

# Theory and Research in Small Group Communication

COM 323  
Online

• • • • • Dr. Hallsten Lyczak • • • • •

Fall 2025

## Course Description

Theoretical and experimental literature dealing with small group communication processes.

## Course Perspective

COM 323 continues exploring ideas you've learned in other communication courses and enhances your understanding of communication processes and practices of small groups in a myriad of contexts.

This senior-level course will offer opportunities for you to apply the material we learn to your professional life and provide you with experiences you can use in the "real world" as you look ahead to graduation.

## Through Course Experiences You Will:

- Develop group and personal emotional intelligence skills.
- Understand the role of identity in group experiences.
- Explore common group and intergroup communication challenges and their relationship to successful group outcomes.
- Explore ideas related to power, influence, and leadership and their relationship to toxic groups and unanticipated group outcomes.
- Reflect on your personal group communication values and understandings, discovering how they affect your behavior and expectations of others.
- Develop skills to better communicate with myriad personalities in group and team situations



ENGAGE IN:  
Active Learning

FOCUS ON:  
Learning over Outcomes

SIMPLY:  
Always Do Your Best

## How to be SUCCESSFUL



Much like you can't get fit without actively working out, you can't learn this content without actively engaging in the content. This means thoughtfully consuming course readings and actively participating in lesson experiences.

When you only focus on the end goal (grades), you've forgotten why you're here in the first place: to learn. Research reveals that student fixation on grades actually creates a barrier to learning. Focus on your innate intellectual qualities like curiosity, honesty and participation in a community of inquiry instead of whether or not you'll get a certain grade. This will inevitably bring you the success you desire.

Always do your best work; never just phone it in. This is a recipe for professional success, but it works in this class, too. You get more out of this class when you give more to it. Honest!

Prof Info

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Office Hours: By appointment - email me

Our Book

Forsyth, D.R. (2019). *Group Dynamics*, 7th ed. Boston: Cengage.

Note: There is a copy of this text on reserve at Milner.

# Demonstrating Your Learning:

## Quizzes

Online quizzes are offered for every lesson.



## Learning Artifacts

Learning artifacts allow you to demonstrate your ability to meet course objectives or synthesize course content and apply it to real-life situations. There are several learning artifacts assigned throughout the semester.

## Exams

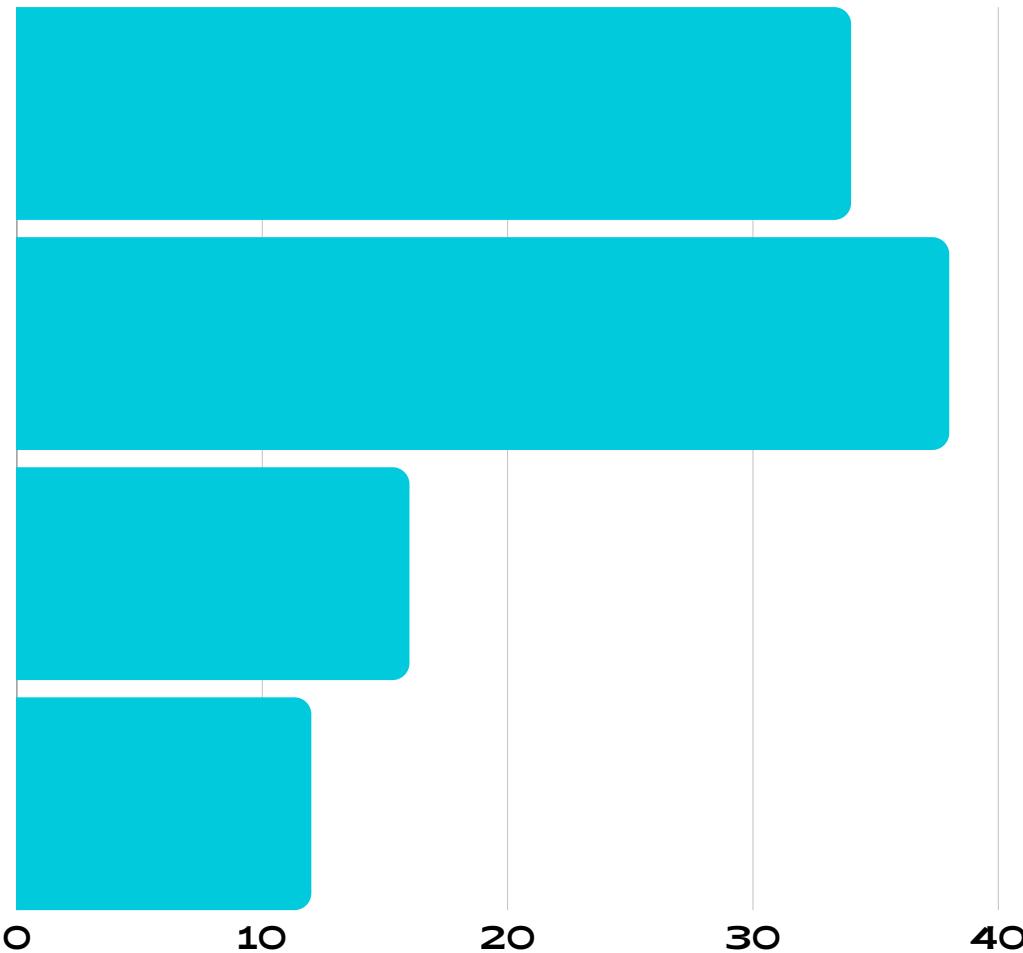
There are two oral exams: a midterm and a final.

