



CMST 444 (001): Group Communication
Fall 2019 3 Credits
Monday/Wednesday/Friday 10:10 to 11:00
Humanities and Social Sciences 101

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Office Hours: By appointment

Please do not see office hours exclusively as a time to address problems with the course. You can use them to clarify points you do not understand, to get additional readings, or to talk about the subject matter in relation to your interests.

Keep in mind I am available to meet at times other than my office hours. If you would like, I am more than willing to meet at alternate times. If you cannot visit my office hours or set up an appointment, the best way to contact me is via email. I will usually respond within 36 hours of receiving an email from you. However, there are limits. The 36-hour rule does not apply to weekends and holidays—it may take longer for a response during those times.

Course Description: Small group decision-making. Evidence, argumentation, leadership, roles, and norms as they affect critical thinking in groups. Prerequisite(s): 342. Registration Restriction(s): Restricted to Communication Studies majors/minors or consent of instructor.

Texts/Resources/Materials:

Keyton, J., & Beck, S. J. (2018). *Communicating in groups and teams: Strategic interactions*. San Diego, CA: Cognella Academic Publishing.

Additional readings on Canvas

Student Learning Objectives: The central goal of this course is to extend your knowledge about how groups function and how to improve our experiences in groups. We will work to understand groups from a theoretical and a practical perspective, then discuss ways of applying this information to your experiences.

To accomplish this, we will focus on the following objectives:

- We will explore different ways groups are conceptualized, studied, and structured
- We will investigate the nature of group communication, including its forms, processes, and functions
- We will create teaching sessions to demonstrate theoretical and practical understanding of group communication concepts
- We will develop a deeper understanding of the theories that inform our understanding of groups
- We will read and develop a deeper knowledge of the research conducted about groups
- We will practice the principles of effective oral and written communication
- We will practice the principles of relationship building and group interaction

Course Communication: This class requires you to regularly check your email and Canvas for updates. Please be sure to keep an eye on both of these for information about class. If you have issues with your email or with Canvas contact OIT: <http://help.utk.edu/footprints/contact>

Course and University Policies:

1. **Instruction Style:** I prefer to interact informally and for students to participate in class as much as possible. We all have experience working in groups, meaning each person has insights to provide. This means most of class time will not rely on lecture but will include group activities, discussion, interaction, and other ways to engage with material. The nature of this course is such that your consistent, active involvement is required. Thus, I expect we all will come to class having completed the reading and any assignments.
2. **Responsibility:** Part of getting a college degree is preparing to the “real world”, *a world in which you must take responsibility for yourself and accept the consequences of your actions (positive or negative)*. This means we should all be prepared to: (1) obtain information from classmates due to absences; (2) checking the syllabus and Canvas closely for readings, assignments, and questions; (3) keeping track of exam dates and deadlines for the course; and (4) keeping track of grades throughout the semester.
3. **Technology:** Class time will be spent talking with each other and I expect everyone to be fully engaged in our discussions. As a result, I maintain a no technology policy in my classroom. Come to class prepared to take notes without the use of a computer, tablet, camera, or cell phone. There are times I may allow technology, which will be announced in advance.
4. **Punctuality:** Make a habit of being on time for class (which really means early). This is a great way to prepare for class and gives us time to interact and talk about issues or concerns before class time.
5. **Attendance:** Based on UT Academic Policy, academic success is built upon regular class attendance. I will take daily attendance. One reason many people dislike working in groups is because people do not show up. Since this class is largely based on group work, I expect you to attend class and be prepared to work with your group every day. If you have any concerns about this policy, please meet with me ASAP. Part of your

participation grade will be based on attendance. **Attendance is required on both Activity Days, and on all Presentation Days.**

