

COMM 5 Course Outline as of Fall 2025**CATALOG INFORMATION**

Dept and Nbr: COMM 5 Title: GRP DISCUSSION PROB SOLV

Full Title: Group Discussion and Problem Solving

Last Reviewed: 11/4/2024

Units	Course Hours per Week		Nbr of Weeks		Course Hours Total	
Maximum	3.00	Lecture Scheduled	3.00	17.5	Lecture Scheduled	52.50
Minimum	3.00	Lab Scheduled	0	4	Lab Scheduled	0
		Contact DHR	0		Contact DHR	0
		Contact Total	3.00		Contact Total	52.50
		Non-contact DHR	0		Non-contact DHR	0

Total Out of Class Hours: 105.00

Total Student Learning Hours: 157.50

Title 5 Category: AA Degree Applicable

Grading: Grade or P/NP

Repeatability: 00 - Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP

Also Listed As:

Formerly: SPCH 5

Catalog Description:

Students will explore theoretical models and research conclusions about communication in groups. Students will participate in small-group discussions applying theory and research in the areas of problem solving, conflict resolution, group roles, leadership styles, interest-based negotiating, group-meeting protocols, organizational communication, and cultural diversity. Students will examine how groups fit into organizational, cultural, and societal structures, as well as how those structures shape the framework for the behavior of the individual and the group. Students will be expected to explain contemporary and historical theories and describe scholarly research in their essays and presentations.

Prerequisites/Corequisites:**Recommended Preparation:**

Eligibility for ENGL C1000 or EMLS 10 or equivalent or appropriate placement based on AB705 mandates

Limits on Enrollment:**Schedule of Classes Information:**

Description: Students will explore theoretical models and research conclusions about communication in groups. Students will participate in small-group discussions applying theory and research in the areas of problem solving, conflict resolution, group roles, leadership styles, interest-based negotiating, group-meeting protocols, organizational communication, and cultural diversity. Students will examine how groups fit into organizational, cultural, and societal structures, as well as how those structures shape the framework for the behavior of the individual and the group. Students will be expected to explain contemporary and historical theories and describe scholarly research in their essays and presentations. (Grade or P/NP)

Prerequisites/Corequisites:

Recommended: Eligibility for ENGL C1000 or EMLS 10 or equivalent or appropriate placement based on AB705 mandates

Limits on Enrollment:

Transfer Credit: CSU;UC.

Repeatability: Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP

ARTICULATION, MAJOR, and CERTIFICATION INFORMATION:

AS Degree:	Area	Effective:	Inactive:
	B	Fall 1981	
		Communication and Analytical Thinking	

CSU GE:	Transfer Area	Effective:	Inactive:
	E	Fall 1981	
		Lifelong Learning and Self Development	

IGETC:	Transfer Area	Effective:	Inactive:
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CSU Transfer:	Transferable	Effective:	Fall 1981	Inactive:
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UC Transfer:	Transferable	Effective:	Fall 1981	Inactive:
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CID:

CID Descriptor: COMM 140	Small Group Communication
SRJC Equivalent Course(s):	COMM5

Certificate/Major Applicable:

Both Certificate and Major Applicable

COURSE CONTENT

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Employ a systematic method within a group to solve a problem.
2. Communicate effectively within groups.
3. Explain effective group processes using current research and applicable theories.

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Describe, compare, and analyze a variety of small-group communication behaviors.
2. Choose and practice methods for communicating with other members of a small group.
3. Analyze and explain the implications and applications of the conceptual framework of diversity, equity, inclusion, and action as it relates to communication dynamics and dimensions of a small group in varying contexts.

4. Describe and practice supportive communication behaviors.
5. Demonstrate effective listening skills in various group settings and summarize the range of perspectives expressed within the group.
6. Discuss and practice communication skills related to leadership and decision making.
7. Evaluate how organizational, cultural, and societal structures shape communication ethics, effectiveness, and behavior of both the individual and the group.
8. Strategize and practice methods for individual and group problem solving.
9. Discuss and practice both task and maintenance roles and behaviors.
10. Discuss and practice methods of group consensus building, rather than less inclusive means of decision-making, such as majority vote or trading.
11. Define, discuss, identify, and avoid groupthink.
12. Create a meeting agenda and lead a group meeting utilizing parliamentary procedure.
13. Observe and explain concepts of organizational communication, including organizational culture.
14. Explain and practice methods of effective leadership in a variety of situations.
15. Describe the current state of research in group communication and organizational culture.
16. Explain current theories in communication, as they relate the interaction observed in groups and organizations.

Topics and Scope:

- I. Group Communication in Social and Behavioral Sciences
 - A. Review of research methods used in the field
 - B. Models of communication
 - C. Group communication versus other forms
- II. The Nature of Small Group Discussion
 - A. The importance of groups in society
 - B. Group roles and norms
 - C. Supportive versus defensive behaviors
 - D. Definitions of terms
 1. Small group
 2. Communication
 3. Conflict
 - E. Maintenance and task theory
 - F. Consensus building
 - G. Group decision making
 - H. When groups make better decisions than individuals
 1. Synergy and assembly effect
 2. Process loss
 - I. When groups are not the best decision-making vehicle
 1. When conditions are changing rapidly (such as on a battlefield or during an emergency)
 2. When group members are unknowledgeable or immature
- III. Diversity in Group Communication
 - A. Learning styles
 - B. Personality types
- IV. Conflict Resolution Theory
 - A. Conflict management
 - B. Negotiations
 - C. Avoidance of groupthink
 - D. Consensus
 - E. Compromise
 - F. Avoidance and accommodation

