209-01 Group Dynamics - A Diversity Curriculum Requirement

Jennifer Tighe
Comm 209 – Group Dynamics - A Diversity Curriculum Requirement

Instructor: Ms. Jennifer Tighe
Office: 307A Schott Hall Hours: MWF 11:00am – 12:00pm; Tues. 9:00am – 12:00pm; other hours by appointment
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(I will return your call/email typically within 24 hours Monday – Saturday)

Text: Rothwell, In Mixed Company, 8th Ed. – Required (Due to the nature of this course (in class, group work) you must have your own text book and you must have the current edition. No exceptions. If you have an earlier edition you will be asked to acquire the 8th edition.) Not abiding by this requirement will reduce your course grade by 1 letter grade. There will be an all class “book check” at the beginning of week 3 of the semester.

I Goals and Learning Outcomes:

Course Goal: To increase your communication competence in group interaction within a variety of group environments.

General Course Objectives – What will I learn about group dynamics?

• You will develop a comprehensive knowledge of small group and team communication processes.
• You will engage in dialogue regarding critical issues such as race, gender, power, conflict, and ethnocentrism. You will study the impact these factors have on group dynamics.
• You will apply conceptual ideas about effective group discussion techniques to practical communication situations.
• You will analyze communication in small group and team settings.
• You will effectively manage collaborative group decision-making.
• You will engage in group activities outside of the classroom environment that will increase your understanding of the importance of effective communication in group settings.
• You will understand the affects of mediated communication and group dynamics.

Specific Course Objectives – What will I learn about the intersection of group dynamics and diversity in Comm 209?

Defining groups: You will gain an understanding of how stereotypes develop and the effects of stereotypes on group dynamics.

Group development: You will discuss the challenges facing groups with diverse membership. You will discuss issues of conformity versus non-conformity as well as learn how group socialization occurs. You will also learn about the benefits of having group members with diverse backgrounds and how to manage group tension and performance.

Group Climate: You will study the effects of defensive communication patterns on positive group climate. You will learn about the negative effects of discriminative language. You will also study intra and inter-group competition and cooperation.
**Leadership:** You will gain an understanding of role development with a specific focus on leadership theory. You will also study gender and ethnic bias in leader emergence as well as ethical considerations regarding leadership in groups.

**Teams:** You will learn how to develop trust among diverse team members. You will learn how teams develop identity and the effective elements of teamwork. There will be a specific emphasis on valuing diversity among team members.

**Decision making:** You will gain an understanding of the effects of psychological and cognitive predispositions toward other group members; the effects of confirmation bias on group decision making; the effects of close-mindedness and group think; and an understanding of the effects of racial bias in regard to decision making.

**Power:** You will learn about the ways power is communicated in groups, the effects of labeling and the role of verbal and nonverbal indicators, as well as how gender differences affect power and communication. You will also learn about power imbalances and group dominance – specific focus on economic power and ways that group members can address power imbalances within their group and among groups.

**Conflict:** You will gain an understanding of different conflict styles. You will also learn about cultural considerations regarding competent conflict management and the role of power in managing conflict.

**II Assessments:**

**Group Activity Assignments**

There are three major graded group activity assignments this semester. You will be graded on your individual work/contribution and the overall effectiveness of the group.

- Group Activity I: Cooperation v. Competition *
- Group Activity II: Virtual Group Collaboration
- Group Activity III: Decision Making and Community Engagement*

**Activities I and III will require you to:**
1. Present results of your activity to the class.
2. Submit written results of group activity including group meeting reports.
3. Submit individual evaluation/analysis of group experience.

**Value: 100pts each.** (A portion of your grade will be given as a group grade and a portion will be an individual grade.)

* There is an expectation that you will meet with your group outside of class/off campus for these activities. It is expected that you will make every effort to work with your group to meet these requirements (dates outlined on the class schedule).

**Activity II:** This activity will involve conducting group communication in an online environment.

**Value: 50pts**
Examinations

Cooperative testing allows students to work together in a group (5 to 7 Members) on examination questions that check knowledge of key concepts and points presented in the text. This is a unique approach to testing students. Study guides for each exam will be distributed at least one week prior to the exam.

COOPERATIVE Midterm exam—this test will cover the first 4 chapters of the text. The format will be multiple-choice.

1. **Group cooperation**—each group (5 to 7 members) will take the test together without benefit of notes or text. Although each group member will be given a copy of the test, one copy will serve as the group's final answer sheet.

2. **Grading**—all members of the group will receive the score on the group test unless individuals earn an insufficient score on the individual accountability measure. Individual accountability is determined by a second test (immediately following the group test) given to all group members working separately without benefit of group interaction. The individual test is composed of multiple-choice and true-false questions covering exactly the same material as the group test with a proportionate number of questions from each chapter of the text. Failure to score **80%** or above on the individual test will result in the reduction of that individual group member’s test score as follows:
   - 79 - 70 = loss of 10 points from group score
   - 69 - 60 = loss of 15 points
   - 59 - 55 = loss of 20 points
   - Below 55 = Receive your individual score and do not benefit from the group score. Thus, if the group score is 88 and the individual group member scores 65 on the individual test, that individual will receive a 73 for the test (87 minus 15 points).

   **PLEASE NOTE:** Any group member scoring a perfect 100 on the individual test will receive a bonus of 5 points added to their group score.

   **ALSO NOTE:** All individuals scoring over 80% on their individual achievement tests receive the group score regardless of whether or not their individual score was higher or lower than the group results.

