

**COMS 3383.01**  
(CRN# 81000)  
**SMALL GROUP COMMUNICATION**

**Dr. Terry M. Thibodeaux**

Fall 2012  
3 credit hours

Classroom: Rather CB 326  
Tuesdays 6 to 9 p.m.

Office: Dan Rather CB 322E; Ph # 294-1356  
Sam Center: Mon,Wed 8-11, 2-5 Fri 8-11 @ 294-4444

e-mail: [thib@shsu.edu](mailto:thib@shsu.edu)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

An examination and application of the research, theories, and practices of interaction, leadership, and problem-solving in formal and informal small group settings.

**REQUIRED TEXT**

Rothwell, C.J. (2013). In mixed company: Communicating in small groups and teams. (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Wadsworth.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Students should: (1) be able to relate a working definition of major principles, generalizations, and theories of small group communication, (2) improve skills in working with others as a member or leader of a team, (3) develop skill in expressing themselves orally and in writing, (4) actively use group communication skills to improve quality of life in the community through a community engagement project. See Participation section below.

**GENERAL COURSE POLICIES**

1. ATTENDANCE. Class attendance is very important. No distinction is made between excused or unexcused absences. As per university policies, each student may be absent three class hours without penalty. Each class is worth points toward the participation grade. ***For every three hours of absences beyond the third hour absent, the course grade will be lowered one letter grade.***
2. GRADING SCALE. All grading is done on a total points basis, with a possible total of 1000 points for the semester. The final course grade will be determined on the basis of the total number of points earned during the semester using the following 8% scale: A=100 to 92%; B=91 to 84%; C=83 to 76%; D=75 to 68%.

3. PARTICIPATION. In addition to regular attendance, part of your course grade will depend on your participation in class discussion, group activities, etc., as assigned in class. A major portion of the participation portion of the course will be a Community Engagement component to the class that will require at least nine (9) hours of service in the community outside of the regular classroom requirements. More detail will be given in class. It is hoped that this experience will help you to see yourself as a positive force in this world and deepen your understanding of your role as a citizen. (Total possible: 200 points of 1000 possible for course)

4. LATE WORK. Any late work will be accepted at the discretion of the instructor. If at all possible, an alternate test time must be arranged with the professor PRIOR to a scheduled test period missed. Failure to make prior arrangements for missing an exam or an assignment deadline will result in AT LEAST a lower grade on that assignment. Class attendance and participation points may not be made up.

5. BLACKBOARD COURSE WEB PAGE. Students are required to use the Blackboard (Bbd) course homepage for this class. Assignments, due dates, handout information, changes in class schedule, etc. will be posted there as needed. It is highly encouraged that you check the Course homepage regularly. This will save you time, work, and stress.

6. ELECTRONIC DEVICES. Cell phones, pagers, and any other electronic devices, other than computers used for the class (in note-taking, etc.) must be turned off before entering the classroom, since they pose a distraction to the class. Any student disrupting the class by use of any electronic devices will be dismissed from the class resulting in an absence for that period. Repeated offenses may result in the student being dropped from the class.

7. INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION. Students will be required to complete an evaluation of the instructor and course late in the term. These evaluations are part of the university Faculty Evaluation System which is used to determine teaching effectiveness, course effectiveness, and also affects faculty merit and promotion decisions.

The following four sections can be found at <https://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>:

8. PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

9. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

10. RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

11. VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM

12. CLASSROOM RULES OF CONDUCT. The Code of /Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link:  
<https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>.

It is expected that students behave in class in such a way that does not distract other students' learning or participation in class.

## **PROJECTS, ACTIVITIES, GRADES**

1. Participation: Participation is crucial, particularly in assigned group projects and activities. Twenty percent (20%) or 200 points of the final course grade is assigned to participation. See also the Attendance policy above.

2. Exams: Four 100-point exams will be administered covering content from the text, class presentations, student reports, assigned readings, etc. Check the Tentative Class Schedule for which chapters will be tested on which exams. (40% of course grade, or 400 points, total possible)

3. Group project: Each student will be assigned to a group for a problem-solving project during the course of the semester. Details will be provided in class and on Blackboard. The project will constitute 400 points or 40% of the course grade. The Oral Report of the project will count for half of the grade (200 possible points) and the written individual reports will count for half of the project grade (200 possible points). The written report will consist of a reflection paper detailing the community engagement group project performed during the semester.

### **Tentative Class Schedule**

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
Sept 4	Intro to Class; Self-Introductions; Def's & Models	Ch 1
Sept 11	Service Learning Project; Com. Competence in Groups	Ch 2
Sept 18	Meet on-site; Service Project Discussion; Groups as System	Ch 3
Sept 25	<b>Exam 1</b> ; Construct Project Proposals; Group Development	Ch 4
Oct 2	Polish Project Proposals; Developing the Group Climate	Ch 5
Oct 9	Project Work; Roles & Leadership in Groups	Ch 6
Oct 16	Project Work; Developing Effective Teams; <b>Exam 2</b>	Ch 7
Oct 23	<b>Defective Group Decision-making &amp; Problem-solving;</b> Mid-term Project Reports	Ch 8
Oct 30	<b>Effective Group Decision-making &amp; Problem-solving;</b> Project Work (cont.)	Ch 9
Nov 6	<b>Exam 3</b> ; Power in Groups; A Central Dynamic; Project Work	Ch 10
Nov 13	Project Work; Conflict Management in Groups	Ch 11
Nov 20	Group Project Workshop	
Nov 27	Technology and Virtual Groups; <b>Exam 4</b>	
Dec 4	Final Project Tune-ups	
Dec 11	Final Exam Reports	