

WAYLAND BAPTIST UNIVERSITY
PLAINVIEW CAMPUS
SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS

Wayland Mission Statement: Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused, and distinctively Christian environment for professional success, and service to God and humankind.

Course Title and Number: **Communication in Small Groups (COMS 3301)**

Term: Fall 2021

Name of Instructor: Dr. Yahui Zhang

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Office Hours, Building, and Location:

Zoom with appointment

Class Meeting Time and Location:

VC

Catalog Description: theories and related skills in group dynamics, interpersonal and intergroup communication, team building, problem solving, decision-making, conflict management and leadership roles. Emphasis on practical situations related to communication in public and professional contexts.

Prerequisites: COMS 1301, 1303, 2302, Or 2303.

Required Textbook and Resource Materials:

Beebe, S. A., & Masterson, J. T. (2020). *Communicating in small groups: Principle and practices* (updated 12th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Optional Materials:

[Butler-Bowdon, T. \(2017\). 50 psychology classics](#)

[Butler-Bowdon, T. \(2017\). 50 success classics](#)

McChrystal, S., Collins, T., Silverman, D., & Fussell, C. (2015). *Team of teams: New rules of engagement for a complex world*.

Sandel, M. J. (2012). *What money can't buy: The moral limits of markets*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Sandberg, S. (2013). *Lean in: Women, work, and the will to lead*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Course Outcome Competencies:

1. Describe and demonstrate an understanding of the functions of communication in small group settings.
2. Describe and examine theory and research in small group/team communication as it relates to the enhancement of communication skills.
3. Identify one's own participation in groups and teams, and experiment and improve upon these behaviors.
4. Observe and evaluate skills in small group behavior and provide feedback on how to improve the effectiveness of group performance (in collaborating, relating, and improving group climate).
5. Identify conflict and strategies for managing different types of conflict.
6. Describe three styles of leadership; explain the relationship between situational variables and the effectiveness of different leadership styles; and analyze leadership in action.
7. Apply the steps and tools of various approaches to group problem solving in group discussions.

Attendance Requirements:

Class attendance is mandatory. Two unexcused absences will result in the loss of a letter grade. Any student who misses 25% or more of the regularly scheduled class meetings will receive a grade of 'F' in the course. Students should refer to Academic Catalog for additional attendance information.

For each week you are late, 5-7 points will be deducted from the 15 points reserved for participation for that week. An excused absence include illness, family emergency or funeral (call or email the professor to let her know what is happening), attendance at an approved WBU event such as athletic team competition or academic conference (bring the notice from the appropriate sponsor), or unavoidable company travel for full-time employees. No absence will be excused without the professor's approval.

Statement on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:

Wayland Baptist University observes a zero tolerance policy regarding academic dishonesty. Per university policy as described in the academic catalog, all cases of academic dishonesty will be reported and second offenses will result in suspension from the university.

Disability Statement:

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. The Coordinator of Counseling Services serves as the coordinator of students with a disability and should be contacted concerning accommodation requests at (806) 291- 3764. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria:

Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation. A student who believes that he or she has not been held to realistic academic standards, just evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course by using

the student grade appeal process described in the Academic Catalog. Appeals may not be made for advanced placement examinations or course bypass examinations. Appeals are limited to the final course grade, which may be upheld, raised, or lowered at any stage of the appeal process. Any recommendation to lower a course grade must be submitted through the Executive Vice President/Provost to the Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee for review and approval. The Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee may instruct that the course grade be upheld, raised, or lowered to a more proper evaluation.

1. **Exams (360 points total):** There are 12 quizzes in REVEL and each quiz is worth 30 points. Please read or listen to each chapter in REVEL to achieve maximum points on quizzes.
2. **11 Shared Writing (220 points):** There are 11 Shared Writing assignments covering the content of 11 chapters. Each is worth 20 points. Please refer to the rubric for grading criteria.
3. **Two PowerPoint Presentations (200 points total)**
(Note: **Encyclopedias and dictionaries do not count as sources.**)

Presentation 1 (100 points): In this presentation you will share your insights on one of the recommended books listed under Optional Materials. Or you can choose your own book that is relevant for this course. Besides a succinct synopsis of the book, please highlight at least two to three points on how the book can be useful for group work/decision/performance. Please use some examples from real world, news coverage, or business magazines such as *Forbes*, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, *WIRED*, *Entrepreneur*, *Fortune*, *The Economist*, etc. in your presentation to show the application values of the principles you gleaned from the book. The delivery of the speech should be extemporaneous. Make sure that your presentation is 10-12 minutes long. It is due by 11:59 pm Central Time Sept. 5.

