Communication 215.001
Small Group Communication
Fall 2017 @ 11-12:15 – F376

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
Languages, Cultures and Communication
Communication Studies
www.sfasu.edu/commstudies

Professor:  R. Tyler Spradley, Ph.D.
2013-2015 Jim Towns Endowed Professor of Mentoring
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Office Hours:  8:30-11:00 TR
Also by appointment
Class Times:  11 TR, 12:30 TR, Online

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](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](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:

- 1000 – 900 points A
- 899 – 800 points B
- 799 – 700 points C
- 699 – 600 points D
- 599 and less F

**Tests:** There will be two exams throughout the semester. Exams will be completed via **D2L on the assigned dates.** Each exam will have multiple-choice and essay 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 400 points.**

- Test 1 200 points
- Test 2 200 points

**Graded Activities:** Graded Activities will include quizzes, single page application essays, group projects, and in-class exercises. Instructions will be provided during the semester. **Activities will be worth a total of 600 points.**

**Students should always contact me using @jacks.sfasu.edu email or personal email at rspradley@sfasu.edu.** Using D2L will result in delayed replies.

**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.**
COM 215 COURSE TIMELINE

Quizzes can be given on any day we meet in the classroom or elsewhere.

8/29: Introductions
8/31: What is Communication? What is a group? – Wheelan CH 1
   Components of Small Group Communication
   Groups Assigned
   **Group Project 1:** Breaking the Ice *(50 points)*

9/5: **Online Class: Log on to D2L for Class Assignment: Due before 11pm.**
   **Group Project 2:** Solving a Problem Together as a Group *(50 points)*
   *Experiencing Groups through Mediated Communication*

9/7: The Small Group Socialization Process
   Small Group Member Communication and Personality Traits
   **Class Exercise:** The Socialization Model *(30 points)*

9/12: Small Group Decision Making and Problem Solving
9/14: What is a team? – Wheelan CH 2-3 and Yemm CH 2
   **Class Exercise:** Characteristics of an Effective Team *(30 points)*
   Effective Organizational Support Checklist

9/19: Facing the challenges of leading your team – Yemm CH 1
   Understanding team roles and balance – Yemm CH 3
   **Class Exercise:** Checking Team Balance *(30 points)*
9/21: **Group Project 3:** Balancing Roles *(50 points)*

9/26: How do high performance teams function? - Wheelan CH 4
   High Reliability Teams
   **Class Exercise:** Performing at High Levels *(30 points)*
9/28: Effective team members – Wheelan CH 5
   **Application Essay:** Highly Reliable Team Members *(50 points)*

10/3: Effective team leaders – Wheelan CH 6 and Yemm CH 4
**10/5: Exam 1 – Complete the exam on D2L before 11pm.** *(200 points)*

10/10: Models of Small Group Development
   Group Stages and Phases
10/12: Navigating Stage – Wheelan CH 7
   **Group Project 4:** Where are you at? *(50 points)*

10/17: Surviving & Reorganizing Stages – Wheelan CH 8 & 9
10/19: **Online Class** *(30 points)*
   **Class Exercise:** Log on to D2L for Class Assignment: Due before 11pm.

10/24: Characteristics of a Small Group
10/26: Sustaining high performance – Wheelan CH 10
   **Class Exercise:** Team Performance Checklist *(30 points)*

10/31: Setting the direction for your team – Yemm CH 5
   **Class Exercise:** Setting the Direction *(30 points)*
11/2: Monitoring and controlling performance – Yemm CH 6
11/7: Communicating with your team – Yemm CH 7
   **Class Exercise:** How Good of a Listener are You (30 points)
11/9: Understanding and Managing Team and Small Group Conflict

11/14: **Online Class** (30 points)
   **Class Exercise:** Log on to D2L for Class Assignment: Due before 11pm.
11/16: Getting the most from your team – Yemm CH 8
   Handling challenges within the team – Yemm CH 9

**THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY – 11/20-11/24**

11/28: Pulling it all together – Yemm CH 10
11/30: Virtual Teams – Wheelan CH 11

12/5: Recent Research – Wheelan CH 12
   **Class Exercise:** Where do go from here? (30 points)
12/7: **Assessing Your Group/Conclusions** (50 points)

**12/9-12/12: Exam 2 - Complete the exam on D2L before 11pm. (200 points)**

**Quizzes can be given on any day we meet in the classroom or elsewhere.**

Last Day to Register: 8/31
Twelfth Class Day: 9/12
Mid-semester: 10/18
Last Day to Drop or Withdraw without WP or WF: 10/25
Last Day to Withdraw from the University: 11/27
Finals Week: 12/11-15