**Department of Communication**

**Reedley College Fall 2012 Course Syllabus**

**Group Communication – Comm-8-50991**

**T/TH 3:30**

Instructor: Jennifer Tipton

Phone: TBA in class

Email: TBA in class

**Required Text**:

Adams, K., & Galanes, G. (2012). *Communicating in groups:* *Applications and skills* (8th ed.). San

Francisco: McGraw Hill.

Other readings as assigned on Blackboard.

**Course Description:**

Group communication 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 interactions. Students will develop a conceptual understanding of small group principles and concepts, putting this knowledge into action through a variety of experiential activities.

**Course Outcomes:**

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

• identify and apply effective communication strategies within the context of group process.

• construct and deliver dynamic and competent presentations that are adapted to the purpose and

audience.

• utilize research materials that incorporate sufficient, credible, and relevant evidence.

• choose appropriate organizational patterns.

• analyze the effectiveness of communication through constructive critique.

**Course Objectives:**

In the process of completing this course, students will:

• identify roles individuals play in groups and understand how those roles relate to the group goals.

• utilize team-building strategies to strengthen group dynamics.

• analyze and employ effective conflict management strategies.

• identify barriers to listening and incorporate effective strategies.

• learn and apply key aspects of verbal and nonverbal communication to small group situations.

• learn how perceptions, values and culture can affect communication.

• incorporate goal setting, planning, and implementation into group projects.

• develop skill in extemporaneous speaking for informative, persuasive and ceremonial presentations.

• utilize practical assignments and exercises that will reinforce the theoretical concepts taught in this course.

**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. Plagiarizing, or any other kind of cheating, will be grounds for a grade of 0% F on pertinent coursework.

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.

**Assignments** (These are general descriptions, and more specific assignment directions will be distributed in class and/or on Blackboard):

**Group Introduction Presentation:** Student groups will utilize group formation principles from Chapter 4 in the text in order to introduce their group and describe their group’s experiences in becoming a group. It is understood that groups’ development is ongoing and continues throughout the semester, and as this is the first presentation of the semester, groups are not expected to present themselves as perfectly functioning and entirely cohesive. At minimum, groups should include a discussion of various types of tensions that have occurred, as well as a description of the rules and norms that have been developed so far. A group introduction presentation guideline sheet will be posted on Blackboard.

**Informative Problem Presentation:** Student groups will present a **creative, interesting, well-rehearsed** informative presentation in which the group will inform the class about a problem or issue affecting the community. Groups must make clear the nature of the problem and must be very familiar with its history and characteristics. This will require extensive research, as group members become knowledgeable of the facts, statistics, legislation, and impact of the problem and prepare to answer audience questions. An interesting introduction and conclusion are essential parts of the presentation. Visual / audio-visual materials should be used to enhance information and interest. 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.

**Persuasive Solution Presentation:** Student groups will utilize both critical and creative thinking procedures in order to develop and then present at least one solution to the group’s problem identified in the Informative Problem Presentation. The group must remind the audience of the problem’s urgency and present the proposed solution as an effective way to address the problem. Groups should consider the feasibility of the solution and specifics of how, when, and where it should be implemented. Most importantly, groups must make clear how the solution will address/help to alleviate the problem as the audience is persuaded to believe in the solution and take action. Effective use of *cognitive dissonance* is important and will be discussed in class.

**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 the informative and the persuasive group presentations. These are worth 100 points (50 points each).

**Tests:** Students will be given three tests that will cover lecture material and material from the textbook. The tests may include true-false, multiple-choice, matching, and short essay questions. 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.

**Midterm Reflection Paper:** Students will write one 3-page paper in which they choose 2 specific elements of group communication discussed in class thus far and apply them to a specific group. The group can be one in which the student participates outside of class or a group the student has observed but should not be the Comm 8 class group. The papers should be well organized and use correct grammar and spelling. The format should be 12-point type, have one-inch margins, be double-spaced, and in Times New Roman or Cambria font. Students may submit a draft of the paper so that instructor feedback can be provided but this must be at least one week before the paper is due. Students are also encouraged to utilize the tutorial services of the campus Writing Center. A detailed guideline sheet will be posted on Blackboard.

