SYLLABUS: COMM 4635
COMMUNICATION DYNAMICS IN GROUPS
JOURNALISM 106; AU2021 (HYBRID)

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Office hours: currently by appointment either in-person or via Zoom, email me to schedule

Course Information

Course description

This class examines the communication dynamics that positively (and in many cases negatively) impact teams in society. Students will learn how to be better group members, will become more aware of actions that undermine group performance, and improve group communication skills. To build these skills students will work on a group project while simultaneously learning about group communication theory. It is hoped that the combination of academic, experiential, and reflective learning will provide a foundation that will help students become better team members, and have more rewarding group experiences, in their personal and professional lives.

Course goals and outcomes

The overall goal of COMM 4635 is to develop the knowledge and skills required to become a More effective group member and leader.

1. Students will understand and apply factors that shape the communication process in groups.
2. Students will understand and apply relevant principles, theories, and research findings associated with group communication to their own lives and various leadership contexts.
3. Students will understand and apply basic communication competencies needed by individuals to be more effective leaders.
4. Students will understand and apply the communication skills needed to function within task-oriented groups and teams.

Mode of delivery

This hybrid course will be presented 65 % in-person and 35 % online. Please see the course schedule for how to attend class that week.

- The in-person classes will take place on specified Fridays from 10:20-12:10pm.

- Any pre-planned distance learning lectures will be posted in the syllabus as "Zoom". These distance lectures will likely be asynchronous and posted to Carmen. Also, keep in mind that in an effort to be adaptive to the current situation, lectures may be moved onto Zoom at the last minute due to safety reasons. Students will be notified of this change via email as soon as possible.
- In-between lectures, it is expected that all groups hold weekly meetings to make progress on their semester long project.

How this course works

Every week of this class will be a new topic. For each topic, a few items can be expected: a lecture (either on zoom or face-to-face, occurring at the same time every week), reading, an associated reading quiz, and a reflection paper. All due dates are posted in the course calendar. Additionally, guidelines about scheduling are written into the calendar as well, such as, "please complete before watching the lecture". Although this is the typical weekly schedule, on some weeks some of these features may vary to accommodate the group project. Therefore, please get in the habit of consulting this syllabus often.

Course materials

Required

All readings will be provided on Carmen, so no book or reader is required.

Grading and faculty response

Grading

The following are the points and/or percentage values for each assignment

Assignments	Points and/or Percentage
Weekly Reflection Papers (9 @ 5 points each)	45
Weekly Reading Quiz (8 @ 5 points each)	40
Exams, Non-Cumulative (3 @ 50 points each)	150
Final Reflection Paper (10 points)	10
Group Project Objective Assessment	35
Group Project Subjective Assessment	35
Total	**315 points**

Assignment Information

***Mandatory Syllabus Quiz: All students who wish to take this course MUST take the syllabus quiz posted online. At the end of the quiz, all students must sign their name indicating they understand and agree to course policy. Students taking the quiz before **10:00am on 9/10** can earn up to **5 extra credit points** (point total subject to quiz performance). Feel free to have your syllabi in hand while you take the quiz to improve performance. There will, however, be a one-hour time limit. Students who enroll late or take the quiz after this date will not earn any extra points but still must take (and sign) the quiz before exam 1 to participate in the course. If you haven't taken this quiz you will NOT be allowed to take the first exam. This quiz is viewed as your acceptance of a class contract and is very important for creating a cooperative and fair class environment.

Weekly reflection papers: These exercises are meant for you to critically reflect on the material you learned from the readings and in-class and apply these ideas to your on-going group project. Although this assignment category is called "reflection papers", the form and structure of these assignments will vary. Please make sure to read the instructions for each assignment very carefully to ensure you are doing the activity properly. Unless otherwise specified, these will be submitted individually. Where appropriate students are free to work with their group members. The deadlines and instructions for turning these assignments in are posted in the class calendar. Please upload these files using Microsoft word or pdf. These assignments will usually be due at the end of the week (**typically due by the Sunday following the week's lecture at 11:59pm**).

