

COMM 6233-101: Small Group Processes

Course Description:

This advanced survey course is designed to expose students to communication principles that hold particular importance to an understanding of small group and team functioning. The course emphasizes recent research advancements in small group communication studies. Topics for the course include an investigation of groupthink and cognitive biases in decision-making processes as well as their connection to facilitative questioning skills.

Class Dates, Location and Hours:

Dates: October 30-November 5, 2017
Location: Washington, D.C. Liaison Office - 2189 Crystal Plaza Arcade, Arlington, VA, 22202.
Hours: Monday - Friday 6:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m.; Saturday 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sunday 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: October 1, 2017

Site Director:

Email: apwashington@ou.edu. Phone: 703-418-4800.

Professor Contact Information:

Course Professor: Ryan S. Bisel, Ph.D.
Mailing Address: University of Oklahoma
Department of Communication
Burton Hall, #224
Norman, OK 73019
Telephone Number: (405) 325-6042
Email Address: RyanBisel@ou.edu
Professor availability: The professor will be available via email to students before and after the class sessions. On-site office hours are half an hour before and after each class session, by appointment.

Instructional Materials:

Materials posted on the OU Canvas learning management system: Access Canvas at <https://canvas.ou.edu>, enter your OU NetID and password, and select course to access material. If you require assistance with Canvas, please click on the Help icon. You can search the Canvas guides, chat with Canvas support, or contact OU IT.

Recommended/Optional Background Reading

1. Choo, C. W. (2005). *The knowing organization: How organizations use information to construct meaning, create knowledge, and make decisions*. New York: Oxford. ISBN 9780195176280.
2. Schuman, S. (Ed.). (2005). *The IAF handbook of group facilitation: Best practices from the leading organization in facilitation* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. ISBN 9780787971601.
3. Weick, K. E. (2001). *Making sense of the organization*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. ISBN 9780631223191.
4. Weick, K. E., & Sutcliffe, K. M. (2015). *Managing the unexpected: Resilient performance in an age of uncertainty* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. ISBN 9781118862414.

Course Objectives:

At the conclusion of the course, students will:

1. have developed a thorough understanding of the importance of communication in small group work;
2. be familiar with several contemporary theories in the field of small group communication;
3. recognize how their own communication can influence the effectiveness of their small group or team; and
4. have an opportunity to practice small group communication skills.

Reading List and Course Outline:

Date-Subject-Readings

Date	Subject	Readings
6/20	HR Philosophy and Introducing the Course	Hirokawa & Rost, 1992
6/21	Groupthink	Janis, 1971; Mullen, Anthony, Salas, & Driskell, 1994
6/22	Group Cognitive Biases	Wright et al., 2004; Brown & Starkey, 2000
6/23	VIT, Decision Making (+ Procedures), and Facilitative Questioning	[Reread]: Hirokawa & Rost, 1992; Orlitzky & Hirokawa, 2001; Keyton, 2005 (Ch. 7);
6/24	HRO Theory and Leading Creativity	Weick & Sutcliffe, 2007 (Ch. 7); Wilson, Burke, Priest, & Salas, 2005; Sosik, Avolio, & Kahai, 1998
6/25	Review, Group work, Activities	N/A
6/26	Exam	N/A
7/3	Group Work Report	N/A
7/10	Final Reflection Paper	N/A

Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:

Students are expected to participate in all class discussions. Effective participation is judged by the informed comments provided by students as well as by the intelligence and insight advanced by the questions and issues that students develop from readings.

Short Writes

In order to encourage active analysis and discussion of class readings, students will choose any **three** questions from the “**Short-Write Question Prompts**” to answer in 1-2 page, provocative, and insightful essays.

Discussion Leader

Each student will have an opportunity to facilitate discussion during a class period and practice the skill of facilitative questioning.

Exam

A comprehensive exam will be administered during part of the last class session (3 hours). Essay questions will be derived from readings, lectures, and class discussion.

Group Work Report

Students will be randomly assigned to a work group and given a complex, conjunctive task. The report will explain the group's decision processes and outcome of their work.

Final Reflection Paper

Students will craft a reflection paper that recaps major learning moments from their small group work.

Grading:

This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F.

Distribution and Due Dates of Graded Assignments

Assignment	Percent of Total	Due Date
Short Writes	5% X 3 = 15%	Oct. 30-Nov. 4
Discussion Leader	5%	Oct. 30-Nov. 4
Exam	40%	Nov. 5
Group Work Report	20%	Nov. 12
Final Reflection Paper	20%	Nov. 19
Total	100%	N/A

Notice: Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.

