Dynamics of Work & Work Organization
Spring 2012

Time: Tues 9:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
Room: Hickman 119
Office hours: Tuesday 1:30-3:30 p.m.
& by appointment

Dr. Joan S.M. Meyers
jmeyers@work.rutgers.edu
Labor Education Center 136
732-932-1890 (no voicemail yet!)
TA: Ommead Nejad
ommead@eden.rutgers.edu

Dates to remember

Week 2 (1/24) First groups formed
Week 5 (2/14) Quiz 1
Week 6 (2/21) First group project due; second groups formed
Week 10 (3/20) Quiz 2
Week 11 (3/27) Second group project due; third groups formed
Week 14 (4/17) Quiz 3
Week 15 (4/24) Third group project presented/due

Course description

Workplaces have changed in fundamental ways over the last few decades. One of the most significant changes is the enormous growth in teamwork, employee involvement, communication, and other forms of "empowerment." This course will examine the dynamics of these developments: how they are experienced in daily work. We will study factors that affect team formation and functioning, and strategies to create effective teamwork.

The course is broken into three sections. The first will deal with individual attributes that contribute to a team's functioning, the second with barriers to group function, and the third with maximizing group performance. We will read academic and industry writing on team function, and explore issues through a number of case studies.

Because our objective is to understand group functioning, there will be a significant amount of group work in addition to lecture and discussion. You will take part in multiple group projects, and have regular in-class, off-site, and virtual (online) meetings with your group. New groups will be formed every four weeks. Grading will be based on three group projects, three individual quizzes, group and individual assignments, and in-class and online group participation.

Learning goals

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate ability to structure team projects and work productively in groups
- Demonstrate competence in diagnosing group performance problems using appropriate theories and model
- Demonstrate understanding of how social status affects team functioning
- Demonstrate understanding of effective groups in simulations and discussions
- Demonstrate understanding of fundamental social science theories, and concepts relating to the dynamics of work teams, including the necessary conditions for effective cooperation and motivation
- Demonstrate proficiency in written and oral communication

Major assumptions of the course

- We are social beings who both shape and are shaped by the social worlds in which we live. We do not have *complete* autonomy and self-determination, but neither are we merely the products of institutions and structures.
- There is nothing natural or inevitable about the institution of work or the arrangements of power in workplace organizations. They were made by people and they can be changed by people. Therefore, it is worth our while to consider how such work and workplaces are constructed and maintained in order to imagine how they might be different.

Description of requirements

Group projects (30% of grade) Each group will work together to complete a specific project: 1) a case analysis; 2) a research paper on challenges to team function; and 3) a research presentation (or paper) on maximizing team effectiveness. Grades will be based on a combination of product (assigned by me) and effort (confidentially assigned by team members).

Quizzes (30% of grade) Each unit will be followed by an individual, non-cumulative, in-class quiz. Students will choose to answer two of three questions which require explanation and application of a concept or practice. These will be short quizzes, taking no more than 20 minutes.

Participation (20% of grade) Everyone is expected to participate in class, which obviously requires being present in class. I believe that students can learn best by actively engaging with material from course rather than simply memorizing names and concepts. This includes asking as many questions as are needed to understand the material, and working through the implications of new ideas. Participation includes asking questions or making comments in class, facilitating small group work, and participating in group activities. If you're wondering about something, it's likely there are other students who don't fully understand either. There are no stupid questions! Discussion is a way to experiment with ideas. Participation can also sometimes mean *not* talking to allow quieter classmates to speak. It means engaging with ideas that are different from your own in a respectful manner, even if you have serious disagreements. Criticism is encouraged, but personal attack will not be tolerated.

Individual and group online assignments (20% of grade) You will find various individual and group assignments online including individual reading reactions and weekly reports on group functioning. These are "low stakes" assignments that ask you to think creatively, but do not have right or wrong answers. Therefore, they will be graded as pass (completed fully), conditional pass (completed partially), or fail (not turned in by the deadline).

Please note that there will be few options for extra credit. Given the interdependence of groups, this is not the kind of class where you can slack off during the semester and pour it on at the end.

Final grade breakdown

Group projects	30 percent
Quizzes	30 percent
Participation	20 percent
Online assignments	20 percent

Make sure to complete *all* assignments; missing assignments count as a 0, not an F.

Logistics and scheduling

The course is divided into three modules, each having four class meetings and two group workshops. Since the room is small and group work requires space, all students will all attend the first hour for lectures, movies, and quizzes, but only half will attend the second two-hour block twice in each module (see schedule below). Groups are expected to work on their projects when they are not meeting in class. Both the Douglas Library and the Douglas Campus Center are a short distance away, or an alternative location can be used. Students will be assigned to three different groups during the semester, and can find their assignment on Sakai.

