**Small Group Communication 4342**

**TR 2:40 – 4:05 p.m.**

**(Syllabus Subject to Change)**

**Professor**:

**Title**:

**Office**:

**Email:**

**Phone**:

**Course Text**: Beebe, S.A., & Masterson, J.T. (2010). Communicating in small groups: Principles and practices (10th ed.). New York, NY: Pearson Publications

*A*dditional class readings and website viewings will be assigned.

**Master Grading Percentages:**

Test Average (3 Tests) 30%

Group Progress Reports # 1 and # 2 20%

Exercises (Individual & Group)/Participation/Attendance\* 20%

Final Group Project 30%

**Total 100%**

*\*Constructive participation is expected. Poor participation (assignments, actions, and/or attitudes) will result in a penalty (maximum 10%) being levied against your final master grade.*

**Master Grading Scale:**

100 – 99 = A+ 98 – 94 = A 93 – 90 = A –

89 – 88 = B+ 87 – 84 = B 83 – 80 = B –

79 – 78 = C+ 77 – 74 = C 73 – 70 = C –

69 – 68 = D+ 67 – 60 = D D – not a university option

59 – Below = F

**Course Description:** Our society is built upon not only the decisions made by individuals but those generated by members of small groups. Primary groups satisfy our needs for inclusion and affection whereas secondary groups bring us together for a designated purpose such as coordinating an activity or finding a solution to a shared problem. Even though groups are everywhere and we all belong to some, our participation does not automatically equate with a clear understanding of the communication process nor does our membership mean we are effective in interacting with others.

This course is designed to enhance our understanding of the types of small groups (with an emphasis on secondary task–oriented groups), member roles and responsibilities, and leadership styles appropriate for a group's format. My ultimate goal is for all of us to end the course doing a better job of communicating within a group and, at least, being able to recognize the effective and ineffective styles of ourselves and fellow group members.

**Course Objectives:**

* To explore the functions of communication in small group settings.
* To examine theory and research in small group/team communication as it relates to
* the enhancement of communication skills.
* To provide the opportunity to examine one’s own participation in groups and teams,
* and to experiment and improve upon those behaviors.
* To provide observational and evaluative skills in small group behavior

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a disability (including invisible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, and head injuries), please register with the Disability Resources for Students office and notify me within the first two weeks of the semester. In conjunction with the DRS office, myself and the department of communications will make reasonable accommodations for all persons with documented disabilities.

**Attendance Policy:**Attendance in this course is crucial in order to fully understand the concepts presented – therefore, academic success depends on participation and mutual support of students. The course encompasses an understanding of the principles of conflict and communication via lectures, class exercises, discussions, readings, etc. In other words, this is a highly interactive course that does not rely solely upon lecturing as an approach to teaching. Most of the basic concepts are illustrated during class time via discussions and exercises. These cannot be made up at a later date despite the nature of your absence.

You are allowed **two (2) absences without penalty**. Your final master grade may be negatively affected once you exceed your two allowed unexcused absences. Excessive tardiness may also negatively affect your ability to participate in class discussions (as well as prove disruptive to the overall climate of the class) and, as a result, may affect your grade as well. **Three tardies = one unexcused absence**. If you come in late after the roll has been taken, I STRONGLY suggest you speak with me after class to explain your reason for tardiness. Otherwise you may be marked as absent when you were only tardy.

Use your two unexcused absences wisely. This does NOT mean you can choose the day of a test or oral presentation as an allowed absence. You must provide adequate documentation for any absence; otherwise it will be counted as unexcused. If you are ill, have a family emergency, vehicle accident, etc. – anything that results in your absence, call me or email me ASAP and bring documentation confirming your absence to your next class. I STRONGLY suggest you contact me in advance if you know you will be absent or, if you are absent without advance warning, contact me within 24 hours. Leaving class early without permission also counts as a partial absence. A sign-in roll will be passed around at the beginning of class so all attendance patterns will be fully documented. I do not trust my memory nor yours regarding your presence or lack thereof.

**Expectations:** In order to fully grasp the course concepts, you must actively engage yourself in the cognitive process of critical and empathic listening as well as the experiential process of dialogue. Thus, I have the following expectations that you:

1. Be present physically, mentally AND spiritually (since you may need to do some soul searching)

2. Complete all assigned readings prior to class discussion (follow the syllabus)

3. Complete all assignments on time

4. Participate by

* Attending class regularly
* Constructively contributing to group discussions
* Actively and relevantly participating in class exercises
* Sharing your pertinent ideas with the class
* Locating and submitting material related to the course content for class discussion
* Focusing in on lectures and engaging in active listening
* Showing sensitivity to the feelings and ideas of others in order to create an atmosphere conducive to open discussion
* Practicing good judgment and common sense as we interact

**Professional U of M Student Classroom Etiquette**

* ***NO CELL PHONES OR TEXT MESSAGING IN CLASS*!** Please be considerate and turn off cell phones and other electronic devices. It is obvious, distracting and inconsiderate to the professor and your classmates if you are sending or receiving a text message during class. The professor reserves the right to ask you to leave the class if you are texting during class.
* ***LAPTOPS FOR NOTE TAKING ONLY****!* Please refrain from using your laptop to play video games, use the Internet or engage in other personal tasks while in class. Please be considerate to your fellow classmates and professor. The professor reserves the right to ask students to shut off a laptop and refrain from bringing it back in these situations.

**Plagiarism & Cheating:**  According to The University of Memphis Student Handbook, your assignments must reflect your own effort (or a group effort for team assignments). In situations where external sources are used, you must acknowledge your sources and add your own analysis. Otherwise, it’s plagiarism. If you plagiarize or cheat, the minimum penalty is an “F” on the assignment; other penalties could include an “F” for the course and/or suspension. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs. Expectations for academic integrity and student conduct are described in detail on the website of the Office of Student Judicial and Ethical Affairs: [http://saweb.memphis.edu/judicialaffairs/dishonesty/definitions.htm](https://ch1prd0411.outlook.com/owa/redir.aspx?C=LLRemMr-U0WMj3-1x84tzZNnk3rwPs8In7VtETuMPgd6X_b4hLBVY8zRfHOaxIZCr8x4cHoIOF8.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fsaweb.memphis.edu%2fjudicialaffairs%2fdishonesty%2fdefinitions.htm)

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of source. As part of this process, you will be required to submit electronic copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. According to the U of M’s Office of Legal Counsel (10/17/2005) by taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in [Turnitin.com](https://ch1prd0411.outlook.com/owa/redir.aspx?C=LLRemMr-U0WMj3-1x84tzZNnk3rwPs8In7VtETuMPgd6X_b4hLBVY8zRfHOaxIZCr8x4cHoIOF8.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fTurnitin.com)'s restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.

**Detailed Course Calendar:** This schedule is tentative and may be adjusted slightly as Mr. Porter deems necessary. Additional readings and assignments may also be announced.

**Week # 1**

**Class # 1: Thursday, January 16th**

Intro to Small Group Communication

**Week # 2**

**Class # 2: Tuesday, January 21st**

Begin class discussion and exercises on Chapter 1

**Class # 3: Thursday, January 23rd**

Continue class discussion and exercises on Chapter 1

**Week # 3**

**Class # 4: Tuesday, January 28th**

Continue class discussion and exercises on Chapter 2

**Class # 5: Thursday, January 30th**

Continue class discussion and exercises on Chapter 2

**Week # 4**

**Class # 6: Tuesday, February 4th**

Begin class discussion and exercises on Chapter 3

**Class # 7: Tuesday, February 6th**

Continue class discussion and exercises on Chapter 3

**Week # 5**

**Class # 8: Tuesday, February 11th**

Begin class discussion and exercises on Chapter 4

**Class # 9: Thursday, February 13th**

Begin class discussion and exercises on Chapter 4

**Week # 6**

**Class # 10: Tuesday, February 18th**

1st of 3 Tests on Chapters 1 – 4 and lecture notes

Select Groups for Final Group Projects

Begin class discussion and exercises on Chapter 5

**Class # 11: Thursday, February 20th**

Continue class discussion and exercises on Chapter 5

**Week # 7**

**Class # 12: Tuesday, February 25th**

Begin class discussion and exercises on Chapter 6

**Class # 13: Thursday, February 27th**

Continue class discussion and exercises on Chapter 6

**Week # 8**

**Class # 14: Tuesday, March 4th**

Begin class discussion and exercises on Chapter 7

**Class # 15: Thursday, March 6th**

Continue class discussion and exercises on Chapter 7

**Week # 9**

**Tuesday, March 11th & Thursday, March 13th**

**NO CLASSES THIS WEEK – HAVE A FUN SPRING BREAK!**

**Week # 10**

**Class # 16: Tuesday, March 18th**

Groups Present Progress Report # 1

Begin class discussion and exercise on Chapter 8

**Class # 17: Thursday, March 20th**

Continue class discussion and exercises on Chapter 8

**Friday, March 21st**

**Last Day to Drop a Class**

**Week # 11**

**Class # 18: Tuesday, March 25th**

Begin class discussion and exercises on Chapter 9

**Class # 19: Thursday, March 27th**

Continue class discussion and exercises on Chapter 9

**Week # 12**

**Class # 20: Tuesday, April 1st**

2nd of 3 Tests on Chapters 5 – 9 and lecture notes

Begin class discussion and exercises on Chapter 10

**Class # 21: Thursday, April 3rd**

Continue class discussion and exercises on Chapter 10

**Week # 13**

**Class # 22: Tuesday, April 8th**

Groups Present Progress Report # 2

Begin class discussion and exercises on Chapter 11

**Class # 23: Thursday, April 10th**

Continue class discussion and exercises on Chapter 11

**Week # 14**

**Class # 24: Tuesday, April 15th**

Begin class discussion and exercises on Chapter 12

**Class # 25: Thursday, April 17th**

Continue class discussion and exercises on Chapter 12

**Week # 15**

**Class # 26: Tuesday, April 22nd**

Begin Final Group Projects

**Class # 27: Thursday, April 24th**

Continue Final Group Projects

**Week # 16**

**Class # 28: Tuesday, April 29th (OUR LAST DAY OF REGULAR CLASS)**

Complete Final Group Projects

**Thursday, May 1st**

**NO CLASS TODAY – STUDY DAY!**

**Week # 17**

**Class # 29: Tuesday, May 6th (Special Time: 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.)**

3rd of 3 Tests on Chapters 10 – 12 and lecture notes

**HAVE A FUN & SAFE SUMMER!**