Syllabus Com 223 Fall 2025

Com 223 Fall 2025

Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00-3:15pm · CVA 147

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Instructor: Megan Koch · Office Fell 061 · Email: mkoch@ilstu.edu · Office Phone: 309.438-8447 · **Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00a-12:00p** ▷ **(https:// teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup- join/19%3ameeting_OGFlYmI0ZTEtOWYwMi00MDdmLTIkY2QtNjFiMjdhMGIwNDkw%40thread.v2/0? context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22085f983a-0b69-4270- b71d-10695076bafe%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22cdba6331-c929-42d4-b77e-025af6c7fa3e%22%7d)**

 and by appointment (all office hours will be on MS Teams; click the link to join the call)

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Course Purpose and Objectives:

The purpose of this class is to explore theories and improve your skills related to successful group communication in a variety of educational and professional contexts. To do so, the course will utilize lectures, activities, quizzes and projects geared toward improving the following skills (identified as crucial for employment by the US Department of Labor and the Society of Human Resource Management).

- Professionalism and work ethic
- Flexibility; ability to adapt to different work styles and personalities
- Written communication within different contexts
- Oral communication within different contexts
- Reading comprehension
- Time and task management (balancing multiple obligations)
- Problem assessment and collaboration
- Critical thinking and problem solving

Moreover, by the end of the semester you should have the ability to recognize, influence and critique the power groups wield and gain an understanding of the power individuals have to

transform the group through interdependency. Specifically you will:

- Acquire the vocabulary to explain individual roles in teams and leadership
- Diagnose team needs and demonstrate the flexibility to fulfill multiple roles as the situation dictates.
- Recognize and negotiate the ethical choices in group contexts and situations.
- Demonstrate an appreciation for and adjust to the needs of a diverse team of people.
- Identify the types of power leveraged by team members and the status and hierarchy that result; demonstrate comfort with discussions about each.
- Reflect on self concept and how the intersection of identities shapes the individual and the team.
- Internalize theoretical best practices and apply those skills to problem-analysis and decision-making processes.
- Develop knowledge and skills in critical and creative thinking in teams' processes.
- Expand knowledge and skills in verbal, nonverbal, listening and questioning communication in teams.
- Identify what constitutes a positive communication climate; guide a team to achieve and maintain such a climate.
- Diagnose and manage problems with deviance, conformity, groupthink, and conflict in teams.
- Demonstrate diligent preparation for and contribution to meetings; understand when to call a meeting, and communication responsibilities before, during and after the meeting as both a member and leader.
- Balance task and relational communication in a variety of team contexts and settings.
- Set SMART goals, establish timelines for completion, enact plans within the timeline, reflect and assess all stages of completion within a group or team context.
- Adapt all of the above concepts to function effectively in a variety of group communication contexts - including mediated and long-distance collaboration.

Course Materials:

- **Textbook:** (Fujishin) *Creating Effective Groups*. ISBN 9781538164440   4th edition
- **Canvas** will be used for assignments and grades, and linked *into* Canvas we will sometimes use Office 365, and Nearpod
- **Teammates** is the app we will use for peer evaluations (via your ISU email)

I would strongly recommend bringing a laptop, tablet or mobile device for accessing the textbook and Canvas in class.

Grade Calculation:

Final grades are assigned based on the accumulation of points throughout the semester. Points

are earned based on a combination of quality and completion. Team members will not receive credit for submissions if they did not participate in the team meeting or completion of that assignment.

Semester Group Project – 175 points*

○   Team charter - 10 points

○   Project proposal - 15 points

○   Midterm team assessment report & exam - 20 points

○   GANTT project timeline - 10 points

○   Meeting reports (12 meetings) - 50 points

○   Campaign closeout meeting analysis / final exam - 30 points

○   Final project portfolio and Instructor Assessment - 40 points

○   Organization evaluation - deductions for poor performance, unprofessional behavior or poor communication

- **Participation / Personal Accountability – 190 points***

○   Pre-class preparation assignments and quizzes – 50 points

○   Lecture participation (12 lectures) - 50 points

○   Meeting participation (12 meetings) – 50 points

○   Peer evaluations – 30 points 3 evaluations of your team's work. These are surveys sent to your ISU email from the app Teammates (watch your "other" folder for them!).

○   Final peer evaluation received - 10 points

*points possible may increase or decrease at the end of the semester to accommodate changing course needs; if this occurs, the point scale to assign letter grades will adjust accordingly on a 90/80/70/60 percent scale.

Rounding Final Grades

Final grades (as explained in the Grade Calculation section above) are determined by earned points, not percentages. Letter grades will be automatically rounded for students who are within 3 points of the next grade **AND have no missed assignments or activities (including lecture participation – after the dropped scores) AND have missed no more than one team meeting**.

- **Example 1**: Pete's final grade is sitting at 328/365 points. Pete did not complete Peer Eval 2, and earned a zero. If he had completed it on time, he would have earned an A in the class. However, he missed that assignment and so earned a B.
- **Example 2:** Jane is sitting on 327/365 points at the end of the semester. She missed 1 lecture activity (which is allowed) and turned in all homework on time. Because she did everything within her power to earn the next highest grade, she will be rounded to an A.
- **Example 3:** Sammi's Gradebook says she has 88%. She is a good student and thinks she should be rounded up because she is only .8% from an A. However, 88% = 321/365 points, which is not in rounding distance.

