

## **Workplace Communication: 37:575::82**

Fall 2021

University Center (UC 201)

Labor Studies and Employment Relations

Thursday 6:00 – 8:40 PM

Mercer County College

Professor Dianne McKay

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Office Hours: By Appointment

### **Course Overview:**

This course will offer the opportunity for micro-sociological 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 communication skills as you learn to give and receive support from others in classroom exercises and activities. I will serve as your facilitator in this class as you meet personal challenges to: identify areas where you feel you need improvement, explore your workplace communication strengths and weaknesses, and finally work with your classmates to enhance your strengths and minimize your weaknesses.

### **Course Text: (required)**

Johnson, David W. and Frank P. Johnson. Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills, 12<sup>th</sup> Edition ( 2017: The Merrill Counseling Series) or 11<sup>th</sup> Edition. (2013: Pearson Education)

### **Relationship to School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) Learning Goals**

#### **Learning Objectives. The student is able to:**

##### ***Core Curriculum: 21C and SCL***

- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experiences of and perspectives on the world.
- Analyze a contemporary global issue from a multidisciplinary perspective.
- Understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place.
- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems and other forms of social organization.
- Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations.

***Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department:***

- Demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives, theories and concepts in the field of labor and employment relations.
- Apply those concepts, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work.
- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of work.

***School of Management and Labor Relations:***

- Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation. (Goal IV)
- Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions (Goal V).
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance (Goal VI)

Students will demonstrate their understanding of these concepts via class readings, discussions, assignments, in-class exercises and exams which focus on historical and contemporary issues of youth and work.

**Academic Integrity.** Familiarize yourself with the Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy which can be found online at: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

Plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity will not be tolerated. Your written assignments will be submitted to "Turnitin.com" to insure that your assignment is yours and not gleaned from the web, another student or source. Use proper citations and quote marks around any material that is not yours. Be careful not to "copy" phrases or sentences excessively from the readings. The goal is to put the ideas into your own words.

**Course Requirements**

*Class attendance:* You are expected to attend each class session, and to be on time. An attendance sheet will be passed out during each class; it is your responsibility to sign the sheet. Be punctual and plan to stay for the entire class. Students who repeatedly arrive late and leave at break will have their grades lowered. If you need to leave early, see me before class; otherwise you are expected to remain until the class is over.

*Participation:* The nature of this topic is one which is best explored through group discussion. As a result, you are expected to attend class and actively participate and contribute to activities and discussions. "Class participation" means not only attending class but also doing the readings and engaging actively and constructively in group activities and discussion, including respectful listening as well as talking.

Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. You are encouraged to make notes for your journal after every exercise so that you can recall and analyze interactions by yourself and group members.

*Missed Exams:* All students are expected to take the scheduled in-class exams at the designated times. Documented emergencies and personal matters will be taken into account for possible cases of rescheduling that arise.

Unless otherwise specified, all writing assignments should be submitted to me in print version at the beginning of class the day that they are due. If you miss class that day, you must submit via email attachment prior to that time. Out of respect to those who meet this expectation, all late papers will be subject to downgrading.

*Accommodations:* This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirement for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of disability should refer to the Rutgers Office of Disability Services and then contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible.

"Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:  
<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>.

If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form> The Rutgers Office of Disability Services can also be reached at 848-445-6800.

*Statement on Academic Freedom:* Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. This class will introduce an array of sometimes conflicting ideas and interpretations of U.S. history, and all who partake in the course should feel encouraged to express their views in an open, civic forum.

### **In Class Exercises:**

This class is highly participatory and requires that you attend every session if possible and that you work in groups or teams. Coming to class prepared (with readings and assignments up to date) is key to participating effectively in your discussion group. Throughout the course, there will be in-class group exercises, including hands-on projects related to the readings done in groups or in pairs. There are NO make-up class exercises and they must be completed during the class period. Of course, if you do not attend class, you will lose points for participation in these

exercises as well as for attendance. Unexcused absences of more than two classes will result in the deduction of points from your final grade.

