

Syllabus: Group Dynamics

CRN: 35925 /35926

Psy 457/557, Spring 2009, M & W 10-11:20 A.M., 112 Lillis

| Professor/TA | Office | E-mail | Phone | Office Hours |
|-----------------|------------|--|----------|---------------------------|
| Dr. Holly Arrow | 357 Straub | harrow@uoregon.edu | 346-1996 | M & W 11:30-12, Thurs 2-3 |
| Jessica Tipsord | 358 Straub | jtipsord@uoregon.edu | 346-1982 | Tue 12-1 & M 1-2 |

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.

Undergrads (457) will complete a midterm, a short paper, and a take home final individually. They will complete group exercises with their class group, and collaborate in generating 6 short group essays. They will also comment on the essays of other groups.

Grad students (557) will complete a midterm and a case analysis, post regularly on the graduate blog, and comment on the blogs of other grad students. They will observe and give feedback to the undergraduate groups & collaborate in pairs on a literature review paper.

1. Participation (all)

Attendance is required. You will be working in groups each week. In week 2, students will form permanent small groups of size 4-5. Undergrads and grad students will be in different groups. At the end of the class, each student will (confidentially) evaluate how well fellow group members fulfilled their commitments; this will inform the participation grade.

1b. Grad students (557): Along with doing some exercises in your own groups, grad students will serve as process consultants for 2-3 undergraduate groups (number will depend on relative enrollment of grads and undergrads). Holly will provide guidance in this task.

2. Readings (All)

Our main text is *Small Groups: Key Readings*, edited by John M. Levine and Richard L. Moreland, published in 2006 by Psychology Press. Supplementary case readings will be available for purchase & download on-line, or in some cases, at no cost via Blackboard.

3. Quizzes & Midterm (All) *Midterm is Wed 29 April, in class*

Occasional quizzes will cover material from readings and lectures. The quizzes will serve as learning checks and help prepare you for the midterm and final. Grads and undergrads will complete different versions of a midterm that combines multiple choice and short answer.

4a. Group Essays on the Undergraduate Blog (457)

Every week you will participate in a group discussion of the readings, and most weeks there will also be group exercises. Undergraduate groups will develop and post short integrative essays (one per group) in response to the readings and group discussion.

These will be posted on a blog (accessible to class members only) and will be due by 9 PM on the day assigned. The word limit is 250. Each group will post a single essay. After the essays are published to the blog site (sometime between 9-10 PM), every student is also responsible for reading the essays and making at least one comment on an essay by another group by 9 PM the following day. After this time, the comment function will be disabled.

Credits for blogs: All group members will get 5 points for each group essay that is (1) of acceptable quality and (2) submitted on time (by 9 PM), UNLESS the group has contacted Holly to specify that one or more members of the group is not eligible for full credit (because of being absent and not contributing, for example). Students also get 1 point for posting at least one substantive comment (more comments are welcome, but will not earn additional points). Holly and Jessica will both read the essays and decide which three of the set they consider the week's best. Group members whose essay is one of the "top three" will get an additional 5 points for that week's blog. Total points may not exceed 50.

4b. Grad Student Exercises & Blog Posts (557)

Grad students will have a separate blog accessible only to the grad students, Holly, and Jessica. In some cases, you will do group exercises with your graduate student groups. In other cases, you will be observing the undergraduate groups. Each week, you will also be discussing the readings. Short posts integrating what you are learning from readings and lecture with what you are observing in your own groups, in the undergraduate groups, and in other groups you may be involved with will be completed individually and posted on the graduate student blog. The deadline for a blogging assignment will always be 9 PM, and you are responsible for reading and commenting on other students' blogs as well by 9 PM the following day. The grad student blog will serve the role of ongoing discussion of readings as well as sharing observations and insights from observing groups, so grads will have more blog assignments than the undergrad groups.

Credit for blogs: Credit for graduate blogging assignments will depend on the quality of posts and on the quality of comments you both make and inspire from others.

NOTE: When observing the undergraduate groups, you will share observations with the group after the exercise is completed and, *if invited by the group*, may also offer process suggestions during exercises. Holly will typically meet briefly with the grad students before each observation to assign a particular aspect of group dynamics to focus on and to give guidelines for what sort of feedback to give.

5. Observation Log (All)

To improve your observation and group participation skills, keep a log of observations and insights. In every class, you will interact in a group. Jot down a few notes after each class. 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. The log will be the raw material for either the Reflective Essay (457) or the Group Dynamics Case (557).

6a. Reflective Essay (457) *Due Wed 27 May, 9 PM, send as Word attachment to Jessica.*

For the **2-3 page reflective essay** (500-750 words), connect your observations of groups to class readings. Either (1) focus on one group and examine several aspects, or (2) pick a particular topic (e.g., conflict or leadership) and discuss several groups. Cite specific readings: (Laughlin & Shippy, 1983)—dates of original pubs are in text Acknowledgments.

