Course Description
Examines task and social dimensions of group interaction, problem-solving, decision-making, roles, norms, leadership skills, cohesiveness, communication climates, conflict management, stages of group development, ethical behaviors, observation techniques, and analytic methods for evaluating group dynamics and accomplishments.

Course role in the program/major:
This course is part of the Bachelors of Arts major in Communication.

Prerequisites
No prerequisites for this course

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

- Explain the dynamics and complexities of the small group communication process and development.
- Describe the impact of culture on group interactions.
- Identify and describe motivations for member participation in groups, phases in group development, and roles and role emergence in groups.
- Describe the different definitions of leadership and its associated styles and perspectives.
- Identify the process elements of developing effective teams.
- Function effectively in group problem-solving and decision making processes, and identify defective group decision making.
- Understand the development and use of power in the small group setting.
- Identify and employ strategies for understanding and dealing with conflict.
- Discover the benefits and challenges of Virtual groups.

Required Text and Other Materials:
Course Assignment Descriptions and Schedule At-A-Glance

You will have several opportunities to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the principles taught in this course. The primary means of evaluating your work will be through practical application of the material. In the event that you have difficulty completing any of the assignments for this course, please contact your instructor immediately. Please refer to the Weekly Materials section of the cyberclassroom for complete details regarding the activities and assignments for this course. The following is merely a summary.

Discussion contributions

Initial Substantive Posts: Submit an initial response to each of the prompts provided each week by your instructor. Your initial post should be substantive (approximately ½ of a page in length) and must be posted by midnight, Central Time by Wednesday of each week. In your substantive post you are encouraged to use references (you may use your textbook); show evidence of critical thinking as it applies to the concepts or prompt and/or use examples of the application of the concepts to work and life. Proper punctuation, grammar and correct spelling are expected. Please use the spell-check function.

Required Replies: You must reply to at least two different peers per prompt. Your replies should build on the concept discussed, offer a question to consider, or add a differing perspective, etc. Rather than responding with, "Good post," explain why the post is "good" (why it is important, useful, insightful, etc.). Or, if you disagree, respectfully share your alternative perspective. Just saying "I agree" or "Good idea" is not sufficient for the posts you would like graded.

Posting Guidelines: Overall, postings must be submitted on at least two separate days of the week. It is strongly recommended you visit the discussion forum throughout the week to read and respond to your peers’ postings. You are encouraged to post more than the required number of replies.

(Please review the Policies section of Blackboard for further details.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Readings        | • Review the weekly lesson, videos and readings provided in the course.  
|                 | • Chapter 1 |
| Discussion      | • Initial post to each prompt due by midnight, CT on Wednesday  
|                 | • At least two replies to peers for each prompt due by midnight, CT on Sunday |
| Assignment(s)   | Group Project:  
|                 | Weeks 1 & 2: Log in to your group discussion area and introduce yourself. Note: While the majority of the communication should be posted in the discussion forum so the instructor may assess the collaborative efforts, it is acceptable to exchange email addresses and phone numbers if the group agrees to this form of collaboration. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Readings        | • Review the weekly lesson, videos and readings provided in the course.  
|                 | • Chapter 2 |
| Discussion      | • Initial post to each prompt due by midnight, CT on Wednesday  
|                 | • At least two replies to peers for each prompt due by midnight, CT on Sunday |
| Assignment(s)   | Group Project:  
|                 | If you have not already done so, log in to your group discussion area and introduce |
yourself. Note: While the majority of the communication should be posted in the
discussion forum so the instructor may assess the collaborative efforts, it is
acceptable to exchange email addresses and phone numbers if the group agrees to
this form of collaboration.

Assignment: Group Dynamics Essay
This week, you will be writing an essay. The essay will be two to three pages in
length (not counting title and reference pages) in APA format.

Choose one (1) of the following questions. Some have multiple parts so be sure to
respond to everything the question is asking.

- What are the five ethical standards for communication in groups? Can your
  communication be ethical without both effectiveness and appropriateness?
  Explain and provide examples.
- We join groups for various reasons. What are these reasons? Why does
  knowing the reasons for joining a group matter? Explain and give examples
to demonstrate your answer.
- Can groups be too open? Can groups be too closed? Explain your answers
  and provide examples.

Use the Myers Library, your text and other scholarly sources to compose your
paper. Your paper should consist of a minimum of three references.

Due: Sunday, midnight CT
Points Possible: 50

Week 3
Readings
- Review the weekly lesson, videos and readings provided in the course.
- Chapters 3 & 4

Discussion
- Initial post to each prompt due by midnight, CT on Wednesday
- At least two replies to peers for each prompt due by midnight, CT on Sunday

Assignment(s)
Group Project:
Review the scenario and begin formulating your thoughts concerning criteria for
assessing your proposal ideas. Post your ideas in the group discussion area.