**Final Group Reflection Paper:** Students will write one 2 to 3-page paper in which they reflect on the semester’s experience of being a part of the Comm 8 class group. Students have much flexibility regarding the focus of the paper but should address at minimum the benefits and challenges of group participation. The papers should be well organized and use correct grammar and spelling. The format should be 12-point type, have one-inch margins, be double-spaced, and in Times New Roman or Cambria font. Students may submit a draft of the paper so that instructor feedback can be provided but this must be at least one week before the paper is due. Students are also encouraged to utilize the tutorial services of the campus Writing Center. A detailed guideline sheet will be posted on Blackboard.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Graded Item** | **Total Points Possible** | **Your Score** |
| Group Introduction Presentation (Group) | 60 (P/F) |  |
| Informative Problem Presentation (Group) | 100 |  |
| Persuasive Solution Presentation (Group) | 200 |  |
| Peer Evaluations (2 @ 50 points each) (Individual) | 100 |  |
| In-class Impromptu/Practice Presentations (Individual and Group) | 100 |  |
| In-class Reading Quizzes (Individual) | 50 |  |
| Midterm Group Principles Paper (Individual) | 70 |  |
| Final Group Reflection Paper (Individual) | 70 |  |
| Test 1 (Chapters 1, 2, & 4) (Individual) | 50 |  |
| Test 2 (Chapters 3, 5, & 6) (Individual) | 100 |  |
| Test 3 - Final (Chapters 7, 8, 9, & 10) (Individual) | 100 |  |
| **Total Points Possible** | **1000** |  |

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

900-1000 A

800-899 B

700-799 C

600-699 D

0-599 F

**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.

**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**

You are allowed *three* unexcused absences without penalty (keeping in mind, of course, the policies regarding missed assignments, speeches and tests). For every additional absence, your final grade will automatically be lowered by 5%. If you are consistently late to class, I will notify you that further tardiness will be treated as absence according to the above guidelines. There will be *no* exceptions to the attendance policy without verifiable documentation presented to me (doctor’s excuse, family emergency, etc.). *It is your responsibility to get any missed notes or assignments*. It is also the student’s responsibility to provide documentation of an excused absence – the instructor will not ask. Note that it is each student’s responsibility to keep track of absences and the instructor will not provide any kind of attendance warnings, nor will the instructor notify a student when it is no longer mathematically possible to pass the course – THIS IS ENTIRELY THE STUDENT’S RESPONSIBILITY.

Please note that all excused absences MUST have verifiable documentation by a reputable source. (This does not mean your parents!) All documentation must be submitted to the instructor NO later than one week following the absence. The instructor will verify documentation and will not accept it late! Please note that work schedules, lost keys, or vacations are not excused absences. Please inform the instructor in advance of any scheduled absences, but understand that this will not excuse them.

Also, please note that it is each student’s responsibility to keep track of absences. The instructor will **not** notify you of absences or provide any sort of warning regarding how many absences a student has left before a failing grade will be assigned. If a student has questions regarding how many absences have been accrued, he or she may ask the instructor after class. Again, it is the student’s responsibility to keep track of absences and tardiness **not the instructor’s**. If you are absent it is your responsibility to find out all announcements made during your absence. PEASE do not approach the instructor and ask, “What did I miss?” The instructor cannot re-teach an entire class in a few minutes before or after a class meeting. In-class group activities CANNOT be made up. Missing class during any graded in-class activity will result in lower points.

**Speeches must be given on the group’s assigned speaking day. If a group member is absent on speaking day, the rest of the group must be prepared to present without the missing member(s). An absence without verifiable documentation on a speaking day will result in a zero for that group member.**

**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 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. Cell phones and pagers should be turned off before coming to class. If a student interrupts a presentation for any reason other than a severe emergency, he/she will be confronted by the instructor and his/her most recent presentation grade may be lowered. Text messaging during class is not appropriate.

Each class member is responsible for treating all class members with respect. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. At the instructor’s 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 without any discussion. Dismissal from class will count as an absence for that class period.

