Course Objectives:

1) To introduce students to many of the primary areas of research in small group communication and behaviors. The primary focus of this survey course will be on intra-group (within group) communication, although some readings relate to external group communication.

2) To provide students with the opportunity to pursue an area of interest in small group communication in depth. Since the course is a survey course, there will be more breadth than depth in the class, but through the research proposal students will obtain more depth.

3) To enable students to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the complexity of group processes.

4) To provide students with resources and materials for teaching undergraduate courses in small group communication.

Course Readings:

*Packet of readings:* A series of required readings have been selected for the course. A list of these is provided in the daily/weekly schedule below. They are a mixture of classic pieces, current studies, and review articles.

In addition, for certain dates/topics, students will be assigned one of two readings or find their own additional reading to bring to class. Those readings should be recent articles—2012 or newer, and probably studies rather than review articles. They should not be articles read for some other class.

*Undergraduate Textbook (optional):* It is recommended that you supplement the readings with an undergraduate textbook. I have some very old ones available if you do not have access to one. This will give you a sense of topics we don’t cover, of the way primary research gets translated into textbooks, and help you prepare to teach an undergraduate class in group communication.

*Americans with Disabilities Act:* If you have special needs covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact me for assistance. If you have additional needs, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 405-325-3852.

*Plagiarism and Cheating:* Graduate students are expected to follow the University of Oklahoma Integrity Guidelines. According to its code, academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism,
fabrication, fraud, destruction, bribery or intimidation, assisting others in violating the code, or attempting to engage in such activities. Of particular concern for graduate students is providing appropriate citations for ideas or information from credible sources. Failure to provide citations is a form of plagiarism. Cheating is an extreme form of plagiarism. Copying the majority or entirety of someone else's work and presenting it as your own is cheating. If discovered, this will result in the individual being turned in for academic dishonesty and may result in failure in the course.

Course Evaluation:

Participation: 10%
Abstract/Summaries: 20%
2 In-Class Essays: 30% (15% each)
Research Proposal 40%
  Rationale: 5%
  RQ/H 5%
  Final 30%

Assignment Descriptions:

Participation: You are expected to be actively involved in participate in the discussion each class period. This includes making comments, asking questions, providing examples, etc. Your participation should demonstrate that you have completed the assigned readings and are willing to share appropriate personal experiences in groups. You are expected to be talkative when we meet!

Abstract/Summaries: For one required article each week (except for first /last weeks), write a brief summary of its key concepts to demonstrate your understanding of the article. In addition, for any days when you select your own additional reading, write a second summary of that article. These summaries should be no longer than ½ page per article and shorter if appropriate (single space, normal fonts and margins). These are a bit longer than the abstracts for most articles. You may include evaluative comments, but this is not meant to be a thorough critique of the articles. These are due to be turned into the dropbox in Canvas at the beginning of class on the day we discuss the articles. One of the goals of these is to learn to be concise. It is a valuable writing skill.

Two Essays: Twice during the semester, there will be an essay to write to demonstrate your ability to synthesize some of the materials you have read. These may include a variety of writing activities including applying course information to case studies, personal experiences, and so forth. These will likely be in-class, but may be take home, depending on how the class develops. These essays are open note and open book but these are timed activities so that you will not have much time to examine your notes.

Research Proposal:

1. Choose a small group communication topic of interest to you. It does not have to be a topic that is on the syllabus. You will need to narrow the topic considerably. For example, "small group leadership" is too broad, but might be your starting point. Make sure that the topic includes small groups and communication. It is easy to get on a tangent.
2. Review as much relevant literature on the topic as possible. Your course readings should be good leads for articles to read. Many of these readings may be from areas such as sociology, psychology, management, etc. Try to find the communication focus in these regardless of the field in which it was published.

3. Once you have reviewed enough of the literature, you should have a sense of what has been studied on your topic and what could be studied. Develop some research questions or hypotheses to explore an area that has not adequately been explored or needs to be reconsidered. Keep the focus relatively simple; do not try to cover everything.

4. Develop a research method for answering your questions/hypotheses. Consider qualitative, quantitative, critical or rhetorical methods; consider surveys, experiments, observations, or some combination. You may or may not want to use a method similar what was used in what you read. The method you propose should be described in as much detail as you are capable of providing. This will vary from student to student. See me for help if this part troubles you.

5. Deadlines: To assist you in making progress and improve the quality of the final project, parts of the project are due throughout the semester. These will all be submitted through Canvas.

   a. A topic rationale (@ 1-2 pages) Due October 4
   b. Rationale and statements of RQ or Hypotheses (@1-2 pages) Due October 25
   c. Final project Due December 6

6. Final Project: This should be an article length proposal (12-20 pages of text excluding title page and references) including the following:

   a. an introduction/rationale for the study (@ 1-2 pages)
   b. a review of the relevant literature (@7-10 pages)
   c. rationale and statement of research questions/hypotheses (1-2 pages)
   d. proposed methodology including proposed survey instrument or interview questions, depending on methodology (2-3 pages)

Reading Schedule

Week 1, Tuesday, August 23: Introduction to Class: Definitions and Theoretical Perspectives


Week 2 Tuesday, August 30: Nonverbal Communication and Communication Networks


6. Choose 1:


7. *Your choice article*—either involving nonverbal or networks

Week 3 Tuesday, September 6: Symbolic Interaction and Fantasy Themes


11. *Your choice article*—using symbolic interaction, fantasy theme, or narratives

Week 4 Tuesday, September 13: Norms, Conformity, Deviance, and Teamwork


14. Choose 1:

   Minei, E., & Bisel, R. Negotiating the meaning of team expertise: A firefighter team’s epistemic denial. *Small Group Research, 36,* 555-599.


Week 5 Tuesday, September 20: Bona Fide Group Perspective and External Communication


18. Choose 1:


Week 6 Tuesday, September 27: Socialization and In Class Writing


WRITING #1: Read this Case Study for in class or take home:

Week 7 Tuesday, October 4: Leadership and/or Facilitation: **Topic Rationale Due**


29. **Your choice article: leadership**

Week 8 Tuesday, October 11: Individual Differences in Groups


34. **Your choice article: diversity or gender issues in groups**

Week 9 Tuesday, October 18: Conflict in Groups


38. *Your choice article*—group conflict (not from your conflict class)

Week 10 Tuesday, October 25: Decision Making **RQ/Hypotheses section due**


42. *Your choice article*—decision making

Week 11 Tuesday, November 1: Alternative Perspectives and Faulty Decision Making


Week 12 Tuesday, November 15: Group Dialectics and Synergy:


Week 13 Tuesday, November 22: Technology and Idea Generation


54. Your choice article: GDSS, CMC, or technology

Week 14 Tuesday, November 29: Critique of the Field and WRITING #2: In Class Video


57. Special Issue: Research presented at the 2012 Conference on Interdisciplinary Network for group research. Small Group Research, 44 (2). Choose one of the interdisciplinary articles from this issue.

Week 15 Tuesday, December 6: Teaching Undergraduate Group Com and Final Paper Presentations

58. Special Issue: Teaching People about Groups. Small Group Research, 44 (4). Choose one of the articles from this August issue of SGR—your choice.

Final Papers Due: Monday, December 12 at Noon!!!