

Skyline College
Official Course Outline

Date: November 2008

1. TITLE:

Speech 140--Small Group Communication

3.0 units. Three lecture hours per week.

Prerequisite: None

Recommended: Eligibility for ENGL 100 or 105, or equivalent.

2. COURSE CLASSIFICATION:

Credit course applicable to the Associate Degree

3. COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:

Catalog Description:

Recommended: Eligibility for ENGL 100 or 105, or equivalent. Understanding of the principles of group interaction and decision making, including study of leadership, types of authority, teamwork, and conflict resolution. Participation in discussion groups to share information, to solve problems, and reach consensus. Transfer credit: UC; CSU (A1).

Schedule of Classes Description:

Understanding of the principles of group interaction and decision making, including study of leadership. Participation in discussion groups to share information, to solve problems, and reach consensus. Plus one hr/wk by arrangement. Transfer: UC; CSU (A1)

4. COURSE JUSTIFICATION:

This course is designed for students who seek to fulfill the following:

- I. This course is transferable to the UC and CSU systems.
- II. This course is applicable to the AA/AS Degree.
- III. This course satisfies the CSU General Education Requirement; Area A1.
- IV. This course satisfies the IGETC Requirement; Area 1C.

5. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLO'S):

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

- Analyze the systems theory as to its effectiveness in increasing group productivity and cohesiveness.
- Explain and demonstrate different methods of group decision making, critical thinking and creative problem-solving techniques.
- Explain how different methods of group decision making, critical thinking and creative problem-solving techniques can enhance a group in its decision making
- Illustrate the pros and cons of competitive and cooperative group climates.

6. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

After completion of Speech Communication 140, students will be able to:

- a) Describe how communication is a transactional process and how this knowledge relates to communication in small groups
- b) Analyze a group discussion based on the definition and elements of communication competence
- c) Explain how using systems theory can help increase a group's productivity and cohesiveness
- d) Explain and elaborate on the task and social dimensions of a problem-solving group
- e) Put into practice the four major perspectives on leadership to different group situations
- f) Explain how different methods of group decision making, critical thinking and creative problem-solving techniques can enhance a group in its decision making
- g) Express how major critical thinking errors occur in problem-solving groups and what to do to avoid them
- h) Compose basic essays with clear main ideas, major and minor supporting details, unity, coherence, and correctness.

7. COURSE CONTENT:

The course will cover the following topics:

- A. Communication theory
 1. Transactional
 2. Process
 3. Shared meaning
- B. Communication competence
 1. Definition
 - a. Matter of degree
 - b. We-not-me oriented
 - c. Effectiveness
 - d. Appropriateness
 2. Elements
 - a. Knowledge
 - b. Skill
 - c. Sensitivity
 - d. Commitment
 - e. Ethics
- C. Systems theory
 1. Interconnectedness of parts
 - a. Ripple effect
 - b. Synergy
 2. Adaptability to change
 - a. Openness and change
 - b. Openness and boundaries
 3. Influence of size
 - a. Group size and complexity
 - b. Groups versus organizations
- D. Task and social dimensions of a problem-solving group
 1. Periodic phases of group development
 - a. Forming
 - b. Storming
 - c. Norming
 - d. Performing

- 2. Social Loafing
- E. Competitive and cooperative group climates
 - 1. Prevalence of competition
 - 2. Effects of competition versus cooperation
 - a. Achievement and performance
 - b. Group cohesiveness
 - c. Self-esteem
 - d. Character building and ethics
 - 3. Teamwork
 - a. Interdependence
 - b. Equality
 - c. Participation
 - d. Individual accountability
 - e. Cooperative communication patterns
 - f. Noncompetitive listening
- F. Perspectives on roles/leadership
 - 1. Group Roles
 - 2. Perspectives on leadership
 - a. Trait perspective
 - b. Styles perspective
 - c. Situational perspective
 - d. Functional perspective
- G. Critical thinking errors
 - 1. Information overload
 - 2. Mindsets
 - a. Confirmation bias
 - b. False dichotomies
 - 3. Collective inferential errors
 - a. Vividness
 - b. Unrepresentative ness
 - c. Correlation
 - 4. Groupthink
- H. Methods of group decision-making
 - 1. Majority rules
 - 2. Minority rules
 - 3. Consensus/Dewey's Reflected Thinking technique
- I. Creative problem solving techniques
 - 1. Brainstorming
 - 2. Nominal Group Technique
 - 3. Framing/Reframing
 - 4. Integrative problem-solving

8. **REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

This course may be taught using a variety of methods; however, it is a requirement that the students deliver from 3 to 5 graded small group presentation projects. Instruction includes lecture, video presentations, text, outside assigned projects or in-class examples of small group discussions, and discussion and analysis of others' small group projects. The use of technology as a resource for presenting small group research projects preparation is encouraged.