Expectations for Graded Coursework:

- All assignments must be turned in **early or on time** and in accordance with the directions on the individual assignment. (Some assignments will be due as hard copies in class, peer evaluations must be submitted through the emailed Teammates link, etc.).
- Deadlines are listed in the Course Calendar (at the end of this syllabus), and any adjustments to that calendar will be updated on Canvas and messaged out to the course. A few things to keep in mind about deadlines:
- Canvas will often show two deadlines – the DUE date and the CLOSE date, and they're not always the same date. Any assignments submitted after the due date will see a per-day late penalty. Assignments will not be accepted after the close date.
- Exceptions and extensions for **busy weeks or team miscommunication** must be negotiated at least the day before the deadline, and if granted may result in a percentage deduction per day. Once an extension is granted the second deadline will be firm.
- Exceptions and extensions **due to illness, injury or emergency** will be granted if documentation of such has been submitted to the Dean of Students. Please deal with your emergency first, then contact the Dean of Students with your documentation and *then* follow up with me. Typically the group is expected to submit on time even if a team member is absent, but talk to me if you need help navigating a team catastrophe.
- Please keep in mind that **peer evaluations cannot be re-opened once feedback is released to the class, and assignments cannot be turned in after final grades are due**, so please stay on top of those deadlines.
- **The entire group is responsible for an on-time submission of team assignments, so the penalty for a late team assignment (anything assigned as one copy per team) will apply to the entire group**. Make sure you are clearly communicating with each other regarding assignment submission.
- All team members must contribute to group assignments to receive credit (if you have to miss a meeting, make sure you talk to your team and contribute *before* the final product is turned in). Team members who are not in the group photo for a meeting report will be counted absent.
- Points will be deducted for failure to follow directions; please read all instructions carefully.

They're usually designed to streamline grading and get you feedback faster.

- All graded materials must have your name on it. No name = no score recorded. If prompted by a tool to log in, please use your ISU email or Office365 to ensure you get credit (do not log in with Google).
- Any assignments that require a recording of a conversation or presentation should be "camera on." Talk to me if you need borrow a camera to complete an assignment.
- I do not accept assignments via email or Canvas Inbox. Ever.
- If Canvas is down when an assignment is due, you may email me a copy to verify that you completed it on time and to notify me of the problem. However, you will be expected to post the assignment for grading when Canvas is up and running. I will not grade the emailed copy.
- Exceptions and do-overs will not be granted for improperly shared links or corrupted files. Please test all links to make sure they work. Do not submit .heic or .pages files (or anything else that might need specific hardware/software to open). When in doubt:
- Any video submissions should be housed in Canvas Studio and then linked into the assignment submission / portfolio
- Documents should be Word or PDF
- If an application asks you if you'd like to save a copy of your response or a confirmation of your submission – DO SO. I can't help you if you say you "definitely completed" an assignment if you don't have a copy of the submission.   It's a good idea to get in the habit of getting screenshots of submission screens (with a date/time stamp) just to be safe.

Checking grades

Project assignment grades should be posted to Canvas no later than 3 weeks after an assignment is submitted (we'll try to post sooner, but with the size of the class that might not always be possible). The Instructional Assistants will be taking care of weekly meeting reports, so feel free to chat with them if you have questions about those scores. Participation grades will usually be batch posted at midterm and end of term; I recommend that you keep track of your own attendance and participation to make sure my totals match yours. Cumulative grade updates will be on Canvas at midterm and end of semester ("total" scores will not be visible outside of that because we use drop scores - the posted total is often not entirely correct until the end of the semester). Just keep in mind that the bulk of your grade is tied up in the project which is scored at the end of the semester.

Grade privacy: Please understand that I can't discuss your individual grades with someone else in the room or your group assignment grades without you present. So, for issues regarding an individual assignment each individual must schedule a separate meeting; to discuss a group assignment grade, I must have all members attend the meeting. Furthermore, I am limited in what grade topics I can discuss over email, so plan on popping into office hours or setting up a meeting if you need to talk specifics.

Extra Credit and Extra Deductions:

You have a few very easy ways to earn bonus points throughout the semester – you may earn **UP TO 12 bonus points** through a combination of options. With the exception of exceeding your project goals, **all extra credit must be completed by the end of Week 12**; nothing submitted after that time will count toward your final grade.

- **Early project submission**: You may earn up to 6 bonus points on the Portfolio score if you *achieve your project goal AND turn in your Portfolio by the early submission date noted on the calendar*. Let me know if you have questions about this. Teams who schedule project events for after the early submission deadline will not be eligible for extra credit (unless you've already effectively achieved your goals **and** have made arrangements with me well in advance).
- **Exceeding goal expectations**: If your group greatly exceeds your primary and/or secondary goals while adhering to all of the rules and guidelines of the project assignment, you can earn a bonus on the Instructor Project Assessment. This is entirely subjective and depends on the nature of the achievement, but groups have earned it for going above and beyond the scope of the project or applying course concepts to effectively and maturely solve group problems.   You may lobby for consideration when you submit your final portfolio for grading. (Typically groups earn can earn EITHER early submission OR exceeding goals. In exceptional cases, teams can earn both, but the total of earned EC cannot exceed 12 points including the buffet listed below).
- **Buffet of EC Options**: A maximum of 6 points in this course can be earned from a combination of other extra credit opportunities. With the exception of exceeding your project goals, **all extra credit must be completed by the end of Week 12**; nothing submitted after that time will count toward your final grade.

🔊 You may receive extra credit for participating in any of the studies posted to the **School of Communication's Research Announcement Board**. The Research Announcement Board is updated as research studies are opened/closed, and it is your responsibility to access the Board and be aware of available opportunities. The Research Announcement Board can be accessed via: **https://sites.google.com/site/ilstusocstudies** ↗ **(https://sites.google.com/site/ilstusocstudies)**

- .   In general, each 30 minutes of participation in an extra credit study will earn you .5 Research Credits, but please see the call for participants for the Research Credits associated with each study. Each Research Credit is worth an additional 6 points toward your total possible final grade in this course. For example, if you participate in a research study worth .5 Research Credit, your participation would provide 3 points to your final grade. Each project listed on the Research Announcement Board will indicate the specific number of Research Credits associated with the project. The course instructor will get evidence of participation and the time of participation from

the researcher(s) who administer the research studies at the conclusion of the semester; however, it is your responsibility to make sure that the researchers have the necessary evidence of your participation at the time of the study. Before participating in a study, please be sure to have your name, ULID (i.e., the part of your email before @ilstu.edu), instructor name, and course and section number ready, as you will need to provide these to receive credit. Research Credit can only be applied to one course for each study, unless specified otherwise on the Research Announcement Board.

