San Bernardino Valley College
Curriculum Approved: SP00

I.   CATALOG DESCRIPTION:
Department   Speech
Course Number   Speech 140
Course Title   Small Group Communication
Units   3
Lecture   3

Course Description for the Catalog
Explores discussion principles, communication skills, conflict management, participation practices, and leadership within small groups in a variety of contexts. Group formation, verbal and non-verbal communication, listening, and decision making procedures are also examined. Emphasis is on group participation, group discussion, and group projects/presentations.

Course Description for the Schedule
Exploration of discussion principles, communication skills, conflict management, participation, leadership, and communication skills within the context of small groups.

II.   NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: One.

III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES:
A.   Examine the principles of group formation and interaction
B.   Identify the various participation patterns and their effects in small groups
C.   Compare and contrast leadership styles in small groups
D.   Differentiate between and use effective verbal and nonverbal communication
E.   Distinguish between and use effective conflict resolution principles in small groups
F.   Analyze and address the challenges of working in small groups with diverse members
G.   Construct coherent, coordinated group presentations
H.   Recognize appropriate parliamentary procedure

IV.   CONTENT:
A.   Introduction to Small Group Communication
      1.   Defining small group communication
      2.   Synergy
      3.   Advantages and disadvantages of working in groups
      4.   Types of groups
      5.   How to learn about groups
      6.   Balance: the guiding principle
B.   Group Formation and Development
      1.   Why people need groups
      2.   Task and social dimensions
      3.   How groups develop
      4.   Group norms
      5.   Dealing with change
      6.   Balancing needs and norms

C.   Leadership in Groups
      1.   Leadership defined
      2.   Leadership and power
      3.   Becoming a leader
      4.   Leadership theories
      5.   Gender and leadership
      6.   Balanced leadership
D.   Participation in Groups

1. Theories of participation
2. Guidelines for participation
3. Dealing with difficulties
4. Balanced participation

E. Confidence in Groups
1. You must talk
2. Self-concept
3. Communication apprehension
4. Coping with communication apprehension
5. Social tensions
6. Balancing confidence and tension

F. Listening in Groups
1. Speaking and listening
2. Effective listening
3. Types of listening
4. Group roles and listening
5. Group listening skills
6. Taking notes in groups
7. Self-listening in groups
8. Adapting to different listeners
9. Balanced listening

G. Verbal and Nonverbal Communication in Groups
1. Principles of language
2. Language difficulties
3. Adapting to language differences
4. Importance of nonverbal communication
5. Individual nonverbal behavior
6. The nonverbal environment
7. Nonverbal communication and culture
8. Creating a communication climate
9. Balancing language and nonverbal behavior

H. Conflict and Cohesion in Groups
1. Conflict in groups
2. Constructive and destructive conflict
3. Conflict styles
4. Approaches to conflict management
5. Group cohesion - Group think
6. Adapting to differences
7. Balancing conflict and cohesion

I. Planning and Conducting Meetings
1. Meetings defined
2. Planning the meeting
3. The chairperson's responsibilities
4. Participation in meetings
5. Dealing with difficulties
6. Adapting to differences
7. Evaluation the meeting
8. Balanced meetings

J. Decision Making in Groups
1. Group decision making
2. Decision-making methods
3. Understanding the discussion question
4. The need for procedures
5. Decision-making and problem-solving procedures
6. Matching the tool to the task
7. Decision-making realities

        8.   Balanced decision making
- K.   Argumentation in groups
  1. The value of argumentation in groups
  2. Argumentativeness
  3. The structure of an argument
  4. Presenting your arguments
  5. Refuting arguments
  6. Ethical arguments
  7. Adapting to argumentative styles
  8. Balanced argumentation
- L.   Making Presentations in Groups
  1. Speechmaking in groups
  2. Oral presentation guidelines
  3. Group presentations
  4. Questions and answers
  5. Balanced oral presentations
- M.   Informed Groups
  1. Becoming a well-informed group
  2. Note your sources
  3. Sources of information
  4. Types of information
  5. Evaluation information
  6. Using information effectively
  7. Balancing information quality and quantity
- N.   Agendas and Minutes
  1. The importance of agendas
  2. The importance of minutes
  3. Balanced agendas and minutes
- O.   Parliamentary Procedure
  1. The rules
  2. Principles of parliamentary procedure
  3. Parliamentary players
  4. Basic rules of order
  5. Informal rules
  6. Balanced procedures
- P.   Technology in Groups
  1. Technology and communication
  2. Electronic meetings
  3. Groupware (Software & Hardware)
  4. Technology and visual aids
  5. Balancing technology in groups

V.   METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:
- A.   Lecture
- B.   Read text and other sources
- C.   Class and Group Discussion
- D.   Critical Evaluation of Videotapes

- E.   Group Exercises
- F.   Oral and Written Group Projects and Presentations

VI.   TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:
- A.   Read text and other sources
  1. Read the chapter on argumentation in groups in your text.
- B.   Class and Group Discussion

        1.   Class Discussion: What are the advantages and disadvantages of working in groups?

        2.   Group Discussion: Make a list of the symptoms of communication apprehension individuals experience. Identify the symptoms that are more likely to occur during a group discussion. Then, answer the following questions:

            a.   How can the type of group or topic of discussion affect the number and severity of symptoms?

            b.   Which symptoms can or cannot be seen or heard by other group members?

            c.   What is the relationship, if any, between the number and type of symptoms and a person's PRCA score for groups, meetings, interpersonal communication, and public speaking?

            d.   How can you alleviate some of the causes and symptoms of communication apprehension in groups?

