



COMM 151 – Small Group Communication (Fall 2018)

**** Tuesdays 6:50 – 10:00 P.M. (Section 19985) ****

Instructor: Michael Shanley

Email: shanlemf@lamission.edu

Website: www.mikescomm151.weebly.com

Office Hours: After class or by appointment (I'm also always available via email)

Class Location: INST 1010

Course Description:

This course provides an analysis of the purposes, principles, and types of group communication processes. Development of individual skills in leadership and problem solving is achieved by responsible group participation.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to demonstrate effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills by collaboratively working in small groups.
2. Students will be able to apply problem solving, conflict management, decision-making, and leadership skills in group settings.
3. Students will be able to produce and implement solutions to problems to reach mutually satisfactory results.

Specifically, you will learn to:

1. Understand the key elements of group communication
2. Identify the different types of groups
3. Understand the benefits and challenges associated with working in groups
4. Identify the different stages of group development
5. Enhance group member motivation and participation
6. Apply different theories and models of group communication to real-world settings
7. Identify and understand group member roles and interaction styles
8. Appreciate the elements of diversity within groups
9. Understand leadership dynamics within a group
10. Effectively communicate and collaborate as a group participant
11. Enhance your listening skills
12. Identify and manage group conflict and tension
13. Utilize problem solving and decision-making strategies to improve group effectiveness
14. Think critically, question and evaluate information in a meaningful way
15. Plan and conduct meetings
16. Utilize technical tools to facilitate effective group collaboration and communication
17. Present information effectively as a group

Required Resources:

Class Website: www.mikescomm151.weebly.com (all assigned readings, assignment details, scheduling, and course resources will be available on this website)

MindTools: www.mindtools.com (note: you will be required to sign up for a Standard Membership, details and fees outlined below)

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|------------------------|----------------|
| • Month 1 (September): | \$1.00 |
| • Month 2 (October): | \$19.00 |
| • Month 3 (November): | \$19.00 |
| • TOTAL: | \$39.00 |

Course Requirements:

In-Class Group Activities – Throughout the semester, you will be required to participate in multiple in-class group activities designed to enhance your understanding and apply concepts learned through assigned readings and lecture. These may include things such as: project progress/status reports, activities and tasks designed to help you better understand group development, membership roles, group conflict mediation strategies, leadership dynamics, problem solving, strategic and tactical decision-making practices, coordinating resources, communication within the group, etc. The point breakdown is indicated in the Course Schedule as well as in the grade breakdown at the bottom of the syllabus.

Group Project Proposal – This assignment will require your group to submit a professionally formatted, detailed proposal for your Final Group Project. Consider the who, what, when, where, why and how questions. Minimally, you will be required to identify and explain:

- **Who** will be involved (group member roles and responsibilities, other project stakeholders, etc.)?
- **What** is the objective of your project, what is the scope, what are the constraints and limitations? What are the benefits of implementing this project and what are the anticipated challenges?
- **When** do you plan to initiate and complete your project (timelines, phases, delivery dates, etc.)?
- **Where** do you plan to conduct the planning and execution of your project?
- **Why** are you undertaking this project? What is the significance/importance, who is impacted and how, what do you hope to achieve?
- **How** do you plan to successfully manage your project? What tools and methodologies will you utilize? How will you fund this project? How will you communicate, assign tasks, ensure accountability, measure success, manage change, etc.?

Additional details and guidance for this assignment will be provided later in the course. Failure to participate will earn you a zero for this assignment. Unless special circumstances need to be considered, you will receive a group grade for this assignment meaning, each member of the group will receive the same grade. As such, it is important for you to ensure equal participation and contribution from each of your group members.

Final Group Project & Presentation – This assignment marks the culmination of your efforts throughout the second half of the semester and will require you to present your Final Project to the class. Your Final Group Project will involve the initiation, planning and successful execution of a philanthropic effort designed to benefit a particular group or organization of your choosing. Philanthropy is defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as, “*the practice of giving money and [or] time to help make life better for other people.*” Simply put, your group project will involve developing a campaign to raise money for, or volunteer time and effort to a particular group or organization. Examples include:

- Raising money for a charity
- Volunteering to feed or clothe the homeless or others in need
- Planning donation events to collect food, clothes, toys, supplies, etc.
- Fundraising events
- Crowdfunding campaigns (GoFundMe, CrowdRise, etc.)

