

SPCM: 3322 Small Group Communication  
The University of Texas at Tyler  
(MWF 9:05-10:00)

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**Text**

Beebe, Steven A., Masterson, Jonn T. (2015) (11<sup>th</sup> ed). Communicating in small groups: Principles and practices. Boston: Pearson Education.

**Course Objectives**

This course is designed to focus on both the theory and practice of communication in small, task oriented groups. Students will participate in a small, task oriented, zero-history group. Through action and reflection, you will broaden your understanding of small group processes and your own participation and practices in small groups. You will have an opportunity to learn the principles and skills of small group communication well enough to use them as a resource in analyzing group situations and apply them to evaluate and improve the communication patterns in one's own work groups. To facilitate this model, some of the time spent in this class will involve experiential learning in long-term groups.

**Course Description**

A study of group process and interaction, including the concepts of leadership and effective participation.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Students should be able to:

- Apply effective approaches to human relational interaction through interpersonal or group and teamwork interactions in various settings and with diverse others.
- Appropriately apply communication theory to the communication rules, norms, listening skills, and rhetorical strategies used by the people around them.
- Understand communication from a variety of theoretical perspectives

**Major Requirements, Points, & Grade % Approximations (535 pts)**

1. Small Group Research Presentation	35 pts.	7%
2. 80s Video	35 pts.	7%
3. Research Argument	100 pts.	19%
a. Presentation	25 pts.	5%
4. Service-Learning	25 pts.	5%
5. Team-Building Exercise	35 pts.	7%
6. Narrative	15 pts.	3%
7. Conflict-Style Analysis	15 pts.	3%
8. Meal	35 pts.	9%
9. Peer Evaluations	50 pts.	8%
10. Career Path Paper	15 pts.	3%
11. Final Exam	150 pts.	28%

### **Grades: Standard Grading Scale**

90% - 100%	=	A
80% - 89%	=	B
70% - 79%	=	C
60% - 69%	=	D
59% - ↓	=	F

### **Attendance Policy**

Perfect attendance in this course is recommended. A student is more likely to do better in this course with higher attendance. In-class activities may be missed due to absences and are only available for make-up if the absence is excused. **Due to the group-nature of this course, attendance is required. Your grade will be reduced one letter grade every three absences (a tardy may constitute an absence).** If you show up late (post roll), it is your responsibility to confirm with the professor that you are counted present for the day. However, it is up to the professor as to whether your tardiness constitutes an absence. If a student must miss class, he or she is advised to contact another student to learn what was missed and if any work is due on a following class period because that work is still due next class period whether or not the absence was excused. If you are to be absent from a class, whether or not you miss any assignments, you must notify the teacher before-hand if possible, but no later than the next class period, of your desire to make up any missed work in order to be able to do so. Illness excuses must be accompanied by a doctor's note for instructor consideration.

### **Participation**

Students are expected to not only attend class, but to play active roles in the classroom. Assigned text readings are to be completed before each class session and students are encouraged to ask questions or offer insight during class periods. When group or individual assignments or activities are assigned, everyone is expected to participate as assigned.

### **Assignments and Exams**

All assignments are due when stated by the instructor. As the college experience is, in part, designed to prepare students for the work place, **ABSOLUTELY NO LATE WORK** will be accepted. If you have completed at least part of an assignment by the due date, it is better to turn in part of the assignment on time than to turn in the completed assignment late for no credit. All homework turned in, unless otherwise stated, is to be typed. Any exam must be taken on the designated day and time set forth by the instructor. Any exceptions to due dates must be verified with the instructor prior to the scheduled deadline. Lack of performance as a part of a group assignment can constitute in a lowered grade than other group members.

### **Original Work**

All student work must be original to the student and original for the course where assigned. Any failure to abide by high standards or ethics in regard to student work will be handled by the instructor and the university and may constitute in the student failing the course and receiving further reprimand from the university. Plagiarism is a big deal and the consequences can go much further than the universities reach, so please be careful.

### **UT Tyler Honor Code**

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

### **Students Rights and Responsibilities**

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link:

<http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

### Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>

### UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University

All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors.

Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products.

There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit [www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free](http://www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free).

### Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. (For Fall, the Census Date is Sept. 12.) Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date (Sept. 12th) is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

### State-Mandated Course Drop Policy

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

#### Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices>, the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

#### Student Absence due to Religious Observance

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Revised 05/17

#### Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

#### Social Security and FERPA Statement

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

#### Emergency Exits and Evacuation

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

#### Student Standards of Academic Conduct

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or

materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

“Cheating” includes, but is not limited to:

- copying from another student’s test paper;
- using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
- possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or

specifically designed “crib notes”. The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically

prohibited by the person administering the test;

- using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key,

homework solution, or computer program;

- collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
- discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
- divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the

instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned

or to be kept by the student;

- substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any

course-related assignment;

- paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test

key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or

computer program;

- falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
- taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student

knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct;  
and

- misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial

benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.

“Plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s

work and the submission of it as one’s own academic work offered for credit.

“Collusion” includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic

assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on

scholastic dishonesty.

All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

UT Tyler Resources for Students

- [UT Tyler Writing Center](https://www.uttyler.edu/writingcenter) (903.565.5995), [writingcenter@uttyler.edu](mailto:writingcenter@uttyler.edu)
- [UT Tyler Tutoring Center](https://www.uttyler.edu/tutoring) (903.565.5964), [tutoring@uttyler.edu](mailto:tutoring@uttyler.edu)
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to

assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.

- [UT Tyler Counseling Center](https://www.uttyler.edu/counseling) (903.566.7254)

## **Course Calendar**

### **Week 1**

1. Introduction to Course
2. Communication Model: 8 Components of Communication (Group)
3. Unit 1 (ch. 1-3)
4. Assign Groups
5. Assignment: Scavenger Hunt

### **Week 2**

1. Unit 1 (cont.)
2. Discussion: In group – discuss positive and negative group member characteristics.
3. Assignment: Group Research Presentation

### **Week 3**

1. Presentations: Group Research Findings (3 Days)

### **Week 4**

1. Unit 1 (cont.)
2. Assignment: 80s Music Video
3. Assignment: Significant Item
4. Assignment: Research Argument

### **Week 5**

1. Present: 80s Video (Wednesday)
2. Assignment: Group Service-Learning

### **Week 6**

1. Unit 2 (ch. 4-7, 12)
2. Due/Discuss: Significant Item
3. Work: Service & Research

### **Week 7**

1. Unit 2 (cont.)
2. Present: Service-Learning Pictures
3. Class Activity: Role play (text book roles)
4. Discussion: Team-Building
5. Assignment: Develop Team-Building
6. Assignment: Small Group Communication in Your Career Path

### **Week 8**

1. Unit 2 (cont.)
2. Activity: P. 92 textbook, Critical Thinking (Fallacy Exercise from 10<sup>th</sup> ed.)
3. Present: Team-Building Exercise

### **Week 9**

1. Unit 2 (cont.)
2. Due: Small Group Communication in Your Career Path
3. Assignment: Creativity Narrative – Story-telling

### **Week 10**

1. Unit 3 (ch. 8-11)
2. Harbaugh Football Video
3. Leadership and Self-Deception (The Arbinger Group)
4. Define Leader/Manager, Positive/Negative
5. Assignment: Meal

### **Week 11**

1. Unit 3 (cont.)
2. Assignment: Conflict Style Analysis
3. Class Activity: Work through problem-solving, decision-making, and conflict scenario

Week 12

1. Unit 3 (cont.) (Ch. 10-11)
2. Class Activity: Problem-Solving Exercises (Textbook)
3. Due: Conflict Style Analysis Paper

Week 13

Thanksgiving Break

Week 14

1. Due: Narrative (Story)
2. Due: Meal Photos

Week 15

1. Due: (Monday) Research Papers (Research Argument)
2. Begin Presentations
3. Group Member – Peer Evaluation (50 pts.)
4. Final Exam Review

Week 16

1. Final Exam (All Units)
  - a. (See university final exams schedule)



**SPCM 3322 Small Group Communication**  
**Group Research Presentations**

As a group you will locate and decide upon one current (from last 5 years) academic research paper regarding group communication. Each member in the group will read the research paper and as a group, depending on the group size, each member will prepare and present an explanation of each of the major parts of the paper respectively. For example, if the group has 5 members, one member will discuss the review of literature, one member the rationale and hypothesis, one member the methodology of the study, one member the results of the study, and the last member would discuss the limitations of the study and the future research implications. This presentation is to be prepared as a group and presented as a group.) Example studies are related to topics such as college social clubs and online social groups.

There is no paper due for this assignment. Presentation will be graded on choice of pertinent article, understanding of the research, and overall presentation to the audience in understandable and interesting manner along with basic presentation skills. Each group member must participate in the presentation and the group will share the overall grade. Presentation 8-10 minutes.  
35 pts.

