

COMM 4100/001 Small Group Communication
3 credit hours, Fall 2012
Thursdays, 6:00-8:45 PM, Room J133

Instructor Information:

Dr. Laura Beth Daws * ldaws@spsu.edu (**the best way to reach me!**) * educate.spsu.edu/ldaws
Twitter: @lbdaws * **Office phone:** 678-915-7208 (voice only) **Cell (voice/text & preferred phone number):** 678-250-DAWS (3297). *NOTE: this is a Google Voice number that I will respond to regularly on weekdays from 8 am-5 pm. Voicemails and texts received before/after that will be handled on the next business day.*

Office Hours: J 318. Mondays & Wednesdays, 10-11; Tuesdays & Thursdays, 4:30-6. Other times by appointment. *(Please come by anytime my door is open if you have questions, concerns or just to say "hi!" If you need advising or have a more serious issue for which you need my undivided attention, though, please schedule an appointment with me. That way, you get priority in my schedule!)*

Textbook: Lumsden, G., Lumsden, D., Wiethoff, C. (2010). *Communicating in groups and teams: Sharing leadership*. Cengage Learning. ISBN-10: 049557046X; ISBN-13: 9780495570462.

Other readings: Will be assigned throughout the semester. You can expect to read additional book chapters, case studies, and articles from the Internet to supplement the textbook material. You will be given advance notice as to when these outside readings will be due.

Course Description as stated in the SPSU Catalog: *Prerequisite: TCOM 2010; either TCOM 2020 or 2030 or concurrently.* Study of the theory and practice of group interaction and teamwork as it applies to group process. Focuses on such topics as the function of roles in groups, conflict resolution, leadership in the small group, gender differences, listening and negotiation skills, and managing meetings. A collaborative project and workshop activities reinforce these principles.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes:

My number one goal for you this semester is to learn how to effectively work in, with and for a group, despite any number of realistic and likely challenges that group may face (these challenges include, but are not limited to: conflicts, laziness, gender/cultural differences, personality clashes, schedule conflicts, group role stress, inter-network gossip, or any other general ill will that may befall a small collection of people, for better or for worse, who just so happen to be forced to work together). Trust me: this is a skill that you will wish all of your future co-workers had, and a skill that will benefit you regardless of your chosen career field.

Our learning objectives are as follows:

- Learn the theoretical underpinnings of small group communication
- Apply small group communication concepts (theories included) in real-life situations

- Extend your oral and written communication skills
- Network with classmates and extend your learning of interpersonal communication practices
- Learn how to plan and execute a small group project

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is expected each class period. Since this class meets once each week, missing one class period is the equivalent of missing an entire week in a typical class. If you must miss class due to an excused absence (illness with doctor's note, death in the immediate family with written verification, car accident with police report, etc.), you may turn in your work late with no penalty (see more details under "Late Work" below). **Under no circumstances** may you make up the in-class participation points. To accommodate for times when you may have an emergency that would prevent you from attending class, I will drop your lowest participation grade at the end of the semester. As a reward for those of you who have perfect attendance, you may keep ALL of those extra participation points you earned from not using your "free" absence week.

Late Work:

Don't say I didn't warn you: I'm a stickler for turning things in on time. **I do not accept late work**, except in the case of a documented excused absence (doctor's appointment with note, death in the family with written verification, car accident with accident report, etc.). If you have an excused absence, you may **email me your written work within 24 hours** as verification that you completed the assignment and then turn in a physical copy of the work **by the next class period**.

Written assignments are due at 6 pm. Assignments turned in after class has started will be subject to a 10% grade penalty. I do not accept assignments after the class period in which the assignment was due, except in cases of an excused absence. I do not accept emailed assignments, except in cases of an excused absence.