C.   Critical Evaluation of Videotapes

        1.   After viewing the video *Twelve Angry Men*, answer four of the seven questions below in a 4-6 page, typed response.

            a.   Analyze jury deliberations in terms of the primary power resources. Concentrate on 4-5 key members of the jury depicted in the movie. Explain the influence of each key member on the final outcome of the deliberations by focusing on each member's power resources (e.g., information, expertise, etc.).

            b.   There are several instances of defiance depicted in the movie. Identify which jury members were defiant and in what ways they were defiant. Discuss each of these instances of defiance in terms of the strategies groups typically employ to extinguish defiance.

            c.   There is much conflict dramatized in this movie. Discuss the conflict by applying the conflict management styles. Identify jurors and the conflict styles they used. What were the results of using the styles?

            d.   What negotiation strategy did Henry Fonda Use? Explain. What negotiation strategies did other jurors (choose 4) use and how did Henry deal with those jurors who used these strategies?

            e.   Did the jury in this movie arrive at a true consensus? Explain and defend your answer in terms of the criteria constituting a true consensus.

            f.   Discuss the jury's deliberations in terms of defensive versus supportive communication climates. Be specific. What were the consequences of these communication patterns?

            g.   Identify significant inferences made by members of the jury. Were the inferences faulty? Explain. Did the jury engage in collective inferential error? Defend your answer.

D.   Group Exercises

        1.   Meet the People Problems Exercise (5-7 group members): Read the descriptions of the five "people problems" that often arise in meetings (e.g., broken record, head-shaker, know-it-all, backseat driver, and attacker). As a group, prepare at least two strategies for dealing with each type of people problem. Be prepared to share your strategies with the class and address the following question:

            a.   What general, overriding principles emerge as effective strategies for dealing with member difficulties?

        2.   Classroom Norms Exercise (5-7 group members): Generate lists of implicit and explicit norms that operate in the classroom. (Example of Implicit Norm: When students come in late, they tiptoe to the closest available seat near the door. Example of an Explicit Norm: The syllabus states that no make-up work will be allowed if students to not have legitimate, written excuses). Each group should rank the norms on each list in terms of their usefulness in ensuring quality

instruction and effective learning. Be prepared to discuss the following questions:

 a. Which norms are most important?

 b. Are there more implicit than explicit norms?

 c. Should any of the norms be changed, strengthened, or abolished in this class?

3. Research Scavenger Hunt (5-7 group members): You have 10 minutes to develop an action plan for answering all the questions on the list. You will then have 30 minutes to collect as many answers as you can and return to the classroom by the deadline. After returning to the classroom, you have five minutes to compile your answers onto a single group answer sheet. Be prepared to discuss any difficulties you encountered during the exercise.

4. Divide and Debate Exercise (5-7 members): Divide the group into two groups. One group will be pro and the other group will be con to the proposition: "It is better to work in groups than it is to work individually." Group members may consult the textbook for evidence in support of their arguments. Groups are to adhere to the following format for discussion:

 a. Pro Side 4 minutes

 b. Con Side 4 minutes

 c. Pro Side 2 minutes

 d. Con Side 4 minutes

 e. Pro Side 2 minutes

Remember to follow the guidelines discussed in this chapter for presenting and refuting arguments. All members of the group should be encouraged to participate.

E. Oral and Written Group Projects and Presentations

1. Current Issue Symposium (5-7 group members):

 A. Select a significant topic of national or international interest (must be controversial). Present all relevant points of view on the topic of discussion, not a unified point of view. The main purpose is to inform the audience of the various points of view and issues related to the topic chosen.

 B. The group presentation is to be between 25-35 minutes for speeches (5 minutes per speaker), and all group members must make a formal presentation of approximately equal length.

 C. Each speaker is to turn in a complete-sentence outline of his or her presentation to the instructor.

 D. Evaluation will be as follows:

  1. 40% Group Grade - 60% Individual Grade (see below for further evaluation criteria)

2. Art Form Symposium (5-7 group members):

 A. Select an art form to critique. Research the history of the form, searching for specific criteria central to an evaluation of that form. Establish a list of criteria for evaluating the chosen art form. Document the relevance of the criteria by citing testimony of experts. Explain the criteria, then as a group, choose "good," "bad," and "mediocre" examples of the art form and justify the requirements.

 B. The group presentation is to be between 25-35 minutes for speeches (5 minutes per speaker), and all group members must make a formal presentation of approximately equal length.

