**GROUP COMMUNICATION – COMM 8 (51433)**

**Reedley Community College/ Spring 2016**

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| **Time:** Tues/Thurs 2:00 – 3:15 pm  **Instructor**: Barri Brennan |  |  |  | **Location**: Social Science, Room 35  **Email**: barri.brennan@scccd.edu |

**Course description**

Group communication is a course that introduces students to how communication can be used as a vehicle for solving problems, and making decisions. Students will study and practice theories, behaviors and the process of group interaction. As a result of taking this course students will develop skill in the use of communication in small group contexts. Specifically, students will enhance their competency in the production and management of communication behavior in task oriented groups. Additionally, students will enhance their ability to construct and deliver informative and persuasive public presentations. Students will develop a conceptual understanding of small group principles and concepts and putting this knowledge into action through a variety of experiential activities. Speech (Communication) 8 fulfills the General Education Requirement in Oral Communication (G.E. Foundation A1), provided the student completes the course with a grade of “C” or better.

**Required text and materials\*\****:*

Staller, M. L., Thorson-Hevle, A. D., & Hirayama, B.R. (2014). *Small group work in the real world: A practical approach*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall-Hunt Publishing Company.

\*\*Three (3) 882e scantron forms

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and apply effective communication strategies within the context of group process.
2. Construct and deliver dynamic and competent presentations that are adapted to the purpose and audience.
3. Utilize research materials that incorporate sufficient, credible, and relevant evidence.
4. Choose appropriate organizational patterns.
5. Analyze the effectiveness of communication through constructive critique.

**Course Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, students will:

1. Identify roles individuals play in groups and understand how those roles relate to the group goals.
2. Utilize team-building strategies to strengthen group dynamics.
3. Analyze and employ effective conflict management strategies.
4. Identify barriers to listening and incorporate effective strategies.
5. Learn and apply key aspects of verbal and nonverbal communication to small group situations.
6. Learn how perceptions, values and culture can affect communication.
7. Incorporate goal setting, planning, and implementation into group projects.
8. Develop skill in extemporaneous speaking for informative, persuasive and ceremonial presentations.
9. Utilize practical assignments and exercises that will reinforce the theoretical concepts taught in this course.

IMPORTANT DATES

**Drop deadlines:**

Jan 22: Last day to drop a Spring 2016 full-term class and receive a full refund.

Jan 29: Last day to register for a full-term Spring 2016 class in-person

Jan 31: Last day to drop a Spring 2016 full-term class to avoid a “W” in person

Jan 31: Last day to register for a full-term class Spring 2016 on WebAdvisor

Feb 12: Last day to change a Fall 2015 class to or from a Pass/No-Pass grading basis

Mar 11: Last day to drop a full-term class with a “W” (letter grades assigned after this date)

**Holidays:**

Jan 18: Martin Luther King Jr. Day– no classes, campus closed

Feb 12 & 15: President’s Day Holiday – no classes, campus closed

Mar 21-25: Spring Break – no classes, campus closed

**Finals:**

May 16-20: Final Exams week

May 17: Final Exam 2:00 – 3:50 pm

**Student Rights**

Students are encouraged to become familiar with the “Campus Policies” section of the Schedule of Courses. This material includes information regarding cheating and plagiarism, disruptive classroom behavior, and other instructional issues. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing in my class will receive a zero on the assignment and any assignment connected to that assignment (e.g. cheating or plagiarism on a speech will result in a zero on the speech, the outline, the reference page, the reflection and on all audience evaluations). Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will also forfeit all participation points, all audience evaluation points and will not be allowed any extra credit points.

Students with disabilities: If you have a verified need for an academic accommodation or materials in alternate media (i.e., Braille, large print, electronic text, etc.) per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, please contact the instructor as soon as possible.