9. **ASSIGNMENTS:**

Typical assignments may include:

Cooperative Exams and Individual Exams for Accountability-Students take group exams that cover course material (and course objectives) and receive one grade. In order to assure that all members contribute to the work involved in studying for the exam (i.e. avoid social loafing), each group member may take a second individual exam on the same material.

Symposium- the symposium assignment requires students to apply concepts and skills taught in Speech 140. The symposium will evaluate student contribution to the group product (an oral presentation and researched outline of the presentation)

Modules-As part of the lab requirement, students complete modules in the Speech Lab that reinforce learning of concepts related to communication theory, teambuilding, and group productivity. Many of these assignments ask that students watch videos and write assessments of the video.

Out-of-class assignment-Students will develop short oral presentations where they are required to show how their term-group could fall into any of the critical thinking traps described in the topical outline and how to avoid them. Example: What is Groupthink, how can it affect your group’s decision-making process, and how can your group avoid the problem of Groupthink?

Reading assignment-Instructor will typically assign 20-30 pages of reading from course text each week.

Oral and written assignment-As part of a term project, group members will prepare a symposium which includes a substantial outline supporting presentation materials, which will be submitted at the time of the symposium.

Critical thinking assignments will be varied. One example: working from a worksheet, students will give examples of various problem-solving groups making critical thinking errors. Students will identify which critical thinking errors are being made in the different examples.

10. Evaluation of Student Performance

Grade option.

Related to SLOs	Evaluation of Student Performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe how communication is a transactional process and how this knowledge relates to communication in small groups ▪ Analyze a group discussion based on the definition and elements of communication competence ▪ Explain how using systems theory can help increase a group’s productivity and cohesiveness ▪ Explain and elaborate on the task and social dimensions of a problem-solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cooperative Exams and Individual Exams for Accountability-Students take group exams that cover course material (and course objectives) and receive one grade. In order to assure that all members contribute to the work involved in studying for the exam (i.e. avoid social loafing), each group member takes a second individual exam on the same material. If they do poorly on the individual exam, their final grade on the test will be adversely affected.

<p>group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss the pros and cons of competitive and cooperative group climates ▪ Apply the four major perspectives on leadership to different group situations ▪ Demonstrate how major critical thinking errors occur in problem-solving groups and what to do to avoid them ▪ Explain how different methods of group decision making, critical thinking and creative problem-solving techniques can enhance a group in its decision making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Write basic essays and speeches with clear main ideas; major and minor supporting details; unity; coherence; correctness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Symposium-As described in question #8, the symposium assignment forces students to apply concepts and skills taught in Speech140. The symposium will evaluate student contribution to the group product (an oral presentation and researched outline of the presentation) ▪ Modules-As part of the lab requirement, students complete modules in the Speech Lab that reinforce learning of concepts related to communication theory, teambuilding, and group productivity. Many of these assignments ask that students watch videos and write assessments of the video. For instance, students may watch the film “A Class Divided” to examine critical thinking errors made by the teacher and her students. ▪ Multiple methods of evaluating and measuring student achievement will be used. Students will be evaluated primarily on the level of critical thinking, reading, writing, oral presentation, and research skills they demonstrate through a progression of writing/oral assignments as well as through quizzes, exams, participation in class discussion, presentations, reading response journals and other individual and group work.
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10. Recommended or Required Text(s)

Burtis, John O., and Paul D. Turman. Group Communication Pitfalls : Overcoming Barriers to an Effective Group Experience. Minneapolis: SAGE Publications, Incorporated, 2005.

Cragan, John F., David W. Wright, and Chris R. Kasch. Communication in Small Groups : Theory, Process, and Skills. Belmont: Wadsworth, 2003.

Engleberg, Isa, and Dianna Wynn. Working in Groups : Communication Principles and Strategies. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006.

Harris, Thomas E., and John C. Sherblom. Small Group and Team Communication. Danbury: Allyn & Bacon, Incorporated, 2007.

Hoover, Judith. Effective Small Group and Team Communication. Belmont: Wadsworth, 2004.

Rothwell, Dan. In Mixed Company. 6th ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2007.