Classroom Policies/General Decorum Issues:

- Part of my job is to help you learn how to communicate in a variety of contexts. If you use email as a channel to send your message to me, then you should treat every email as a chance to practice professional written communication skills, and I expect you to adhere to standard conventions of grammar, spelling and language when writing emails to me and other instructors at SPSU. I will correct grammar, spelling and punctuation in your emails just like I would correct them in a written assignment. This is a class in communication, after all, and I'd hate to know you left my class thinking it was acceptable to contact potential employers, bosses, or other professionals with sloppy emails!
- Texting during class is rude and distracting; if you must communicate via cell phone during class hours, please walk out of the room to do so. Do not be surprised if I ask you to leave class after you've been caught texting in my class on more than one occasion.

- If you would like to use a laptop or iPad to take notes in this course, that's fine – as long as you disable your wireless connectivity so you won't be tempted to browse the Internet during class time or use the technological device to distract others. I reserve the right to ask you to cease use of electronic note taking devices if they become distracting to yourself or others.
- Class discussions should facilitate an open exchange of ideas. Debates should be healthy, and each individual should be respectful of others' opinions. Hate speech, or racist, sexist, ageist, or homophobic comments are not allowed.
- All written assignments must be printed on plain white 8.5" x 11" paper, using a computer/word processor and printer. Please **staple** all assignments that are two or more pages in length (do NOT dog-ear, fold corners, use paperclips or other binding methods). Unless I specify otherwise in class, hand-written assignments will not be accepted.
- **Plagiarism can result in failure of the course.** In this class, you are rewarded for correctly citing information, and severely punished for failing to credit where your ideas came from. If you are ever uncertain, ask me ahead of time.

In Case Of Emergency, Weather Crises, Impending Apocalypse, Zombie Attacks, etc.

If you haven't done so already, please sign up for Hornet Alert by going to www.spsu.edu/hornetalert. This is SPSU's way of communicating with you in the event of a crisis/emergency that impacts campus (such as class cancellations due to weather). If I have to miss class unexpectedly (it RARELY happens), I will alert you via Vista – so it's not a bad idea to check in there before class starts. Oh, and in case of a zombie apocalypse... aim for their heads.

SPSU Honor Code:

As a member of the Southern Polytechnic State University community of scholars, I understand that my actions are not only a reflection on myself, but also a reflection on the University and the larger body of scholars of which it is a part. Acting unethically, no matter how minor the offense, will be detrimental to my academic progress and self-image. It will also adversely affect all students, faculty, staff, the reputation of this University, and the value of the degrees it awards. Whether on campus or online, I understand that it is not only my personal responsibility, but also a duty to the entire SPSU community that I act in a manner consistent with the highest level of academic integrity. Therefore, I promise that as a member of the Southern Polytechnic State University community, I will not participate in any form of academic misconduct. I also understand that it is my responsibility to hold others to these same standards by addressing actions that deviate from the University-wide commitment to working, living, and learning in an environment conducive to a quality education. Thus, I affirm and adopt this honor code of Southern Polytechnic State University.

ADA Procedures: Southern Polytechnic State University is committed to providing an educational environment that is accessible to all students. In accordance with this policy, students in need of accommodations due to a disability should contact the ATTIC (Student Center 1st floor, extension 7361) for verification and determination of reasonable

accommodations as soon as possible after admission to the University, or at the beginning of each semester. More information is available at <http://www.spsu.edu/attic/index.htm>.

Grades:

I will post your grades to the Vista gradebook so you will ALWAYS know exactly where you stand in this course. However, I also recommend you keep up with your grades here as a backup.

Group Project Printed Materials	____/225
Team Names/Team Leader Names	____/10
Project Proposal Statement	____/20
Division of Responsibilities/Contract	____/10
Annotated Bibliography	____/50
Outline	____/50
Deliverables on Presentation Day	____/85
Group Project Presentation	____/125
Group Evaluation	____/50
Group Experience	____/100
Participation	____/100
Response Papers (2 at 100 points each)	1. ____/100
	2. ____/100
Midterm Exam	____/100
Final Exam	____/100

Short Description of Assignments

Detailed grading rubrics will be provided on Vista before assignments are due.