**Classroom Deportment**

Each student is expected to respect the rights of the other students in the class and the instructor. The exploration of controversial ideas is an essential component of this class. Students who do not behave in a respectful manner will be asked to leave the class. Please turn cell phones off before coming to class. Text messaging during class will not be tolerated. You may only use a laptop for class assignments or activities. Students using the computer for non-academic purposes will be asked to leave the class and will be marked as absent.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**Partner-Introduction Speech:** Each student will have the opportunity to partner up with another member of the class and introduce that student to the class. You’ll be given time in class to converse, ask questions, get to know each other, then be prepared to give a short, organized introduction of your new friend. This speech should attempt to be both informative as well as entertaining. Share with the class some interesting facts about your partner as well as some general information. Each student should expect to spend 2-3 minutes talking about his/her partner. This is a credit/no credit assignment. You receive full credit when you complete the presentation. (25 points).

**Puzzle Presentation:** This is your first presentation as a group and is designed to introduce you to the process of working as a group. The task is to present a series of separate speeches (4-6 minutes per group member) on a central theme. The central theme among the members should emerge as elements important to each individual identity. Try to utilize your cultural background or personal interests as common ground to show the audience diversity and similarity among your group members. This is an informative speech and the focus should be on describing and showing us who you are as individuals as well as demonstrating how you all fit together – like a puzzle! (50 points).

**Informative Presentation:** Student groups must present a creative, interesting, well-rehearsedinformative presentation in which the group will inform the class about an issue, practice, or event affecting the world, nation, region, or community. An interesting introduction and conclusion are essential parts of the presentation. Visual / audio-visual materials should be used to enhance information and interest. All audio/visual materials (including videos) must be approved by me prior to using them in your presentation. Individuals will be evaluated on their use of strong speech delivery skills including appropriate use of language, engaging vocal variety and animation, energetic and enthusiastic gestures, strong eye contact, and professionalism. An informative presentation guideline sheet will be posted on Blackboard. (100 points).

**Problem-Solving Presentation:** In the final group presentation, student groups will produce a creative, well-rehearsed problem-solving presentation that will unveil a number of brainstormed solutions that the group believes will help solve the problem locally. The “package of solutions” may include ideas (cited appropriately) that are being used in other communities; in fact, you will need to research what other solutions have been utilized to solve or manage your problem. However, this *presentation should reflect your group’s original thinking* on the issue/problem; the true purpose of this assignment is for your group to conceive and develop a solution(s) derived from the hearts and minds of your group. This solution(s) should be your solution to the problem you introduced in your previous presentation, the informative presentation. All audio/visual materials (including videos) utilized in your presentation must be approved by me prior to your presentation**.** The presentation should include an interesting introduction and conclusion. Again, individuals will be evaluated on their use of strong speech delivery skills including appropriate use of language, engaging vocal variety and animation, energetic and enthusiastic gestures, and strong eye contact. (200 points).

**Peer Evaluation:** Each group member will be given an opportunity to provide anonymous feedback on the participation and contributions of their fellow group members. Peer evaluations will be completed for group members following both group presentations. (2 @ 50 points each).

**Exams:** Students will be given three exams that will cover lecture material and material from the textbook. The tests may include true-false, multiple-choice, matching,. Emphasis will be placed on assigned readings and material discussed in class. The purpose of the exams is to provide an opportunity for the students to demonstrate that they understand the theoretical concepts covered in the course. (3 @ 100 points).

**Reflection Paper:** Students will be required to write two 2-3 page papers. The purpose of both essays is to reflect upon your experience within your group. Each paper will be assigned at two different points in the semester – specific guidelines and criteria for the assignment will be given prior. The papers should incorporate concepts from the text, be well organized, and use correct grammar and spelling. The format should be 12-point Times Roman font, double-spaced with 1 inch margins, utilizing APA citation style. I reserve the right to return papers that do not follow or attempt to follow the format guidelines; returned papers will result in 0 points for the assignment. (2 @ 50 points).

