Communication 215.002
Small Group Communication
HONORS
Spring 2016 – McKibben 351
Stephen F. Austin State University
Languages, Cultures and Communication
Communication Studies
www.sfasu.edu/commstudies

Professor: R. Tyler Spradley, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Communication
Leadership Minor and Certificate Coordinator
Office: LAN 417
Phone: 468-1381
E-mail: rspradley@sfasu.edu
Office Hours: 9:30-11am TR 2-3pm TR
Class Times: 11 TR, 12:30 TR, Online Also by appointment

Course Materials:

Course Description: Theories, principles and skills involved in group communication. Experiential focus upon problem analysis, problem solving, and decision-making.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes:
Understand what constitutes and characterizes a small group.
Understand different types of small groups and the dynamics and functions of each.
Understand and demonstrate small group communication competencies related to discussion, problem solving, decision making, and presenting.
Recognize and address challenges to small group communication.
Understand the role of diversity in small group communication.
Understand and demonstrate roles within small groups.

University Core Curriculum Program Learning Outcomes (See Last Section of Syllabus):
Critical Thinking Skills - to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
Communication Skills - to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
Teamwork - to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
Personal Responsibility - to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

Communication Studies Program Learning Outcomes:
Objective 1—Theory Knowledge: Students majoring in Communication Studies should display comprehension of major communication theories.
Objective 2—Theory Application: Students majoring in Communication Studies will apply the major theories in the field to communicate effectively in a variety of settings.

Objective 3—Research Methods: Students majoring in Communication Studies will be able to use and demonstrate understanding of appropriate methodology in critical, humanistic, or social scientific paradigms in examining research questions in communication.

Objective 4—Diversity and Freedom of Expression: Students majoring in Communication Studies will be able to recognize the central role of diversity and freedom of expression in a global community.

Objective 5—Constitutive Nature of Communication: Students majoring in Communication Studies will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the constitutive nature of communication, which includes forces that enable and constrain communication such as technology, ethics, and organizational life.

Objective 6—Higher Order Thinking: Students majoring in Communication Studies will be able to demonstrate oral and written competence in logical and critical thinking.

Governing Policies: The following policies will apply toward classroom decorum.

1. ACCEPTABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR: Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

2. COURSE ADAPTATIONS: To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

3. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism. Definition of Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of
an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit. Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

4. D2L AND ONLINE COURSEWORK: **ALL** students are expected to use **D2L** in this course to perform and keep up with graded activities and scheduled readings. Students should sign in at http://d2l.sfasu.edu using the same username and password as MySFA.

5. GRADE WITHHELD POLICY (Semester Grades A-54): **II. Withheld Grades:** Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average. http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/semester_grds.asp

**Evaluation:** In addition to attendance, students will be evaluated using exams and written work. Each evaluated activity must be completed and turned in by the scheduled class meeting time. Your professor throughout the semester will provide additional instructions. You may earn up to **1000 points** total. The following indicates which letter grades correspond to earned points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Range</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1000 – 900 points</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>899 – 800 points</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>799 – 700 points</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>699 – 600 points</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>599 and less</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tests:** There will be two exams throughout the semester. Exams will be completed via D2L on the assigned dates. Each exam will have 50 multiple-choice questions and student will have 60 minutes to complete the exam. Questions must be responded to before moving to the next question and cannot be returned to after moving forward. **Tests will be worth a total of 300 points.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test 1</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/19-2/18</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/3-5/3</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Graded Activities:** Graded Activities will include single page application essays, group projects, and in-class exercises. **Activities will be worth a total of 700 points.**

**Semester Project:** Over the semester, students will complete a multi-component research and application group communication project. The project has been broken down into components to help students stay on task, learn the process as the project is being implemented, and maximize time. **This aim of this ongoing class Semester Project is focused on learning and analyzing small group communication in actual organizations and using what you learn to develop a workshop/seminar to develop small group communication skills.**

First, students will select an organization they would like to volunteer with throughout the semester. Volunteer hours need to total 5.

You will be placed into small groups that will serve as your designated discussion group
for the duration that the class works on the multi-part posts and assignments related to studying small group interaction within an organization. You and your group members will use the discussion tool in D2L to post your findings about the organization, share data about actual group interaction within the respective organizations, and eventually develop a workshop/seminar designed for organizations to enhance their small group communication.

As noted above, the Semester Project is done incrementally. This means that students are held accountable to complete portions of the project throughout the semester so that the project is not assumed to be accomplishable overnight and to help students from becoming overwhelmed at the end of the semester. Keep in mind all of the segments discussed below are affiliated with the Semester Project (i.e. Project Segments 1-3).

As noted in the course timeline, key segments of your semester project will be turned in at various times. Keep these dates in mind.

**Project Segment 1:** You will need to have completed at least the interviews, a portion of the service/volunteer hours, a portion of the participant observation at meetings, and distribution of the surveys in order to complete this assignment. Write a one-page summary of these experiences and have the organizational representative you are serving email me verification of your service. See Course Timeline for the date. 25 points.

**Project Segment 2:** You will need to have completed all of the service/volunteer hours, participant observation at group meetings, interviews, and collection of surveys. Turn in your field notes from your observations and have the organizational representative you are serving email me verification of your service. See Course Timeline for the date. Field notes should be in DOC, RTF, or PDF format entitled "Field Notes." 50 points.

**Project Segment 3:** You will need to have analyzed the data and applied it to the creation of a small group communication skills training designed specifically to address the needs of the organization. See Course Timeline for the date. Project Segment 3 is the final component of your semester project that was outlined in Module 4 Assignment 2 and your course syllabus. In this component, you must have a complete data analysis section that has appropriately employed qualitative research design to develop and analyze categories found in the field notes and data gathered through the semester. Synthesize your findings with the material learned throughout the semester and other academic support to flesh out detailed explanations of key small group communication skills. Student will develop a Power Point or Prezi to use as a visual aid that outlines each of the small group communication skills developed. Each student will video record themselves delivering the training. Videos will be uploaded and graded. Presentations should be 5-8 minutes in length. Students are responsible for assuring the video and sound quality is clear. The visual aid segment should be submitted under Project Segment 3 along with the video file.

Following the release of the video on YouTube and LiveText, students will evaluate assigned group members’ videos, and complete an analysis of the group video session. A YouTube link to your individual video will be uploaded into the group analysis discussion link on the scheduled date in the timeline. Students will have 48 hours to
provide written feedback to their respective assigned group members. After completing the analysis and reading the feedback provided by your group about your video, you will complete a single page paper that discusses what you learned about the feedback process and its effectiveness as group communication. The analysis paper will be due according to the date written in the timeline.

The video will be worth 100 points. The paper will be worth 25 points. Segment 3 will be worth a total 125 points.

NOTE: Students who struggle with data analysis or need assistance should feel free to set up an appointment with the professor.

Tentative Course Calendar: The course calendar should be used by students to see when daily readings, activities, and exams are scheduled. The calendar is subject to change based on student learning progress and unforeseen occurrences. In the event the calendar changes, announcements will be emailed to the student’s SFA email and posted on D2L announcements. See COURSE TIMELINE in the Welcome and Getting Started Module.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES:
List the program learning outcomes addressed in this course as identified in the course matrix for your degree program. If your department requires a listing of all Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) on the syllabus, please identify those that are directly taught in this course. If this is a general education core curriculum course and no PLOs are taught in this course then insert the following statement under this heading:

This is a general education core curriculum course and no specific program learning outcomes for this major are addressed in this course.

General Education Core Curriculum
This course has been selected to be part of Stephen F. Austin State University’s core curriculum. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six objectives for all core courses: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. SFA is committed to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives.