POLICIES AND NOTICES

Attendance/Grade Policy

Attendance and participation in interaction, individual assignments, group exercises, simulations, role playing, etc. are valuable aspects of any course because much of the learning comes from discussions in class with other students. It is expected that you attend all classes and be on time except for excused emergencies.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution's policy regarding "I" (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy. Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any "I" (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on "financial aid probation." If the "I" grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student's Financial Aid may be suspended making the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

Academic Integrity and Student Conduct

Academic integrity means honesty and responsibility in scholarship. Academic assignments exist to help students learn; grades exist to show how fully this goal is attained. Therefore, all work and all grades should result from the student's own understanding and effort.

Academic misconduct is any act which improperly affects the evaluation of a student's academic performance or achievement. Misconduct occurs when the student either knows or reasonably should know that the act constitutes misconduct. Academic misconduct includes: cheating and using unauthorized materials on examinations and other assignments; improper collaboration, submitting the same assignment for different classes (self-plagiarism); fabrication, forgery, alteration of documents, lying, etc...in order to obtain an academic advantage; assisting others in academic misconduct; attempting to commit academic misconduct; destruction of property, hacking, etc...; intimidation and interference with integrity process; and plagiarism. All students should review the Student's Guide to Academic Integrity at http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. All students should review policies regarding student conduct at <http://studentconduct.ou.edu/>

Accommodation Statement

The University of Oklahoma is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your local OU Site Director.

Adjustment for Pregnancy/Childbirth-Related Issues

Should you need modifications or adjustments to your course requirements because of documented pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss. Generally, modifications will be made where medically necessary and similar in scope to accommodations based on temporary disability. Please see <http://www.ou.edu/content/eoo/faqs/pregnancy-faqs.html>.

Title IX Resources

For any concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking, or intimate partner violence, the University offers a variety of resources, including advocates on-call 24/7, counseling services, mutual no-contact orders, scheduling adjustments, and disciplinary sanctions against the perpetrator. Please contact the Sexual Misconduct Office at smo@ou.edu or (405) 325-2215 (8-5), or the Sexual Assault Response Team at (405) 615 -0013 (24/7) to report an incident. To learn more about Title IX, please visit the Institutional Equity Office's website at <http://www.ou.edu/content/eoo.html>

Course Policies

Advanced Programs policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are mailed to the professor for the course. Advanced Programs does not provide duplicating services or office supplies.

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about Advanced Programs, visit our website at: <http://www.goou.ou.edu/>

INSTRUCTOR VITA

Ryan S. Bisel, Ph.D.

Education

- Ph.D. Organizational Communication, University of Kansas, Lawrence KS
- M.A. Organizational Communication, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS
- B.A. Organizational Communication, William Jewell College, Liberty, MO

Current Positions

- Associate Professor, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK
- Advanced Programs professor since 2009

Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses

- 5043 Organizational Research Practicum
- 5053 Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods
- 5313 Qualitative Research Methods
- 5333 Organizational Communication
- 5373 Communication and Leadership
- 6233 Small Group Processes

Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest

- Dr. Bisel's research interests focus primarily on supervisor-subordinate communication, organizational discourse, and organizational culture change.
- In 2007, his research was honored with a Top Paper Award from the Central States Communication Association (CSCA). In 2008, his research was honored with a Top Paper Award from the National Communication Association (NCA). Additionally, he was formerly the editorial assistant for the *Journal of Applied Communication Research*.
- Dr. Bisel has published four book chapters and his research is published and in press with top communication journals such as *Communication Theory*, *Management Communication Quarterly*, *Western Journal of Communication*, *Communication Teacher*, and *Communication Studies*.
- In addition to his academic experience, Professor Bisel has worked as a process consultant and facilitator for organizations such as Douglas County Visiting Nurses and Hospice, Lawrence Chamber of Commerce, Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security, and the Kansas Health Foundation.

Representative Publications:

- Bisel, R. S., Kelley, K. M., Ploeger, N. A., & Messersmith, J. (2011). Workers' moral mum effect: On facework and organizational ethics. *Communication Studies*, 62, 153-170.
- Bisel, R. S., & Barge, J. K. (2011). Discursive positioning and planned change in organizations. *Human Relations*, 64, 257-283.
- Bisel, R. S. (2010). A communicative ontology of organization? A description, history, and critique of CCO theories for organization science. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 24, 124-131.
- Bisel, R. S. (2009). On a growing dualism in organizational discourse research. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 22, 614-638.
- Bisel, R. S., Ford, D. J., & Keyton, J. (2007). Unobtrusive control in a leadership organization: Integrating control and resistance. *Western Journal of Communication*, 71, 136-158.