

**CMS 330: Small Group Communication**  
**Spring 2015**  
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**Textbook:**

Rothwell, J. D. (2013). *In mixed company: Communicating in small groups and teams*. Belmont, CA: Cengage/Thomson Wadsworth. ISBN: 9781111346850

**Course Purpose and Learning Outcomes:**

This course is designed to develop students' abilities to work effectively in small groups and present information in a group style. It is a General Education Course and addresses GEC Student Learning Outcome 1B: students will demonstrate the ability to develop and focus on one topic in speaking assignments and present ideas in an organized, logical and coherent form.

Upon completion of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Identify the basic principles of communication, reasoning, & decision-making.
2. Explain the aids and barriers to small group communication for decision-making & problem-solving.
3. Discuss group roles, group climate, conflict management, and effective group decision-making.
4. Demonstrate research and oral citation ability through participation in two small group informative presentations.
5. Identify a relevant problem, analyze the problem, and present a solution to this problem in a group presentation.

**Course Requirements:**

- **Group Presentations:** Students are required to complete three (3) small group presentations:  
Informative Small Group Presentation #1 – 150 points  
Informative Small Group Presentation #2 – 170 points  
Final Small Group Presentation – #3 – 450 points  
**(Presentations are to be the original composition of each group. Although you must use outside sources in preparing a presentation and cite them appropriately, students should not plagiarize such material.)**
- **Exams:** Each student is required to take two (2) examinations in class and one (1) take home exam:  
Exam #1 – 100 points  
Exam #2 – 100 points  
Exam #3 – 75 points  
(The exams will cover material covered in class and the text. The two in-class exams may include multiple-choice, true-false, fill-in-the-blank, and essay questions; the take home exam will only include essays.)
- **Homework/Quizzes/Participation:** Periodically, you will have homework assignments and/or quizzes on the course material. Additionally, you are expected to keep up with reading assignments and to be prepared to discuss the material in class. Finally, you are expected to be in attendance for all

presentations and be available to evaluate other group presentations. 150 points of your grade will be based on this.

## **CMS 330 PRESENTATION ASSIGNMENTS**

Students will present material in small groups, either assigned by the instructor, or chosen by students. Each student in the group must actively participate and present material pertinent to the topic. Each student is to speak in an extemporaneous mode (using notes only). During each presentation, individual students will be evaluated based on content, organization, language, audience adaptation, vocal delivery, nonverbal delivery, and overall value to the group presentation. Both group and individual grades will be given for all of the group presentations.

An outline of the group presentation and a bibliography (in proper bibliographic form) must be turned in with all group presentations. Speaking within the time limits is very important, not only for the efficient running of the class but also because speakers in the "real world" are expected to adhere to time limits. If you are severely over or under the time limit (one minute or more), your presentation grade will be penalized. See appropriate time limits for each presentation below.

### **Informative Small Group Presentation #1: – 150 Points Total**

**Individual (75 pts.) and Group Grades (75 pts.) Earned**

**Instructor Chooses Groups: Group Chooses Topic**

In small groups, students are to present a short informative presentation on a topic of your choice. Each student will be responsible for presenting pertinent information, adding to the overall presentation of the topic. Each student's portion of the presentation should present a balanced (i.e., unbiased) presentation of both sides of the topic, and students must cite all sources used during the presentation. Each student's portion should be approximately 2 – 3 minutes. A complete outline and bibliography is required for each group (APA Format).

### **Informative Small Group Presentation #2: 170 Points Total**

**Individual (85 pts.) and Group Grades (85 pts.) Earned**

**Instructor Chooses Topic: Students Choose Groups**

In small groups, students are to present a short informative presentation on some aspect of using small groups to solve problems. This presentation should incorporate current research about the effectiveness/ineffectiveness of using small problem-solving groups in our world today. I will give you several corporations to choose from as you work to discover the WHY and HOW these corporations are using small problem-solving groups. All speakers must orally cite sources within his or her portion of the presentation. Each student's portion should be approximately 3 – 4 minutes. A complete outline and bibliography is required for each group (APA Format).

### **Final Small Group Problem-Solving Project: 450 Points Total**

**Individual (100 pts.) and Group Grade (350pts.) Earned**

**Students choose groups and topics**

In small groups, students are to present a solution to a local problem that deserves our attention and that can be solved. Students will identify a particular problem in Hattiesburg or on USM campus, analyze the problem, and offer a solution to the problem.

The group project will culminate in a presentation given to the entire class, and addressing all phases of problem solving (identifying the problem, analyzing the problem, and offering a workable solution to the problem). All sources must be cited within your portion of the presentation. Each student's portion should be approximately 5 - 7 minutes. A complete outline and bibliography is required for each group (APA Format). Each student will be assessed according to general speaking guidelines, the group will be assessed according to the group presentation rubric, and the group will be assessed on problem identification, analysis, and solution.

### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topics and Assignments</u>
Week 1	Course overview / Introduction to Small Group Communication Small Group Communication (Text--Chapters 1, 2)
Week 2	Group Development (Text--Chapter 3) Group Climate (Text—Chapter 4) Informative Presentation #1: Guidelines, groups, topics
Week 3	Gathering Material & Citing Sources Workday (in class) <i>Speaking Center Workday</i>
Week 4	<b><i>Informative Group Presentation #1 (groups 1, 2, &amp; 3)</i></b> <b><i>Informative Group Presentation #1 (groups 4, 5, &amp; 6)</i></b>
Week 5	Roles & Leadership (Text--Chapter 5) Effective Groups (Text—Chapter 6)
Week 6	Review for Exam 1 <b>Exam 1</b> (covers chapters 1 – 5) Informative Presentation #2: Guidelines, groups, topics
Week 7	Gathering Material & Citing Sources Workday (in class) <i>Speaking Center Workday</i>
Week 8	Overcoming Anxiety & Gaining Attention (Text—Appendix A) Decision Making & Problem Solving (Text—Chapters 7 – 8)
Week 9	<b><i>Informative Group Presentation #2 (groups 1, 2, &amp; 3)</i></b> <b><i>Informative Group Presentation #2 (groups 4, 5, &amp; 6)</i></b>
Week 10	Conflict and Conflict Management (Text—Chapter 10) Review for Exam 2
Week 11	<b>Exam 2</b> (covers chapters 6, 7, 8, 10) Using Visual Aids (Text—Appendix A) Critical Thinking (Text—Appendix B) Final Small Group Project: guidelines, groups, topics

- Week 12      Identifying the Problem  
Identifying the Problem – group sheet turned in
- Week 13      Analyzing the Problem  
Analyzing the Problem – group sheet turned in
- Week 14      Solving the Problem – group sheet turned in  
***Final Small Group Projects (Groups 1 & 2)***
- Week 15      ***Final Small Group Projects (Groups 3 & 4)***  
***Final Small Group Projects (Groups 5 & 6)***  
***(A take-home final exam will also due on this day)***
- Week 16      We will not meet