○ **Participating in in-class options as they arise**: Occasionally students in Com 297 will ask for research help, and sometimes other groups will need a hand. Those opportunities will come with a few points, but are not scheduled.

Conversely, your final grade can be penalized by excessive meeting absences, missing mandatory events (like your team's project events), poor performance reports from your organizational contact and poor communication behaviors with the class community. The purpose of this course is to identify standards for good communication practices and develop the skills necessary to exceed those standards. Poor communication habits are considered violations of these standards, and will be penalized under the premise that if you cannot demonstrate good communication behaviors then you are not learning or using the information covered in the course. Point penalties will depend on the severity of the situation. You will receive one warning (via email), and future problems will result in deductions to your grade book. No notice will be given when the deductions are posted. This policy is not meant to limit your participation in the course, but to encourage you to proactively utilize the best practice recommendations we will cover.

Participation in Class sessions & Group meetings:

Lectures: This is an in-person Communication course – unless otherwise noted on the course calendar, all scheduled lectures will take place in CVA and there is no option to join remotely. **You will earn points for Participation in lecture, and may drop up to two low Lecture participation scores**. If used for that week's activity, Canvas and Nearpod logins must show the IP address for CVA to receive credit (log in to ISUNET – using your phone's data plan or a VPN will not show the correct IP). Need to miss a lecture for an excused reason? Please refer to the **Absence Policy** **(https://canvas.illinoisstate.edu/#_Absence_Policy:)** below.

Project meetings: I understand that team meetings are tough to schedule, so we will use class time to meet with your project teams during class on Thursdays, beginning Week 2. Because of this, team meetings at 2p on Thursdays are required and failure to attend will hurt your grade and reflect poorly on you and your team. Your team should plan to meet on the 3rd floor of Milner Library to pick up your team folder from the Instructors' table. If you want to conduct your meeting on a different floor of the library, you may, however, remember to return your folder to the

Instructors' table before you leave for the night.

You'll be asked to provide a team selfie with each meeting report to verify team attendance (with that week's agenda visible in the photo). Meeting reports and selfies will be turned in on Canvas each week.   Groups may schedule additional meetings during the week, but will be counted absent if they do not meet during assigned class time (talk to me in advance if you want to reschedule one team meeting, but you may not reschedule all of them for outside of class time). During scheduled team meeting time, the TAs and I will be available for questions at Milner.

You'll earn points in team meetings for both *completion* of team meeting reports, and for *participation* in weekly team activities. **Not attending team meetings is a problem** – not only will you miss those points, but it adds a layer of complication for the group while they try to work without you and catch you up later. The net result is progress is slowed because of your absence.   For that reason ***failure to attend meetings or contribute to group assignments will result in no credit for those submissions. Team members who consistently fail to contribute can be removed from the team altogether.*** You can earn back half credit for up to 2 meetings - you must notify the team and post to Canvas prior to the meeting, and follow up with the team and on Canvas before class on Tuesday.   Please refer to the Project Packet and **Absence Policy (https://canvas.illinoisstate.edu/#_Absence_Policy:)** for guidance.

Preparing to Participate - Reading Assignments:

Preparing for a meeting is a core learning objective of this course, and, in that vein, reading for class is how you can best prepare for both our full-class meetings on Tuesdays and your team meetings on Thursdays.   To help you stay on track, ***reading quizzes will be due each week before the start of lecture and may only be taken twice.***   The weekly team activities, Midterm Assessment and Campaign Closeout will give you an opportunity to apply and analyze the concepts from the text. Any PDF readings will be posted to Canvas.

Participation Assessment

Lecture participation will be assessed in person and via Canvas. Please plan on bringing a charged laptop or mobile device to participate (although many activities will use plain old pen and paper). You will receive credit for completion and quality of your responses. Any in-class quiz games (usually via Nearpod) will be graded on a combination of *completion* and *correctness* . You will not receive credit for skipped questions, regardless of why you missed them. Make sure you have a device with you that is charged and can keep up (**talk to Tech support if you need a loaner device (https://help.illinoisstate.edu/technology/support-topics/teaching-and-learning/ requesting-a-loaner-laptop)**). If you have problems in class, check in with the TAs before you leave the lecture hall – any tech issues raised after I leave the lecture hall will be covered by the drop score policy (and remember you only get two dropped scores).

Log in to the ISUNET network – online submissions in class must come from CVA's IP address to receive credit (so if you're using your phone, make sure you're logged into ISU's wifi); if you typically use a VPN please make sure you turn it off for class.

Problems with tech during class? If you are having problems during class with Canvas or Nearpod – slow to load, forgot to log out of a VPN, switched to data, etc. – and you're worried you might not get credit, please stop by the TAs table with your campus ID to sign in to the class notebook and let us know of the issue. If these problems persist for more than one class, please talk to the HelpDesk for assistance.

