Workplace Communication
Fall 2011

Monday, 9:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Cook/Douglass Campus- Room 126 Hickman Hall

Instructor: Dianne Mills McKay Phone: 609-261-0255
Course Number: 37:575:480:01 Fax: 609-267-1888
37:575:480:81 ACCC Campus
Email:damckay@rci.rutgers.edu

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 Group Skills, 10th Ed. (2009: Pearson Education, Inc.)

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 your personal communication skills

Evaluate and record your skill learning growth and mastery as you participate in various group exercises and analyze results based upon your 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 35% 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 student's input on grading percentages for class evaluation. Each group will present an oral report of their findings, 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 20 % 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

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9/8 | Thursday | |
| | Introduction to Workplace Communication | Read Chapter 1 |
| | Types of Groups | Self Evaluation |
| | Exercise 1.2 Introduction | Skip reading exercises |
| | Exercise 1.3 Saving the World from Dracula | Journal 1.1 |
| | Exercise 1.5 Sinking Boat | |
| 9/12 | Experiential Learning | Read Chapters 2-3 |
| | Role Playing | Journal 3.1 (1.), 3.3 |
| | Participant Observer | |
| | Feedback and Evaluation | |
| | Effective Group Goals p.81 | |
| | Exercise3.5 Plane Wreck | |
| | Exercise 3.6 Broken Squares | |
| | Exercise 3.7 | |
| 9/19 | True Colors: Personality as a factor in Workplace Communication | |
| 9/26 | Social Interdependence and Cooperation | Journal 3.9 |
| | Exercises 3.8, 3.10, 3.13 | |
| | Building or Destroying Trust | |
| | Exercise 3.14 | |
| 10/3 | Group communication | Read Chapter 4 |
| | Interaction Analysis | Journal 4.1, 4.11 |
| | Exercises 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 | |
| | Communication patterns | |
| | Effects of Cooperation and Competition on Communication | |
| 10/10 | Leadership | Read Chapter 5 |
| | What is a Leader | Journal 5.2, 5.5, 5.6 |
| | Leadership Styles 5.3 | 5.13, 5.14 |
| | Exercises 5.7, 5.8 | |
| 10/17 | Using Power | Read Chapter 6 |
| | What is Power | Journal 6.9 |
| | The Bases of Power-Image of Power p.229 | |
| | Unequal Power | |
| | Indirect Power | |
| | Ranking Bases of Power p.244 | |
| | Defining Bases of Power p. 247 | |
| | Exercise 6.4 | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 10/24 | Verbal and Gender Communication in the Workplace<br>Negotiation - Assignment of individual paper due 3/29 | |
| 10/31 | Decision Making<br>Making Effective Decisions<br>Individual v. Group Decision Making<br>Approaches to Group Decision Making<br>Complete selected exercises | Read Chapter 7 |
| 11/7 | Controversy and Creativity<br>Avoidance of Controversy<br>Outcomes of Controversy<br>Process and Controversy<br>Guidelines for Constructive Controversy<br>Developing and Fostering Creativity | Read Chapter 8<br>Journal 8.2 (1), 8.13 |
| 11/14 | Assign groups for special exercise<br>Allow class time for groups to begin work on the special exercise to determine final grading percentages | |
| 11/28 | Conflicts of Interest<br>Negotiations<br>Special Exercise | Read Chapter 9<br>Journal 8.2, 8.13 |
| 12/5 | Update Journal<br>Team Development and Team Training<br>Team Building | Read Chapter 13 |
| 12/12 | Journals due<br>Review for exam | |