

Syllabus: Group Dynamics

CRN: 35865/35881

Psy 457/557, Spring 2013, M & W 10-11:50 P.M., 112 Lillis

Professor/T A	Office	E-mail	Phone	Office Hours
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Course Description Overview

This course has three interrelated goals:

- 1) acquaint you with theory and research on small groups, with an emphasis on recent work
- 2) improve your skills as participant in, observer of, and consultant to small groups
- 3) develop your ability to work collaboratively in producing and critiquing scientific writing

To accomplish these goals, readings, lecture, and discussion are paired with group exercises, practice in observing and interpreting group dynamics, several writing assignments (all of them short or very short)*, and comments on essays written by others.

Work Load Summary

Undergrads (457) will complete one short paper (2-3 pages), collaborate on five short (250 words max) group essays, comment on the essays of other groups, and complete a take-home final. Attendance and participation is required.

Grad students (557) will complete a case analysis and a literature review, write several short essays, and make comments on blog essays and draft lit reviews of other grad students. They will assist with group exercises and give feedback to the undergraduate groups based on what they observe when watching group interactions.

Details about Requirements for Undergrads (447) and Grads (557)

1. Participation (all)

Attendance and participation is required. In Week 2, students will form permanent small groups of size 4 (there may be a few of size 3 or 5, depending on enrollment), with undergrads and grad students in different groups. At the end of the class, each student will (confidentially) evaluate how well fellow group members fulfilled their commitments to their group. This will help determine the participation grades.

1b. Grad students (557): Along with doing some exercises in your own groups, grad students will serve as process consultants for several undergraduate groups, developing their skills in observing and providing useful feedback to groups. Holly will provide guidance.

* Grad students (557) have two longer assignments

2. Readings (All)

Readings will be available on Blackboard, via Web links or (for several case studies) for purchase & download on-line from the Harvard Business School site.

3a. Group Essays on WordPress Blog (457)

Every week you discuss the readings with your group. As a group, you will also develop and post 5 short integrative group essays that analyze a case or cases by drawing on readings / lecture. These will be posted on a blog (accessible to class members only) and will be due by 5 PM Thursday. The strict length limit is 250 words. Each group will post a single essay. **Do not wait until the last minute to post! Allow a time buffer for technical difficulties**

Credits for Essays: Blog essays 1-4 will be graded on a 1-5 scale, with 1 = weak but completed on time, 2 = balance of strengths and weaknesses, 3 = strengths outweigh weaknesses, 4 = strengths very notable and weaknesses modest, and 5 = outstanding (or) one of the best two essays for the week, as determined by Holly & Erik (even if pure quality wouldn't otherwise merit a 5). Assignments will be posted on Blackboard. Blog 0 will receive feedback but no grade: the first group project is always a bit chaotic and I don't want you to have the stress of a grade. Instead, focus on developing a good group process.

3b. Grad Student Blog Essays (557)

Grad students will complete 5 blogs, some as a group, some individually or in pairs. The topic of grad student blogs may differ somewhat from those of the undergraduate groups. For essays 2a-4b, grad students can choose which essay to write (a or b).

3c. Comments (All): After the blog essays are published, every student is responsible for reading all the essays. For the first two essays (0 and 1), all students are responsible for making at least one substantive comment on one of the other essays by Noon Saturday.

For subsequent essays (which alternate between ODD and EVEN groups, 2a-4b), students in groups that did NOT write an essay that week are responsible for making at least one substantive comment by Noon Saturday.

Comments should advance the conversation about the case being discussed. Specific connections back to the readings, thoughtful questions, and critical/constructive/specific feedback are all helpful. Vague comments lacking specifics are less useful. Comments must be made by the deadline to count.

4. Make observation notes (raw material for reflective essay or case)

Take notes on your observations and insights about group interactions during the term. Your observations will serve as raw material for either the Reflective Essay (457) or the Group Dynamics Case (557). You do not need to turn your notes in; they will not be graded.

4a. Reflective Essay (457)

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 2-3 different aspects, or (2) pick a particular topic (e.g., conflict or leadership) and compare and contrast 2-3 groups. Cite specific readings: (Laughlin & Shippy, 1983). Partial draft due to Holly Mon 6 May; ***both the partial draft and the final essay must be submitted when due*** to receive full credit. You will have some time in class on Monday 13 May to trade and peer review close-to-final drafts.