Weekly reading quizzes: Rather than a textbook, students will often read classic research articles to learn the material in this course. Although this will be difficult at first, these reading quizzes are designed to help you learn how to read a research article more effectively (and quickly!). To do well on these quizzes make sure to have done the reading already and, if possible, have the reading nearby to consult as these can be open note quizzes. Please note, these quizzes will have an hour time limit. Additionally, once submitted, these quizzes cannot be redone, so make sure you press "submit" when you are ready to submit. Unless otherwise specified, these quizzes will be due before the lecture that discusses this content is scheduled to take place (**typically due before 10am on the Friday of the lecture**).

Exams: You will have three exams in this course (taken individually, not in groups). The exams will contain multiple-type test questions, possibly including: True/False, Multiple Choice, Matching, and Open-Ended Questions. Exams questions will be generated from the material covered in class lectures and readings and will not be cumulative. All exams will be held online within a certain timeframe on Carmen. Please read all the rules before taking each exam so you are acquainted with time limits and expectations.

Group project: Each person will be required to apply the knowledge gained during the semester to a group project. The grade students receive on this project will come from two sources; one objective and one subjective. The first source will be based on objective group task performance. The second will be based on group members' subjective evaluation of your performance. More formal instructions for this project can be found on Carmen.

Final reflection paper: The reflection paper assignment throughout the semester has asked you to reflect on your group processes in real-time. Now, after the project has concluded and after you have learned more about group processes and dynamics, this paper asks you to reflect on your group project experience. Specifically, this paper asks that you go back and look at your reflection papers during the semester and reflect upon what was accurate and what was inaccurate in these reflections. The format and topic of this paper is open, you can focus upon any group dynamics that you'd like, but the only requirement is that you, at least twice, reference old reflection papers in your current assessment. This paper should be between 1-2 pages long, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1" margins. References to your own reflection papers do not require a formal citation, but any ideas cited from course materials (lecture or readings) do need to be properly attributed and cited using APA. Citations, in general, however, are not required nor expected. Violations of any of these policies will result a loss of points. More information about this assignment will be posted on Carmen.

Late assignments

Although our situation has certainly improved, these remain unprecedented and unpredictable times. The challenge I face is to provide much needed flexibility for students who are likely to experience more unforeseeable circumstances than usual while also to maintaining a class structure at a reasonably uniform pace. If an issue arises that prevents a student from completing an assignment on-time, please contact the instructor AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Accommodations will be made on a case by case basis. Pending an <u>exceptional</u> circumstance, late reading quizzes and reflection papers will be subject to the following penalties:

- 1-minute to 24 hours late (-1 point)
- 24 hours to 48 hours late (-2 points)
- 48 hours to 72 hours (-3 points)
- +72 hours will not be allowed

Please note that Exams and the Group Project deadlines are not included in this policy.

OSU grading scale

93–100: A	73–76.9: C
90–92.9: A-	70 –72.9: C-
87–89.9: B+	67 –69.9: D+
83–86.9: B	60 –66.9: D
80–82.9: B-	Below 60: E
77–79.9: C+	

Please note: Carmen Canvas, OSU's grading and class management software, does not round fractions up. Please take that into account in computing grades. <u>I do not manually round up grades</u>. There will be opportunities for extra credit for students who choose to earn those points.

Attendance, participation, and discussions

Credit hour and work expectation

This is a 3-credit-hour course. According to Ohio State policy, students should expect around 3 hours per week of time spent on direct instruction (instructor content and Carmen activities, for example) in addition to 6 hours of homework (reading and assignment preparation, for example) to receive a grade of (C) average. ASC Honors provides an excellent guide to scheduling and study expectations.

Faculty feedback and response time

I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course. (Remember that you can call **614-688-HELP** at any time if you have a technical problem.)
Grading and feedback:
For large weekly assignments, you can generally expect feedback within **7-10 days**.
E-mail:
I will reply to e-mails within **24 hours on school days**.
Discussion board:
I will check and reply to messages in the discussion boards every **24 hours on school days**.

Discussion and communication guidelines

The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.

- **Tone and civility**: Let's maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably. Remember that sarcasm doesn't always come across online and is not always appreciated in-person. The instructor and TA both work very hard to provide a positive learning experience. Please keep this in mind and remain civilized and respectful in your class communications.

