

COMM 8 – Group Communication

SPRING 2020 – Course #58159

Instructor: Alisha Kennedy
Meeting Days/Location: TTH, SOC 36
Meeting Time: 2:00 – 3:15 p.m.

Office Hours: By appointment
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Preferred Method of Contact: Canvas

Course Description

Group communication introduces students to how communication can be used as a vehicle for solving problems and making decisions imperative to successful social and professional interaction. Students will develop a conceptual understanding of small group principles and contexts, putting this knowledge into action through a variety of experiential activities. Students will study and practice theories, behaviors, and the process of group interactions. Students will construct and deliver informative and persuasive public presentations. 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 Materials

- In Mixed Company: Communicating in Small Groups and Teams by J. Dan Rothwell 10th edition. ISBN: 978-0-19-091990-0
- 882-E Scantrons for exams

Important Dates

- Jan. 24: Last day to drop with a full refund
- Feb. 2: Last day to drop a course to avoid a “W”
- March 13: Last day to drop a full-term class and receive a “W”
- April 6 – 10: Spring Recess NO CLASS
- May 18 – 22: Finals Week

Course Outcomes

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

- Identify and apply effective communication strategies that are grounded in group theories.
- Construct and deliver dynamic, competent and ethical presentations that are adapted to the purpose and the audience.
- Utilize organizational patterns and research materials that incorporate sufficient, credible and relevant evidence.
- Explain the principles of human communication by critically evaluating public speeches through constructive critique and self-analysis.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of 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, leadership skills and reasoned decision making.

- Analyze and employ effective conflict management strategies that will assist with problem solving.
- 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, decision making and implementation into group projects.
- Develop skill in extemporaneous speaking for informative, and persuasive presentations (may also include ceremonial presentations).
- Utilize practical assignments and exercises that will reinforce theoretical group concepts.
- Present a variety of speeches and will be expected to present for approximately 25 minutes each during the course of the semester.

Student Rights

So that students are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities they 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 with Disabilities

If you have a verified need for an academic accommodation or materials in alternate media (e.g. Braille, large print, electronic text, etc.) per the Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, please bring it to my attention as soon as possible and contact Disabled Student Programs & Services at (559) 638-0332, or reach out to DSP&S through their [webpage for additional information](#).

Student Responsibility

YOU, the student, are responsible for checking Canvas and your college email account regularly for course related announcements and materials. It is YOUR responsibility to keep track of your grade, course policies, required assignments, and due dates in this class.

Being Asked to Leave the Classroom

Each student is expected to respect the rights of other students and the instructor while enrolled in this course. This classroom is a special environment in which students and instructors come together to promote learning and growth, and where the general goals of academic freedom are maintained. Student conduct that disrupts the learning process will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from class. Disruptive behaviors include (but are not limited to): using a cell phone in any way (including text-messaging), reading outside materials or doing homework for other classes, having side conversations while someone else is speaking, and repeatedly arriving late or leaving early. Additionally, the exploration of new and controversial ideas is an essential component of this class. Students that choose to behave in a disrespectful manner will be asked to drop the class or leave the classroom.

Attendance Policy

Roll will be taken at the beginning of every class meeting. I will DROP any student that misses the first or second, class meetings. Per college policy, I will also drop any student who misses 4 class meetings before the drop deadline. Understanding that life happens, and perfect attendance can only happen in a utopian world, each student is allowed **4** unexcused absences without penalty, regardless of reason. A freebie does not exclude you from points earned in class that day (audience evaluations, classroom activities, speeches, etc.) IF you know in advance that you will be tardy or absent, please inform the instructor PRIOR to the absence so accommodations can be made. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what was announced and covered during class. Please do not approach the

instructor and ask, “Hey, what did I miss?” Instead, check the schedule, send an email, make an appointment, or ask a fellow classmate to update you on missed assignments/announcements.

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 “voted off the island” – everyone needs to be aware that a student cannot pass this class without a group. It is imperative that you follow the rules and do your share in order to avoid losing your group. Any group member who does not have their work completed when an assignment is due will be dismissed from the group by the instructor.

Course Assignments

Below you will find an outline of course assignments. More information – including a detailed prompt – will be provided in class at a later date. Assignments that are **bolded** and marked with ****** are signature assignments. Meaning, you **MUST** complete those assignments to pass the course.

Breakdown of Assignments

Assignment	Points Possible	Your Score
Introduction Speech	Credit/No Credit	
Group Puzzle Presentation**	60	
Group Contract	10	
Group Informative Presentation**	160	
Group Business Pitch**	210	
Group Ceremonial Presentation**	50	
Group Peer Evaluations	30	
Audience Evaluations	30	
Speech Critique Activity**	40	
Self-Reflection Paper	10	
Exams 3 @ 100 points each	300	
Classroom Participation	100	
Total Points Possible	1000	

Course Grading Scale

Total Points	Letter Grade
900 – 1000	A
800 – 899	B
700 – 799	C
600 – 699	D
599 or less	F

The instructor reserves the right to increase points for students who are on the margin; this will be done based on attitude and participation throughout the semester and is solely at the discretion of the instructor. Keep track of your grade throughout the semester. Do not ask for an extra assignment to raise your grade during finals week. Be proactive.

Deadlines

Due to the nature of this course your work is due “to the instructor” on the due dates not to each other. If your group must assemble the work prior to submitting, then the group will have to set due dates PRIOR to the instructor due dates. When outlines and reference pages are due – they are due at the beginning of class or the entire group takes a zero on the assignment. Group members can turn in the work that is done by responsible members to save their grades and the members who did not give their work to the group will be eliminated by the instructor.