6. **Civility:** Please check out UT's policy on civility: <http://civility.utk.edu/>. For this class, I expect we all will treat each other in a respectful and professional manner. This does not mean you cannot disagree with me or others (friendly debate is encouraged!) but do so in a polite manner. I reserve the right to ask individuals to leave class who violate this policy.
7. **Handing in Work:** All papers must be **typed in Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1 inch margins, stapled, and in 12-point font.** Think about self-presentation and impression formation as you put together your assignments. Specific writing requirements for each assignment will be shared later in class. Papers are expected to reflect university-level writing quality. In other words, spelling, organizational, and grammatical errors will greatly reduce your final grade. To aid in this, I recommend you make use of the Writing Center. If you would like early feedback on writing assignments, please visit with me no later than one week before the due date.
8. **Nature of Group Work:** Working in groups is tricky. I recognize there can be situations where you may not get along or where the work load is unbalanced. I see my role this semester as a mediator if conflict or issues arise within groups. Please contact me as issues arise. I also maintain the following **policies for all groups:**
 - a. The team projects *require* each team member to be actively engaged with the team; attend all team meetings; complete team assignments by the team's due dates; and complete his/her fair share of the project workload.
 - b. The team is to contact me *immediately* if above policy is not adhered to by a team member(s). Continued lack of involvement from a team member will result in a lowered project grade for that team member, including potential "firing" and a failing grade.
 - c. A team member(s) may also leave the team and complete the project independently if he/she believes other team members, with prior approval from the professor, are not completing the fair share of the project workload.
 - d. If you choose not to confront and instead choose to carry that member along, *you have nobody to blame but yourself.*
9. **CCI Diversity Statement:** CCI recognizes and values diversity. Exposing students to diverse people, ideas and cultures increases opportunities for intellectual inquiry, encourages critical thinking, and enhances communication and information competence. When all viewpoints are heard, thoughtfully considered, and respectfully responded to, everyone benefits. Diversity and fairness unite us with the wider professional and global community.
10. **Disability Services:** Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 865-974-6087 in 100 Dunford Hall to document their eligibility for services. ODS will

work with students and faculty to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

11. **College Life:** As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to your learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, and/or feeling down. These concerns and events may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities, including classes. The University of Tennessee offers free services to assist you, and you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus at <https://counselingcenter.utk.edu/>.

Course Assignments: Your grade is based on your performance on exams and a variety of activities. You must complete all assigned work to receive credit in this course. A summary of these is below (more information will be available on Canvas and in class):

Individual Graded Assignments (400 points)

- **Exams (2 @ 100 points each).** There will be two exams in this class which will cover the most recent content. I will let you know what type and how many questions closer to each exam.
- **Analysis Paper (100 points).** The purpose of this assignment is to apply the concepts or theories discussed in class to group communication behavior in a film.
- **Peer Evaluations of Group Projects (40 points).** An evaluation form will be completed after each group project by each group member based on contribution. If you do not turn in your evaluation, you will receive a zero.
- **Mini Writing Assignments (2 @ 15 points each).** There will be two short writing assignments this semester based on class activity days. If you are absent on the associated Activity Day, you will receive a zero on the Mini Writing Assignment.
- **Participation (30 points).** Evaluated at the end of the semester based on being actively engaged in class (raising hand to answer questions or contribute daily, full participation in class exercises, respectful and professional behavior at all times, regular attendance).

Group Graded Assignments (200 points)

- **Teaching Assignment (50 points).** You will work with your group to devise a teaching session which will be given to the rest of the class. The topics will be provided by Dr. Paskewitz and dates will be assigned in advance.
- **Big Project Paper and Presentation (150 points).** The purpose of this assignment is to give your team an opportunity to identify, develop, and practice your small group communication skills while assisting a local charity/non-profit group.

Grading Scale: The following grading scale will be used to determine final grades for the course.

A	600 to 555	B-	494 to 480	D+	419 to 399
A-	554 to 540	C+	479 to 459	D	398 to 375
B+	539 to 519	C	458 to 435	D-	374 to 360
B	518 to 495	C-	434 to 420	F	359 or lower

Please note I do not use percentages for grading. Your grade is calculated based on points earned in the course. This means if you are 1 point away from a B-, you have received a C+ in the course.

Grading Policies:

1. **Due Dates:** All work is due at the beginning of class on the designated due date. Missed or late assignments **will not be accepted**. An assignment is considered late when it is submitted after the stated deadline. The only exception to this will be documented and/or university accepted excuses **that have been brought to my attention in advance**. No make-up work is available for any assignment unless prior arrangements are made with Dr. Paskewitz. **Emailed assignments will NOT be accepted.** There is free printing available in Communications 293.
2. **Academic Integrity:** An essential feature of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the university, it is expected that you will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity. *Not knowing the definition of plagiarism does not excuse you from consequences*. Students found guilty of academic misconduct are subject to penalties, up to and possibly including suspension and/or expulsion.

