

# Syllabus: Group Dynamics

Psy 457/557, Spring 2006, Tu & Th 4-5:20 P.M., 242 Gerlinger

Professor/TA	Office	E-mail	Phone	Office Hours
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## Course Description & Requirements

This course has two interrelated goals:

- 1) acquaint you with theory and research on small groups
- 2) improve your skills as participant in & observer of small groups

To accomplish these goals, readings, lecture, and discussion are paired with group exercises and hands-on practice in observing and interpreting group dynamics. All students will both participate in and observe small work groups to be formed in Week 2, and also participate in and observe other class groups of different sizes.

*Undergrads (457)* and *Grad students (557)* have somewhat different assignments.

### 1. Participation

Attendance is required. *If you can't attend class faithfully, don't take this course.*

You will be working in groups each week. In week 2, students will form permanent small work groups of size 4 or 5. Undergrads and grad students will have different groups. At the end of the class, each student will (confidentially) evaluate how well fellow work group members fulfilled their commitments to the group; these evaluations will affect your participation grade. Another major component of participation is the observation log (see point 5 below).

**1b. Grad students:** Along with working together in your own groups, each group will be assigned to serve as process consultants for three or four undergraduate groups. Grad students will consult with Holly separately to get input and guidance in this task.

### 2. Readings

The three required books are D. R. Forsyth, *Group dynamics*, A. Lansing, *Endurance: Shackleton's incredible voyage*, and J. Dervisevic-Cesic, *The river runs salt, runs sweet: A memoir of Bosnia*. Four additional primary readings will be available under Course Documents on Blackboard.

**2b. Grad students:** Along with the readings listed above, you will be reading and writing **6 short responses** to an article related to the week's topic. I'll provide a list of possible

readings but you are free to find something else. Responses should be no longer than 500 words and should give the full citation, identify what you see as the three most important points or findings, and identify a major strength and a weakness. Best 5 out of 6 will count.

### 3. Quizzes

Quizzes will cover material from Forsyth and lectures, and will be multiple choice format. Best 5 of 6 quiz scores will count. No make-ups. Written challenges may be submitted to regain a maximum of 5 missed quiz points.

### 4. Group Exercises and Worksheets

There will be 7 in-class group exercises, with worksheets that will be turned in and graded. Be sure and stay on top of the readings and bring your books to class as needed for these exercises. Best 5 of 6 will count. 7<sup>th</sup> exercise will be completed by grad students only.

### 4b. Grad Students

For all but one of the group exercises, you will be observing the undergraduate groups as they work on these tasks (in one of them, your groups will do the exercise while the undergrads observe). You will share your observations with the group after the exercise is completed and, *if invited by the group*, may also offer process suggestions during exercises.

### 5. Group Observations and Insights Log

Along with the declarative knowledge about groups you will acquire from readings, lecture, and discussion, the second purpose of the class is to make you a more careful observer of, and more effective participant in, groups of various sizes. To this end, I want you to keep a log of observations and insights. In every class, you will interact in a group. Jot down a few notes about what you noticed. In some classes, you will also observe other groups interacting. Again, jot down a few notes. In your life outside of class, you will also be participating in and observing groups, more opportunities for insights. As you read the two case study books (*Endurance* and *The River Runs Salt, Runs Sweet*), make notes about the group dynamics and relate them to topics covered in the text and in lectures. Most of the group exercises ask you to analyze these cases, so your notes will help. I will periodically ask you to type up and turn in some highlights from your log. Your log will also be the raw material for a **2-3 page reflective essay** that connects your experiences and direct observations in groups to topics in the text.

**6. Take home final.** Short answer and short essay. Some questions will focus on material from the reading, some on material from your group observations and insights log. Open book. ***Deadline is 1 PM Wed June 14 (bring to Straub 357);*** earlier submission is welcome.

**6b. Grads.** Instead of the final, grad students will ***pair up*** to collaborate on a ***literature review essay*** on some topic in group dynamics. The essay should identify the strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and some unanswered (or unasked) questions in the literature reviewed, and should include an annotated bibliography. 10 pages max. Choose a partner and pick a topic for this project within the first two or three weeks. You will also present a short (15 minute max) ***presentation on the topic*** in week 10 of the class.

## Grading

UNDERGRADS	GRADS	Pnts	Course grades based on % of points earned			
Participation	Including coaching	30	A	93-100	C	73-76.9
Reflective essay		20	A-	90-92.9	C-	70-72.9
Group Ex (Best 5)	Reading responses	50	B+	87-89.9	D+	67-69.9
Quizzes (Best 5)		50	B	83-86.9	D	63-66.9
Take-home final	Lit review paper	50	B-	80-82.9	D-	60-62.9
	and presentation		C+	77-79.9	N	< 70
<b>TOTAL points</b>		<b>200</b>			P	≥ 70

### Special Needs:

**Learning disabilities & athletes.** If you have a documented learning disability and need adjustments, or are on a UO sports team and will miss class because of travel, contact Holly ASAP. With advance notice, special arrangements can be made. At the last minute, this may not be plausible. NOTE: if your schedule requires frequent absences, *you should not take this class*. In-class participation and exercises are an important part of the course.