- **Citing your sources**: When we have academic discussions, please cite your sources to back up what you say. (For the textbook or other course materials, please use APA style. For online sources, be sure to include a link.)

Challenging Grades

There may be instances in which students feel as though the grade posted in the gradebook is inaccurate. This inaccuracy could be based on instructor error or an instance in which the

student feels they can make a case for a different grade. In either instance, students must contact the instructor **within two weeks** of the date in which the grade was posted. After this time, the grade on that assignment will be considered "closed". Thus, students are encouraged to monitor their grades throughout the semester and challenge any decisions as soon as possible.

Encouraging an optimal learning experience

Previous distance learning and hybrid courses have provided insights from students on how to improve the learning experience and optimize outcomes. Here are a few tips from previous students to encourage your success in this hybrid course:

- Students kept up with the Schedule and assignment due dates.

- Students made sure they had access to a reliable internet connection.

- Students had access to at least one reliable device and a backup plan in case of a technological issue.

- Students have made plans to back up work. OSU provides free access to data storage through Microsoft One Drive.

- Students reported that completing assigned readings before class helped them to be prepared to follow along with lectures and participate in discussions.

- Students scheduled time to complete activities at a steady pace during the week. Keeping a schedule prevented a last minute rush and kept the workload manageable.

- Students approached the material by thinking about the connections between readings, lectures, and assignments.

- Students followed the instructor's preference for camera and microphone settings during online synchronous meetings.

Course technology

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at https://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours, and support for urgent issues is available 24x7.

- **Carmen:**
  - Carmen, Ohio State's Learning Management System, will be used to host materials and activities throughout this course. To access Carmen, visit Carmen.osu.edu. Log in to Carmen using your name.# and password. If you have not setup a name.# and password, visit my.osu.edu.
  - Help guides on the use of Carmen can be found at https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmen
  - This hybrid course requires use of Carmen (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools. If you need

additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with your instructor.

- - Carmen accessibility
- **Carmen Zoom:**
  - o Office hours will be held through Ohio State's conferencing platform, Carmen Zoom. A separate guide to accessing Carmen Zoom and our office hours is posted on the course Carmen page under Files.
  - o Students may use the audio and video functions if a webcam and microphone are available. If not, there is still a chat function within Carmen Zoom for the student to live chat with the professor or TA in the virtual office hours room.
  - o Carmen Zoom help guide

- **Self-Service and Chat support:** http://ocio.osu.edu/selfservice
- **Phone:** 614-688-HELP (4357)
- **Email:** 8help@osu.edu
- **TDD:** 614-688-8743

Baseline technical skills necessary for online courses
- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen

Necessary equipment
- Computer: current Mac (OS X) or PC (Windows 7+) with high-speed internet connection
- Web cam and microphone

Necessary software
- Word processor with the ability to save files under .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf. Most popular word processing software programs including Microsoft Word and Mac Pages have these abilities.
- OSU students have access to Microsoft Office products free of charge. To install, please visit https://osuitsm.service-now.com/selfservice/kb_view.do?sysparm_article=kb04733

Other course policies

Student Academic Services

Arts and Sciences Advising and Academic Services' website provides support for student academic success. Information on advising issues such as tutoring, transfer credits, academic standing, and contact information for Arts and Sciences advisors can be obtained through this website. The site is: http://advising.osu.edu/welcome.shtml

Student Services

The Student Service Center assists with financial aid matters, tuition and fee payments. Please see their site at: http://ssc.osu.edu

Copyright Disclaimer

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Diversity

The School of Communication at The Ohio State University embraces and maintains an environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, experiences, and people. Our commitment to diversity moves beyond mere tolerance to recognizing, understanding, and welcoming the contributions of diverse groups and the value group members possess as individuals. In our School, the faculty, students, and staff are dedicated to building a tradition of diversity with principles of equal opportunity, personal respect, and the intellectual interests of those who comprise diverse cultures.

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at http://titleix.osu.edu or by contacting the Interim Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Molly Peirano, at titleix@osu.edu

Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing.