4b. Group Dynamics Case (GRADS only, 557)

Pick either a single group 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 and other relevant literature. Partial draft due to Holly Mon 6 May; **draft and final case must be submitted when due** to receive full credit. NOTE: Two extra HBS readings provide tips for case writing.

5a. Take Home Final (457). The final will consist of several short answers and essay questions. It will be open book, open notes, but you must complete it yourself. Completed finals must be submitted on Blackboard by the time/day of our final exam time. Early submission is welcome. ESL students may consult a tutor for grammatical assistance before turning in essays. *No other assistance* is permitted.

5b. Literature Review Paper (GRADS only, 557). Choose a substantive question about group dynamics and complete a literature review of research relevant to the question. The paper should include a minimum of 20 sources, of which at least 10 are peer-reviewed articles published in 2000 or later. A 7-10 page double-spaced review essay should provide a critical summary of what these sources tell us about the question, what issues remain unresolved, and what you think is the most important direction for future research to take. The full paper (counting title page, reference list, etc.) should be 2500-3500 words. Partial draft must be handed in when due to receive full credit. Final version due last class.

Grading

UNDERGRADS	GRADS	%	Course grades based on % of 100 earned			
Participation	Participation	20	A	93-100	C	73-76.9
Reflective essay	Case analysis	20	A-	90-92.9	C-	70-72.9
Group blogs (1-4)	Blog essays (1-4)	20	B+	87-89.9	D+	67-69.9
Comments	Comments	10	B	83-86.9	D	63-66.9
Take home final	Lit review paper	30	B-	80-82.9	D-	60-62.9
			C+	77-79.9	N	< 70
TOTAL		100			P	70 or higher

Special Needs

If you have a **documented disability** and need adjustments to ensure an effective learning experience, or are **on a UO sports team** and will miss an occasional class because of travel, contact Holly ASAP. Arrange to have the relevant office (Office of Disability Services or Athletic Department) contact me regarding the appropriate accommodations. NOTE: if your schedule requires regular absences, ***you should not take this class***, as participation and exercises are important.

Non-native English speakers. I want your performance in this course to reflect your understanding of group dynamics as well as the quality of your thinking. Because the measurement of understanding and thinking quality is based on your writing in English, this may pose special challenges to you. It is fine for you to consult writing coaches (for quality of writing only – not the content) and also to rely on your group members for assistance with grammar and other technical aspects of writing for the written assignments. Holly and Erik can also give you extra feedback on early drafts regarding writing issues.

Problem Situations

Late Work

Points will be deducted if your **Reflective Essay draft or final essay (or Case or Lit Review drafts or finals for grads)** are late unless late submission is approved **in advance** by Holly due to some unusual circumstance. Blog comments made after the deadline **will not count**, and group blog essays ***MUST*** be submitted on time; otherwise you will mess up the schedule for the rest of the class.

Alternative Arrangements not related to Disability, ESL, or UO Sports

If you have some kind of special circumstance and need an adjustment, this may well be possible with advance notice. Unexpected requests at the last minute (or after the fact) are much less likely to get a positive response.

Academic Dishonesty

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. Getting feedback on drafts from group members, friends, Holly and Erik is encouraged and completely acceptable. Non-native English speakers may consult with ALS or an English coach to improve their writing. However, you must ***not*** have others do the writing for you.

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. If you are unclear about what constitutes academic dishonesty, see <http://www.uoregon.edu/~conduct/sai.htm> for more information.