### **Evaluation:**

#### Personal Journal:

Each student will maintain a personal journal which will record the group dynamics and observations from in-class exercises, assigned individual exercises and classroom discussion. For details on keeping a journal for the course, please refer to Chapter 1: Keeping A Personal Journal. The journal will comprise 40% of the final grade.

#### Papers:

Students will each conduct a fieldwork project in at local business and/or public meeting and write a paper with their findings. This assignment will require observations and analysis of both informal and formal communications. The second paper will focus on utilizing the steps for different techniques for negotiations. 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%.

#### 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 briefly discuss the process of decision making within the group. 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.

#### Final Class Evaluation:

There will be a final class evaluation based on the major theoretical principles of group dynamics as they apply to the workplace setting worth 15% of the grade.

### **Class Grade Distribution:**

Your final grade is based on the following distribution:

Journal	40%
Papers	30%
Graded Group Assignment	20%
Final Class Evaluation	10%

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.

*Professor reserves the right to add or change readings or otherwise change the structure of the course.*

## **Course Schedule**

September 02

Introduction to Workplace Communication	Read Chapter 1
Types of Groups	Self Evaluation
Exercise 1.2 Who Am I?	Skip reading all exercises
Exercise 1.4 Saving the World from Dracula	Journal 1.1
Keeping a Journal	

September 09

Experiential Learning	Read Chapter 2
Role Play	
Participant Observer	

September 16

True Colors: Personality as a factor in workplace communication

September 23

Social Interdependence and Cooperation	Read Chapter 3
Plane Wreck Exercise	Journal 3.1 (1&2), 3.3
Building or Destroying Trust	
Exercise 3.5 Cooperative, Competitive and Individualistic Goal Structures	

September 30

Group Communication	Read Chapter 4
Interaction Analysis	Journal 4.1, 4.7
Exercise 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 Formal-Informal Group Observation paper due 10/28

October 07

Leadership

Exercise 5.1 Who Are Your Heroes?

Exercise 5.2 Controversy: What is the Nature of Leadership?

Exercise 5.5 Tower Building

Read Chapter 5

Journal 5.3, 5.7

October 14

Using Power

What is Power

The Bases of Power-Image of Power

Unequal power

Indirect Power

Exercise 6.4 Unequal Resources

Read Chapter 6

Journal 6.5 (2+3) as  
an individual

October 21

Discussion of Group Observation Papers

Verbal, written and Gender Communication in the Workplace

Assignment of Negotiation paper due 11/18

Chapter 9

Read as  
background for your  
Negotiations paper

October 28

Decision Making

Making Effective Decisions

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

Read Chapter 7

Journal 7.7 only the How I  
Behave Questionnaire section  
7.6 in 13<sup>th</sup> Ed.

November 04

Controversy and Creativity

Avoidance of Controversy

Outcomes of Controversy

Exercise 8.6 The Johnson School (8.4 in 13<sup>th</sup> Ed.)

Exercise 8.5 Avoiding Controversies

Guidelines for Constructive Controversy

Developing and Fostering Creativity

Exercise 8.7 Creativity

Exercise 8.8 Joe Doodlebug

Read Chapter 8

Journal 8.2 (1), 8.6 (1), 8.11

November 11

Discussion of Negotiation papers

Conflicts of Interest – Management Strategies

Negotiations

Exercise Stranded in the Desert

Assign Special Exercise on the Determination for a Final Evaluation

Review Chapter 9

9.7 (2-3) as an individual

November 18

Assign Special Exercise on the Determination of the Final Evaluation

Work on Special Exercise

December 02

Group presentations of their proposals for a final class evaluation Read Chapter 13

Team Development and Team Training

Team Building

Exercises 13.1, 13.2, 13.3

Review materials for the journals

December 09

Completion of the selected final Class evaluation

Hand in journals