If you are or someone you know is suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614--292--5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766.

If you are thinking of harming yourself or need a safe, non-judgmental place to talk, or if you are worried about someone else and need advice about what to do, 24-hour emergency help is also available through the Suicide Prevention Hotline (Columbus: 614-221-5445)

COVID-19 and Illness Policies

University COVID policies

==This is a placeholder for policies to be announced by OSU.==

Student illness or absence

In the event you must quarantine because of exposure to someone diagnosed with COVID-19 OR you are feeling ill with COVID-19 symptoms, you still will be able to make progress in this class. Please contact your instructor right away, as some accommodations may require extra set-up or planning. The quarantine plan for this course is to record the class session and post the recording on Carmen. This requires a minimum of 1-hour advance notice for device and room set-up.

If *you* are too ill to participate in this course due to COVID-19 or another illness, please contact the instructor as soon as you are able <u>prior</u> to the next class meeting. All materials will be made available on Carmen, including lecture recordings and slides. At least 1 hour advance notice is necessary for device and room set-up. Alternate assignments or extensions may be arranged.

Instructor illness or absence

If the *instructor* is quarantined or is experiencing respiratory symptoms but is well enough to teach, the in-person sessions will be moved online to Zoom. You will be notified via email no later than 3 hours before the class is scheduled to meet. Given that this is a morning class, please get in the habit of checking your email before you leave.

If the *instructor* is too ill to teach the course for a period of time, the designated backup for this course will step in. You will be notified via email from the School of Communication.

Campus closure

Should The Ohio State University Main Campus move to full online instruction due to closure, please wait for your instructor to email directions for the next session. Our in-person classes will be moved to Zoom and links to the meetings will be provided.

Academic integrity policy

Policies for this hybrid course

- **Written assignments**: Your written assignments, including discussion posts, should be your own original work. In formal assignments, you should follow **APA** style to cite the ideas and words of your research sources. You are encouraged to ask a trusted person

to proofread your assignments before you turn them in--but no one else should revise or rewrite your work.

- **Reusing past work**: In general, you are prohibited in university courses from turning in work from a past class to your current class, even if you modify it. If you want to build on past research or revisit a topic you've explored in previous courses, please discuss the situation with me.

- **Falsifying research or results**: All research you will conduct in this course is intended to be a learning experience; you should never feel tempted to make your results or your library research look more successful than it was.

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/

Accessibility accommodations for students with disabilities

Requesting accommodations

Students with disabilities (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions) that have been certified by the Office of Student Life Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Student Life Disability Services is located in 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue; telephone 614- 292-3307, slds@osu.edu; slds.osu.edu.

Course schedule (tentative)

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS CALENDAR IS TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE. STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR KEEPING TRACK OF THESE DATES SO GET IN THE HABT OF CHECKING THE SYLLABUS REGULARLY.

Note: Group project deadlines are emphasized in red

Week/Date	Week Overview and Assignments
	Part I: Building Groups
1 **8/27**	**Welcome and Group Fundamentals** *Read Defining Groups and Teams and the Syllabus* Online Syllabus Quiz due by 9/10 @ 10am for extra credit, must be completed by exam 1 to remain in course

2 **9/3**	**Group Composition** *Read* Gruenfeld et al. (1996) Online Complete Reading Quiz #1, due 9/3 by 10am Complete Reflection Paper #1 *after* reading, due 9/5 by 11:59pm
3 **9/10**	**Contextual Factors in Groups and Creativity** *Read* Yeh (2012) Class activity: Picking Project Groups! Online Last chance to complete Syllabus Quiz for extra credit points! Complete Reading Quiz #2, due 9/10 by 10am Complete Reflection Paper #2, due 9/12 by 11:59pm
4 **9/17**	**Group Norms and Structure** *Read* Zurcher (1970) Online Have a group meeting and then complete Reflection Paper #3, due 9/19 by 11:59pm Complete Reading Quiz #3 after the lecture, due 9/20 by 11:59pm
5 **9/24**	**EXAM ONE** (available on Carmen from 10am – 1pm, time limit of 55 min) **Progress check-in mini lecture (posted on Carmen)** Online Meet with your groups, then complete Reflection Paper #4 (theme selection for group project – use form on Carmen, only 1 submission needed per group), due 9/26 by 11:59pm
Part II: Making Groups Work	
6 **10/1**	**Group Performance** *Read* The pluses and minuses of working together Online Complete Reading Quiz #4, due 10/1 by 10am Complete Reflection Paper #5, due 10/3 by 11:59
7	**Group Cohesion** *Read* Craig & Kelly (1999)

