Small Group Communication (COM 320)

Instructor Information
Name: Dr. Toqa Hassan, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: T & Th 7:30-9:30

Course Information
Course Dates: Jan 13-May 17
Course Time: T/TH 9:30-10:45
Room: PORTER 222

Course Description: Communicating in small groups is designed to increase your understanding and implementation of effective communication behaviors and skills within the small group context. This course examines basic verbal and nonverbal elements which affect communication between individuals in a variety of group contexts: the family, the social peer group, and the work group. Topics include: 1) an introduction to small group theory; 2) problem-solving and decision-making; 3) team building; 4) group communication facilitation; 5) communication climates; 6) conflict management; 7) ethics in group communication; 8) leadership; 9) roles, norms, status, and power; and 10) how to make small group presentations.

Learning Outcomes: **By the end of this course, you should be able to:**

1. Understand and apply decision-making models to problem-solving.
2. Distinguish between the problem-solving (cognitive) and the socio-emotional (affective) dimensions of the small group process.
3. Analyze the socio-emotional dimensions of small group process by understanding the significance of group culture and group structure.
4. Recognize the impact of nonverbal communication in small groups.
5. Develop an awareness of the role listening plays in communication within a small group.
6. Distinguish defensive from supportive communication climates.
7. Identify the variety of leadership styles available to small groups.
8. Identify and apply methods of evaluation of small group communication effectiveness.
9. Distinguish between high power and low power source positions in small groups.
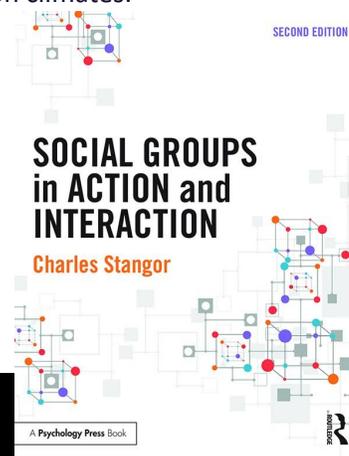
Required Textbook

Myers-Lipton, S. (2023). *CHANGE! A Student Guide to Social Action.* Routledge.

Stangor, C. (2015). *Social Groups in Action and Interaction* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Small Groups in Class

The requirements for the class are: (I) that you have a minimum of 3 students on your team working towards a social action campaign, (II) you have passion for the issue/topic/campaign you work on, and (III) your campaign tries to change some type of policy on campus. The campaign you choose to work on may come from a liberal, conservative, social democrat, or libertarian perspective, or it may have no ideology. Whatever campaign you choose to do, I will teach you about democracy, power, and how to bring about change.

If for some reason a student wants to leave a group, please contact the professor. At that time, the student and professor will discuss what group you would like to join. After the student makes a choice, I will contact the other group. If the group believes there will be little disruption to the group, then the student is able to join. However, if the group feels that there would be a disruption to the group due to possible lack of trust and transparency issues, or negative behavior by the student, that group has the right to say no. If the student still wants to join the group even after the student group has said that it would cause a disruption, the professor will make the final decision, as I am ultimately in charge of the classroom environment. Personally, I am fine with any student joining another group if it would cause minimum disruption to the group. At the same time, I am not okay if by a student joining the group, it

would cause disruption to the group. As professor, I am responsible for the classroom environment, and I will base my decision on the impact on the classroom environment. If the student has no group to join, then the student will be given an independent study with no negative repercussions to her/his/their grade.

Assignment Distribution and Grading Scale

Assignments	Total Points per Assignment
Exams (2) - Given in testing center	200
Group Campaign	200
Group Campaign Presentation + Binder	200
Portfolios and Log	200
Attendance and Participation	200
Chapter Quizzes	260
	Total: 1260 points

Grading Scale (letter grade % percentages):
F = 59.99 or below, D- = 60 to 63.99, D = 64 to 66.99, D+ = 67 to 69.99, C- = 70 to 73.99, C = 74 to 76.99, C+ = 77 to 79.99, B- = 80 to 83.99, B = 84 to 86.99, B+ = 87 to 89.99, A- = 90 to 93.99, A = 94 to 100.

Extra Credit: *There will also be other extra credit opportunities for attending campus events having to do with social action. To receive the extra credit, you need to go to the campus event, and then a 1-single spaced reflection paper (about 3-4 paragraphs): (1) describing what you saw and heard (i.e., the major points and key lessons of the event), and (2) integrating your insights with the reading from COM 320: SmallGroups. To receive full credit, the extra credit must be turned in one week after the event.*

Assignments: A detailed breakdown of course assignments and due dates by lesson module is available in the table at the end of the syllabus document that can be accessed either in the syllabus here or on Brightspace by clicking on the Syllabus tab in the course content.
Submitting assignments:
Students should submit all coding assignments via Brightspace using the following guidelines:
- Any projects must be submitted in either .pdf or .docx format.

This allows your instructor to view the assignment easily in Brightspace and to provide direct feedback and comments on your submission through Brightspace while grading. Assignments not submitted in this format **will not be graded** until you re-submit/re-upload them correctly.

Exams
There will be 2 exams in the course. Each exam is worth 100 points. I will be using discussion questions throughout the session to stimulate thoughts and discussion and

help you prepare for this examination. We will hold review sessions and study guides will be distributed to each student. Exams will be given in the testing center, and they will be closed-book, closed-notes.

