argument. *Remember:* this assignment is how I assess your understanding of concepts and your ability to critically apply them in an analysis. If you simply dump concepts into your post and/or do not define them, I have no idea if you understand these terms.
- Accurate application of relevant course content.
- Few (if any) writing errors
- Links/URLs to any *non-course related* materials referenced within your posting

Here is an example of an ideal discussion board post:

““Through word and example, the family shapes a child’s personality and instills modes of thought and ways of acting that become habitual.” (p. 54) To begin considering what defines my culture, I first look to the influence of my FAMILY, as family is “one of the most enduring and influential social organizations that deal with deep structure,” (p. 49) and it is “the basic unit of society and it is at the heart of its survival” (p. 53). My family demonstrated to me a contrasting view regarding INDIVIDUALISM (p. 67). At a STATE (p. 49) level, my family is more COLLECTIVIST than is the general culture. I think this collectivist orientation was influenced by four family circumstances. My grandfather brought over a more collectivist view when he IMMIGRATED (p.9) from England. His life’s work was to work to change labor laws to better protect the rights of workers. (2) My grandmother grew up on a farm. Though farm life requires a tough, hard-working spirit, it also requires that many hands work together. She and my grandfather met while working on a political campaign and were active in politics their entire lives. (3) My mother grew up in a religious household in which service to others was expected. Her life’s work has been as a social worker and she has regularly been involved with volunteer work in her free time. (4) My father has worked as an environmentalist my entire life, trying to influence policy changes that better protect the planet. Growing up in a family with this history, I have a worldview that change is possible, that we each have a voice and the freedom to use it, and that we have not only a right but a responsibility to support our community and our world. This worldview is supported by events in my culture’s history. The founders of this country sought to change their circumstances and to establish a country in which freedom and government by the people were core principles. Throughout our country’s history, people have worked for CHANGE AND PROGRESS (p.80), and the people who have bravely pushed for change—people like Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Susan B. Anthony—have become national heroes. On a personal level, my family is very INDIVIDUALISTIC , “emphasiz[ing] independence and

individual autonomy” (p. 68). Self-reliance, self-determination, and following one’s own pursuits is what is practiced and advocated. Family is not for support—you pick yourself up by your bootstraps and forge your way. Though my mother grew up as a church-goer, she is no longer and the rest of my family have never been. Reliance on a religion or a faith group contradicts their notion of personal strength. Living in a country in which freedom of religion—and freedom from religion—is part of our country’s history and character (p.79), this is possible. Cultural values that I have always treasured are the ideas of justice, fairness, and welcome. Though I know in practice this hasn’t been the case for many people in our country, I like the ideal that we are innocent until proven guilty, that our Declaration of Independence says that all men are created equal, and that we want “[the] tired, [the] poor, [the] huddled masses yearning to breathe free” (p.13) to come join us. History has shown time and time again that we don’t live up to that ideal—we aren’t living up to it even today—but I am thankful that I live in a country that at least considers those ideas and makes attempts to meet them.”

### **What constitutes a substantive response?**

A substantive response is one that refers to a specific portion of the original discussion post and attempts to spark discussion about that portion. An example of an unsatisfactory post is: “I really like what you wrote about culture. Good job!” This post is unsatisfactory because it doesn’t attempt to spark a discussion about what the person wrote about culture. A better/satisfactory response post would be:

“There definitely were several historical events that shaped our country and I too believe that our desire for individualism was the cause. You picked a great quote from West and Turner, “Individualism involves self-motivation, autonomy, and independent thinking”. Our nation’s definition of freedom seems to follow this way of thinking. The key words from that quote can be applied to the historical events that you listed. The settlers demonstrated self-motivation in their desire to practice the religion of their choosing. The abolition of slavery demonstrated the importance of autonomy. You also mentioned some of the groups that spawned from these monumental events. Despite the fact that I do not agree with what these groups stand for, I do understand that they are also practicing individualism.”

**Notice that in the first example**, the student fulfills the requirements listed above. Similarly, in the second example, the same student fulfills the requirements for what makes a substantive comment.