Week 4
Readings
- Review the weekly lesson, videos and readings provided in the course.
- Chapters 5 & 6

Discussion
- Initial post to each prompt due by midnight, CT on Wednesday
- At least two replies to peers for each prompt due by midnight, CT on Sunday

Assignment(s)
Group Project Submission:
- Continue to work in your group board this week. Choose one person from
  your team to submit what you have created for your proposal thus far. Your
  instructor will give you feedback regarding the direction of your proposal.
  There are no points awarded for this submission, however failure to submit
  this week will affect your overall grade for the project.

Team Dynamics Essay
This week, you will be writing an essay. The essay will be approximately two to
three pages in length (not counting cover and reference pages) double spaced
using a 12 point font, in APA format. Choose one (1) of the following prompts.

Some have multiple parts so be sure to respond to everything the question is
asking.

- What is team empowerment? What are the four dimensions of team
  empowerment? How does organizational hierarchy affect team
  empowerment? Why?
- What are role reversal, role status, role conflict, and role fixation? Explain
  the differences between formal and informal roles.
- Explain the different perspectives on leadership: traits, styles, situations,
  functions, and competence.
### Week 5

| Readings          | • Review the weekly lesson, videos and readings provided in the course.  
|                   | • Chapters 7 & 8 |
| Discussion        | • Initial post to each prompt due by midnight, CT on Wednesday  
|                   | • At least two replies to peers for each prompt due by midnight, CT on Sunday |
| Assignment(s)     | **Group Project Submission:**  
|                   | • Continue to work in your group board this week. Choose one person from your team to submit what you have created for your proposal thus far. Your instructor will give you feedback regarding the direction of your proposal. There are no points awarded for this submission, however failure to submit this week will affect your overall grade for the project.  
|                   | **Group Decision Making Essay**  
|                   | This week, you will be writing an essay. The essay will be approximately two to three pages in length (not counting cover and reference pages) double-spaced using a 12 point font in APA format.  
|                   | Choose one (1) of the following questions. Some have multiple parts so be sure to respond to everything the question is asking.  
|                   | • How does information overload affect group decision-making? How can you cope with information overload? Which is the most effective coping method?  
|                   | • What is group polarization? How is it different from risky shift phenomenon? Why does group polarization occur? What are the steps for combating group polarization?  
|                   | • What are the pros and cons of majority rule, minority rule, and consensus decision-making? What are the specific rules of consensus decision making that make it work? What is a true consensus? Can all groups achieve consensus?  
|                   | Use the Meyers Library, your text and other scholarly sources to compose your paper. Your paper should consist of a minimum of three references.  
|                   | Due: Sunday at Midnight, CT  
|                   | Points Possible: 50 |

### Week 6

| Readings          | • Review the weekly lesson, videos and readings provided in the course.  
|                   | • Chapters 9 & 10 |
| Discussion        | • Initial post to each prompt due by midnight, CT on Wednesday  
|                   | • At least two replies to peers for each prompt due by midnight, CT on Sunday |
| Assignment(s)     | **Power and Conflict Essay**  
|                   | This week, you will be writing an essay. The essay will be approximately two to three pages in length (not counting cover and reference pages) double spaced using a 12 point font, in APA format.  
|                   | **Choose one (1) of the following questions.** Some have multiple parts so be sure to respond to everything the question is asking.  
|                   | • Define power. What are the three forms of power? How do they differ from each other? How would you group the five power resources with the three form of power?  
|                   | • What are the five communication styles of conflict management? When should you use each and when should you choose another option? Which styles are most likely to be effective and which are least likely?  
|                   | • What are the distinctions between constructive and destructive anger? What steps can be taken to manage effectively your own anger and the anger of other group members?  
|                   | Due: Sunday, midnight CT  
|                   | Points Possible: 50 |
Use the Meyers Library, your text and other scholarly sources to compose your paper. Your paper should consist of a minimum of three references.
Points Possible: 50
Due: Sunday, midnight CT

### Week 7

#### Readings
- Review the weekly lesson, videos and readings provided in the course.
- Chapter 11

#### Discussion
- Initial post to each prompt due by midnight, CT on Wednesday
- At least two replies to peers for each prompt due by midnight, CT on Sunday

#### Assignment(s)

**Group Project Submission**
Your proposal should be finalized with your group. Each group member should receive a copy of the proposal you have written. This week, individually, submit the proposal along with a reflection to your instructor. Remember, you are not graded solely on the proposal, but rather the experiential reflection regarding the group communication process. Compose a 2-3 page reflection on the group project. When evaluating your experience working in a virtual group, consider issues such as the following:
- In comparison to a traditional team what did you find, working in the virtual environment, that you feel is better in terms of ease, immediacy, response times, information transfer etc?
- Did you feel the ability to communicate was enhanced or deterred by this form of group?
- Do you believe groupthink would be easier to fall into using a virtual group? Why or why not?
- How did the virtual environment affect your ability to express your agreement or disagreement?
- Do you feel your work product was affected by the virtual environment? If so how? Was it better or worse?