Because of my travel schedule, I can only promise that Participation scores will be updated at midterm and at the end of semester. Please make sure you're attending class and answering all questions. We will drop two low Participation scores at the end of the semester. Details on which absences are excused is explained in the **Absence Policy. (https://canvas.illinoisstate.edu/#_Absence_Policy:)**

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Semester Project:

For your semester project, you will be assigned to collaborate as a team to combat a social issue that affects our local community. The project is broken into the assignments listed above, and the purpose of these assignments is to emphasize the small group process and to reward consistent, diligent teamwork. This is not a project that will turn out well if your group tries to throw it together at the last minute, or if members try to coast on others' work. In fact, it is not guaranteed that all members will receive the same grade and (Top) team members who consistently fail to contribute can be removed from the team together.

The angle your team takes to tackle your issue may require that you work with a local non-profit or address a social issue; most non-profits will tell you that they primarily need funds, however this doesn't have to be a strictly fundraising project. For example, your team can opt to log volunteer hours as a portion of your project (not more than 75%), or complete a long-needed project that the organization might otherwise have to pay for. Please take the time to figure out what your group is capable of and how that matches up to what fulfills your team goals and community needs. More details will be forthcoming after Week 3.

This class tends to perform very well on this project. This course typically earns an average of $20,000 per semester in donations, supplies and volunteer hours and even during COVID project teams found inventive ways to address local issues. In addition to the terrific work Com 223 students perform, this course provides the opportunity to network with employers in the community, develop skills to showcase on a resume, and produce tangible outcomes to point to in

an interview. Historically, Com 223 students found this course to be incredibly helpful for securing internships and jobs.

Project ground rules:

Needless to say, the expectations are high and achieving our goals takes a lot of hard work. Cutting corners becomes tempting but we have **simple ground rules for the project**. If you violate these rules you will be in a world of trouble (penalties include point deductions, failure on the project, failure in the course and code of conduct disciplinary hearings which can lead to University sanctions including expulsion). The assignment packet will provide more details, but the basics are:

- **Focus on a *single* organization or issue** - the team should be collaborating on a single goal.
- Once a proposal is submitted and accepted, your team may not change organizations, shift focus or dramatically change approved plans without instructor approval.
- Fundraising must benefit an *organization*. Supporting an individual's GoFundMe, for example, is not allowed.
- Volunteering hours only count when directed and documented by the organization. Team volunteer logs need approval by an organizational supervisor.
- Fundraising events will count the total profit (amount donated after expenses are reimbursed), not hours spent preparing or hosting the event. For example, if you host a bake sale, the time spent baking and sitting at the table wouldn't count toward your goal.
- Groups should try for a combination of volunteer hours / material support - the percentage split should be about 75/25 and will depend on the organization. The goal is to make sure you're collaborating towards the goal, not signing up to do hours independently.
- We will use our class's metric for goal completion - 10hrs / $100 per team member. If your organization uses another metric, that's a great talking point for your resume, but will not apply to the project grade.
- **Do the work to meet your goal** - you may not spend money out of pocket or rely on family donations. With few exceptions, YOUR TEAM needs to do the work - recruiting helpers will not count towards your team's totals.
- **Be honest in your group work** - all group work submitted for evaluation must be accurate; all funds collected must be donated to the organization. All receipts for purchases and verification of the final donation and volunteer hours must be submitted in order to get project credit. Team meeting reports must be accurate and include both an attendance roster and meeting selfie.
- **Represent the University and any community partners well** - the events you host must not reflect poorly on either organization or conflict with the Code of Student Conduct.
- **Plan to attend all team meetings and events** - communicate problems and conflicts early, and understand that it's your responsibility to be present at whatever events your team schedules. **Team meetings must take place each Thursday at 2p in Milner.** You can have

extra meetings, or keep the conversation going on a group chat, but you have to at least show up for your weekly meeting during classtime at Milner. Our Instructional Assistants will be checking in on each group's meeting, so make sure you are keeping them updated on where you are sitting in Milner.

- **Contribute to all team events and assignments** - please remember **you cannot receive credit for work you didn't do, or meetings you did not attend**. In the event of unavoidable absences or other problems, please remain in communication with your team; teams should make every effort to be flexible and create an environment where all members can participate fully.

The point is, please be honest in your work and adhere to the spirit and purpose of the assignment. Make sure you read the assignment details carefully with your group and refer back to them often.

Course Policies and Expectations:

Expected Class Behaviors

Although we do introduce communication theories and research concepts, group communication is first and foremost a skill to be honed. Creating a supportive environment is also vital to help you grow and sharpen your skills. Specifically, I expect my students to:

- ○ Attend class; arrive on time and stay to the end.
- ○ Do all readings, watch videos and complete your quizzes on time – come prepared to discuss!
- ○ In fact, discuss! Answer questions out loud! Class moves faster when you demonstrate you understand the topic!
- ○ **Students may not use audio or video devices to record classroom lectures or discussions**. Students who violate this policy may be subject to both legal sanctions for violations of copyright law and disciplinary action under the University's **Code of Student Conduct (https://deanofstudents.illinoisstate.edu/conduct/code/academic/)** .
- ○ Be respectful to your classmates, the Instructional Assistants and to me:
- ○ Please use your best judgment in language choices and humor
- ○ Please turn off cell phone ringers and do your best to minimize distractions during class and meetings.
- ○ Keep side chatter to a minimum - CVA is weirdly echo-y, and I can hear conversations happening around the auditorium clearly
- ○ Please remember group meeting attendance and participation is as important as class attendance and participation. Show up for class, and make sure you are prepared for your group meetings and do your best to make those meetings supportive and productive.

○ If you develop a cough or runny nose, please get a COVID test right away. If you're negative and feeling well enough, come to class (masked), and keep some space around you. Our class has a lot of people packed into a CVA, so let's **normalize wearing masks (https://canvas.illinoisstate.edu/courses/25913/pages/syllabus-com-223-fall-2024#_MASks:)** when we feel sniffly to avoid passing colds, flus, etc. Refer to the **Absence Policy (https://canvas.illinoisstate.edu/courses/25913/pages/syllabus-com-223-fall-2024#_Absence_Policy:)** if you are too sick to attend class.

