

**SPCH 102: Small Group Communication and Critical Thinking**  
**Spring 2015**  
**Dr. Krista L. Phair**  
**Ohlone College**

**Textbooks:**

Rothwell, J. D. (2013). *In mixed company: Communicating in small groups*. Belmont, CA: Cengage.

Ruggiero, V. R. (2013). *Beyond feelings: A guide to critical thinking*. Boston, MA: McGraw Hill.

**Course Description & Student Learning Objectives:**

The general objective of this course is to provide students with a broad background in ethical individual and group decision making which is based on sound critical thinking communicative skills. The group system will serve as the setting for students to practice the emphasized critical thinking skills related to inductive and deductive reasoning, integration of formal and informal logic, evaluation of claims in everyday life, and on fallacies of language and logic in problem solving. By the end of the semester students should be able to:

- 1) Examine the theory and research in group/team communication to build competence in small group communication
- 2) Evaluate and apply small group theory to for effective problem solving/decision making
- 3) Demonstrate ability to solve problems through critical thinking
- 4) Utilize and analyze formal and informal logic in inductive and deductive reasoning

This course is broken down into two distinct parts. Part one will focus almost exclusively on critical thinking and will occupy the first five weeks of class. For the remainder of the semester the focus will shift to group communication with an emphasis on applying critical thinking concepts in the group context.

**Course Requirements:**

**Papers**

You will be required to write four papers, one will focus on group communication, two will focus on critical thinking, and the final paper will be a reflection on your experience working in groups. Two of these papers will be done as cooperative group projects. All papers will be submitted electronically via Blackboard. More information on these assignments will be provided to you as the semester progresses.

**Exams**

There are four exams in this course: a fallacy exam, two midterms, and a final. These exams tend to draw heavily on the principles explained in the primary course texts, which is just one reason why it's important to keep up with your assigned reading. Instructors will discuss these exams as the semester progresses. All exams will be cooperative exams taken in groups.

### **In class activities and Quizzes**

There will be a variety of in class activities and reading quizzes given throughout the semester. These activities cannot be made up if you miss class.

### **Journal**

You will be required to keep a journal. Most class days will start with a critical thinking prompt that you will be expected to write on in your journal. You should bring your journal to class every day. Journals will be collected 4 times during the semester.

### **Group Presentations**

At the beginning of the semester the class will be broken into groups. Each group will be responsible for presenting an analysis of a group concept. Detailed instructions for this assignment will be provided on Blackboard.

### **Attendance and Participation**

Regular attendance and participation is required of all students enrolled in courses at Ohlone College.

### **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:**

	Topic	Reading Due	Assignments Due
Week 1			
	Introduction to Course		
Week 2	What is Communication and Critical Thinking	Ruggiero 1&2	
	Truth, knowledge, and opinion	Ruggiero 3-5	
Week 3	What is an Argument	Ruggiero 7, Bb 1	
	Types of evidence	Ruggiero 6, Bb 3	
week 4	Types of evidence	Bb 4	
	Peculiar Pitfalls; Fallacy Quiz attempt #1		
Week 5	Strategies for Critical Thinking	Ruggiero 14-19*	
	Critical Thinking Midterm		

Week 6	Introduction to Group Communication	Rothwell 1-2	
	Groups defined and evaluated	Rothwell 1-2	Evidence Analysis Paper
Week 7	Group Development and task management	Rothwell 3	
	Group Climate	Rothwell 4	
Week 8	Writing a paper in a group		
Week 9	Roles and Leadership	Rothwell 5	
	Defective and Effective Decision Making and Problem Solving	Rothwell 7-8	
Week 10	Developing Effective Teams	Rothwell 6	
	Team Building Activity		
Week 11	Power and Conflict	Rothwell 9-10	Movie Analysis Paper Due
	Group Midterm		
Week 12	No Class; Fallacy Quiz on Line	Bb 7	
Week 13	Cooperation, collaboration, and compromise	Bb 8	
Week 14	Group Presentation		
	Group Presentation		
Week 15	Murder Mystery One		

Week 16		
	Murder Mystery Two	Informed Citizen Paper Due
Week 17	Review for Final Exam	
	Final Exam	Group Reflection Paper Due