Workplace Communication
Spring 2016

Thursday, 3:00-5:40PM.

Mercer County College

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Course Description:

This course will offer the opportunity for microsociological analysis of group
dynamic and interpersonal interactions in workplace settings with an emphasis on
experiential learning. Group dynamics theory and communication skills can be practiced
in order to positively impact your workplace interactions and performance. This course
will contribute to your workplace communications skills as you learn to give and receive
support from others in classroom discussion and activities. I will serve as your facilitator
in this class as you meet personal challenges, identify areas where you feel you need
improvement, explore your workplace communication strengths and weaknesses and
work with your classmates to enhance your strengths and minimize your weaknesses.

Course Text:

Johnson, David W. and Frank P. Johnson, Joining Together: Group Theory and

The 10th Edition may also be purchased for this class.

Learning Objectives:

Develop a repertoire for effective interactions in workplace communications.

Demonstrate understanding of the theory and practice of group dynamics as it
relates to workplace communication.

Course Objectives:

Bring together the theory and research of workplace communications
through structured exercises in order to enhance group cooperation

Utilize experiential learning (role play and observation) to clarify group
dynamics skills

Focus on specific areas of workplace communication in order to improve
personal communication skills

Evaluate and record skill learning growth and mastery by participating in various group exercises

Analyze outcomes based upon interaction with other group members

Attendance and Assignments:

Regular attendance is necessary to successfully complete this course. Group exercises cannot be duplicated if they are missed. Assignments are due on the dates scheduled in the syllabus or assigned by the instructor. If you cannot complete an assignment on time please see the instructor prior to the scheduled due date for any special consideration. Office hours are available by appointment.

All cell phones and electronic devices must be turned off prior to class. Please make every effort to arrive on time to class and to stay until the class is dismissed.

Evaluation:

Personal Journal: Each student will maintain a personal journal which will record the group dynamics and observations from in-class exercises and assigned personal exercises. For details on keeping a journal for the course, please refer to page 41 of the text. The journal will comprise 40% of the final grade.

Graded Group Assignment: Groups will be graded by the professor and their peers based on the content and presentation of the assignment to determine the format for the final class evaluation. Each group will present an oral report of their proposal, as well as, a written report which will discuss the process of decision making within the group. The groups will review the methods of decision making to decide which method will be used by the group. Please give the rationale for accepting and rejecting each method. Describe the group’s process of reaching its conclusion as to the best method of decision making. Use the guidelines of constructive controversy to deal with any disagreements and analyze the effectiveness of these guidelines in your written report. The group report will be 15% of the final grade.

Individual Assignments: Two papers will be assigned. One paper will focus on communication in informal and formal group settings. The second paper will focus on utilizing the steps for different techniques for negotiation. Details on the requirements for the papers will be shared in class. Each paper will be worth 15% of the final grade for a total of 30%.

Exam: There will be a final exam on the major theoretical principles of group dynamics as they apply to the workplace setting worth 15% of the final grade.
The nature of this course may be quite different from the previous ones that you have taken. Instead of passively listening to lecture material, you will learn by doing. It is my hope that you will master new strategies and enhance practiced skills so that you will be a more effective communicator in the workplace or in any group setting.

Course Schedule

1/21
Introduction to Workplace Communication
Types of Groups
Exercise 1.2 Who Am I?
Exercise 1.4 Saving the World from Dracula
Sinking Boat

1/28
Experiential Learning
Role Playing
Participant Observer
Feedback and Evaluation

1/28
Exercise 1.2 Who Am I?
Skip reading exercises

1/28
Exercise 1.4 Saving the World from Dracula
Journal 1.1

1/28
Sinking Boat

1/28
Types of Groups
Self Evaluation

1/28
Exercise 1.2 Who Am I?
Skip reading exercises

1/28
Exercise 1.4 Saving the World from Dracula
Journal 1.1

2/4
True Colors: Personality as a factor in Workplace Communication

2/8
Social Interdependence and Cooperation
Role Playing
Participant Observer
Feedback and Evaluation

2/11
Social Interdependence and Cooperation
Read Chapter 3
Plane Wreck
Building or Destroying Trust
Exercise 3.5 Cooperative, Competitive and Individualistic Goal Structures

2/18
Group Communication
Read Chapter 4
Interaction Analysis
Exercises 4.2 Bewise College
Exercise 4.3 Solstice Shenanigans Mystery
Exercise 4.4 Transmission of Information
Exercise 4.5 One-Way and Two Way Communication
Assignment of paper due 3/10

2/25
Leadership
Read Chapter 5
What is a Leader
Journal 5.3, 5.7
Exercise 5.2 Controversy: What is the Nature of Leadership?
Exercises 5.5 Tower Building

3/3
Using Power
Read Chapter 6
What is Power
The Bases of Power - Image of Power
Unequal Power
Indirect Power
Exercise 6.4 Unequal Resources

3/10 Verbal and Gender Communication in the Workplace
Negotiation - Assignment of individual paper due 3/31

Spring Break

3/24 Decision Making
Making Effective Decisions
Exercise 7.1 Individual v. Group Decision Making
Exercise 7.2 The Bean Jar
Exercise 7.3 Winter Survival
Exercise 7.4 They’ll Never Take Us Alive
Approaches to Group Decision Making

3/31 Controversy and Creativity
Avoidance of Controversy
Outcomes of Controversy
Stranded in the Desert
Exercise 8.5 Avoiding Controversies
Guidelines for Constructive Controversy
Developing and Fostering Creativity
Exercise 8.7 Creativity
Exercise 8.8 Joe Doodlebug

4/7 Conflicts of Interest
Negotiations
Review Negotiations Paper
Assign Special Exercise

4/14 Work on Special Assignment

4/21 Present Special Exercise
Team Development and Team Training
Team Building

Read pp. 363-367
Read Chapter 7
Read Chapter 8
Read Chapter 9
Read Chapter 13
Exercises 13.1, 13.2, 13.3
Review materials for journals

4/28  Review for Exam
      Hand in Journals