Absence Policy:

Attendance at lecture and meetings is expected – this is a Communication course, and your presence is instrumental for ensuring you and your team stay on track. I know occasionally we're burned out, tired, and some days just can't deal with class (and that's not even factoring in that a dozen viruses are still running around). This absence policy is designed to incentivize showing up for class each week with a little grace provided for the things that come up – but disincentivize letting you fall so far behind that it only exacerbates your anxiety and burnout.

Basically, there are two types of absences: **Excused** (Communicable illness, bereavement, University sanctioned, military service, religious observance – requires documentation and might include advanced notice), and **Unexcused** (does not necessarily require notice or documentation).

Excused absences (https://deanofstudents.illinoisstate.edu/contact/absence/) – The Dean of Students office (Student Services Building, room 387) has a few kinds of absences that are considered officially excused.

○ **Communicable Disease (https://policy.illinoisstate.edu/students/2-1-30/)** - "If a student is required to be absent from class because of a required self-isolation or quarantine based on the directive of a public health official or health provider for a reason related to a communicable disease, the absence from class will be considered excused."

■ **What to do:** You must provide appropriate documentation from your health care provider to the **Dean of Students (https://illinoisstate.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6AyvIzZXL7MdKzc)** and contact me and your team to arrange to complete missed classroom work as soon as possible. Ultimately, students are responsible for material covered in class. PLEASE don't email me or send me your medical documentation- the DoS will evaluate your doctor's note and determine if it meets their requirements to be considered Excused. If they say it does not, please refer to the Unexcused policy below.

○ **Bereavement (https://policy.illinoisstate.edu/students/2-1-27.shtml)** – This allows for absences in the unfortunate event of the loss of a loved one.

■ **What to do:** please contact the **Dean of Students - (https://illinoisstate.az1.qualtrics.com/**

[**jfe/form/SV_6AyvIzZXL7MdKzc)**](jfe/form/SV_6AyvIzZXL7MdKzc) before you leave campus and they'll help you notify your professors and tell you what documentation you'll need to provide when you return. I appreciate a heads up to me and your team so we can navigate your absence together, but completely understand if you only have the bandwith to notify DoS.   Make sure you check in with us when you return to campus.

○ [**University Sanctioned***](https://policy.illinoisstate.edu/students/2-1-20.shtml) [(https://policy.illinoisstate.edu/students/2-1-20.shtml)](https://policy.illinoisstate.edu/students/2-1-20.shtml) , **Military, or** [**Religious Observance**](https://studentaccess.illinoisstate.edu/policies/religious-accommodations/) [(https://studentaccess.illinoisstate.edu/policies/religious-accommodations/)](https://studentaccess.illinoisstate.edu/policies/religious-accommodations/) **–** these policies cover planned absences you know about well in advance.

■ **What to do:** please provide **two weeks' advance notice** with appropriate documentation to me, so that I can work with you and your team to ensure that coursework can be completed and turned in **prior to departure** (note for religious accommodations – SAAS requires 30 days' notice to process a religious accommodation request; I ask to receive the SAAS accommodation notice two weeks before the absence, so plan to reach out to them at the top of the semester if you know you have a religious holiday coming up). If you fail to provide enough notice or do not complete your coursework prior to departure, you may opt to use one of your unexcused absence drop scores if you have any available.

■ **Note on University Sanctioned Absences for Athletes** - Just a heads up that some advisors do not send out paperwork until the day before departure, so it is YOUR responsibility to notify me and your group two weeks in advance of your departure for a sports event.   If you receive a copy of your travel schedule at the top of the semester, please highlight the dates you expect to be out of class and provide me with either a hard copy or emailed copy. Don't assume your advisor will take care of it.

*University sanctioned activities do **NOT** include: work events or shifts, fraternity or sorority events, group meetings, make-ups or study sessions for another class, career or internship fairs, vel or competition for Independent RSOs, early departure for breaks or vacations or anything else not listed in the official policy.*

Unexcused absences –

○ **The short answer:**   most absences are unexcused, and that's ok!   You will drop two low lecture participation scores and can earn back half credit on two missed meeting scores. So you can miss two of each without penalty (that is four total classes - basically two weeks' of (mostly) free sick days).

○ **The long answer:** it's a long semester and stuff happens - you get a cold that knocks you out, your sorority has a big event, or your roommate decided to shut off the heat in January and your whole apartment flooded (ask me about this one, it's WILD). I get it! And you're an adult who paid for this class, so really you can choose to attend or not.   This attendance policy is designed to keep you cognizant of the impact of your absence on your academic progress and your team's progress – but also acknowledges that you might have other things to deal with.   So anything not

covered by the excused policies above will be considered "unexcused," but that's not necessarily bad. Here is how that will work.   **The following absences are considered Unexcused*:**

■ **Regular illnesses (now including COVID) -** no, I don't want you to come to class sick. PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CLASS SICK.   Instead, stay home and take comfort knowing you have some drop scores to use. **If you feel sick and insist on coming to class anyway, please mask up**.

■ **Extended Absences** – These are usually due to accidents, mental health emergencies, prolonged illness, or hospital stays. Please notify the **Dean of Students** 🔗 **(https:// illinoisstate.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6AyvlzZXL7MdKzc)** and provide them with documentation; we'll figure out a plan and communicate with your project team based around your situation.

■ **Chronic physical illness and mental health** – If you are coping with a chronic physical or mental illness, I'd urge you to contact **Student Access and Accommodation Services (https:// studentaccess.illinoisstate.edu/services/request/)** (or SAAS) to ask about the resources available to you *before* you need them. Accommodations are not retroactive, so please reach out and set up your safety net right away - 350 Fell Hall, 438-5853 (voice), 438-8620 (TDD).   Unfortunately, without official accommodations in place, these absences will count as unexcused.