**Non-native English speakers.** We want your performance in this course to reflect your understanding of group dynamics, not the challenges that English poses. Feel free to bring a dictionary (book or electronic) and use it during the quizzes—also please ask for clarification if you are not sure you understand a question. You are also encouraged to get assistance with grammar and other technical aspects of writing for the written assignments.

### Late and Missed Work:

If you know in advance that you will be absent the day of a quiz, let me know and we can arrange for you take the quiz early. Late essays (or late drafts) will have 2 points subtracted, and will not be accepted after Friday the week they are due. Take-home finals will NOT be accepted after the deadline; plan your time accordingly, with cushion for technical problems.

### Academic Dishonesty:

Complete quizzes on your own, and be vigilant about not tempting others to cheat. All work submitted must be your own (or your group's for group exercises) and produced exclusively for this course, unless you receive explicit permission to use the work for more than one course. The use of sources must be properly acknowledged and documented. Academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade in the course and will also be referred to the Student Conduct Committee. Collaborating with group members is also NOT permitted on the take home final; non-native English speakers may consult with ALS or English coach on writing issues (not content). If you have any confusion about what constitutes academic dishonesty, see <http://www.uoregon.edu/~conduct/sai.htm>

## Readings, Assignments, Activities

<i>Week One</i>	<i>Topic / Focus</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Other Events</i>
Tu April 4	<b>Studying Groups</b>		Introductions, temporary groups
Th April 6		Forsyth 1&2	Process Coding Exercise
<b>Week Two</b>	<i>Permanent Groups formed this week</i>		
Tu April 11	<b>Individual &amp; Gp Group Formation</b>	Forsyth 3&4	<b>Quiz 1</b>
Th April 13		Lansing, Part I&II (2-97)	<b>Grp Ex A: Roles</b>
<b>Week Three</b>			
Tu April 18	<b>Structure &amp; Leadership</b>	Forsyth 5&12	<b>Quiz 2</b>
Th April 20		Lansing, Pts III&IV (100-175)	<b>Grp Ex B: Leadership</b>
<b>Week Four</b>	<i>SYMLOG ratings</i>		
Tu April 25	<b>Cohesion &amp; Development</b>	Forsyth 6; Worchel 1994; Keyton 1995	SYMLOG: Bring ratings <b>Quiz 3</b>
Th April 27		Lansing Pts.V-VII (178-280)	<b>Grp Ex C: Development</b>
<b>Week Five</b>	<i>Midtern Skills and Class Assessments</i>		
Tu May 2	<b>Performance &amp; Dec-making</b>	Forsyth 10&11	<i>Skills &amp; class assess</i> <b>Quiz 4</b>
Th May 4		<b>**Reflective Essay Draft**</b>	<b>Grp Ex D: Dec-making</b>
<b>Week Six</b>			
Tu May 9	<b>Intergroup relations</b>	Forsyth 13; D-Cesic Pt I	<b>**Reflective Essay Due**</b>
Th May 11		Shelton & Richeson 2005	<b>Grp Ex E: Intergroup</b>
<b>Week Seven</b>			
Tu May 16	<b>Influence &amp; Crowds</b>	Forsyth 7&15; D-Cesic Pt II	<b>Quiz 5</b>
Th May 18		Kugihara 2001	<b>Grp Ex F: Influence &amp; Crowds</b>
<b>Week Eight</b>	<i>SYMLOG ratings</i>		
Tu May 23	<b>Conflict</b>	Forsyth 9	SYMLOG: bring ratings & graphs
Th May 25		D-Cesic Pts III & IV	<b>Grp Ex G: Conflict</b>
<b>Week Nine*</b>	<i>SYMLOG ratings</i>		
Tues May 30	<b>Power &amp; Environment</b>	Forsyth 8&14	SYMLOG: bring ratings & graphs
Thurs June 1		Large group discussion: Power	<b>Quiz 6</b>
<b>Week Ten</b>			
Tues June 6		No more reading!	<b>Grad students present</b>
Thurs June 8			Peer, class, self evaluations

\*\*\*\*\* *This is for your personal use—don't need to turn in*\*\*\*\*\*

Rate Your Group Skills (+3=very strong 0=okay -3= very weak)

Wk 1    Wk 10

1.	Communicate ideas effectively (self-expression)	___	___
2.	Listen to and understand others (empathy, perspective taking)	___	___
3.	Help others understand themselves with constructive feedback (guide)	___	___
4.	Seek feedback from others to know yourself better (personal growth)	___	___
5.	Establish rapport with others (make connections)	___	___
6.	Monitor and manage your own emotions (self-management)	___	___
7.	Organize people to achieve tasks (task leader)	___	___
8.	Identify and fill needed roles in the group (social flexibility)	___	___
9.	Promote group morale and cohesion (socio-emotional leader)	___	___
10.	Resolve conflicts and negotiate agreements (mediator)	___	___
11.	Analyze structural causes of group dynamics (social analysis)	___	___

Your own goals for this class:

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|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 3. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 4. _____ |

Week 5 *peer* assessment of progress on these goals within your class group

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Week 5 *self*-assessment of progress in developing and practicing group skills

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Week 10 *self*-assessment of progress in developing and practicing group skills

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