ORGC 316: Group Decision Making  
Winter 2015

Kay Yoon, Ph.D.  
14 E. Jackson Suite 1809  
E-mail: kyoon4@depaul.edu  
Phone: 312-362-7987  

Office Hours:  
Tuesdays 12:00-1:00pm, and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS AND OBJECTIVES:

Many tasks in organizations are performed by teams of various forms: committee, task-force teams, boards, staff, and crews. As much as more heads are helpful in getting work done, it is not always easy to coordinate collective efforts to achieve success in team performance. This is an advanced undergraduate course in small group communication that addresses various issues in small group decision making processes in organizational contexts. Class materials will focus on various theories, research, and practices, and their applications to issues in task performing teams.

The goals of the course are (1) to understand diverse theoretical and methodological perspectives to group decision making processes, (2) to be able to identify and analyze decision making processes and outcomes in teams, (3) to recognize various factors in individual, group, and organizational levels that influence the effectiveness of decision making, (4) to practice skills in leading informal group discussions, and (5) to conduct an empirical study and to manage a group research project effectively.

REQUIRED TEXT:

All required readings will be available on our course website at <d2l.depaul.edu>.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATIONS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group Project</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini-assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Facilitation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Tickets</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your course letter grade is a function where your total course percentage grade falls within the following percentage ranges:

- **A** = 94 - 100
- **A-** = 90 - 93
- **B+** = 88 - 89
- **B** = 84 - 87
- **B-** = 80 - 83
- **C+** = 78 - 79
- **C** = 74 - 77
- **C-** = 70 - 73
- **D+** = 68 - 69
- **D** = 64 - 67
- **D-** = 60 - 63
- **F** = Below 59

**Group Research Project:**
In the beginning of the term, you will be randomly assigned to a research project group (4-5 members) with whom you will conduct original research on a topic related to group decision making. This original research will entail the whole process of conducting an empirical social scientific study: establishing research questions, conducting literature review, collecting data, and drawing conclusions from the data. In your group, you will complete the following tasks throughout the quarter:

- Schedule and attend regular meetings with your teammates
- Make consistent progress with your research
- Make a formal power point presentation of your research findings to the class and submit a written report.

There will be four mini assignments designed to keep you on track and to give you an opportunity to get my feedback on your project throughout the quarter.

More specific guidelines for the project will be distributed later. Your group’s final written report is due in the digital dropbox on D2L no later than 11pm Friday, March 13.

**Discussion Facilitation:**
Groups of students will be randomly selected to lead the class discussion for each assigned reading. The responsibilities of discussion leaders are to (1) develop a brief one page abstract on the reading; (2) prepare a 30 minute class discussion: Bring questions for discussion on interesting points, issues, problems, and integrate the materials with other course topics; (3) prepare a detailed discussion plan outlining your goals for the discussion; points to be covered, questions to be asked, participation management strategies, and the division of labor among the discussion facilitators. The abstract and discussion plan are due at noon in the digital dropbox on D2L on the day of your discussion. More specific guidelines will be provided in class.

**Reading Tickets:**
You need to submit a “ticket” for every reading on the day it is assigned. There will be 11 tickets throughout the term. The goal of the tickets is to make sure that you are prepared for class discussions. Each of your tickets needs to do at least one of the following: (1) identify most interesting or important concepts and how they are relevant to your and other’s group life, (2) elaborate on how certain concept is related to other topic areas we’ve covered before, (3) relate specific concepts/theories to current events or personal experiences, and/or (4) challenge or critique authors’ points or arguments. Ultimately, I’d like to see how you actively engage in the
reading. Each ticket is worth 10 points and shouldn’t be longer than 150 words. Each ticket is due at noon in the digital dropbox on D2L on the day the reading will be discussed in class. I will drop your lowest ticket score at the end of the term.

**Final Exam:**
The final exam is scheduled for 11:45am, Thursday, March 19. Exam will not be rescheduled unless you provide documented medical or family emergencies prior to the exam. The exam will cover contents from the entire quarter, and will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Study guide will be provided prior to the exam.

**Class Participation:**
This is a fun course, especially for the students who come to class everyday, keep up with the assigned readings, and actively participate in class discussions and group projects. Your physical attendance will not guarantee a good grade in participation. I will keep track of the frequency and quality of your class contributions, attentiveness to lectures and fellow classmates’ presentations, and participation in in-class activities over the quarter.

High quality comments:
- Offer a unique and relevant perspective
- Contribute to moving the discussion forward
- Build on the comments of others
- Include logic or evidence
- Avoid tangents

If you make at least one or two good comments during every class discussion, you will earn a high participation grade. I expect you to come to every class having read the assigned readings. Also, your professionalism will be counted toward participation grade (see the “professionalism” section below).

With all these reasons, class attendance is very important in this class. Various activities for your group research project will take place in the classroom. Each class meeting is worth 10 points (200 total participation points divided by 20 total class meetings). Therefore, if you miss a class, you automatically lose 10 points. Absences will be excused only in cases of documented medical or family emergencies. I begin class on time. When you arrive late, you miss important information and disrupt the class. Arriving late or leaving early will result in deduction from your participation points.

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Course Website:**
All class assignments, lecture slides, supplementary readings, and handouts will be posted on the course website at <d2l.depaul.edu>. Contact information for classmates will also be available.