Be sure not to critique on a personal level, but rather evaluate the process as a whole. Submit your individual reflections (along with a copy of the completed proposal) to the dropbox by Sunday, midnight CT.

Points Possible: 100
Due: Sunday, midnight CT

### Week 8

#### Readings
- Review the weekly lesson, videos and readings provided in the course.

#### Discussion
- Initial post to each prompt due by midnight, CT on Wednesday
- At least two replies to peers for each prompt due by midnight, CT on Saturday

#### Assignment(s)

**Assignment: Final Exam**
This week, complete the final exam. You will have until Saturday, midnight CT to complete the final. You may start and stop the exam, however it MUST be completed by Saturday, midnight CT. There are 50 questions, each worth 2 points for a total of 100 points.

Points Possible: 100
Due: Saturday, midnight CT

---

* All online weeks run from Monday to Sunday, except the last week, which ends on Saturday.
** All assignments are due at midnight Central Time. (All submissions to the Blackboard system are date/time stamped in Central Time).

### Assignments At-A-Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment/Activity</th>
<th>Qty.</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 1-8: Discussion*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20 per week</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2: Group Dynamics Essay</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 of 7
Week 4: Team Dynamics Essay
Week 5: Group Decision Making Essay
Week 6: Power and Conflict Essay
Week 7: Group Project Final Submission
Week 8: Final Exam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Team Dynamics Essay</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Group Decision Making Essay</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Power and Conflict Essay</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Group Project Final Submission</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL POINTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>560</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please refer to the Policies menu for more information about requirements for Discussions.

**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90 to 100%</td>
<td>504-560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80 to 89%</td>
<td>447-503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 to 79%</td>
<td>390-446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60 to 69%</td>
<td>333-389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 60%</td>
<td>&lt; 332</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To access your scores, click on Grades in the Student Tools area in Blackboard.

**Important Policies**

All course-specific policies for this course are spelled out here in this syllabus. However, additional university policies are located in the Policies section of Blackboard. You are responsible for reading and understanding all of these policies. All of them are important. Failure to understand or abide by them could have negative consequences for your experience in this course.

**Editorial Format for Written Papers**

All written assignments are to follow the APA writing style guidelines for grammar, spelling, and punctuation. This online course includes information regarding the APA style under “Writing and Research Resources” in the Resource Room on the course menu in Blackboard.

**Ottawa Online Late Policy**

With instructor approval, assignments may be accepted for up to one week after the due date, but a minimum automatic deduction of 10% of the points will be assessed. The instructor also has the option of increasing this deduction percentage up to a maximum of 20%. Extenuating circumstances may be determined on rare occasions and an extension allowed without a deduction, but only at the sole discretion of the instructor.

Discussion board postings will not be accepted for credit when posted after the close of the discussion week. There are no exceptions to this rule; however, solely at the discretion of the instructor, the student may be allowed to submit an alternative assignment to make up for the points under extenuating circumstances. If granted, this should be an exception to the rule.

No assignments will be accepted after the last day of the course (end of term) unless arrangements have been made and “approved” by the instructor at least one week in advance.

**Saving Work**

It is recommended that you save all of your work from this course on your own computer or flash drive. The capstone course you take at the end of your program may require you to have access to this work for culminating assignments and/or reflections.
Academic Integrity
Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated at any level on any assignment. The reality of cyberspace has made academic dishonesty even more tempting for some, but be advised that technology can and will be used to help uncover those engaging in deception. If you ever have a question about the legitimacy of a source or a procedure you are considering using, ask your instructor. As the University Academic Council approved on May 29, 2003, “The penalty for plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty will be failure in the course in which the academic dishonesty occurred. Students who commit academic dishonesty can be dismissed from the university by the provost/director.”
Please refer to Academic Honesty in the Policies section of the online course menu for important information about Ottawa University’s policies regarding plagiarism and cheating, including examples and explanations of these issues.

Student Handbook
Please refer to your student handbook for all university regulations. The Resource Room on the course menu in Blackboard contains information about where to find the student handbook online for your campus.

Please see Policies in Blackboard for additional university policies.

Blackboard Technical Support
The Resource Room in Blackboard contains links to student tutorials for learning to use Blackboard as well as information about whom to contact for technical support. Ottawa University offers technical support from 8 a.m. to midnight Central Time for all students, staff, and faculty at no cost. See www.ottawa.edu/ouhelp for contact information.

---

Ottawa University Mission Statement
The mission of Ottawa University is to provide the highest quality liberal arts and professional education in a caring, Christ-centered community of grace, which integrates faith, learning and life. The University serves students of traditional age, adult learners and organizations through undergraduate and graduate programs.