Out of politeness, and for the encouragement of your fellow classmates, you are asked to serve as an attentive audience member. Therefore, you are asked not to read, sleep, eat, do homework, text message, tap your desk, or talk to your neighbor (as examples) while others are presenting. Again, **cell phones must be turned off, completely off, not on silent, not on vibrate, during all student presentations and exams.** If there is some reason you feel you need your cell phone on, please discuss the urgency with the instructor prior to class and a decision will be made as to proper action.

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 the instructor prior to the class session.

Laptops are to be used during class only to take notes or to aid in giving presentations. The instructor reserves the right to ask you to put away your laptop. Searching the internet or instant messaging on your laptop is not acceptable during class.

Hats and/or sunglasses may not be worn in class during presentations or exams.

Netiquette: When emailing the instructor, please include a salutation, a body, and a closing. Sometimes students send me emails that say things like "when is the quiz?" When you email the instructor, please use proper punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar. In addition, please have a salutation (e.g, Hello Professor Tipton), 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.

**Academic Dishonesty**

Students at Reedley College are entitled to the best education that the college can make available to them, and they, their instructors, and their fellow students share the responsibility to ensure that this education is honestly attained. Because cheating, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest activities erode the integrity of the college,

each student is expected to exert an entirely honest effort in all academic endeavors. Academic dishonesty in any form is a very serious offense and will incur serious consequences.

**Cheating** is the act or attempted act of taking an examination or performing an assigned, evaluated task in a fraudulent or deceptive manner, such as having improper access to answers, in an attempt to

gain an unearned academic advantage. Cheating may include, but is not limited to, copying from another’s work, supplying one’s work to another, giving or receiving copies of examinations without an instructor’s permission, using or displaying notes or devices inappropriate to the conditions of the examination, allowing someone other than the officially enrolled student to represent the student, or failing to disclose research results completely.

**Plagiarism** is a specific form of cheating: the use of another’s words or ideas without identifying them as such or giving credit to the source. Plagiarism may include, but is not limited to, failing to provide complete citations and references for all work that draws on the ideas, words, or work of others, failing to identify the contributors to work done in collaboration, submitting duplicate work to be evaluated in different courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors involved, or failing to observe computer security systems and software copyrights.

Incidents of cheating and plagiarism may result in any of a variety of sanctions and penalties, which may range from a failing grade on a particular examination, paper, project, or assignment in question to a failing grade in the course, at the discretion of the instructor and depending on the severity and frequency of the incidents.

**General Assignment Guidelines (individual assignment requirements will be provided in class and/or on Blackboard):**

• Readings should be completed *in their entirety* by the first class for which they are assigned reading should be thorough and should prepare you to participate constructively in activities and discussions.

• There are no make-ups for speeches or tests that are missed without a documentable, excused absence. The instructor must be informed in writing prior to missing class for religious holidays or university-sponsored activities, and excuses for illness or emergencies require appropriate written documentation *within one week* of the absence. Make-up tests/speeches are conducted at the convenience of the instructor and the class. Make-up tests may be given in essay form.

• Written assignments must be submitted in hard copy *and* through SafeAssign on Blackboard. Your work will be used by SafeAssign for plagiarism detection and for no other purpose. The student may indicate in writing to the instructor by the second week of class that he/she refuses to participate in the SafeAssign process, in which case the instructor can use other electronic means to verify the originality of their work. SafeAssign Originality Reports will be available for student viewing.

• Late assignments will not be accepted unless otherwise indicated by the instructor.

• Written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, single-sided, 12pt font, standard size, and stapled. The minimum page length on written assignments is *a minimum*; below the minimum, assignments will receive a corresponding deduction in credit (e.g., 2 pages of a 3 page paper = original grade x 67% [2/3]). *Keep a copy of all of your work.*

• Stylistic form and bibliographies are to be consistent with APA style manual. Spell-check and proofread your work.

• Grade deductions will occur for speeches that do not meet length requirements (beyond understandable variability due to extemporaneous delivery).