## Lasso

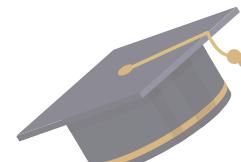
There is an application assignment based on the popular Apple+ television program, "Ted Lasso."

## Grade Breakdown

### Learning Artifacts



## Student Access and Accommodations



Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 308 Fell Hall, Office Phone (309) 438-5853, Video Phone (309) 319-7682 or visit the website at [StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu](http://StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu)

## Grade Dispute Policy

If for some reason you feel a score is unfair, you have 7 days from the date the grade is posted to contact me about it with a written appeal that includes evidence of the unfairness. Grade disputes will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

# It's Good To Be "In The Know:"

## Late Work Policy

I am often willing to work with you ahead of time if you're having any situations preventing you from meeting assignment deadlines. Without advanced notice, however, work cannot be made up or submitted late.



## Grade Solicitation Policy

"Grade Solicitation" / "Grade Grubbing" - The inappropriate acts of asking for: rounding up of grades, extra opportunities to increase grades or any special consideration in regards to grades are strictly prohibited.



## 323 Course Recording Policy

Students may not photograph or use audio or video devices to record or screen capture materials that accompany lessons or exams (incl. Nearpod slides).

Students who violate this policy may be subject to both legal sanctions for violations of copyright law and disciplinary action under the University Code of Student Conduct.

In short: you do not have my permission to record me or anything in this course. Ever.

## ISU Excused Absence Policy

I understand that life happens and so I will follow ISU's policy on university excused absences. My expectations are below.

Prior to an excused absence you must:

- Email me personally (not in a group of your professors) with a greeting that includes my name. (It's not "Professor", that's my role)
- Indicate which course you're enrolled in.
- State your excuse and attach documentation.
- Clearly identify the assignments you will be missing.
- Provide a reasonable date by which you will complete the assignments you didn't submit on time. Be sure to name each assignment you will miss.

I always appreciate the Dean's Office mass-emails sent about student absences, but you still need to email me personally.

If you don't follow these steps, your absence will be considered unexcused and you will not have the opportunity to make up missed work.

# Let's All Agree On These Things:

## Intellectual Property

Anything on Power point/Nearpod/Canvas etc. that I provide to you as learning materials in this class belongs to me. It is mine. It is NOT yours. You may use it to help learn this material, but you DO NOT HAVE PERMISSION TO SHARE IT ANYWHERE. If you choose to post any material from this course anywhere online you run the risk of my finding it, having the ISU IT department trace it to your IP address, and reporting you to the Dean's Office for violation of the Student Code of Conduct, Section VI – A7. Simply put: use what I provide you, but don't share it with anyone; it's not yours to share. I'm crazy serious about this. (If I loaned you my car for a week, you'd respect that. You'd take care of it; you would return it as you found it. You would never leave the keys hanging by an elevator in Watterson with a sign that said "help yourself." My intellectual property is as personal to me, and as valuable to me, as my car. Please treat it as you would my car, okay?)