**Email Communication:**
I often have class announcements and contact individual students outside the class via email. Make sure to have working email address on campus connection so that you are included in this communication.
When you send me an email with any questions or concerns, allow at least 24 hours for turn around time. For example, when you send me an email the night before our class, I may not be able to respond to you before our class time.

**Submission of Written Assignments:**
All written assignments must be submitted electronically in the D2L digital dropbox at 11pm on due dates (exceptions are reading tickets and discussion facilitation materials, which are due at noon). When you submit the assignments later than the due dates, 5 points will be deducted for each day after the due dates. When a week passes, the submissions will not be accepted.

**Individual Grade and Peer Evaluations:**
Your individual grade for the group depends both on the success of your group in completing the assignments, and on your individual performance within the team (*as privately rated by your teammates*). For both group projects, your team members will fill out a Peer Evaluation Form for your performance in the project and hand them to me. The highest possible individual grade is the group project grade. If you contribute less than other members, your individual grade will be lower than the group grade. It is therefore necessary to keep in mind that I am not the only person who will evaluate your work. It is also your responsibility to inform me of any performance issues with your group members well in advance prior to the project completion date. In other words, you have to let me know about any problems before it is too late to solve them.

**Academic Integrity:**
Work done for this course must adhere to the University Academic Integrity Policy, which you can review in the Student Handbook or by visiting http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/Resources/Students/index.html. Violations may result in the failure of the assignment, failure of the course, and/or additional disciplinary actions.

**Professionalism:**
I would like to create a fun, open, and friendly learning environment in the classroom. Professional behavior from all of us is a precursor to this goal. I expect you to display respectful and professional manners to your classmates and your instructor. Arriving late and leaving early without notice in advance are considered very rude. Particularly, using sexist or racist languages, making comments that make others uncomfortable, disrupting the class by having side conversations, flowing in and out of the classroom and using electronic devices not for the purposes related to class activities will not be accepted. Your professional behaviors will be evaluated and counted toward your participation grade.

**Online Course Evaluation:**
One of your responsibilities in this course is to complete an online teaching evaluation for this class. This course will be available for you to review during the 9th and 10th week of the quarter. Close to that time, you will receive a notification to this effect via email. I take your feedback very seriously. Your feedback is critical to learn about what works and what doesn’t work in this course, and so I strongly encourage you to complete the online teaching evaluation at the end of the term.
Students with Disabilities:
I do my best to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. It is the student’s responsibility to notify me in advance (within the first two weeks of the quarter) of any special needs so proper accommodations can be made.
# COURSE SCHEDULE

The schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class in advance. Full citations of the readings are available on p. 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/6</td>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>Course Overview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1/8  | Th  | Nature of Groups  
Facilitating Effective Discussions  
Choose discussion topics and meet team members  
**Handout:** Leading Group Discussion |
| 1/13 | Tu  | Team Effectiveness  
Reading #2: Chapter 14 of Hirokawa et al. Book  
Ticket #1  
Discussion of Group Research Project and Formation of Groups  
**Handout:** Guidelines for Group Research Project and Mini Assignment 1 |
| 1/15 | Th  | Theories of Small Group Decision Making I  
Reading #3 and #4: Chapter 4 & 5 of Hirokawa et al. Book  
Ticket #2 |
| 1/20 | Tu  | Theories of Small Group Decision Making II  
Reading #5: Chapter 6 of Hirokawa et al. Book  
Ticket #3  
Mini Assignment 1 Due |
| 1/22 | Th  | Group Identity  
Reading #6: Multiple identities in teams in a cooperative supermarket by Oetzel & Robbins  
Discussion facilitation (1)  
Ticket #4  
**Handout:** Mini Assignment 2 |
| 1/27 | Tu  | Group Structure  
Reading #7: Structuring the group system by Keyton  
Discussion facilitation (2)  
Ticket #5 |
| 1/29 | Th  | Analyzing Group Communication I  
Reading #8 and #9: Chapter 22 & 23 of Hirokawa et al. Book  
Ticket #6  
Mini Assignment 2 Due |
2/3  Tu  Analyzing Group Communication II  
Creating Measures  
Handout: Mini Assignment 3

2/5  Th  Errors in Group Decision Making I  
Reading #10: Groupthink and Watergate cover-up: The Illusion of Unanimity by Cline  
Discussion facilitation (3)  
Ticket #7

2/10  Tu  Errors in Group Decision Making II  
Discussion facilitation (4)  
Ticket #8  
Mini Assignment 3 Due

2/12  Th  Group Conference with Kay  
Handout: Mini Assignment 4

2/17  Tu  Influence and Leadership  
Discussion facilitation (5)  
Reading #12: “What makes a leader” by Goleman  
Ticket #9

2/19  Th  12 Angry Men

2/24  Tu  12 Angry Men  
Discussion: So what about 12 Angry Men?

2/26  Th  Diversity in Groups  
Discussion facilitation (6)  
Ticket #10

3/3  Tu  Issues with Virtual Teams  
Discussion facilitation (7)  
Ticket #11  
Mini Assignment 4 Due

3/5  Th  Group Conference and Final Exam Review  
Handout: Guidelines for Final Presentation and Paper  
Handout: Final Exam Study Guide  
Course evaluations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/10</td>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>Research project presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>Research project presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Group Research Paper and Peer Evaluations due at 11pm in digital dropbox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/19</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>Final Exam at 11:45am</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF READINGS