6b. Group Dynamics Case (557) *Due Wed 20 May, 9 PM, send Word file to Holly.*

Pick either a single group you are familiar with that has an identifiable challenge or problem, or two groups that provide a useful contrast. These may be groups you belong to, groups you are observing directly, or other groups about which substantial documentation is available. Write a 5-7 page case analysis modeled after one of the cases assigned for class. Make connections to class readings as well as other relevant literature.

7a. Take Home Final (457). Multiple choice and short answer. The focus will be on material from lecture and class readings, and you may also be assigned an additional case to read to answer short analysis questions. Open book & notes. ***Deadline is Noon Wed June 10*** (email to Jessica as a Word attachment). Earlier submission is welcome.

7b. Literature Review Essay (557). Instead of the final, grad students will *pair up* (based on enrollment, there may need to be one set of three) to collaborate on *a literature review* 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. *Email as Word file to Holly by 9 PM Wed June 3.*

Grading

| UNDERGRADS | GRADS | Pnts | Course grades based on % of points earned | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---|---------|----|---------|
| Participation | Including coaching | 30 | A | 93-100 | C | 73-76.9 |
| Reflective essay | Case analysis | 20 | A- | 90-92.9 | C- | 70-72.9 |
| Group Blog assignments | Individual Blog assignments | 50 | B+ | 87-89.9 | D+ | 67-69.9 |
| Midterm | Separate midterm | 50 | B | 83-86.9 | D | 63-66.9 |
| Take-home final | Lit review paper | 50 | B- | 80-82.9 | D- | 60-62.9 |
| | | | C+ | 77-79.9 | N | < 70 |
| TOTAL points | | 200 | | | P | ≧ 70 |

Special Needs: 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 midterm—also please ask for clarification if you are not sure you understand a question. Rely on your group members for 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:

You must complete the midterm and final 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 assignments) 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 (when in doubt, cite!). Academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade in the course and will also be referred to the Student Conduct Committee. 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 & Assignments</i> |
|----------------------|---|---|---|
| M March 30 | Studying Groups | Text: Small Groups Overview & How to Read A Journal Article | Introductions, temporary groups |
| W April 1 | | | Process Coding Exercise |
| Week Two | <i>Permanent Groups formed this week</i> | | |
| M April 6 | Composition | Text Part 1 readings | Group Speed Dating |
| W April 8 | | Read Army Crew Team (HBS case) | Blog Essay #1: Post by 9 PM |
| Week Three | | | |
| M April 13 | Structure | Txt Part 2 + Nighthawks OR Nurses | Blog Essay #2: Post by 9 PM |
| W April 15 | | Exercise | |
| Week Four | | | |
| M April 20 | Conflict | Part 3 (pick 3) + Morrill Playco Case | Blog Essay #3: Post by 9 PM |
| W April 22 | | Exercise | |
| Week Five | <i>Midterm Exam & Midterm Skills and Class Assessments</i> | | |
| M April 27 | Decision Making | Part 4A Readings 11-12 | <i>Skills & class assess</i> |
| W April 29 | | **Midterm** | **Midterm** |
| Week Six | | | |
| M May 4 | Decision Making Cont. | Exercise | |
| W May 6 | | Readings 13-15 + Nut Island | Blog Essay #4: Post by 9 PM |
| Week Seven | <i>**First 150 words of Reflective Essay or Group Case Analysis Draft to Holly **</i> | | |
| M May 11 | Production | Part 4B+ Mann Gulch OR Hospital | Blog Essay #5: Post by 9 PM |
| W May 13 | | Exercise | |
| Week Eight | | | |
| M May 18 | Leadership | 4C(pick 3) + Coach K, Coach Knight | Blog Essay #6: Post by 9 PM |
| W May 20 | | Exercise | *Grad Case Analysis Due 9 PM** |
| Week Nine* | | | |
| M May 25 | Group Ecology | MEMORIAL DAY NO CLASS | *Reflective Essay Due by 9 PM** |
| W May 27 | | Part 5 Readings + Virtual Experience | |
| Week Ten | <i>**This week groups may complete an Optional Blog if group point total is < 40**</i> | | |
| M June 1 W June 3 | Integration | Case analysis TBA | *Grad Lit Review due to Holly by 9 PM Wednesday* |
| W June 10 | FINAL DUE by Noon, submit as a Word attachment to Jessica. Put “FINAL” in header | | |

***** *For personal use—don't need to turn in******

| Rate Your Group Skills (+3=very strong 0=okay -3= very weak) | | Wk1 | Wk5 | Wk10 |
|--|--|-----|-----|------|
| 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:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

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

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

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