\* PLEASE NOTE THAT STUDENTS MUST COMPLETE ALL SPEECHES IN ORDER TO FULFILL THE ORAL COMPONENT OF THE COURSE. IN OTHER WORDS, FAILURE TO SATIFACTORILY COMPLETE ALL SPEECHES WILL RESULT IN A GRADE NO HIGHER THAN A “D” FOR THE COURSE.

**Important Dates**

Instruction begins ............................................................................................... Monday, August 13

Last day to drop a semester length course

and qualify for a refund.........................................................................................Friday, August 24

Last day to register for full-length class or ...........................................................Friday, August 31

drop full-length class to avoid a “W”

Holiday, Labor Day ....................................................................................... Monday, September 3

Last day to change class to or from

Pass/No-Pass grading option........................................................................... Friday, September 14

Mid-term report period ....................................................................................... Friday, October 12

Last day to drop a semester length course

(letter grade assigned after this date) .................................................................. Friday, October 12

Holiday, Veterans’ Day ............................................................................... Monday, November 12

Holiday, Thanksgiving ........................................................... Thursday-Saturday, November 22-24

Final Exam Week ......................................................................... Monday-Friday, December 10-14

Saturday Class Finals .............................................................................. Saturday, December 8

Grades Posted to WebAdvisor, Grade Scan Sheets &

Class Rosters due to Admissions ................................................... Monday, December 17, 12 noon

**COMM 8 Tentative Daily Schedule**

| **Day** | **Date** | **Topic** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| T | 8/14 | Course Introduction / Get Acquainted |
| Th | 8/16 | Introduction Speeches/Communication Apprehension |
| T | 8/21 | Library Orientation – Class meets in library |
| Th | 8/23 | Chapter 1: Small Groups as the Heart of Society  Complete Availability Table  Chapter 2: Groups as Structured Open Systems |
| T | 8/28 | Groups Assigned  Team Building Activity |
| Th | 8/30 | Chapter 4: Becoming a Group |
| T | 9/4 | Discuss Group Intro Speeches and Assign Speaking Days |
| Th | 9/6 | Test 1 Review |
| T | 9/11 | **Test 1 (Chapters 1, 2, & 4)** |
| Th | 9/13 | Chapter 5: Working with Diversity in the Small Group |
| T | 9/18 | Chapter 3: Communication Principles for Group Members |
| Th | 9/20 | Discuss Midterm Paper Guidelines  Discuss Informative Speech and Assign Speaking Days |
| T | 9/25 | **Group Intro Speeches (4)** |
| Th | 9/27 | **Group Intro Speeches (4)** |
| T | 10/2 | Chapter 6: Creative and Critical Thinking in the Small Group |
| Th | 10/4 | Test 2 Review |
| T | 10/9 | **Test 2 (Chapters 3, 5, & 6)** |
| Th | 10/11 |  |
| T | 10/16 | **Midterm Paper Due**  In-class Group Meeting Time |
| Th | 10/18 | **Informative Speeches (4)** |
| T | 10/23 | **Informative Speeches (4)** |
| Th | 10/25 | **Informative Speeches (if needed)**  Discuss Persuasive Speeches and Assign Speaking Days |
| T | 10/30 | Chapter 7: Group Problem-Solving Procedures |
| Th | 11/1 | Chapter 8: Managing Conflicts Productively |
| T | 11/6 | Chapter 9: Applying Leadership Principles |
| Th | 11/8 | Chapter 9: Applying Leadership Principles (cont’d) |
| T | 11/13 | Chapter 10: Planning, Organizing, and Presenting Small Group Presentations |
| Th | 11/15 | Discuss Final Paper |
| T | 11/20 | In-class Group Meeting Time |
| Th | 11/22 | Thanksgiving Recess, No Class |
| T | 11/27 | **Persuasive Speeches (2)** |
| Th | 11/29 | **Persuasive Speeches (2)** |
| T | 12/4 | **Persuasive Speeches (2)** |
| Th | 12/6 | Last Day of Instruction / Final Exam Review  **Persuasive Speeches(2)** |
| T | 12/11 | Finals Week |
| Th | 12/13 | Finals Week |

**The schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor – it is the responsibility of the student to check on announcements made during class and/or via Blackboard, especially after any absence.**