**SPCM 3322 Small Group Communication**  
**80s Video**

As a group select an 80s song. Develop an 80s music video to the song and be prepared to show the video to the class. Remember, these groups are gender-mixed and these videos are for class and instructor viewing, so be sure that all group members are comfortable with the song choice and the video – be appropriate. Place the video either on a DVD drive or upload the video to youtube for ease of access during class presentation. Confirm that the video works prior to class beginning on the day the video is due. Video will be graded on creativity, effort, and group cohesion, along with appropriate nature of song and video. The video should be 3-4 minutes in length (not entire song) and can be a conglomeration of songs.  
35 pts.

**SPCM 3322 Small Group Communication**  
**Research Argument**

There seems to be a dichotomous relationship between mid-semester individual conferences regarding co-group member satisfaction and end of the semester co-group member satisfaction as regarding the extent of disclosure. In the past I have conducted individual mid-semester conferences with each student in an effort to learn of any significant issues that might exist among class groups. By and large, the answers are positive, where students state things in the group are fine. However, if upon completion of the semester a student thinks his or her grade was not sufficiently high, they sometimes begin to blame other group members, stating that one or more in the group was absent regularly, rude, lazy, etc. This is information that would have been helpful to know and discuss during the semester, but becomes a moot point post semester.

As a group you are to construct a valid argument based on theory regarding this topic. More specifically, write about why there is this separation between reality and what students are willing to communicate to the professor mid-semester. Base your argument on theory. (APA format – current edition, 12-font, Times New Roman, standard margins, single-spaced and 10 academic sources, minimum 10 pages). Papers graded on content, APA style, length, grammar, etc.

**Presentation**

Each group will present their findings/argument in a panel-like format. Presentation will be graded on content and overall presentation of content to audience per grading rubric guidelines below. Group time limit – 10 minutes.

Paper = 100 pts.

Presentation = 25 pts.

**SPCM 3322 Small Group Communication**  
**Service-Learning**

As a group, decide upon a local organization with which you would like to volunteer one hour of service. Contact the organization and schedule a time when all group members can be present to serve together. While serving, take at least six pictures of the group serving together (everyone must be in at least one picture). Suggested places of service are Tiger Creek, a nearby retirement home (just hanging out with the elderly), etc. The chosen service must be cleared through the professor.  
25 pts.

**SPCM 3322 Small Group Communication**  
**Team-Building Exercise**

As a group, discuss possible issues that are common among small groups. Then develop an original team-building exercise designed to “fix” or improve the issue. Once the exercise is developed, each group member must play an active role in acting out the team-building exercise on video (each member must be present in the video). The video is then presented to the class. When presented, the group must disclose to the class:

1. The issue addressed by the exercise
2. Show the Video
3. Briefly discuss how the exercise truly works on the issue

Team-building exercise will be graded on originality, validity (does the exercise truly address the issue), presentation (energy, content, and overall presentation style to engage audience), and overall level of effort. There is no paper with this assignment. Overall presentation/video length 3-4 minutes.  
35 pts.

**SPCM 3322 Small Group Communication**  
**Career Path Paper**

Write a short paper: 1-2 pages (APA not required, Times New Roman, 12-font, standard margins) about how small group communication does or will play into your chosen career path.  
15 pts.

**SPCM 3322 Small Group Communication**  
**Narrative (Story-Telling)**

As a group, take a traditional children's story (i.e. The Three Little Pigs) and develop a creative twist. Rework the story together with contributions from each group member. Prepare to tell the story to the class. Assignment graded on content, creativity, group cohesion, and overall presentation quality. Story 3-4 minutes.  
15 pts.

**SPCM 3322 Small Group Communication**  
**Conflict Style Analysis**

Take the conflict style analysis provided by the instructor. When completed, document (type) the following with headings:

1. Results
2. Whether or not you agree with the results
3. An example of why you think the results are true or false
4. Ask a close friend/family member about the results and document their comments regarding the validity
5. Document your close friend/family member's reasoning by way of an example

Type headings for each of the paper's five sections. There is not length requirement for this assignment – just be sure to adequately cover the five sections.  
15 pts.

**SPCM 3322 Small Group Communication**  
**Meal**

Eat a meal with your group. Each group member must contribute to the meal by bringing a food item he or she has prepared (only in rare extreme cases will the professor allow store-purchased food). Set a time and place to share the meal. Families are welcome to attend and points for this project are awarded via a minimum of 6 pictures taken during the meal process.  
35 pts.