- V. Dewey's Reflective Approach Theory as Applied to Problem solving
 - A. Understanding, researching, and analyzing the problem
 - B. Generating possible solutions
 - C. Evaluating possible solutions
 - D. Selecting the best solutions
 - E. Implementing solutions
- VI. Systems Theory or Collective Intelligence Theory
 - A. Input, throughput, and output
 - B. Environment
 - C. Open versus closed systems
 - D. Groups as systems with "collective intelligence"
 - E. Collective vs. individual intelligence
 - E. Positive Synergy
- VII. Functional Theory of Leadership
 - A. Understanding and managing diversity
 - B. Employing lawful and ethical leadership strategies
 - C. Using interpersonal power ethically and positively
 - D. Employing effective communication
 - E. Fostering a positive communication climate
 - F. Evaluating group and organizational leadership
 - G. Employing the most appropriate style of leadership for the situation, organization, or group
- VIII. Components of Group Communication
 - A. Beliefs
 - B. Values
 - C. Behaviors (norms)
 - D. Listening
 - E. Practicing supportive communication
 - F. Avoiding defensive communication
- IX. Nonverbal Communication
 - A. Kinesics
 - B. Proxemics
 - C. Dress
 - D. Vocalics
 - E. Oculesics
 - F. Haptics
 - G. Chronemics
- X. Social Identity Theory: Understanding an Individual's Place in the Group
 - A. Interdependence as the goal
 - B. How groups help develop an individual's identity
 - C. How individuals help create group identity
 - D. Group membership (gender, race, class, religion, nationality, ethnicity, etc.)
 - E. Practicing antiracism, overcoming privilege, championing social justice.
 - F. Categorization
 - G. Ingroups and outgroups
 - H. Positive distinctiveness
- XI. Critical Thinking and Research Gathering in Group Contexts
- XII. Participating in and Running a Meeting
 - A. Parliamentary Procedure
 - B. Agenda: building and distribution
 - C. Taking and distributing minutes
 - D. Archiving a group's history
- XIII. The Theory of the Communicative Constitution of Organizations (CCO Theory)

- A. Organizational culture and communication
- B. How communication shapes organizations
- C. Four Flows Model (FFM)
 - 1. Activity coordination
 - 2. Self-structuring
 - 3. Membership negotiations
 - 4. Institutional positioning
- XIV. Theory of Dialogic Communication
 - A. Dialogue fosters understanding
 - B. Dialogue fosters cooperation
 - C. Meaning is co-constructed during dialogue
 - D. Effective communication in conflict-ridden groups
 - E. Effective communication in groups with a diverse membership
- XV. Networked Individualism Theory (NIT)
 - A. Individual navigation of social networks
 - B. How technology shifts us away from traditional community
 - C. How technology fragments social connections
 - D. How NIT explains the breakdown of today's political climate
 - E. How to avoid NI in group communication
- XVI. Research in Group Communication
 - A. Research methodologies
 - 1. Qualitative
 - 2. Quantitative
 - B. Review of Group Communication Literature
 - C. Methods of collecting and evaluating communications data
 - D. Methodological Research
 - 1. Examining research methodologies
 - 2. Improving research methodologies

Assignment:

The course will include some or all of the following assignments,

1. Application of communication theory in group exercises: including the use of experiential games and simulations
2. Class participation in group discussions about theories and research in group communication
3. Written group presentation(s) (1-3)
4. Oral group presentations (2-6)
5. Written applications of theory by predicting and explaining observed group behavior
6. Oral critiques of group communication using current research to justify the evaluation
7. Problem solving exercises and projects (2-4)
8. Exams and quizzes (2-20)
9. Weekly reading (10-30 pages)

Methods of Evaluation/Basis of Grade:

Writing: Assessment tools that demonstrate writing skills and/or require students to select, organize and explain ideas in writing.

Written applications of theory as analysis of group communication

Writing
10 - 20%

Problem Solving: Assessment tools, other than exams, that demonstrate competence in computational or non-computational problem solving skills.

Experiential games and simulations; problem solving exercises and projects; oral group presentations

Problem solving
15 - 25%

Skill Demonstrations: All skill-based and physical demonstrations used for assessment purposes including skill performance exams.

Analysis of group communication using current research to justify the evaluation; oral group presentations

Skill Demonstrations
15 - 25%

Exams: All forms of formal testing, other than skill performance exams.

Exams and quizzes

Exams
15 - 25%

Other: Includes any assessment tools that do not logically fit into the above categories.

Class participation

Other Category
15 - 25%

Representative Textbooks and Materials:

Communicating in Groups: Applications and Skills, 11th ed. Adams, Katherine and Galanes, Gloria. McGraw-Hill: 2021.

Communicating in Small Groups: Principles and Practices, 12th ed. Beebe, Steven and Masterson, John. Pearson: 2020. (classic).

Effective Group Discussion: Theory and Practice, 15th ed. Galanes, Gloria and Adams, Katherine. McGraw-Hill: 2019. (classic).

In Mixed Company: Communicating in Small Groups, 11th ed. Rothwell, Dan. Cengage: 2021.

Systems Approach to Small Group Interaction, 11th ed. Tubbs, Stewart. McGraw-Hill: 2011. (classic).

Open Educational Resource(s) (OER):

Small Group Communication: Forming & Sustaining Teams. Linabary, Jasmine, ed. Pressbooks. <https://pressbooks.pub/smallgroup/> Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License