## Academic Dishonesty

Students are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct (Academic Integrity) and this syllabus.

- All work is to be appropriately cited when it is quoted or paraphrased from another source (including the course text/readings or any other source). **AI is not a permitted source.**
- Unauthorized and unacknowledged work with other students on assignments or tests, misrepresentation of sources, and/or the presentation of someone else's work, **including AI**, as your own, is considered plagiarism.
- Completing individual assignments for another student, re-using assignments from another course for credit in this one, misrepresenting attendance or contributions on any class document, or making your course work available to other students for submission are also considered to be cheating and results in immediate failure of the course.

Be aware that academic dishonesty is not limited to the use or attempted use of any unauthorized assistance in any academic exercise, or even of knowingly or intentionally assisting another in committing a violation of this or the larger university student code of conduct.

**Regardless of intentionality, in all cases, cheaters will immediately fail this course and will be reported to the office of Community Rights and Responsibilities for action taken there, too.**

In short, if you think you might be in a place where cheating is happening; leave. If you wonder if you're cheating, you probably are: stop (or ask).

(Here's the scoop - if you're simply in a place where people are sharing course information and if the prof found out it wouldn't be cool, then you're participating in legit academic dishonesty. Even if you didn't ask for that information, your presence there (even just your membership) means you benefited from that information and you are therefore participating in that dishonesty and can suffer the same consequences as those who are both seeking and giving the information. This happens w/GroupMe-Group Chattype messaging all the time. Don't join them, or if you choose to take the risk and you see it going south, delete your account immediately.)

Be Well 

## We Get By With A Little Help From Our Friends

If you or someone you know needs a bit of encouragement, request a through Redbirds Reach Out. Redbirds Reach Out is a new program on campus with the goal of connecting students who may be struggling via a letter of encouragement from a student peer. To request a letter, fill out the Redbirds Reach Out Letter Request. Learn more at: <https://studentaffairs.illinoisstate.edu/keepthriving/>

## Your Well-Being

It's hard to learn if you're hungry or couch surfing. If you are having difficulty affording groceries, accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or securing a safe and stable place to live, help may be available. I urge you to contact the Dean of Students Office to learn more. Also check out the School St. Food Pantry if you just need to pick up some groceries. For more tips and campus resources for taking care of yourself please visit: <https://studentaffairs.illinoisstate.edu/keepthriving/>

## Student Counseling Services

Life at college can get very complicated. In fact, according to recent research, nearly 44% of college students suffer from generalized anxiety disorder and are less likely to seek help for it compared to other mental health issues. Students also sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience depression, and struggle with relationship difficulties or diminished self-esteem. However, many of these issues can be effectively addressed with a little help.

Student Counseling Services (SCS) helps students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. Student Counseling Services is staffed by experienced, professional psychologists and counselors, who are attuned to the needs of college students. The services are

FREE and completely confidential. Find out more at <https://counseling.illinoisstate.edu/> or by calling (309) 438-3655.

## ISU Commitment To Diversity

ISU remains committed to creating and maintaining a working, learning and living environment that is welcoming, supportive, respectful, inclusive, diverse and free from discrimination and harassment. I know it's hard to call out or correct a teammate, TA or instructor, but I promise we are here to help and will be open to feedback and will commit to improvement. Thank you in advance for making the class a welcoming, inclusive class culture. If you have experienced or witnessed a bias-related incident, you can report to the Inclusive Community Response Team at the Dean of Students office. More info and a link to report are available at: <https://studentaffairs.illinoisstate.edu/who/diversity/icrt/>

## Harassment & Bullying

ISU provides support and resources to students, faculty, staff, and visitors to campus to address concerns relating to: gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence or stalking. Misbehavior will not be tolerated in this class or in group work. To report instances or problems (in or out of class) please visit: [https://ilstu-advocate.symplicity.com/public\\_report/index.php/pid987165](https://ilstu-advocate.symplicity.com/public_report/index.php/pid987165)