Late and Missed Assignments

I **DO NOT** accept any late assignments. Deadlines will be clear on Canvas, the course schedule, and announced in class. Lack of Internet access, submission links not working, being tired, your dog eating your laptop, being busy, not asking for clarification prior to the due date, etc. is not an excuse for turning in an assignment past the deadline (trust me I've heard them all...). Any assignment that is due during an absence must be made up **BEFORE**, not after, the absence unless arranged otherwise. If you know for certain you will be absent on a particular day – pay close attention to the course schedule – notify the instructor in advance. In the event of an emergency or extenuating circumstance the instructor must be notified as soon as possible, and arrangements can be made solely at the discretion of the instructor (official documentation may be required). Also note, I will NOT accept handwritten or emailed assignments. Assignment **MUST** be turned in through Canvas. Plan ahead and be responsible for your work. Remember this is college not high school.

Cheating

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 using work from another course.

Plagiarism

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 the 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.

Disciplinary Procedures

When a faculty member discovers a violation of the cheating or plagiarism policy, the faculty member:

- Will arrange a conference with the student and at that time advise the student of the allegations.
- Will notify the dean of the division in writing that an act of dishonesty has occurred.
- May give the student an F for the assignment and/or for the course.

A student may appeal the faculty member's action to the Academic Standards Committee.

Speeches

This course fulfills the oral component for general education requirements. **Therefore, 4 speeches/presentations are required.** There are NO makeup speeches in this course. These speeches are clearly noted both in the syllabus and course schedule. I take this very seriously. Please note, students that miss a speech will deplete ALL classroom participation points and will be unable to complete their ceremonial speech or take the final exam. This will cause the student – best case scenario – to only earn a D in the course overall. In addition, if a student misses a speech, they will not receive any points for any other assignments connected to that speech (outline, reference page, etc.). In order to present a speech, students **MUST** submit a completed speech outline on Canvas by the assigned due date. Failure to submit an outline on time will result in the student receiving a 0 on the assignment and being unable to give their speech/presentation with their group.

On Speech Days

Understand that it is extremely important that you arrive on time. **The door will be locked 5 minutes after the course start time to avoid interruption.** If you are late, DO NOT knock repeatedly, DO NOT come into the classroom if someone is speaking, WAIT until you hear clapping, or you are sure your fellow classmate's speech is finished presenting before knocking or coming in. In addition, absolutely NO electronic devices are to be seen or heard on speech days. Scrolling on Instagram, texting, taking a phone call, having headphones in, will all result in you being dismissed from the class that day. Side conversations, doing homework for other coursework, etc. Is also unacceptable on speech days. As we will learn in this course, it is just as important to be a good audience member as it is to be a public speaker. After you complete your speech, you are required to stay until class is dismissed.

Audience Evaluations

On speech days when you are not speaking you are required to complete an audience evaluation in order to earn the points for that day. The instructor will assign each student a speaker to evaluate. These points cannot be made up. The evaluation form will be explained later. These forms should include a lot of detail, clear explanations, full sentences, and helpful advice to the speaker so they can improve. One-word answers or incomplete evaluations will receive a reduction in points.

Exams

There will be three 100-point exams. You will need a scantron 882-E and pencil for these. They will include but not be limited to multiple choice, true and false, and matching questions. Exams will begin at the beginning of class. Once the first student is done with the exam no one else will be allowed to take it. If you will be absent, exams must be taken BEFORE the scheduled exam date, not after.

Professional Speech Critique Activity

The professional speech critique is a required in-class activity. Please note the date of the activity in the course schedule and ensure that you are in attendance on that day. Students MUST complete this activity in order to pass the class as it is a signature assignment. Students that are absent on this day and miss the in-class activity will be required to complete an outside paper. More details will be provided at a later time.

Classroom Participation Points

While attending this course, students will be required to actively participate in the classroom learning experience. Your professor is a member of the course, but student learning is the highest when they themselves take responsibility for their learning. Because communication courses are highly participatory, if you are not in class to participate in classroom discussions and activities, you may exhaust all of your participation points. Each student is expected to attend class each day and be prepared to discuss ideas and share opinions relevant to interpersonal communication. Please come to class prepared to engage the material. In other words, READ the assigned chapters prior to their lecture date on the syllabus. If you deplete all of your participation points, you will no longer be eligible to earn extra credit. Leaving early, arriving late, or not being mentally/physically present in the classroom will affect your participation points. Remember, every student has 4 freebies. After that, I will deduct up to 25 points from participation for every subsequent absence.

Additional Point Assignments (Extra Credit)

Occasionally, extra credit assignments may arise and are entirely at the discretion of the instructor. If they do, they will be briefly announced in class and written on the board. It is the student's responsibility to find out more information from the instructor and to have the extra credit turned in by the assigned deadline. Extra credit is not to take the place of required course work. It will ONLY be accepted from those students who have submitted and attempted all required assignments. Students with excessive absences or missing speeches will not be allowed to submit any extra credit. In addition, students may only earn up to 50 points extra credit.

Changes to the Syllabus

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus and to the class calendar if extenuating circumstances arise. This right extends to assignments, evaluations, and all other aspects of this course. Denying that you have heard a verbal assignment change is not a basis for appealing the information contained in this syllabus.