■ **Other common reasons to miss class** - picking up work shifts, club/fraternity/sorority events, job/internship fairs, advising appointments, make ups for another class, study sessions for another class, sick kids, etc., **are all unexcused**. It happens, and I understand, but this is why we have built-in drop scores.

*in emergency medical circumstances - with provided documentation and good communication - 🔊 can try to figure out a reasonable way to assist you.   Please keep in mind with unexcused absences, we will always use your drop scores first, and *then* discuss what additional accommodations are needed - do not ask me to "excuse" an absence, and assume any accommodations will require you to make up missed work by an agreed upon deadline.

How to use your drop scores in lecture- Good news! It's automatic! You don't even need to email me if you'll be absent! We will automatically drop two low lecture participation scores at the end of the semester, so you can miss two lectures (no questions asked) without it impacting your grade. After that, it's 5 points per missed activity. No need to email, *just check Canvas, check in with your team for notes and feel better soon!*

Missing Team Meetings – You cannot receive credit for a meeting you did not attend, however you can earn half credit for **up to 2 missed meetings** if you 1) provide your project updates to your Recorder and to Canvas before the meeting, and 2) complete and submit the missed activity to Canvas by classtime the next Tuesday. Full details are in the project packet and on Canvas.

■ **Team assignments - you will not get credit for an assignment you did not contribute to .** That means that even though you can make up some points for a missed meeting, if your unexcused absence means you did not contribute to an activity or major assignment that was discussed and completed at the meeting you cannot earn credit for it (so, for example, if you don't attend the Team Charter discussion, you cannot earn points for that assignment even though it is a "group" assignment).   Make sure you are staying on top of deadlines and communicating with your teammates.

Removing team members for non-attendance: Team members who miss an excessive number of meetings or fail to contribute to the team's events or project may be removed by their teammates. The removal process takes time and requires documentation of non-attendance on Meeting Reports, communication of concern as feedback on formal peer evaluations, and a meeting with the team and me to address a plan to improve participation. If, after exhausting all options for feedback a team member is still not attending or contributing, the team has two options: 1) keep the team member but request that all team members receive separate project scores based on individual contributions, or 2) unanimously vote to remove the member from the team – that person would receive a zero for all project components from that point forward (not retroactive).   Students who are removed from their team may complete an alternate research paper to satisfy project requirements (75 pages minimum; due by the end of Week 15).   Because removal of a team member requires a process, it's important that you're honest in all team documents and communicate with me or your Instructional Assistant as soon as you see a problem begin to develop.

Cheating & Plagiarism

Students are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy as outlined in the **Code of Student Conduct (https://deanofstudents.illinoisstate.edu/ conduct/code/)** and this syllabus.

- All work is to be appropriately cited when it is quoted or paraphrased from another source (including the course textbook and info from your non-profit organization).
- Unauthorized and unacknowledged collaboration on assignments or tests, misrepresentation of sources, and/or the presentation of someone else's work as your own is considered plagiarism (this includes AI-produced writing).
- Completing individual assignments for another student, re-using assignments from another course for credit in this one, misrepresenting your or a classmate's attendance or contributions on any class document (including submitting Nearpod for credit if you are not attending class), misrepresenting the source of donations raised or making your course work available to other students for dishonest submission (with or without your knowledge) are also considered to be cheating and will be referred accordingly.

- You may use your notes and text for reading quizzes, but that's it; evidence of utilizing outside resources for reading quizzes (Chegg, etc.) will be considered academic dishonesty.
- Violating the **Project Ground Rules** **(https://canvas.illinoisstate.edu/courses/25913/pages/ syllabus-com-223-fall-2024#_Project_ground_rules:)** could result in academic dishonesty problems for the whole team, so make sure you're all clear on what is and isn't allowed.

Students found to commit unintentional or intentional acts of plagiarism may earn a zero on the assignment, may fail the course and will be **referred for appropriate disciplinary action (https:// deanofstudents.illinoisstate.edu/conduct/code/academic/)** . Plagiarism or cheating on group work (even unintentionally) will impact all members of the group, so please be honest in your work, and carefully check anything that has your name on it.

Communication:

Walk-In / Office Hours: My walk-in hours (office hours) for the semester are **T/Th 11:00a-12:00p on Teams** ⤢ **(https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup- join/19%3ameeting_OGFIYml0ZTEtOWYwMi00MDdmLTIkY2QtNjFiMjdhMGlwNDkw%40thread.v2/0? context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22085f983a-0b69-4270- b71d-10695076bafe%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22cdba6331-c929-42d4-b77e-025af6c7fa3e%22%7d)**

 (click the link to join the Teams call – I will likely not be in my office). You don't need an appointment to pop in at that time, but if I don't pull you out of the waiting room right away it's because I'm meeting with a classmate. Just hang out and I'll pull you in when they're done. If that time doesn't work for you, just send me an email / chat and I'll send you a link to my schedule.

Email tips: Your Instructional Assistants and I want to respond to your questions quickly and accurately, but it is difficult to do that if we can't decipher either the question or the identity of the person sending the message. So please make sure you:

1. **Email** us from your ISU email account or Canvas Inbox.
2. Make sure your message is clear:

- Please include the course name, your group number and name and a topic in your email / chat messages. *Example: "*COM 223, Group 2 (Team Awesome), Posting a calendar announcement."
- Please include a salutation and a signature in your message. You may call me Megan or Ms. Koch. Our Instructional Assistants will tell you how they would like to be addressed.
- Do not use text-speak in your email. Please proofread for proper spelling, grammar and punctuation. Remember that sarcasm doesn't translate well over email.
- Make sure your question is clear. If you are sending an informational email, but would like a reply as confirmation of receipt please say so.
- Please sign your email with your first *and* last name. As the semester progresses I'll get to

know you all, but bear in mind that there might be other people in this class (or my other classes) with your first name (ask me about the semester where we had 4 people with the same first AND last name – it was chaos!).