 C. Each speaker is to turn in a complete sentence outline of his or her presentation to the instructor.

 D. Evaluation will be as follows:

  1. 40% Group Grade - 60% Individual Grade (see below for further evaluation criteria)

VII.   EVALUATION

Group evaluations support the objectives of the course. In order to balance individual achievement with group participation and cooperation, however, most assignments are divided between group and individual evaluation components.

A.   Methods of Evaluation

1.   Objective Group Examinations (5-7 group members) with Individual Checks. The rationale behind this method of testing is that cooperation is advantageous. If group synergy is desirable, then a system of examination that promotes both cooperation, synergy, and personal responsibility is justified. By adding the individual component to the group test, students must still learn the required material. Although strictly individual exams are permitted, this joint format promotes the learning objectives of the course.

a.   Each group will take the test together without benefits of notes or text. Although each group member will be given a copy of the test (multiple choice with 1 to four correct answers for each question), one copy will serve as the group's final answer sheet.

b.   All members of the group will receive the same score on the group test unless individuals earn an insufficient score on the individual accountability test (immediately following group test) given to all group members working separately without benefit of group interaction. The individual test is composed of multiple choice questions covering exactly the same material as the group (but not the same questions). Failure to score 80% or above on the individual test will result in the reduction of that individual group member's test score as follows:

1.   Between 70-79 points = loss of 5 points from group score
2.   Between 60-69 points = loss of 10 points
3.   Between 50-59 points = loss of 15 points
4.   Below 50 = loss of 20 points

Thus, if the group score is 87 and the individual group member scores 65 on the individual test, that individual will receive a 77 for the test (87 - 10 points). Any student scoring a perfect 100 on the individual test will receive a bonus of 5 points.

c.   Group Test Question:

1.   The main strategies for instilling cohesiveness in a group are to
a.   encourage compatible membership
b.   accomplish tasks
c.   develop a positive history of cooperation
d.   promote acceptance of group members

d.   Individual Test Question:

1.   When you initially form your term groups, you should
a.   avoid disagreement
b.   appear friendly, open, and interested
c.   express positive attitudes
d.   avoid superficial conversation on frivolous topics

2.   Subjective Evaluation of Symposium Projects: As with the examinations, the term projects (symposiums) are divided between individual and group grades. The grading criteria for Symposium #1 may be as follows:

a.   40% Group Grade:

1.   Topic choice - Lends itself well to the purpose of the symposium and to interest of audience
2.   Organization - Division of labor among participants is equal in proportions; division of topic into subcategories is reasonable.
3.   Content - All possible propositions on the topic are explored; presentations exhibit careful and plentiful research with points of view supported with evidence from credible sources.

4.   Attention - Effort is made to maintain interest and attention of audience throughout symposium.

5.   Quality of Performance - use of extemporaneous style of presentation; no reading or memorization.

b.   60% Individual Grade:

1.   Organization - Signposts each speech and provides internal summaries; clarity and comprehensibility are important.

2.   Content - Point of view is coherent, logically presented, and well supported with evidence.

3.   Attention - Uses attention strategies to maintain audience interest

4.   Style/Delivery - Uses extemporaneous style, maintain eye contact.

The grading criteria for Symposium #2 may be

a.   40% Group Grade:

1.   Topic choice - Lends itself well to the purpose of the symposium and to interest of audience

2.   Organization - Division of labor among participants is balanced; division of topic into subcategories is reasonable.

3.   Content - Criteria are carefully explained and well supported with evidence; criteria are applied effectively to good, bad, and mediocre examples of art form.

4.   Attention - Effort is made to maintain interest and attention of audience throughout symposium.

5.   Quality of Performance - use of extemporaneous style of presentation; no reading or memorization.

b.   60% Individual Grade:

1.   Organization - Signposts each speech and provides internal summaries; clarity and comprehensibility are important.

2.   Content - Provides substance which contributed to the successful evaluation of specific examples of the art form.

3.   Attention - Uses attention strategies to maintain audience interest

4.   Style/Delivery - Uses extemporaneous style, maintain eye contact.

3.   Subjective Evaluation of Student Writing (Video Reports, Outlines): Students are evaluated on their ability to apply course concepts and writing clarity.

A.   Frequency of Evaluation

1.   Two cooperative exams (preferred, however, may be individual exams)

2.   A minimum of one Symposium

3.   A minimum of 10 group exercises throughout the semester

VIII.   TYPICAL TEXTS

A.   Engleberg, Isa N. and Wynn, Dianna R. Working in groups: Communication principles and strategies (2nd edition). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000.

B.   Beebe, Steven A. and Masterson, John T. Communicating in small groups: Principles and practices (6th edition). New York, NY: Longman/Addison Wesley, 1999.

C.   Cathcart, Robert S., Samovar, Larry A., and Henman, Linda D. Small group communication: Theory and practice (7th edition). Dubuque, IA: Brown & Benchmark Publishers, 1997.

D.   Wilson, Gerald L. Groups in context: Leadership and participation in small groups (5th edition). New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 1998.

E.   Renz, Mary A. and Greg, John B. <u>Effective small group communication in theory and practice.</u> Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1999.

IX.   OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED OF STUDENTS
None.