	Attend 2nd block	**Class sessions**	**Group project**
1.	All	Introduction	
MODULE 1: PERSONAL SKILLS			
2.	1A-E	Personality types and group roles	Case analysis
3.	1F-J		
4.	1F-J	Team structure and effective feedback	
5.	1A-E		
MODULE 2: CHALLENGES TO GROUP FUNCTION			
6.	2A-E	Social barriers to group functioning	Research paper
7.	2F-J		
8.	2F-J	Accounting for team failure and success	
10.	2A-E		
MODULE 3: ACHIEVING GROUP GOALS			
11.	3A-E	Mutual-gains negotiating	Research presentation
12.	3F-J		
13.	3F-J	Group problem-solving	
14.	3A-E		
CLOSE			
15.	All	Group presentations and conclusion	

Instructor meetings

All students are strongly encouraged to meet with me to discuss questions or concerns, or simply to continue discussions that piqued your interest in class. If you have a conflict with office hours, we may be able to find another meeting time.

Course format and policies

Students are expected to complete all required readings before class, and come to class prepared to discuss what they do and do not understand about them.

Diverse ideas and beliefs will come up during the course, and you may find yourself disagreeing with fellow students or me. That's normal and expected, and the discussion of our difference analyses makes for a lively classroom and more sharply honed opinions for everyone. However while passionate intellectual debate is welcome, personal attacks or insults are not.

Please refrain from making faces while someone speaks, using an angry or sarcastic tone in addressing their ideas, or snickering.

Don't plagiarize. Be sure you know the difference between *citing* a text, *quoting* a text, and *stealing* from a text (whether published, on the internet, or from another student). For more information, see the official policy at **http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml** or use the online tutorial at **http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/cir_tutorial.shtml**. You can also get help at the Rutgers Learning Centers.

Borrowed material should be documented.

Any time you incorporate into your writing ideas, words, key phrases, or pictures that were *not originally created by you*, you must give credit to the original author by citing the source.

You must cite direct quotes.

You must cite paraphrases. Paraphrasing is rewriting a passage in your own words. **If you paraphrase a passage, you must still cite the original source of the idea.**

You must cite ideas given to you in a conversation, in correspondence, or over email.

You must cite sayings or quotations that are not familiar, or facts that are not "common knowledge." However, it is not necessary to cite a source if you are repeating a *well known quote* such as Kennedy's "Ask not what your country can do for you . . .," or a *familiar proverb* such as "You can't judge a book by its cover." *Common knowledge* is something that is widely known. For example, it is common knowledge that Bill Clinton served two terms as president. It would not be necessary to cite a source for this fact.

This course requires regular attendance: there will be considerable group work and open discussion during class. You be expected to attend all classes with your groups. If you are ever confused about whether you are required to attend a particular group workshop, let Ommead know. If you expect to miss one or two classes, be sure to use the University absence reporting **website https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/** to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

The only excuses for missing a deadline or a quiz are *legitimate* illness or family emergency. There are no exceptions to this policy in the interest of fairness to the whole class. Be sure to contact me *well in advance* of a due date or exam if you foresee difficulties meeting a deadline. Absences with good cause will be excused, but must be negotiated with me in a timely manner. More than three unexcused absences will result in an automatic F.

I will discuss your questions about assignments during office hours. Bring a paper copy for me to read and review. *Do not send papers as attachments by email*.

Individual and group assignments must be uploaded to Sakai (Assignments tab) before the start of class on the day they are due. Group workshop reports and weekly group journals must be uploaded within 24 hours of the end of class. Assignments uploaded later count as 0.

Group papers must be uploaded into Sakai (Assignments tab) before the start of class on the day they are due. Late group projects will be docked by half a grade for each day it is late *beginning from the start of class the day it is due*. That is, a B paper would become a C+ paper

after the start of class, and a C paper the next day. Do not miss class to finish a paper! Nothing will be accepted a week past its due date.

If you believe you have received a lower grade than you should, you may contest it within two weeks by following these steps. 1) Allow a *24-hour "cooling off" period* so that you will be calm and collected when you ask for reconsideration of your work. 2) *Write out* the reason you think the grade should be changed. Describe *how* your work fulfills the assignment. We make mistakes but, "I just think I deserve better" doesn't tell me what I might have missed.

Up to half of any missed credit on the first two quiz questions can be partially made up *within one week* by a) reviewing the correct answers on Sakai, b) writing a critique pinpointing how the answer given on the quiz failed to fully address the question, and c) writing a new answer entirely in your own words. The key is the critique of the original answer. *No extra credit* will be given without this critique.

I will do what is in my power to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities, but you must let me know what is needed (preferably after class or during office hours). Contact the Office of Disability Services for Students at 151 College Ave, Suite 123, Mon-Thurs, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. and Fri 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for examples of services and accommodations available on campus. (732) 932-2848 or **http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/**

Laptops and cellphones can be a great resource for bringing course readings and other pertinent information into the classroom, but can also be a huge temptation to text, email, use social media, or otherwise focus on non-course matters. Know yourself and turn off the electronic devices if they are too tempting. Use of electronic devices for non-course matters is distracting to other students as well as you, and is therefore not permitted. Such use of electronic devices will have a *strong negative effect on your participation grade*.

