Small Group Communication

Instructor: Tom Hall
Phone: (W) 325-0809  
E-Mail: hthall@ou.edu

Course Time: W 5:30 – 9:00pm

Course Description: Students will develop an understanding of the unique characteristics of communication in the context of a small group.

Class Contract: Grades for this course will be determined by student performance on the required assignments. There is no formal attendance policy other than it is expected that students will attend each class. All assignments are due at the beginning of class—late assignments will not be accepted without a legitimate excuse approved beforehand by the instructor. Class members will conduct themselves in accordance with the student handbook provided by Oklahoma City University. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for any student with a learning obstacle. Please see me individually if you need special arrangements to make the classroom and its environment as friendly as possible.


Course Schedule

August 21:  
Introductions
Overview of course content and assignments
Assign Discussion 1
Assign Discussion 2

August 28:  
Reading—Chapter 1: Introduction
Reading—Chapter 2: A systems approach to SGC
Discussion 1 due

Sept. 4:  
Group observation reports
Reading—Chapter 3: Goals and Roles in Small Groups
Reading—Chapter 4: Communicating Effectively in the Small Group
Discussion 2 due
Assign Discussion 3

Sept. 11:  
Procedural Model of Problem Solving Activity
Reading—Chapter 5: Listening and Feedback in Small Groups
Reading—Chapter 6: Problem Solving
Discussion 3 due

Sept. 18:  
Group Observation Reports
Reading—Chapter 7: Nonverbal Communication in the Small Group
Reading—Chapter 8: Leadership in Small Groups
Assign—take home final exam
Assign Discussion 4

Sept. 25:  
Movie Night—Movie to be announced
Discussion 4 due  
Oct. 2:  Movie paper due  
Reading—Chapter 9: Conflict Management and Resolution in SGC  
Reading—Chapter 10: Special Forms and Techniques for SGC

Oct. 9:  TBA  
Reading—Chapter 11: Planning and Conducting Meetings

Oct. 16:  No class—use this time to work on projects and take home exam
Oct. 23:  Group observation report due  
Group observation presentation due  
Take home final exam due

Class Assignments:  There are five main criteria for evaluating individual performance in class: Discussion assignments, group observation paper and presentation, movie paper, PMOPS paper, and final exam.

Discussion Topics:  During the semester there will be four topics assigned for discussion. The week after the discussion topic is assigned, students will be required to turn in a one page, typed paper discussing the topic. The topic will also be discussed as a class, with each individual expected to contribute to the discussion. Topics may be case studies, historical examples of small groups, or current small group academic literature. The brief paper is expected to contain YOUR OWN thoughts on the topic under discussion. Citations and additional research are not expected, however, your answer should reflect an understanding of the topic and the topic’s relationship to small group communication.

4 Discussions @ 10 points each  40 points

Procedural Model of Problem Solving (P-MOPS) Group Paper: On September 11th class attendance will be mandatory. We will be participating in a group event which will serve as the basis of a 2 page paper. Each group will be given a specific problem and a time frame in which to reach a solution. This will be discussed in more detail on the night of the event. I am being purposefully vague because I would prefer to have your excitement and anxiety level slowly increase over the next three weeks.

P-MOPS activity and paper  40 points

Individual paper:  On September 25th we will watch a film in class. The film selected will address multiple small group issues. On October 2 a two to three page paper which discusses the small group communication characteristics present in the film will be due. The student is expected to turn in a well organized, grammatically correct, and logically sound paper discussing the film. This assignment will be discussed in more depth in the coming weeks.

Individual paper  40 points

Group Observation Project:  Beginning with discussion number 2, each member of the class will be expected to identify a group in the
workplace or in the community to observe over the course of this class. Individuals are expected to spend at least 5 hours observing, documenting, and identifying the characteristics of the small group selected. On September 4th and October 2nd brief reports are to be given regarding the group being observed. On the final night of class a 3-4 page paper will be due discussing the group and applying information from the textbook to the group. Also on that night a formal presentation will be given to the class regarding the group. More details concerning this project will be discussed in the coming weeks. The presentation will be expected to be 6-8 minutes.

Group observation project  40 points

Final Exam (Take home): The final exam will consist of 10 short answer questions (Of which, you only have to answer four) and is designed to measure the students ability to synthesis classroom discussions, assignments, lectures, and the textbook into concise, well thought out answers.

Final exam  40 points

Grades for the course will be distributed as follows:

180 – 200  A
160 – 179  B
140 – 159  C
120 – 139  D