Part of academic integrity is citing sources for all of your work. You are required to cite all sources you use in this class (both in text and reference page). This class uses APA format for citations. I encourage you to use a current APA format guide of your choice. Outside of the APA style manual, I recommend the following resource:
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

3. **Grade Disputes:** Students are encouraged to discuss their progress with me anytime throughout the semester. I recommend keeping a running total of your points to avoid any surprises at the end of the semester! Please visit me during office hours or make an appointment for discussing grades rather than before or after class.

Any student wishing to contest a grade for an assignment or exam may do so up to one week after that grade has been given. To request a re-grade, you will need to write a letter explaining why you believe a re-grade is needed. This letter should address how your work matches the assignment description, along with how it aligns with course readings and lectures. Attach the original assignment and return both to me within the one week time frame.

If you are dissatisfied with the grade dispute process after going through me, please see the University of Tennessee Grade Appeal for more information.

Course Schedule
Subject to revision during the semester

	Course Topic	Reading	Assignment
W: 8/21	Course Introduction Syllabus		
F: 8/23	<i>No Class: Faculty Retreat</i>		
M: 8/26	Group Experiences	Ch. 1	
W: 8/28	Group Experiences		
F: 8/30	Characteristics of Groups	Ch. 2	
M: 9/2	<i>No Class: Labor Day</i>		
W: 9/4	Characteristics of Groups		Analysis Paper Assignment Given
F: 9/6	Group Formation	Canvas Readings Group Development Group Socialization	
M: 9/9	Group Formation		Teaching Assignment Given
W: 9/11	Group Formation	Canvas Reading: Kane & Rink	Big Project Assignment Given
F: 9/13	Activity Day		
M: 9/16	Contextual Influences	Ch. 3	Mini Writing #1 Due
W: 9/18	Contextual Influences		
F: 9/20	Communicating in Groups	Ch. 4	
M: 9/23	Communicating in Groups Review for Exam		Analysis Paper Due
W: 9/25	CCI Diversity and Inclusion Week Session “Public Health”		Meet in Scripps Lab
F: 9/27	Exam One		
M: 9/30	Decision Making	Ch. 5	
W: 10/2	Decision Making		
F: 10/4	Decision Making	Canvas Reading: Challenges to Decision Making	
M: 10/7	Teaching Work Day		
W: 10/9	Teaching Presentations		Groups 1 & 2
F: 10/11	Teaching Presentations		Groups 3 & 4
M: 10/14	Teaching Presentations		Groups 5 & 6
W: 10/16	Teaching Presentation		Group 7
F: 10/18	<i>No Class: Fall Break</i>		
M: 10/21	Group Relationships	Ch. 6	
W: 10/23	Group Relationships		
F: 10/25	Group Relationships	Canvas Reading: Rovio et al.	

M: 10/28	Conflict in Groups	Ch. 7	
W: 10/30	Conflict in Groups		
F: 11/1	Activity Day		
M: 11/4	Leadership in Groups	Ch. 8	Mini Writing #2 Due
W: 11/6	Leadership in Groups		
F: 11/8	Leadership in Groups		
M: 11/11	Group Meetings	Canvas Reading: Beck et al.	
W: 11/13	<i>No Class: National Communication Association Conference</i>		
F: 11/15	<i>No Class: National Communication Association Conference</i>		
M: 11/18	Group Meetings	Ch. 9	
W: 11/20	Group Meetings Review for Exam		
F: 11/22	Exam Two		
M: 11/25	Big Project Work Day		
W: 11/27	<i>No Class: Thanksgiving Break</i>		
F: 11/29	<i>No Class: Thanksgiving Break</i>		
M: 12/2	Big Project Presentations		Big Project Due
W: 12/4	Big Project Presentations		
M: 12/9 10:15am to 12:15pm	Big Project Presentations		

***NOTE: We do have activities planned on class periods before Fall Break and Thanksgiving Break. Do not make any travel plans for those days. If you are not available those days, then please select a different semester to take this course.