Chapter Quizzes

Students are tasked with thoroughly reading the assigned chapter each week and taking quizzes to test their reading. Quizzes include questions that summarize the major points in each chapter and relating the chapter content to their lives and personal experiences.

Portfolios

The portfolio is where you demonstrate your knowledge of the text in light of your social action experiences. Therefore, you must integrate the text with your community work throughout each portfolio. With no integration of text, you cannot receive above a C on your portfolio. These are reflective questions after each of the Myers-Lipton chapters. You will have time in class each week to work on these before they are due. You can talk to your teammates and share/compare answers but all of the portfolios will be your own work.

Small Group Campaign Project

The importance of your membership and participation in your small group cannot be overstated, since this is how most of your efforts in class will be evaluated. After a semester of working on a campaign, students give a group presentation on your team's social action campaign. In addition, your group will turn in a campaign binder, which will be evaluated for the group project. The binder will be used by future students when they choose their campaigns.

In-Class Participation and Attendance

Attendance is part of your participation grade. I always take attendance each day our class is in session. Attendance is required to pass the class. Sometimes I take attendance at the beginning of class, and sometimes attendance is taken at the END of class. Attendance is usually in the form of an Entrance Ticket, Pop-up Ticket (in the middle of class), or Exit Ticket. If you are not here when these ticket questions are presented, or if you leave class before the Exit Ticket, you will be counted as absent for that day. Failure to attend one of these days will result in you earning a lower grade for the course.

Resources and Support for Academic Success: University students encounter setbacks from time to time. If you encounter difficulties and need assistance, it's important to reach out. Consider discussing the situation with an instructor or academic advisor. Many PNW resources that assist with wellness and academic success are listed below. If you are in immediate crisis, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

- **Accessibility** - Purdue University Northwest is committed to making learning experiences accessible. If you anticipate or experience physical, academic/learning, mental health, pregnancy, or other medically related barriers to your PNW experience, you are encouraged to contact the PNW Accessibility Center at: pac@pnw.edu or by phone: (219) 989-2455. Visit the [PAC website](https://www.pnw.edu/pnw-accessibility-center/)[1] for more information.
- **Mental Health/Wellness** - Purdue University Northwest is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of mental health support, confidential services are available. For help, contact the Counseling Center at (219) 989-2366 or visit at 2250 173rd Street on the Hammond Campus and TECH 101 in Westville. Visit the [Counseling Center website](http://www.pnw.edu/counseling/)[2] for more information.
- **Basic Needs Security** - Any student who faces challenges securing food, housing, or other basic needs is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support at dos@pnw.edu or (219) 989-4141 (Hammond) or (219) 785-5230 (Westville). Student Advocates are also available to assist students 8:00am-4:30pm in Hammond (SULB 313) or Westville (LSF 103). Visit the [Dean of Students website](https://www.pnw.edu/dean-of-students/get-help/)[3] for more information.
- **Veterans** – Purdue University Northwest is committed to creating a community of support for veterans, active-duty service members and their families. Visit the [Veterans Services website](https://www.pnw.edu/dean-of-students/student-resources/veteran-services/)[4] for more information
- **Academic Support** - All PNW students have access to academic support services for free.
    - **Tutoring** - Tutoring is available by appointment or during walk-in hours for most major subjects. Visit the [Tutoring website](https://www.pnw.edu/student-academic-support/)[5] for more information.
    - **Writing Center** - Get help with any writing task from trained peer tutors; assistance available in-person or virtually. Visit the [Writing Center website](https://www.pnw.edu/writing-center/)[6] for more information.

University Policies

As a student, it is important for you to understand these [university policies](https://www.pnw.edu/dean-of-students/policies/)[7], including non-discrimination, academic integrity, and others relevant to your educational experience.

Technology Requirements and Skills

Computer Hardware and Software

Review the Technology Requirements section of the Getting Started in Your Online Course site (located within your course) for important information including links to free or discounted versions of required software.

You should have the following software installed on your computer:

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[1] https://www.pnw.edu/pnw-accessibility-center/

[2] http://www.pnw.edu/counseling/

[3] https://www.pnw.edu/dean-of-students/get-help/

[4] https://www.pnw.edu/dean-of-students/student-resources/veteran-services/

[5] https://www.pnw.edu/student-academic-support/

[6] https://www.pnw.edu/writing-center/

[7] https://www.pnw.edu/dean-of-students/policies/

1. An actively supported operating system such as Windows 10 for PC computers OR Mac OS X 10.11 or newer for Apple Mac computers OR Chromebooks
2. Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint).
3. Antivirus for Windows OS, Microsoft Security Essentials OR Antivirus for Mac OS, Sophos
4. A compatible browser, such as the latest version of Firefox, Chrome, Safari, Brave, etc.

Technology Skills

In order to be successful in this course, you must be able to: navigate a computer operating system, launch and quit applications, connect to the Internet, use a web browser to search the World Wide Web, download, save, and upload files, and send and reply to emails. You must be proficient in MS Word or Google Docs.

Brightspace

This class will use Brightspace, the official learning management system (LMS) used by Purdue University to deliver course materials to university students. ALL course materials and activities will take place in Brightspace.

In order to login to Brightspace, you will need a Purdue University Northwest login ID and password.

- You can login to Brightspace either through myPNW or via a direct link to the login page: https://prude.brightspace.com/login