Your group project should NOT be intended to:

- Generate a profit
- Benefit you or any member of your group personally
- Support a political candidate
- Raise money for your favorite local band
- Support any for-profit organization or operation

Additional assignment details will be provided later in the course but think about the word “philanthropy.” Your goal is to make the world a better place by helping those who need it. You must be able to make a measurable impact (ex. five hundred dollars raised, ten boxes of food items collected, marketing materials created, etc.). This is your chance to change the world. Think big, be creative, innovate and collaborate and most importantly let passion and dedication drive you. If you plan well and follow through, you will make a lasting impact. At the end of the semester, your group will present your project to the class. Failure to participate will earn you a zero for this assignment. Unless special circumstances need to be considered, you will receive a group grade for this assignment meaning, each member of the group will receive the same grade. As such, it is important for you to ensure equal participation and contribution from each of your group members.

Exams – There will be two multiple choice format exams on assigned readings and lecture materials. Students should bring a Scantron #882 and #2 pencils with erasers to class. Each Exam will consist of 25 multiple choice questions and each exam will be worth 50 points.

Attendance and Participation – Attendance and participation in this course is critical to your success. The nature of this course and the focus on group communication places a unique responsibility on each of us – to be present, involved, collaborative and engaged. Failure to attend class and/or to participate in group activities and efforts will significantly impede your ability to succeed and will also negatively impact the success of your group as a whole. Your attendance and participation will be measured based upon your engagement during in-class group activities as well as general presence and engagement with your team during the planning and execution of your Final Group Project. The point breakdown is indicated in the Course Schedule as well as in the grade breakdown at the bottom of the syllabus.

Policies:

Kicking a Member Out of the Final Project Group - A person can be kicked out of a group for a variety of reasons (e.g. not doing work, not communicating via phone and/or email, not showing up for class, being disrespectful, not completing tasks, etc.). The group would need to present sufficient

reason for removal to the Instructor before the Instructor makes the final decision. A person cannot be kicked out of a group without going through the following steps:

- Group members will need to provide detailed documentation describing the events that led up to the decision to dismiss the offender
- The group must schedule an in-person meeting with the Instructor during which time an open mediated discussion between the dissatisfied group members and the accused will take place. All group members must be present for this.
- The group must then schedule a second mediated appointment with the Instructor and the entire group during which time resolution will be discussed and implemented. The Instructor will meet with the accused and the rest of the group separately. The prosecuting party will need a unanimous vote to kick a person out of the group and the Instructor reserves the right to remove a group member at any time.

If and when an individual is voted out of the group, this does not mean that this individual will automatically receive a failing grade in the course. Rather, the individual will be required to submit a 10-12 page research paper on Group Communication. The Instructor will provide a descriptive outline and this paper will need to be submitted to Turnitin.com and receive a plagiarism score under 25% or it will be considered an automatic failure. The paper will be graded against a very strict rubric based on organization, research, APA format, grammar, theory comprehension, and theory application. In my experience, it is best to avoid this option.

Due Dates – We are on a tight schedule. Assignments are due on assigned days. Extensions and make-ups are **NOT** available. Documented illnesses or emergencies are the only exception to this policy. If an emergency arises, you must contact the instructor **before** the assignment is due.

Excused Absences – Absences due to personal illness or medical emergencies must be cleared via written documentation ON THE DAY YOU RETURN TO CLASS (no exceptions). Changes in work schedule, personal celebrations (e.g., birthdays), transportation problems, etc. are NOT considered to be legitimate reasons for me to excuse an absence.

Academic Honesty – Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to the College policies regarding student academic integrity, as specified in the current Pierce Catalog. Cheating and plagiarism are serious violations of the student conduct code. Cheating or plagiarizing will result in an “F” or a “0” on the assignment or test and may result in suspension from the class and/or other disciplinary action authorized by the Board of Trustees for violations of the District Code of Conduct. All incidents of cheating and plagiarism will be recorded in the student’s disciplinary file.

Disruptive Behavior – Any behavior that interferes with the instructional, administrative or service functions of the College is considered to be disruptive behavior. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated in the classroom. Examples of unacceptable behavior may include:

- Cheating; plagiarism
- Use of profanity
- Verbal and non-verbal disruptions
- Private conversations or displays of affection
- Uncooperativeness
- Cell phones and/or other personal electronic equipment
- Physical threats/violence

In the event of severe cases of disruptive behavior, I reserve the right to suspend a student from class on the day of the offense and for the following class period (if necessary). If additional action is deemed necessary, I will report the incident to the Dean of Student Services to determine the next course of action.

