The University of Oklahoma
College of Continuing Education
Advanced Programs – Course Syllabus

Course Title:
Small Group Processes

Course Number:
COMM 6233-101

Course Description:
This advanced survey course is designed to expose students to communication principles that hold particular importance to an understanding of small group and team functioning. The course emphasizes recent research advancements in small group communication studies. Topics for the course include an investigation of groupthink and cognitive biases in decision-making processes as well as their connection to facilitative questioning skills.

Class Dates, Location and Hours:

Dates: July 9-15, 2012
Location: Washington, D.C. Liaison Office - 2189 Crystal Plaza Arcade, Arlington, VA, 22202
Hours: Mon-Fri 6:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m.; Sat 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sun 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: June 10, 2012

Site Director:
Phone: 703-418-4800; Fax: 703-418-2730; E-mail: apwashington@ou.edu

Professor Contact Information:

Course Professor: Ryan S. Bisel, Ph.D.
Mailing Address: University of Oklahoma
Department of Communication
Burton Hall, #224
Norman, OK 73019
Telephone Number: (405) 325-6042
Fax Number: (405) 325-7625
Email Address: RyanBisel@ou.edu
Professor availability: The professor will be available via e-mail to students before and after the class sessions. On-site office hours are half an hour before and after each class session, by appointment.

Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:
Student materials are available at the Follett/AP Bookstore located in the Oklahoma Memorial Union, 900 Asp Ave., Norman, OK. Orders can be placed online at www.oklahomaunion.bkstr.com or by telephone at 866-369-9713 (toll free in the U.S.) or 405-325-5960 (outside the U.S.). E-mail orders may be sent to oklahomaunion@bkstr.com. Representatives are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. CST Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST on Friday. Summer hours: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. CST. Faxed orders may be placed 24 hours a day to 866-223-5607 (toll free in the U.S.) or 405-325-7140 (outside the U.S.).

2. Materials posted on the OU Desire to Learn (D2L) system: Access D2L at [http://learn.ou.edu](http://learn.ou.edu); enter your OU NetID (4+4) and password, and select course to access material. Please contact your local Site Director if you require assistance.

Note: The Follett/AP Bookstore is the Advanced Programs contractual textbook provider. Should text changes become necessary after publication of the course syllabus, Advanced Programs will facilitate text returns/refunds only for texts purchased through the Follett/AP Bookstore.

**Recommended/Optional BACKGROUND Reading**


**Course Objectives:**

At the conclusion of the course, students will (a) have developed a thorough understanding of the importance of communication in small group work, (b) be familiar with several contemporary theories in the field of small group communication, (c) recognize how their own communication can influence the effectiveness of their small group or team, and (d) have an opportunity to practice small group communication skills.

**Reading List and Schedule for Small Group Communication**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7/9</td>
<td>Introducing the Course</td>
<td>Hirokawa &amp; Rost, 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/10</td>
<td>Groupthink</td>
<td>Janis, 1971; Henningsen et al., 2006;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group Learning</td>
<td>Kayes, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/11</td>
<td>Group Cognitive Biases</td>
<td>Kerr, MacCoun, &amp; Kramer, 1996; Wright et al., 2004; Tetlock, 2000; Brown &amp; Starkey, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/12</td>
<td>Decision Making (+ Procedures)</td>
<td>Poole, Seibold, &amp; McPhee, 1985; Castor, 2005; [Reread]: Hirokawa &amp; Rost, 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/13</td>
<td>Facilitative Questioning</td>
<td>Strachan, 2007 (esp., Ch 5 &amp; 6); Barge &amp; Oliver, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/14</td>
<td>Leading Creativity Review, Group work, Activities</td>
<td>Chirumbolo et al., 2005; Sosik, Avolio, &amp; Kahai, 1998; Reiter-Palmon, et al., 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/15</td>
<td>EXAM</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/20</td>
<td>Group Work Report</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/22</td>
<td>Final Reflection Paper</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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**Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:**

**Students are expected to participate in all class discussions. Effective participation is judged by the informed comments provided by students as well as by the intelligence and insight advanced by the questions and issues that students develop from readings.**
Short Writes
In order to encourage active analysis and discussion of class readings, students will choose any three questions from the “SHORT-WRITE QUESTION PROMPTS” to answer in 1-2 page, provocative, and insightful essays.

