

CMS 112

Small Group Communication

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Required Reading:

Allman, P. (2009). Little Me Can Live a Big Life. Bloomington, IN; iUniverse
ISBN 978-1-4401-3505-7

Course Description: A group can be roughly defined as two or more individuals who influence one another and/or arrive at decisions through social interaction. This course in small group communications is the study of the processes of group organized around four major topics: (1) basic group processes: group formation, conflict, structure, and performance, (2) social-influence processes: power, leadership, conformity, deviancy, and the group environment, (3) problems in group deindividuation, group think, and inter-group conflict, and (4) applications: business and industry, classrooms, family, and social. This class is **not** group therapy.

Course Objectives:

- (1) The students gain a knowledge of theories which serve as the basis for the study of groups,
- (2) The students develop knowledge and understanding of the stages and process of group development,
- (3) The students gain an awareness of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors which can cause groups to become dysfunctional,
- (4) The students develop skills to enhance their own effective performance within groups,
- (5) The students understand and develop the skills of group facilitation.
- (6) The students will learn “both-and” thinking and how it applies to handling conflicts.

Learning Activities: Lecture, discussion, experiential exercises, video.

Directed study prior to the beginning of the course

- A) Each student will bring to the first class meeting a paper which addresses:
- (1) Personal goals for learning in the class,
 - (2) Contractual elements (those rules and explicit agreements that you believe are necessary to structure the group’s interactions so as to enable you to meet your goals),
 - (3) Conditions in the group that will facilitate the meeting of those goals.

Suggested length: two pages

- B) Read introduction (xi to xvii) of Little Me Can Live a Big Life.

Attendance: Each class meeting is so experiential and learning intensive that it is crucial to attend every class meeting. It is almost impossible to gain the learning you have missed when absent by doing some kind of make-up work. Therefore, if you miss more than once, you should withdraw from the course.

If you miss one class, you may write a two/three page typed paper that describes the dynamics of a group you were in during that week. If you choose not to write this paper, your grade will drop one full letter. For example, if you were going to receive an “A,” you would then receive a “B.”

Method of Grading: Grades will be awarded on a contract basis. You will receive a grade based on the amount of completed work assigned to that grade. The minimum requirements for each grade must be met and variation in the quality of this work will be reflected within the grade range (i.e. A-, A, A+).

Requirements are as follows:

Minimum requirements for a “C”:

At the first class meeting, submit a paper assigned above.

Full involvement in all class activities.

Minimum requirements for a “B”:

Meet all requirements for “C,”

Satisfactory completion of a take-home paper about Little Me Can Live a Big Life. See handout. Due 7th session,

Satisfactory completion of a weekly typed paper (minimum two pages) that demonstrates your understanding of the concepts covered in class, your feelings elicited during class, and your view of our class process.

Minimum requirements for an “A”:

Meet all requirements for “B,”

Perfect attendance (or make-up paper for one absent),

Successful writings on the assignment about “Applying Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace.” (See “A” Paper for Small Group Communication). This is due the 8th week of the quarter.)