### **Here Are Two Examples of What NOT to Do in Your Comments:**

“thnx 4 sharing. u r awesome.”

And/Or:

“I totally agree.”

Keep in mind that a student's original response to an online discussion question as well as their comments to colleagues will be evaluated.

### **First Week Assignments (15 points):**

You will also earn *extra* points toward your total class participation grade by completing the required First Week Quiz, sending a message to me via Canvas, and participating in the first discussion post titled “5 Things about You”. The quiz contains multiple choice and true/false questions about the course website and course assignments. For details about the first discussion post, please see the discussion board.

### **Quizzes (3 X 100 Points):**

There will be 3 quizzes given. Each quiz is worth 100 points and will consist of true/false and multiple-choice questions. Quiz material will pertain to information covered in the text, as well as, information discussed and presented in class discussions and assignments. Review sheets will be provided for each quiz. Review sheets can be accessed through the learning modules on the website.

### **Group Project (120 Points):**

Students will be assigned to and participate in a small group. Students will be given adequate time to meet online in order to complete this project. The project grade consists of two parts: group performance and effectiveness in meeting the project goals (60 pts.), and student attendance, contribution and professionalism to & with his/her group (60 pts.). Students will work collectively online (or face-to-face if preferred by the group) to create a PowerPoint presentation. In the 8th week of the quarter, students will be put in to project groups. During the weeks of the Group Project (Weeks 9-10), students are required to access their group's discussion board daily Monday-Thursday and respond to any questions posted by group members within 24 hours. Failure to comply with this access requirement may result in removal from the group.

*Note: any group member who makes insufficient or minimal contribution to their group's project and/or discussion will be removed from their group. If a student is removed from his/her group, he/she will research and write a 15 page research paper on a Small Group Communication topic of the instructor's choice. The research paper will have a minimum of 15 cited journal sources and a comprehensive bibliography.*

### **Analysis Paper (100 Points):**

Students will collaborate with their small group and write an analysis paper applying their knowledge of small group communication theory and concepts to their team project. Each paper will be 8-10 pages typed and double-spaced with 1 (one) inch margins in size 12 Times New Roman font (or similar) and include a Bibliography of sources in APA style. Detailed instructions for the paper are available on the course website under ‘Assignments’. This paper will be submitted online using the Assignments Tool. Papers should be attached to the submission page in a .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf format.

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## General Policies

### Late 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 on the course website calendar and are listed in the syllabus.

#### Please note:

You are responsible for ensuring that any assignment submitted as an attachment is capable of being opened (i.e., not a corrupted file). **I will evaluate any corrupted files as being an incomplete assignment – in other words, you will earn a zero for that assignment.**

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 assignments will receive a one point grade reduction for every day – including weekends - they are late (e.g., 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.

If you do not know what constitutes plagiarism, please check out this handy [game](#)/guide.

### Special Needs:

If you need course modifications /adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, I can refer you to our Disability Resource Center (DRC). The Disability Resource Center is located in L100 and can be reached at 425-564-2498. Please meet with me if you have any questions.

## IMPORTANT LINKS

**Bellevue College E-mail and access to MyBC:** All students registered for classes at Bellevue College 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. To create your account, go to: <https://bellevuecollege.edu/sam>

BC offers a wide variety of computer and learning labs to enhance learning and student success. Find current campus locations for all student labs by visiting the Computing Services site -<http://ac.bcc.ctc.edu/LabsInfo/ComputerLabs.aspx>

**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](tel:425.564.2400). The Public Safety website is your one-stop resource for campus emergency preparedness information, campus closure announcements and critical information in the event of an emergency. 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/1011.asp>. This calendar gives you the year at a glance and includes college holidays, scheduled closures, quarter end and start dates, and final exam dates.

Computer Access: Students who need access to a computer can utilize computers in the BC Computer Lab located in N250.

### **One Final Note...**

Communication is key! Please e-mail me to discuss any concerns or issues. Or, email me to set up an appointment.