Assessment of these objectives at SFA will be based on student work from all core curriculum courses. This student work will be collected in D2L through LiveText, the assessment management system selected by SFA to collect student work for core assessment. LiveText accounts will be provided to all students enrolled in core courses through the university technology fee. You will be required to register your LiveText account, and you will be notified how to register your account through your SFA e-mail account. If you forward your SFA e-mail to another account and do not receive an e-mail concerning LiveText registration, please be sure to check your junk mail folder and your spam filter for these e-mails. If you have questions about LiveText call Ext. 1267 or e-mail SFALiveText@sfasu.edu.

The chart below indicates the core objectives addressed by this course, the assignment(s) that will be used to assess the objectives in this course and uploaded to LiveText this semester, and the date the assignment(s) should be uploaded to LiveText. Not every assignment will be collected for assessment every semester. Your instructor will notify you which assignment(s) must be submitted for assessment in LiveText this semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Course Assignment Title</th>
<th>Date Due in LiveText</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking Skills</td>
<td>To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.</td>
<td>Semester Project: Project Segment 1 Project Segment 2 Project Segment 3</td>
<td>1) April 14th 2) May 1st 3) May 9th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Skills</strong></td>
<td>To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Empirical and Quantitative Skills</strong></td>
<td>To include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teamwork</strong></td>
<td>To include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>To include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COURSE TIMELINE

1/19: Introductions
1/21: What is a group? – Wheelan CH 1
   Groups Assigned and Group Projects Explained
   Group Project 1: Breaking the Ice
1/26: What is a team? – Wheelan CH 2 and Yemm CH 2
   Exercise: Characteristics of an Effective Team (Yemm p. 20)
1/28: Facing the challenges of leading your team – Yemm CH 1
   Group Project 2: Solving Problem Together
2/2: Understanding team roles and balance – Yemm CH 3
   Exercise: Checking Team Balance (pp. 32-33)
2/4: OUTSIDE OF CLASS ACTIVITY: Group Project 3: Setting Roles
2/9: Semester Project Instructions and Calendar
2/11: Navigating stage – Wheelan CH 3
2/16: Surviving stage – Wheelan CH 4
2/18: Reorganizing stage – Wheelan CH 5
   Group Project 4: Assessing Health
2/23: Sustaining high performance – Wheelan CH 6
   Application Essay: Team Performance Checklist (Wheelan pp. 55-57)

2/25: Semester Project Segment 1 Due
3/1: Exam 1 (Covering material from 1/19 to 2/18) on D2L from 8am-11pm
3/12-3/20: SPRING BREAK
3/24: EASTER BREAK
3/29: Effective team members – Wheelan CH 8
   Application Essay: Effective Team Member Checklist (Wheelan pp. 85-90)
3/31: Effective team leaders – Wheelan CH 9
   Application Essay: Effective Team Leader Checklist (Wheelan pp. 105-110)
4/5: Your role as a leader – Yemm CH 4
   Semester Project Segment 2 Due
4/7: FIELD TRIP
4/12: Setting the direction for your team – Yemm CH 5
   Exercise: Setting the Direction (Yemm pp. 60 & 71)
4/14: Monitoring and controlling performance – Yemm CH 6
   Exercise: A Simple Report (Yemm p. 86)
4/19: Communicating with your team – Yemm CH 7
   Exercise: How Good of a Listener are You (Yemm p. 100)
   Group Project 5 Due: Making a Difference
4/21: FIELD TRIP
4/26: Getting the most from your team – Yemm CH 8
   Handling challenges within the team – Yemm CH 9
4/28: Effective organizational support for teams – Wheelan CH 10
   Effective Organizational Support Checklist (Wheelan pp. 123-128)
5/3: Pulling it all together – Yemm CH 10
   Semester Project Segment 3 Video Due

5/5: Semester Project Segment 3 Group Analysis Essay Due
5/6-5/10: Exam 2 (Covering material from 3/3 to 5/3) on D2L will available from 8am on May 6th until 11pm on May 10th.