Discussion Leader
Each student will have an opportunity to facilitate discussion during a class period and practice the skill of facilitative questioning.

Exam
A comprehensive exam will be administered during part of the last class session (3 hours). Essay and multiple choice questions will be derived from readings, lectures, and class discussion.

Group Work Report
Students will be randomly assigned to a work group and given a complex, conjunctive task. The report will explain the group’s decision process and outcome of their work.

Final Reflection Paper
Students will craft a reflection paper that recaps major learning moments from their small group work.

Grading:
This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F.

Distribution and Due Dates of Graded Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short Writes</td>
<td>5% * 3 = 15%</td>
<td>July 9-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Leader</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>July 9-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>July 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Work Report</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>July 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Reflection Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>July 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>N/A</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

NOTICE: Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.
POLICIES AND NOTICES

Attendance/Grade Policy

Attendance and participation in interaction, individual assignments, group exercises, simulations, role playing, etc. are valuable aspects of any course because much of the learning comes from discussions in class with other students. It is expected that you attend all classes and be on time except for excused emergencies.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution’s policy regarding “I” (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy.

Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any “I” (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on “financial aid probation.” If the “I” grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student’s Financial Aid may be suspended make the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

Academic Honesty

Honesty is a fundamental precept in all academic activities and … [you] have a special obligation to observe the highest standards of honesty. Academic misconduct in any form is inimical to the purposes and functions of the University and is therefore unacceptable and is rigorously proscribed. Academic misconduct includes:

- cheating (using unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise), plagiarism, falsification of records, unauthorized possession of examinations, intimidation, and any and all other actions that may improperly affect the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement; assisting others in any such act; or attempting to engage in such acts.

All acts of academic misconduct will be reported and adjudicated as prescribed by the student code of the University of Oklahoma. All students should review the “Student’s Guide to Academic Integrity” found at http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity

Accommodation Statement

The College of Continuing Education [Advanced Programs] is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your OU Site Director.

Course Policies

Advanced Programs policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are mailed to the professor for the course. Advanced Programs does not provide duplicating services or office supplies.

Copyright

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about Advanced Programs, visit our website at: http://www.goou.ou.edu/
INSTRUCTOR VITA

Ryan S. Bisel, Ph.D.

Education

- Ph.D. Organizational Communication, University of Kansas, Lawrence KS
- M.A. Organizational Communication, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS
- B.A. Organizational Communication, William Jewell College, Liberty, MO

Current Positions

Assistant Professor, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK

Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses

- 2113 Business and Professional Communication
- 3683 Organizational Communication
- 3223 Small Group Communication
- 356 Research Methods in Communication
- 5333 Organizational Communication
- 5683 Organizational Communication for Leaders
- 5810 Communicative theory of the Firm

Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest

- Dr. Bisel is an Assistant Professor of Organizational Communication at the University of Oklahoma. His research interests focus primarily on supervisor-subordinate communication, organizational discourse, and organizational culture change.
- In 2007, his research was honored with a Top Paper Award from the Central States Communication Association (CSCA). In 2008, his research was honored with a Top Paper Award from the National Communication Association (NCA). Additionally, he was formerly the editorial assistant for the Journal of Applied Communication Research.
- Dr. Bisel has published four book chapters and his research is published and in press with top communication journals such as Communication Theory, Management Communication Quarterly, Western Journal of Communication, Communication Teacher, and Communication Studies.
- In addition to his academic experience, Professor Bisel has worked as a process consultant and facilitator for organizations such as Douglas County Visiting Nurses and Hospice, Lawrence Chamber of Commerce, Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security, and the Kansas Health Foundation.

Representative Publications: