

**GROUP COMMUNICATION**  
**COMM 4342/6342**  
Term and Year

Course instructor  
Office  
Phone  
Email address and/or www address  
Office hours

**Required text**

Keyton, J. (1999). Group communication: Process and analysis. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.

**Course description**

This course explores issues related to communicating in groups and teams. We will explore: 1) what constitutes a group, 2) verbal and nonverbal communication in groups, 3) how groups are structured, 4) the environment in which groups operate, 5) your role as a group member, 6) group decision making, 7) leadership, 8) conflict management, 9) group development, 10) meeting management, and 11) how to observe group process and provide feedback. During the term, you will have many opportunities to practice what you have learned about group communication.

**General course objectives**

This course in group communication is designed to: 1) give you an appraisal of your own group abilities, 2) provide you ways to develop your group abilities, and 3) encourage you to apply what you've learned.

**Student learning objectives**

During this course, you should:

1. become familiar with the study of group communication from a process perspective.
2. discover the importance of analyzing your role as a member of a group.
3. become more sensitive to the complexity of group interaction.
4. recognize the influence you have on a group as well as the influences a group has on you.
5. become a more effective communicator in group and team settings.

**Course policies and procedures**

Attendance and late policy  
Drop policy  
Resources for students with disabilities  
Missed or late assignments, exam makeups  
Grievance policy  
Academic misconduct (including plagiarism)

Course standards (for example, are assignments expected to be typed, participation in class groups, class preparation)

Grading

### **Course format**

This course consists of lectures, class discussion, group activities, and a multiple-week group project. Your learning depends upon your participation. Lectures are designed to promote dialogue on issues addressed in the text chapters and may include additional information beyond what is included in the text. Class discussions are designed to encourage students to express opinions and observations, share experiences, and ask questions. Group activities are distributed throughout the course to allow you opportunities to become acquainted with other class members and to practice what you are learning about group communication. Some of these may be graded; some will not. The group project is long-term project to demonstrate your ability to integrate and apply what you have learned.

### **Course assignments**

Assessment paper: a 5-7 page paper assessing your strengths and weaknesses as a group member. 20% of course grade.

Exams: there are two examinations (one mid-term and one final). Exams will consist of true/false, matching, multiple-choice and some short-essay questions. Each exam is 20% of the course grade.

Group project: (Give details here for the project you select. Several group projects are described in Part II of this manual.) Group members are selected by the instructor based on topic interest. The group project is graded pass/fail based on pre-determined evaluation criteria shared with groups prior to the project. A "pass" will not affect your course grade. A "fail" will lower each group members' course grade by one letter. Because your group's interaction and output is graded pass/fail, your participation in your group will be peer-evaluated. These evaluations will be conducted after the group has turned in their output. If a group's evaluation of a member's group performance demonstrates performance deficiency, an individual's course grade can be decreased one letter grade.

Final paper: a 10-15 page paper describing and analyzing your individual effectiveness as well as the group's effectiveness in the group project. 40% of course grade.

### **Semester Course Schedule**

Class Period	Topic	Classroom activity	Assignment
Week 1	<u>Introduction to course</u> Why study group communication? What is a group?	Introductory group activity	Chapter 1



Week 2	<u>Communication in groups</u> Verbal and nonverbal communication Listening	Group activity	Chapter 2
Week 3	<u>How groups are structured</u> Formal and informal group roles Group norm development Communication networks	Group activity	Chapter 3
Week 4	<u>The group's environment</u> The macro-system perspective Connectivity and embeddedness The group's physical and psychological environment The group's charge	Case study and classroom dis- cussion	Chapter 4
Week 5	<u>Types of groups and group activities</u> The link between group type and group task Task characteristics	Group activity	Chapter 5
Week 6	<u>Your role as a group member</u> Interpersonal needs in group interaction Communication apprehension Your communicator style What characterizes a competent group member?	Assessment activities	Chapter 6
Week 7	<u>Your role with other group members</u> Creating interdependence with others Group cohesiveness Group member satisfaction Power relationships in groups Gender and diversity issues in groups	Group activity	Chapter 7 Assessment paper due
Week 8	Mid-term exam	Selecting group project members; Group project assignment	



Week 9	<u>Group decision making and problem solving</u> Using decision procedures Evaluating decision making effectiveness Essential group decision making functions Influence in decision making Faulty decision making Implementing decisions		Chapter 8 Chapter 9
Week 10	<u>Group decision making activities</u>	Practice decision making procedures	
Week 11	<u>Group leadership</u> How should a group select a leader? Leadership styles Competent group leadership	Work on group projects	Chapter 10
Week 12	<u>Managing conflict in groups</u> Types and sources of conflict Conflict management strategies Minimizing conflict in your group	Work on group projects	Chapter 11
Week 13	<u>Group development</u> Group member selection Group member assimilation Stages of group development Group endings	Work on group projects	Chapter 12
Week 14	<u>Meeting management</u> Planning group meetings Conducting group meetings Meeting follow-up Helping your group become more effective	Work on group projects	Chapter 13
Week 15	<u>Giving feedback to your group</u> Why is feedback necessary? Types of feedback Feedback techniques	Work on group projects	Chapter 14
Final Exam			Final paper due