10/8	Online Complete Reading Quiz #5, due 10/8 by 10am Complete Reflection Paper #6, due 10/10 by 11:59pm Group project story boards due 10/12 by 11:59pm
8 **10/15**	**NO CLASS – Happy Fall Break!**
9 **10/22**	**Managing Alternative Perspectives and Diversity** *Read* Mannix & Neale (2005) Online Complete Reading Quiz #6, due 10/22 by 10am Complete Reflection Paper #7, due 10/24 by 11:59pm
10 **10/29**	**Exam Two** (available on Carmen from 10am – 1pm, time limit of 55 min) Online Work on projects!!!
Part III: Foundational Work in Group Communication + Reflections	
11 **11/5**	**Leadership** Projects Due, No Reading Online Video Upload due 11/5 by 10am Begin online campaign!
12 **11/12**	**Conflict (Zoom)** *Read* Behfar et al. (2010) – I know this is a long reading, so you can ignore all the stats ☺ - just focus on the conflict types Online Complete Reading Quiz #7, due 11/12 by 10am Complete Reflection Paper #8, due 11/14 by 11:59pm
13 **11/19**	**Decision-Making (Online: posted to Carmen)** *Read* Forsythe (2010, chapter 11) Online ONLINE CAMPAIGN ENDS AT 11/19 @ 10am sharp! Results announced in class Complete Reading Quiz #8, due 11/19 by 10am Complete Reflection Paper #9, due 11/21 by 11:59pm

	Complete Group Member Evaluation form, due 11/20 by 5pm	
14 **11/6**	**NO CLASS – Happy Thanksgiving!**	
12/3	**Final Exam** (Available on Carmen from 10am – 1pm, time limit of 55 min) Final Reflection Paper due 12/7 by 11:59pm	

Required Reading List (in class order)

"Defining Groups and Teams": An Introduction to Teams and Groups, available from: https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/groups.html#:~:text=A%20group%20is%20a%20collection, of%20any%20number%20of%20people.&text=People%20in%20groups%20are%20defined,are %20part%20of%20a%20group.

Gruenfeld, D. H., Mannix, E. A., Williams, K. Y., & Neale, M. A. (1996). Group composition and decision making: How member familiarity and information distribution affect process and performance. *Organizational behavior and human decision processes*, *67*(1), 1-15.

Yeh, Y. C. (2012). The Effects of Contextual Characteristics on Team Creativity: Positive, Negative, or Still Undecided? (Working papers in contemporary Asian studies; No. 38). Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University. Available from: https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/files/3103258/3127683.pdf

Zurcher, L. A. Jr. (1970). The "Friendly" Poker Game: A Study of an Ephemeral Role, *Social Forces*, Volume 49, Issue 2, Pages 173–186, https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/49.2.173

"The pluses and minuses of working together": From "Group Process: The Pluses and Minuses of Working Together", section 11.2 from the book Social Psychology Principles (v. 1.0). Available from, https://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/social-psychology-principles/s14-02-group-process-the-pluses-and-m.html

Craig, T. Y., & Kelly, J. R. (1999). Group cohesiveness and creative performance. *Group dynamics: Theory, research, and practice*, *3*(4), 243.

Mannix, E., & Neale, M. A. (2005). What differences make a difference? The promise and reality of diverse teams in organizations. *Psychological science in the public interest*, *6*(2), 31-55.

Behfar, K. J., Mannix, E. A., Peterson, R. S., & Trochim, W. M. (2011). Conflict in small groups: The meaning and consequences of process conflict. *Small Group Research*, *42*(2), 127-176.

Forsyth, D. R. (2010). Chapter 11: Group processes (pp. 313-350). In *Group processes*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengate Learning.