Group Project: 350 points. 225 points: printed materials. 125 points: group project presentation. What would a class in small group communication be without, of course, a small group project? You'll be expected to work with 3-4 other classmates in creating and implementing a project that will make a difference in the community or workplace of your choice. This will be a group grade – everyone will receive the same grade, except for the designated group leader, who has the opportunity to earn more points (or lose points) based on the overall effectiveness of the project and the reviews of others in the group. My rationale behind this is that in the workplace, those who lead groups are often paid more or given rewards for taking on increased responsibility, and I hope to emulate that sort of environment with these projects. You will be evaluated on printed/digital and orally presented materials. Groups will be determined by the second class meeting after introducing yourselves to your classmates, discovering common interests and determining who has the most compatible schedules. Ideally, this project will result in some good pieces to include in your capstone portfolio.

Group Evaluation: 50 points. Each person will be expected to write a 2-3 page assessment of how your group functioned over the course of the semester. You'll need to incorporate terms, concepts, and theories that are discussed in class and help explain your group's dynamics.

Group Experience: 100 points. To help your group develop cohesiveness, you will be expected to engage in at least one out-of-classroom group social experience early on in the semester. Ideas for the experience include: bowling, going to the movies, laser tag, dinner & a movie at someone's house, board game night, a group hike, or **almost** anything else your group thinks would be fun (with my approval), entertaining and a good way to bond. The experience must last at least 60 minutes, and it should be documented with pictures and/or video. You will be expected to make an informal presentation (around 8-10 minutes) about your experience to the class in which you use the pictures/videos you took as visual aids.

Participation: 100 points. Each class meeting will present multiple opportunities to engage in thoughtful discussion and hands-on activities. You may not make up participation points that you miss for any reason; your lowest participation grade will be dropped at the end of the semester to accommodate for any unexpected emergency that may cause you to miss class.

Response Papers: 2 at 100 points each. To help develop your writing skills and develop your knowledge of APA format, you will be expected to turn in 2 response papers that are over the course of the semester. I will give you a prompt for each paper, and you will be expected to turn in a written response that incorporates class material. Prompts could include explaining a case study in small group communication, in-depth exploration of a small group communication theory, and/or a summary of textbook and outside readings. Each paper should have two scholarly sources and be written using APA 6th edition format.

Exams: Midterm and Final. 200 points total, 100 points each. You will be responsible for all readings, in-class discussions, and in-class examples for the midterm and final. They may contain multiple choice, true/false, short answer and essay questions.

Total Points: 1000. Grade Scale: 900-1000 points: A. 800-899 points: B. 700-799 points: C. 600-699 points: D. 599 and below: F.

Tentative Class Schedule

Date	Reading (complete before class)	Due In Class
August 16	Syllabus, Chapter 1: Your Groups and Teams	
August 23	Chapter 2: Your Teamwork Responsibility	
August 30	Chapter 3: The "Work" in Teamwork	Team names & leader
September 6	Chapter 4: The "Team" in Teamwork	Response Paper 1
September 13	Chapter 5: Task Questions and Resources	Group Experience Presentations
September 20	Chapter 6: Logical & Critical Thinking	Project Proposals

September 27	Chapter 7: Innovative & Creative Thinking	Division of Responsibilities & Group Contract
	OCTOBER 1: MIDTERM DATE	
October 4	Chapter 8: Problem Analysis & Decision Making	MIDTERM EXAM
October 11	Chapter 9: Verbal & Nonverbal Comm	
October 18	Chapter 10: Listening & Questioning	Response Paper 2
October 25	Chapter 11: Teams and Designated Leaders	Bibliography
November 1	Chapter 12: Team Pressures and Conflicts	Detailed outline
November 8	Chapter 13: Team Problems and Participation	
November 15	Group Preparation Workday (<i>Instructor at NCA Convention</i>)	Group Workday
November 22	HAPPY THANKSGIVING	NO CLASS
November 29	None	Group Presentations
TBA		FINAL EXAM

The final exam will take place during the university's official final exam date/time, TBA.