- Allow 24-48 hours for a response during the week. If you email me during a speech tournament (F-M) you likely won't receive a reply until Tuesday morning. I will do my best, but sometimes the schedule and tech limitations make it impossible to send a thorough reply when I am away from the office.
- Check your email for a reply before asking me if I received your email. It's possible you got a reply right before class.

Emailing our organizational contacts: Each group may be interacting with reps from a local non-profit or community agency. They will note every interaction and keep every email to support their final evaluation. Impolite and unprofessional communication with her WILL affect your project score. They interact with a lot of people over the course of the semester, so for the sake of clarity and your team's grade please make sure you do the following when emailing your contact:

- Only the group's Liaison should be emailing the organization. You want to make sure they're not getting the same question from multiple people in your group.
- Include a clear, specific subject
- Keep your questions brief and direct. Proofread your message carefully.
- Sign the email with your first and last name, and include your team name and number
- You're welcome to cc or bcc all of your correspondence to me or your group's assigned TA if you think you need help with an issue, but I don't expect you to do this. **This procedure may change at the request of a community contact, so please be polite and patient.**

Remember - unprofessional, confrontational or indecipherable emails will at best be ignored and at worst will result in a "Poor Communication Habits" penalty. I'd prefer to make sure your questions are answered quickly, so please follow these guidelines and thanks so much for understanding. It can be tough to stay on top of email from 200+ students. **(Top)**

MASKS:

Obviously, we are not mandating mask wearing, but please understand that we have students with varied medical histories and family responsibilities - be mindful of your role in making the class community as safe as possible:

- Respect your classmates' personal space (as much as we can in a tight lecture hall) and respect their desire to wear a mask if they choose to do so.
- If you are feeling well enough to attend class, but are coughing or sneezing (you tested negative, but you know it's not allergies), please wear a mask, use hand sani, and give your classmates a little extra space.

If you do opt to wear one, remember that mask quality matters- **neck gaiters, bandanas, masks made with mesh fabric and masks with exhale vents should be avoided if your goal is to prevent spreading illness**. Cloth masks are ok, but not ideal. KN-95, KF-94 and N95 respirators are preferred for protecting everyone in the lecture hall. I usually have a stash of masks, so hit me up if you need one. Let's try to minimize the effects of cold / flu / COVID season!

Support and on-campus resources

Tech Problems:

If you find you need help with equipment during the semester, please contact the Support Center: SupportCenter@IllinoisState.edu or 309-438-4357.   With the exception of campus-wide server outages, problems with your computer or internet connection are not acceptable reasons to submit assignments late.

 If you have a technical issue with **Canvas**:

- Immediately contact the HelpDesk either at **https://ithelp.illinoisstate.edu/ (https:// ithelp.illinoisstate.edu/)** or (309) 438-HELP. After the HelpDesk has resolved your issue they will send you an email to "close your ticket." Please forward me a copy of this email so I know your problem has been resolved properly.
- Drop me an email to let me know you're having a problem and to show me your filed help ticket. If you were trying to post an assignment, include that assignment in this email so I know it was completed. Also include any error messages you're seeing (screencaps are helpful for this).
- When the problem has been resolved, post your assignment as usual. I won't grade an assignment that has been emailed to me, so please make sure it's posted per the requirements in the assignment.

If you have problems with hardware or wifi access and just need some assistance, please contact the Technology Support Center: ithelp@ilstu.edu or 309-438-4357

If you have problems with **Teammates** (the app we use for peer evaluations), please visit their **support page ▷ (https://teammatesv4.appspot.com/web/front/help/student)**. There you may find an answer in their FAQs. If not, you are welcome to email them for help, and cc me on that message so I know you're working on it.   The app developers are very responsive and helpful, and usually respond within 24 hours.   The most common issue with Teammates is that Outlook will put their emails in the Other or Junk folder – **if you can't find the email to complete your peer eval**, go into Outlook, click on the search bar (and check the little drop menu to make sure you're searching All Folders), and type "teammates" – your messages should pop right up. If not, check in with me to make sure you typed your email address correctly on your group survey.

Accommodation Services:

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented reason should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall, 438-5853 (voice), 438-8620 (TDD). **www.studentaccess.ilstu.edu** ⮕ **(http://www.studentaccess.ilstu.edu)**

. The Accommodations office will not contact me about your needs, so plan on visiting my office early in the semester to discuss what I can do to help. Please make sure you EMAIL your accommodation card to me, and put "Com 223 Accommodation Card" in the subject heading so I can file it in the correct folder. Accommodations are not retroactive – for example, you can't get an assignment extension if you didn't have accommodations in place prior to the due date – so visit them early if you think you might have a need they could help address.

Redbird care alerts – Get help for your team members

I know it's a massive inconvenience when team members disappear, but sometimes the reasons for that person's absence are complicated and overwhelming. If you haven't heard anything from a team member in a while, or suspect that they might be in need of help or resources from the campus, please let me know or submit a Redbird Care Team Alert on their behalf. This report doesn't get anyone in trouble, but it does demonstrate care and concern and enlists the assistance of professionals on campus who are equipped to deal with difficult situations. For more information or to submit a report please visit: **https://studentaffairs.illinoisstate.edu/who/ safety/rct.php (https://studentaffairs.illinoisstate.edu/who/safety/rct.php)** or call: the Dean of Students office at 309-438-2008.