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| **Graded Item** | **Total Points Possible** | **Your Score** |
| Partner Introduction Speech | 25 |  |
| Group Puzzle Presentation | 50 |  |
| Informative Presentation | 100 |  |
| Final (Problem-Solving) Presentation | 200 |  |
| Peer Evaluation (2 @ 50 points each) | 100 |  |
| In-class Activities/Participation | 100 |  |
| Reflection Papers (Individual) (2 @ 50 points each) | 100 |  |
| Exam 1 (Chapters 1, 2 & 9) | 100 |  |
| Exam 2 (Chapters 3, 4, & 5) | 100 |  |
| Final Exam (Chapters 6, 7, & 8) | 100 |  |
| **Total Points Possible** | **975** |  |

The following numerical guidelines will be used in the assignment of final grades.

878-975 A

780-877 B

683-779 C

585-682 D

0-584 F

**Notes on Grading:**

The following criteria describe the expectations associated with each grade:

**A:** Thework **exceeds** the minimum requirements in many significant ways. An **A** is reserved for *excellent* and *superior* performances.

**B:** Thework exceeds the minimum requirements in some way, and is above and beyond the stated basic requirements of the assignment.

**C:** The work meets the minimum requirements for acceptable completion of the assignment. A **C** is *not* punishment; it is an indication that you have performed at an acceptable level.

**D:** The work falls short of minimum requirements in some ways.

**F:** Thework fails to meet requirements in many ways.

**CLASSROOM POLICIES**

**Attendance**

Attendance will be taken at each class session. Students are allowed three (3) absences without penalty. I will not require documentation for these absences – they are yours to take, or not take, at your discretion. The only condition is that you are responsible for finding out what you missed. Being absent on a presentation day or exam day will not be acceptable and result in a failing grade for the assignment. Each absence beyond three will result in one letter grade reduction. More than seven unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.

Arriving late to class and leaving early are unacceptable and will result in a grade reduction. Three (3) tardies or early departures are considered the equivalent of one absence. It is the student’s responsibility to keep track of their absences.

It is your responsibility to keep track of missed assignments or lectures that occurred during your absences and/or tardiness. At any time during the semester you may email me to see where you stand.In class group activities CANNOT be made up. Missing class during any graded in-class activity will result in lower points.

**Student Conduct**

Each student is expected to respect the rights of the other students in the class and the professor. The exploration of controversial ideas is an essential component of this class. Students who do not behave in a respectful manner will be asked to drop the class. When presentations are in progress students arriving late are to stay outside until the presentation is complete. Interrupting a presentation for any reason other than a severe emergency is inconsiderate and will not be tolerated. *All cellphones should be turned off prior to entering the classroom*. If a student interrupts a presentation for any reason other than a severe emergency, he/she will be confronted by the professor and his/her most recent presentation grade will be lowered. Additionally, text messaging and internet surfing on your cellphone is not acceptable.

Each class member is responsible for treating all class members with respect. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. At my discretion, any student whose behavior interferes with the learning of any student will be dismissed from class. This dismissal from class may be for the day or may necessitate being dropped permanently from the class. If you are asked to leave class, you should quietly gather your belongings and leave the classroom quietly without any discussion. Dismissal from class will count as an absence for that class period.

If you must leave class, please be discrete and try to leave between speakers. If you will be leaving class early and not returning, you must notify me prior to the class session.

Laptops are to be used during class only to take notes or to aid in presentations. I reserve the right to ask you to put away your laptop. Searching the internet, accessing your social networks or instant messaging on your laptop is not acceptable during class and will not be tolerated.

Sunglasses may not be worn in class during presentations or exams.

**Group Responsibility**

Members have the right to remove a group member for irresponsible behavior. Problems must be documented and both the group member and Instructor must be informed of the problem. It is essential that each group member take his or her responsibility seriously. Procedures will be discussed in class as to how a group member can be dismissed. Each student must be aware that one cannot pass this class without a group; thus, it is imperative that each student follow the rules and do his/her share in order to avoid losing his/her group.