COOPERATIVE Final Exam—this test will cover Chapters 5 through 8. The same procedure used for the midterm will be used for this test.

**Value:** Each exam worth 100pts.

Attendance and Class Participation

You are allowed one week’s worth of absences without penalty (i.e., 3 absences for MWF) this is to cover sickness, emergencies, and bad parking karma. If you miss more than the allowable number of classes for ANY reason, your grade will be lowered by 5 pts for each absence missed. If you miss more than 6 classes you will receive a 0 for class participation. **If you are not present for class participation activities you cannot receive credit or make up these points unless approved by the instructor.**

In order to calculate participation there will be times when homework or in class work will be collected for a completion/accuracy check. They will be graded according to the scale below. At the
end of the semester a point value will be given to each ranking based on the number of class participation assignments. Typically full credit for each assignment weighs between 3 – 5 pts. Value: 50pts

| Present and assignment completed | + |
| Present and assignment partially completed | 📊 |
| Present, part of discussion, assignment not completed | 📊 |
| Not present but work completed by next class | 📌 |
| Not present, work not completed by next class | − |

III Classroom Behavior

**Use of Technology in the classroom**

Please complete all personal business before entering class. This class is highly interactive. Most students find that a laptop is not necessary for note taking because class notes are available on Blackboard. If you choose to use a laptop for note taking or access to an e-text, please turn it off / close the lid when doing group activities. Plan on giving your undivided attention to the class lecture or activity. If I see you texting or surfing the web during class discussion I will email you privately. If there is a second occurrence I will consider you absent for the day.

**Xavier Official University Business**

If you are a Xavier Athlete you need to check the class schedule to determine whether or not you will miss more than 6 classes due to Athletic/University business. You may not miss a group test or a major group activity presentation for any reason. If your athletic schedule conflicts with these dates please drop this section of this course for this semester. The same applies for all students with University business. Absences for University business must be submitted in writing at the beginning of the semester. These absences will be approved by the instructor on an individual basis. **It is the responsibility of the student missing class to notify the instructor of an upcoming absence and submit all work due prior to an absence. Please do not assume that work can be made up after missing a deadline.**

**Tardiness**

Tardiness will not be tolerated if you are more than 5 minutes late 3 times you will be given a warning. After that each tardy will receive a penalty equivalent to an absence (stated above). I value our time together. Please be prompt.

**Missing class and getting notes**

Please do not email the instructor asking, “What did I miss?” If you missed class please contact a fellow student for class notes. The instructor’s notes are available on Canvas.
IV Doing Business

**Canvas:**

I will communicate via Canvas regarding this course. I will contact you via announcements on Canvas and Xavier email. If you are not using Xavier mail as your primary email please be sure to point Xavier mail to your primary email account. You may push your course announcements to your social media by changing your settings on Canvas – a cool feature if you want to explore the possibilities go to [http://guides.instructure.com/](http://guides.instructure.com/) You can access Canvas via the portal or at [canvas.xavier.edu](http://canvas.xavier.edu)

**Submitting written work:**

All written work should be submitted as an electronic assignment on Canvas by the assigned due date. No email or paper submissions will be accepted. There will be a 10% penalty for each calendar day work is submitted late. Work will not be accepted more than one week after the due date. If there is an exception to this format it will be given at the beginning of the assignment.

**Getting Fired:**

It is possible to get “fired” from a group for lack of participation and cooperation. If you refuse to participate in a project or a test and/or you do not have a book or come prepared to contribute to group discussion or activities your group will first try to work with you to solve the problem. If you cannot successfully resolve the problem as a group, your group will document your behavior in writing and make a recommendation. The instructor will meet with you to hear your case. If you are fired from a group you will receive a 0 for all group work in that round (i.e. Test and activity). If you are fired from two groups you will fail the class. This is a very serious issue. If you do not believe that you can participate fully in group work please drop the class. The nature of this course demands a high level of personal commitment to active group participation and preparedness.

**Plagiarism:**

The Xavier University Handbook outlines the specific policy for [Academic Honesty](http://xavier.edu). This and all other policies apply to this course. Please review the handbook for further detail.

**V Grading Guidelines:**

Total points 500: 2 exams @ 100pts each; Activities/papers I and III @ 100pts each; Activity II @ 50pts; class participation @ 50 pts. Grades will be calculated based on the percentage of total points earned for the course.
**Grading scale:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: 93% and above</td>
<td>465 and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-: 90%-92%</td>
<td>464-450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+: 87%-89%</td>
<td>449 – 435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: 83%-86%</td>
<td>434 – 415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-: 80%-82%</td>
<td>414 – 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+: 77%-79%</td>
<td>399 – 385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: 73%-76%</td>
<td>384 – 365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-: 70%-72%</td>
<td>364 – 350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+: 67%-69%</td>
<td>349 – 335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: 63%-66%</td>
<td>334 – 315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-: 60%-62%</td>
<td>314 – 300</td>
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<tr>
<td>F: 59% or lower</td>
<td>299 and below</td>
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To determine your grade at any time during the course add your assignment points, divide by the course points used, refer to the percentage scale to see your grade.

The instructor calculates grades at midterm and the end of the semester. Use this point scale at the end of the semester to determine your grade.

Keep record of your grades. I will calculate your grade at midterm and at the end of the course.

Midterm Exam-/100pts
Activity I – /100pts
Activity II – /50pts
Activity III – /100pts
Final Exam - /100pts
Class Participation /50pts