Personal resources and Support

Mental health resources - Life at college can get very complicated. According to recent research, nearly 40% of college students are at-risk for developing 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) (https://counseling.illinoisstate.edu/)** 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 Counseling.IllinoisState.edu or by calling (309) 438-3655.

Need encouragement? Request a letter through Redbirds Reach Out. Redbirds Reach Out is

a 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 (https://forms.illinoisstate.edu/forms/redbirds_reach_out)** .

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 (https:// deanofstudents.illinoisstate.edu/services/)** to learn more. Also check out the **School St. Food Pantry** ⤷ **(https://linktr.ee/ssfp)** 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/ (https://studentaffairs.illinoisstate.edu/ keepthriving/)**

REPORTING PROBLEMS

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 an 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 and team 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/ (https:// studentaffairs.illinoisstate.edu/who/diversity/icrt/)**

Harassment and 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?)**

Tentative Course Schedule

Week	Date	Day	Reading	Lecture topic	Assignment Due
Unit One: From Individuals to a Group - Team Formation					

1	8/19	T		Syllabus Review Introduction to 223	
	8/21	Th	Chapter 1	What is Small Group Comm?	
2	8/26	T	Chapter 2	Discovering Yourself ***Asynchronous lesson (on Nearpod; do not go to CVA)***	**Nearpod lesson due by 11:59pm - take notes on your responses / outcomes for your first team meeting (no quiz for this chapter)** **Group placement survey due 11:59pm**
	8/28	Th	Chapter 3	Expressing yourself clearly and setting ground rules. First team meeting Come to CVA to meet your team *Proposal & Team Charter submission portal opens*	**Reading quiz due by 1:59pm** **Trade contact info / assign jobs; begin writing team charter** **Meeting 1 report to be turned in at end of class**
3	9/2	T	Chapter 4 and PDF	Managing Meetings and Listening	**Reading Quiz due by 1:59pm**
	9/4	Th		Team Meetings in Milner (come to 3rd floor to pick up your team's folder - communicate with each	**Final Team Charter Due** (print and turn in as the cover page on your team

					other in advance so you know where you plan to meet).	folder)
	9/5	F				**Meeting report due by 11:59p (same deadline each week)**

Unit Two: Task Outcomes

4	9/9	T	Chapter 5 and PDF		Goal setting; Problem Solving (Team Project Proposals)	**Reading Quiz due by 1:59pm**
	9/11	Th			Team Meetings	**Project Proposal Due (printed and turned in via your team folder)**
	9/12	F				**Meeting report due by 11:59p**
	9/16	T	PDF reading		Decision Implementation (GANTT Charts) and Task Development *Peer Eval 1 Opens*	**Reading quiz due by 1:59pm**
	9/18	Th			Team Meetings	
	9/19	F				**Meeting Report due**

Unit Three: Relational Outcomes

6	9/23	T	Chapter 6 (p. 109-121) & Chapter 7	Preparing for and Guiding Discussion; Roles	**Reading quiz due by 1:59pm**
	9/25	Th		Team Meetings	**Begin to schedule mid-project meetings**
	9/26	F			**Meeting Report due** **Peer Eval 1 Due via Teammates (look for an email)** **GANTT Charts due**
7	9/30	T	Chapter 9	Climate, Cohesion and Motivation	**Reading quiz due by 1:59pm**
	10/2	Th		Team Meetings	
	10/4	F			**Meeting Report Due**
8	10/7	T		No Lecture – Project Meetings	
	10/9	Th		Project report meetings Team Meetings	
	10/10	F		Project report meetings	**Meeting Report Due** **(would like to get the MidProject Assessment**

					Report before spring break, but you have til the Tuesday after to submit without penalty)

Unit Four: Conflict

9	10/14	T	Chapter 10	Conflict *Peer Eval 2 Opens*	**Reading quiz due by 1:59pm** **Mid project assessment due 11:59pm**
	10/16	Th	Team Meetings		
	10/17	F			**Meeting Report Due**
10	10/21	T	Chapter 10 & Supplemental PDF	Conflict pt 2 & Power *Final Project Submission Portal Open*	**Reading quiz due by 1:59pm**
	10/23	Th		Team Meetings	
	10/24	F			**Meeting Report Due** **Peer Eval 2 Due via Teammates (look for it in your email)**

11	10/28	T	More Chapter 10 and Supplemental PDF	Forgiveness and Restoring Trust	**Reading quiz due by 1:59pm**
	10/30	Th		Team Meetings	
	10/31	F			**Meeting Report due**

Unit Five: Leadership

12	11/4	T	Chapter 8	Lecture – Leadership	**Reading quiz due by 1:59pm**
	11/6	Th		Team Meetings	
	11/7	F			**Meeting Report due** **Last day to drop course with WX** **Last day to turn in / complete any extra credit assignments** **Early portfolio submission extra credit deadline** *Peer Eval 3 opens after your project is submitted*
13	11/11	T	Supplemental PDF	Leadership pt. 2	**Reading quiz due by 1:59pm**

	11/13	Th		Team Meetings	
	11/14	F			**Meeting Report due**

Unit Six: Adjournment

14	**11/18**	T		Lecture Adjournment and Closure *Campaign Closeout Sign Up Opens*	**Quiz due by 1:59pm**
	11/20	Th		Team Meetings	**Final Portfolio Submission Due**
	11/21	F			**Meeting Report**
15	**11/22-30**			**Thanksgiving Break - no classes**	
	12/2	T		Campaign Closeout Meetings	
	12/4	Th		Campaign Closeout Meetings	
	12/5	F		Campaign Closeout Meetings	**Peer Eval 3 due**

Finals week: We will not meet during Finals Week. Please have any final bits of documentation (receipts, etc.) turned in by Thursday, Dec 11 at 11:59pm.