## Assigned Paper Grading Rubric

Dept. of Communication

Dr. Justin Velten

Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Work	Grade
The paper is free of grammatical errors, closely adheres to the required style format, and is the correct length (with appropriate spacing and margins). Content from the assignment is clearly covered and is done so in a manner that displays a high level of understanding and application of theory or course concepts to the paper topic(s). The paper displays a high level of effort and originality in thought and writing and makes a clear point.	A
The paper is nearly free of grammatical errors, adheres to the required style format, and is the correct length (with appropriate spacing and margins). Content from the assignment is covered and is done so in a manner that displays an adequate level of understanding and application of theory or course concepts to the paper topic(s). The paper displays a good level of effort and originality in thought and writing.	B
The paper has a few grammatical errors, somewhat adheres to the required style format, and is near the correct length (with appropriate spacing and margins). Content from the assignment is mostly covered and is done so in a manner that displays a marginal level of understanding and application of theory or course concepts to the paper topic(s). The paper displays an evidently average level of effort and originality in thought and writing.	C
The paper has a significantly noticeable amount of grammatical errors, does not adhere to the required style format, and is not quite near the correct length (with appropriate spacing and margins). Content from the assignment is only partially and is done so in a manner that displays a lack of understanding and application of theory or course concepts to the paper topic(s). The paper displays an inadequate level of effort and originality in thought and writing.	D
The paper has numerous grammatical errors, does not adhere to the required style format, and is not near the correct length (with appropriate spacing and margins). Content from the assignment is not covered and a strong lack of topic-understanding is evident. The paper displays an evidently low level of effort and originality in thought and writing.	F

Please see university policy on plagiarism and work hard to not plagiarize. If you are unsure as to whether you are plagiarizing the work of another person it is best to be cautious and take the appropriate steps to insure you are not plagiarizing. In the event that you are caught plagiarizing on this paper you will receive either a reduction of 50% on the assignment (if the plagiarism is minor or not seemingly blatant) or a 0% on the assignment (if the plagiarism is major and seemingly blatant). There are clear guidelines available for what constitutes plagiarism so please do not plan to plead ignorance in the event your grade is reduced for plagiarism. I hope this is not an issue with your paper and do not expect it to be so.

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity/Work/Video/Presentation Grading Rubric**  
 Dept. of Communication  
 Dr. Justin Velten

Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Work	Grade
The work meets the guidelines of the assignment. Each group member participated and there was an evidently high level of effort placed into the project. Class theory/concepts are applied to the assignment as required and teamwork is evident. The overall presentation quality and effort was high.	A
The work mostly meets the guidelines of the assignment. Each group member participated and there was an above average of effort placed into the project. Class theory/concepts are applied to the assignment as required and teamwork is somewhat evident. The overall presentation quality and effort was above average.	B
The work somewhat meets the guidelines of the assignment. Each group member participated and there was an average level of effort placed into the project. Class theory/concepts are applied to the assignment as required and teamwork is marginal. The overall presentation quality and effort was above average.	C
The work does not meet the guidelines of the assignment. Each group member participated and there was an evidently inadequate level of effort placed into the project. Class theory/concepts are not applied to the assignment as required and teamwork is not very clearly represented. The overall presentation quality and effort was below average.	D
The work does not meet the guidelines of the assignment. Each group member participated and there was an evidently low level of effort placed into the project. Class theory/concepts are not applied to the assignment as required and there is a clear lack of teamwork. The overall presentation quality and effort was inadequate.	F

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

**Group Work Peer Evaluation**  
 Dept. of Communication  
 Dr. Justin Velten

Group #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student Assessed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student Assessing: \_\_\_\_\_

In each of the following sections, rate your fellow group member on a scale from 1 – 10 with 10 being the highest score. Once you have completed 5 scales, total the scales for a score out of 50. In some cases, students create a strong bond while working with classmates. These relationships can be a wonderful product of teamwork, but please do your best to offer an objective evaluation of your group members. Your responses remain confidential and are averaged for the group.

Description of Work	Grade (1-10)
<i>Attendance</i> This group member was timely and present at most all group meeting.	
<i>Initiation</i> This group member seemed engaged in group meetings, offering thoughtful comments and feedback. Generated original ideas and worked with <u>other</u> group members to further develop <u>their</u> ideas.	
<i>Workload</i> This group member carried his or her allotted and fair amount of work within the group.	
<i>Relational</i> This group member worked to build and maintain strong and positive working relationships with fellow group members. This section is not about popularity or personality differences as much as it is about effort to work together in a positive way.	
<i>Overall</i> This section is designed to capture other elements not mentioned above. You can offer an overall grade here or even write in comments regarding your teammate and offer a score on this overall scale.	

Total: \_\_\_\_\_ / 50

Comment:

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Assessment reflective, though not completely related to, The Nine Core Small Group Communication Competencies (Beebe & Masterson, 2012)

Beebe, Steven A., Masterson, John T. (2012). Communicating in small groups: Principles and practices. Boston: Pearson Education.