Course Texts

All course materials are available for download on the class Sakai page in the Resources tab.

Course reading list

Week 1: **Introductions**

- Syllabus

MODULE 1: PERSONAL SKILLS

Weeks 2-3 Lecture: Personality types and group roles

- "What Emotional Intelligence Looks Like: Understanding the Four Skills" and "Digging In: My Emotional Intelligence Plan." 2009. Bradbury, Travis and Jean Graves.
- "The Effect of Personality Type on Team Performance: Summary." 1997. Hollister, Pam
- "Identity Issues in Teams." 2003. Polzer, Jeffrey F.

Weeks 2 (1A-E) & 3 (1F-J) Group Workshop

- "Student Learning Style Inventory 48A." 2009. Paragon Educational Consulting.
- "Introduction to Type." 1962, 1980. Myers, Isabel B.
- "A Day in the Life of Alex Sanger: Driving in the Fast Lane at Landon Care Products." 2008. Greiner, Larry E. and Elizabeth Collins.

★ Individual Assignment 1 (to be completed before your group workshop meeting)

Weeks 4-5 Lecture: Team structure and effective feedback
- "Ground Rules for Effective Groups." 2002. Schwartz, Roger.
- "Balancing Inquiry and Advocacy." 1994. Ross, Rick and Charlotte Roberts.
- "When Life Gives You Lemons: How to Deal with Difficult People." 2004. Hackley, Susan.

★ Group Assignment 1 (to be completed before Week 4)

Weeks 4 (1F-J) & 5 (1A-E) Group Workshop
- "Teaching Smart People How to Learn." 1991. Argyris, Chris.
- "Karen Leary." 1996. Hill, Linda A. and Jaan Elias.
- "Mac's Two-Column Case." http://flash.lakeheadu.ca/~kbrown/F2250%20Webpages/mac%27s_case.html

★ Individual Assignment 2 (to be completed before your group workshop meeting)

MODULE 2: CHALLENGES TO GROUP FUNCTION

Weeks 6-7 Lecture: Social barriers to group functioning
- "Norms in Mixed Sex and Mixed Race Work Groups." 2010. Chatman, Jennifer A.
- "Best Practices for Employing People with Disabilities: Case Study Data." n.d. Shur, Lisa and Doug Kruse

Weeks 6 (2A-E) & 7 (2F-J) Group Workshop
- "The Students." 1990.Gersick, Connie J.G.

★ Individual assignment 3 (to be completed before your group workshop meeting)

Weeks 8, 10 Lecture: Accounting for failure and success
- "Reproco: Creating Flexibly Specialized Service Workers." 2001. Smith, Vicki.
- "Cracking the Glass Cages? Restructuring and Ascriptive Inequality at Work." 2009. Kalev, Alexandra.

★ Group Assignment 2 (to be completed before Week 8)

Weeks 8 (2F-J) & 10 (2A-E) Group Workshop
- "Rebecca Collier." 2004. Lewis, Jennifer

★ Individual Assignment 4 (to be completed before your group workshop meeting)

MODULE 3: ACHIEVING GROUP GOALS

Weeks 11-12 Lecture: Mutual gains negotiating
- "Using the Facilitative Leader Approach to Create a Culture of Collaboration." 2006. Schwartz, Roger
- "Distributed Leadership: Initial Framing." n.d. Ancona, Deborah and Elaine Backman.

★ Group Assignment 3 (to be completed before Week 11)

Weeks 11 (3A-E) & 12 (3F-J) Group Workshop
- "Groupthink." 1971. Janis, Irving L.
- "Negotiation Advice: A Synopsis." 2005. Wheeler, Michael

★ Individual Assignment 5 (to be completed before your group workshop meeting)

★ Also, **remember to bring collage materials & art supplies**!

Weeks 13-14 Lecture: Group problem solving

- "Effective Problem Solving Techniques for Groups." 1997. Rebori, Marlene K.
- "How to Make a Team Work." 1987. Hardaker, Maurice and Bryan K. Ward
- Mindtools: http://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_TMC.htm and particularly:
  - ☛ PDCA (http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM_89.htm)
  - ☛ 5 Whys (http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_5W.htm)
  - ☛ Root Cause Analysis (http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_80.htm)
  - ☛ Cause & Effect Analysis (http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_03.htm)

Weeks 13 (3F-J) & 14 (3A-E) Group Workshop

- "Florida Power Light Quality Improvement Story Exercise." 1988. Hart, Christopher W.L., Dan Maher, and Michael Montelongo.

★ Individual Assignment 6 (to be completed before your group workshop meeting)

Week 15: **Group presentations and conclusion**

- No readings.