Special Services – Students with psychical, psychological or learning disabilities are offered a wide range of services free of charge (to any qualifying disabled student). These services are also available to students with a temporary disability. The Disabled Students Programs & Services Office is located in the Instructional Building, Room 1018. Additional information including the DSP&S mission statement, operating hours and contact details can be found here: <http://www.lamission.edu/dsps/>

Course Grades Will Be Determined Using the Following Scale:

90-100%	(or 900-1000 points)	= A
80-89.99%	(or 800-899 points)	= B
70-79.99%	(or 700-799 points)	= C
60-69.99%	(or 600-699 points)	= D
0 -59.99%	(or 0-599 points)	= F

Grading:

350 points	Final Group Project & Presentation
100 points	Group Project Proposal
50 points	Exam 1 (Midterm Exam)
50 points	Exam 2 (Final Exam)
225 points	In-Class Group Activities
25 points	Sign Up for MindTools
25 points	Submit Final Project Team Roster
25 points	Submit Project Ideas Worksheet
150 points	Class Attendance and Participation (Team Engagement)

100% (or 1000 points) TOTAL

Note: I reserve the right to adjust final course grades (in borderline cases) on the basis of your performance on these assignments as well as your overall class participation/engagement and attendance.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK	DATE	MAJOR EVENTS	TOPICS	ACTION ITEMS	POINTS
WEEK 1	8/28/18	Course Overview	Review Of Course Syllabus; Q&A	Read Course Syllabus	
WEEK 2	9/4/18	Group Activity: Group Member Interviews	Getting To Know Each Other	Complete Group Activity Sign Up For MindTools (Standard)	25 25
WEEK 3	9/11/18			Complete Assigned Readings	50
WEEK 4	9/18/18	Group Activity: Interaction Styles	Interaction Styles	Complete Group Activity Complete Assigned Readings	50 25
WEEK 5	9/25/18	Group Activity: Functional Group Roles	Tuckman Model - Stages of Group Development Functional Group Roles	Complete Group Activity Complete Assigned Readings	50 25
WEEK 6	10/2/18	Group Activity: Problem Solving & Decision Making	Problem Solving & Decision Making Conflict & Cohesion in Groups	Complete Group Activity Complete Assigned Readings	50 25
WEEK 7	10/9/18	EXAM 1 Assemble Final Group Project Teams	EXAM 1 Review Final Group Project & Presentation Assignment Details	Complete Exam 1 Submit Final Team Roster	50 25
WEEK 8	10/16/18	Final Project: Initiating Brainstorming Project Ideas	Project Management 101	Submit Project Ideas Complete Assigned Readings	25 25
WEEK 9	10/23/18	Final Project: Planning Developing Out Final Project Ideas Worksheet Due (Proposal)	Project Scheduling & Resource Management (Milestones)	Submit Project Proposal/Worksheet Complete Assigned Readings	100 25
WEEK 10	10/30/18	Final Project: Planning	Project Work Breakdown Structure (Deliverables)	Attend Class & Engage Complete Assigned Readings	25 25
WEEK 11	11/6/18	Final Project: Planning/Executing	Project Sprint	Attend Class & Engage Complete Assigned Readings	25 25
WEEK 12	11/13/18	Final Project: Executing	Project Sprint	Attend Class & Engage Complete Assigned Readings	25 25
WEEK 13	11/20/18	Final Project: Executing	Project Sprint	Attend Class & Engage Complete Assigned Readings	25 25
WEEK 14	11/27/18	EXAM 2 Final Project: Executing	EXAM 2 Project Sprint	Complete Exam 2 Attend Class & Engage	50 25
WEEK 15	12/4/18	Project Wrap Up & Preparation for Final Group Project Presentations	Project Wrap Up & Preparation for Final Group Project Presentations	Attend Class & Engage	25
FINAL	12/11/18	Final Group Project Presentations	Final Group Project Presentations	Deliver Final Group Project Presentation	350
TOTAL POINTS					1,000

*Please Note: This schedule is subject to change at the discretion of your instructor. Any changes will be communicated within a reasonable time frame so be sure to continually check your email, the class website and if you miss class, check with your peers and/or your instructor. This will ensure that you are aware of any schedule changes that might arise.