Readings, Activities, Due Dates

<i>Week One</i>	<i>Topic / Focus</i>	<i>Readings</i>	<i>Other Events & Assignments</i>
M April 1	Studying Groups	Syllabus	Introductions, temporary groups
W April 3		Wooley et al. 2010; Wheelan 2009	Process Coding Exercise
<i>Week Two</i>	<i>Permanent Groups formed this week</i>		
M April 8	Productivity & Composition	Tziner & Eden 1985; Ronay et al. 2012	Speed dating
W April 10		Army Crew Team case (Snook/Polzer)	Group formation & first task: Blog Essay #0 (all): Due Th 5 PM
<i>Week Three</i>	<i>Comments on blogs due by Saturday Noon</i>		
M April 15.	Members & Motivation	Seeley et al. 2003; Høigaard et al. 2010	Group exercise
W April 17.		Nurses & Nighthawks (Denison; Wood)	Blog Essay #1 (all): Due Th 5 PM
<i>Week Four</i>	<i>Comments on blogs due by Saturday Noon</i>		
M April 22	Difference	<i>Managing Conflict case</i> (Gentile & Gant) Watson et al. 2003	Group Health Check; Membership change opportunity
W April 24		Learning Team case (Isabella)	Essay #2a *Odd* groups Th 5 PM
<i>Week Five</i>	<i>Even group members comment Saturday Noon; Midterm Skills Progress and Class Assessments</i>		
M April 29	Decision Making	Turner et al. 1992; Wittenbaum et al. 2004	<i>Skills & class assess</i>
W May 1		Columbia case (Bohmer et al.)	Essay #2b *Even* grps Th 5 PM
<i>Week Six</i>	<i>Odd group members comment Saturday Noon **First 150 words Reflective Essay or Case Analysis Draft submitted Mon 7 PM ***</i>		
M May 6	Task Performance	Reitzschel et al. 2006; Woolley et al. 2008	Group exercise
W May 8		Surgical Teams case (Edmondson 2003)	Essay #3a *Odd* grps Th 5 PM
<i>Week Seven</i>	<i>Even group members comment Saturday Noon **Final Reflective Essay or Group Case Analysis submitted Mon 7 PM**</i>		
M May 13.	Leadership	Javidan et al. 2006; Van Vugt et al. 2008	Peer review of Essay/Case
W May 15		Mount Everest case (Roberto & Carioggia)	Essay #3b *Even* grps Th 5 PM
<i>Week Eight</i>	<i>Odd group members comment Saturday Noon</i>		
M May 20	Adaptation	Gersick 1989; LePine 2005	Group exercise
W May 22		Mann Gulch case (Weick, 1993)	Essay #4a *Odd* grps Th 5 PM
<i>Week Nine</i>	<i>Even group members comment Saturday Noon **Grads: First 2 pages lit review + list of references submitted by Mon 7 PM**</i>		
M Holiday W May 29	Intergroup Dynamics	Scheepers 2009; Halevy et al. 2006 St Pauls’ riot (Reicher 1984)	Essay #4b *Even* grps Th 5 PM
<i>Week Ten</i>	<i>Odd group members comment Sat Noon **Grads: Final Lit Review due Wed in class**</i>		
M June 3	Therapy & Support	Poulin et al. 2001; Spiegel et al 2007	<i>*Take home final essay Qs posted on BB by Mon 7 PM*</i>
W June 5		Peer Evals, Review for Final	
Tu June 11	<i>*Take-home FINAL: Submit by Noon Tuesday, June 11. Early submission welcome.*</i>		

Readings

- Bohmer, R., Feldman, L. R., Ferlins, E. M., Edmondson, A. C., & Roberto, M. A. (2004). *Columbia's Final Mission (Case 304090-PDF-ENG)*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing.
- Denison, D. R., & Sutton, R. I. (1990). Operating room nurses. In J. R. Hackman (Ed.), *Groups that work (and those that don't)* (pp. 293-308). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Edmondson, A. C. (2003). Speaking up in the operating room: How team leaders promote learning in interdisciplinary action teams. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(6), 1419-1452.
- Gentile, M., & Gant, S. B. (1995). *Managing conflict in a diverse workplace (Case 9-395-090)*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing.
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- Halevy, N., Sagiv, L., Roccas, S., & Bornstein, G. (2006). Perceiving intergroup conflict: From game models to mental templates. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32, 1674-1689.
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- Isabella, L. (2007). *A Learning Team Drama in One Act* (No. UV0756): University of Virginia Darden School Foundation.
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- Roney, R., Greenaway, K., Anicich, E. M., & Galinsky, A. D. (2012). The path to glory is paved with hierarchy: When hierarchical differentiation increases group effectiveness. *Psychological Science*, 23 (6), 669-677.
- Scheepers, D. (2009). Turning social identity threat into challenge: Status stability and cardiovascular reactivity during inter-group competition. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 45, 228-233.
- Seeley, E. A., Gardner, W. L., Pennington, G., & Gabriel, S. (2003). Circle of friends or members of a group? Sex differences in relational and collective attachment to groups. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 6(3), 251-263.
- Snook, S. A., & Polzer, J. T. (2003). *Army Crew Team (Case 9-403-131)*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing.
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- Watson, W. E., Johnson, L., & Zgourides, G. D. (2003). The influence of ethnic diversity on leadership, group process, and performance: An examination of learning teams. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 26, 1-16.
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