**Email Etiquette**: When emailing me, please include a salutation, a body, and a closing. When you email me, please use proper punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar. In addition, please have a salutation (e.g, Hello Instructor Brennan), a body (i.e., the request or comment), and a closing. The closing should have your name, the course name or number, and the course and time (e.g., Barri Brennan, Group Communication, COMM 8, 2:00 – 3:15pm).

**Late and Missed Assignments**

Unless otherwise stated, I will **NOT** accept any late, emailed, or handwritten papers.

Presentations: **I do not allow any late presentations.** If a group is unable to present on their assigned date the entire group will be given a 0 on that assignment. Group members absent on the day of presentations will receive a 0 unless some prior arrangement has been made with me. The group however, must go on without the absent member.

Exams: Make-up examinations will be given only when proper and complete written documentation of your absence is provided.

GROUP COMMUNICATION **TENTATIVE** SPRING 2016 SCHEDULE

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| Day | Date | Topic | Assignment **(due)** |
| Tues | 1-12 | First day of instruction/course overview |  |
| Thurs | 1-14 | Partner-Introduction Speeches | **Partner-Introduction Speech** |
| Tues | 1-19 | Partner-Introduction Speeches | **Partner–Introduction Speech** |
| Thurs | 1-21 | Introduction to Small Groups | Chapter 1 |
| Tues | 1-26 | Group Assignments  Puzzle Presentation Assignment |  |
| Thurs | 1-28 | Getting a Productive Start | Chapter 2 |
| Tues | 2-2 | Group Activity |  |
| Thurs | 2-4 | Small Group Presentation | Chapter 9 |
| Tues | 2-9 | Puzzle Presentations | **Puzzle Presentations** |
| Thurs | 2-11 | Puzzle Presentations | **Puzzle Presentations** |
| Tues | 2-16 | Puzzle Presentations | **Puzzle Presentations** |
| Thurs | 2-18 | Exam #1 (Chps. 1, 2 & 9) | **Exam #1** |
| Tues | 2-23 | Using Power and Managing Conflict | Chapter 3 |
| Thurs | 2-25 | Group Activity |  |
| Tues | 3-1 | Small Group Theories | Chapter 4 |
| Thurs | 3-3 | Group Activity |  |
| Tues | 3-8 | Small Group Formation and Development | Chapter 5 |
| Thurs | 3-10 | Group Activity |  |
| Tues | 3-15 | Informative Presentation Assignment |  |
| Thurs | 3-17 | Exam #2 (Chps. 3, 4, 5) | **Exam #2**  **Reflection Paper due** |
| Mon-Fri | 3-21 to 3-25 | SPRING BREAK | No Classes |
| Tues | 3-29 | Small Group Communication and Climate | Chapter 6 |
| Thurs | 3-31 | Group Activity |  |
| Tues | 4-5 | Informative Presentations | **Informative Presentations** |
| Thurs | 4-7 | Informative Presentations | **Informative Presentations** |
| Tues | 4-12 | Informative Presentations | **Informative Presentations** |
| Thurs | 4-14 | Small Group Leadership and Roles | Chapter 7 |
| Tues | 4-19 | Making Decisions and Solving Problems | Chapter 8 |
| Thurs | 4-21 | Group Activity |  |
| Tues | 4-26 | Group Time and Exam Review |  |
| Thurs | 4-28 | Exam #3 (Chps. 6, 7 & 8) | **Exam #3** |
| Tues | 5-3 | Final Presentations |  |
| Thurs | 5-5 | Final Presentations | **Final Presentations** |
| Tues | 5-10 | Final Presentations | **Final Presentations** |
| Thurs | 5-12 | Final Presentations | **Final Presentations** |
| Tues | 5-17 | Final Exam Day 2-3:50 pm  Final Presentations | **Final Presentations**  **Peer Evaluations #2 Due** |