Presentation 2 (100 points): Your focus in this presentation is leadership. You can address shared leadership in teams; relationship between situational variables and the effectiveness of different leadership styles; transformational leadership skills; or embodied leadership in one icon that you respect. To substantiate your main ideas, you are required to use at least 5 credible sources from books, journals and/or business magazines. Your presentation should be 12-15 minutes long. It is due by 11:59 pm Central Time Sept. 26.

*Presentations must be prepared and presented using Microsoft PowerPoint with your video embedded. Please learn how to use VIDGRID from the tutorials.

4. **Final paper (100 points total):** For this assignment, you can either use your own team work experience or a case study available via media outlet (*MasterChef*, *Project Runway*, *Apprentice*, *Grid Iron Gang*, *Apollo 13*, *Remember the Titans*, etc.). Observe and evaluate communication skills in small group behavior and provide feedback on how to improve the effectiveness of group performance. In addition, analyze the small group project and determine which leadership style and behaviors will most likely move the group toward its goal. If the group experiences conflict, please identify the nature of the conflict and discuss whether the conflict is managed appropriately. If there is no conflict that hinders the performance of the group, identify the problem-solving approach that the group applies to accomplish their goal.

Or you can choose to write a research paper related to any topic we have covered this semester. Please rely on WBU library database for articles (a minimum of 8-10 articles) that you can use in literature. In your paper, you need to identify your focus, to synthesize extant literature, to analyze an issue from some data (interviews/participant observation/content analysis of a newspaper coverage for a certain time frame), and to conclude with some meaningful insights. For example, during the COVID-19 Pandemic, many people have to work from home. You may like to explore the topic of virtual leadership or gendered double or even triple shifts for women employees.

5. Attendance and participation (120 points)

Besides the assignments and exams described above, there will be 120 points reserved for attendance and participation. For each week you participate and turn in quality work, you earn 15 points for participation.

You are expected to be respectful of your peers in order to maintain a positive learning environment. Students who post regularly, do all the readings, but never interact with or comment on fellow classmates' presentations or posts will earn a C for that week. Inconsistent performances and inconsiderateness may also cause a loss of points in this category.

Grading Scale

900-1000 = A 800-899 = B 700-799 = C 600-699 = D 599-Below = F

Schedule:

Please note that this is a tentative schedule for topics that will be explored this semester. Slight changes may be made as the semester progresses.

Weeks	Topics	Assignments
1 – 8/09	About REVEL & Ch. 1	Self-intro & quiz 1
2 – 8/16	Ch. 2	Quiz 2/1 Shared Writing (SW)
3 – 8/23	Ch. 3 & Ch. 4	Quizzes 3 & 4/2 SW
4 – 8/30	Ch. 5 & Ch. 6	Quizzes 5 & 6/ 2 SW Presentation 1 due
5 – 9/06	Ch. 7 & Ch. 8	Quizzes 7 & 8/2 SW
6 – 9/13	Ch. 9	Quiz 9/1 SW
7 – 9/20	Ch. 10 & Ch. 11	Quizzes 10 & 11/2 SW Presentation 2 due
8 – 9/27	Ch. 12	Paper due 11:59 pm 10/02

Additional Information:

Academic Honesty: All students are expected to conduct themselves according to the highest standards of academic honesty. Penalties that may be applied to individual cases of academic dishonesty normally range from a written reprimand to receiving an F in the course, but there can also be more severe punishment. For a detailed explanation of academic misconduct and a list of potential penalties and punishments see the University Catalog and the Student Handbook. Any student found violating the university's academic honesty policy in this class will meet with the professor so that the offense and punishment can be recorded. That record must then be filed with the Dean of the School of Fine Arts who will then pass it on to the Provost.

Email: Your Wayland email address is the official line of communication between you and the university. You must make sure your email address is established, functioning and is also **monitored at least once a day** as you will receive important information about your classes, financial aid, billing, emergency situations, etc. through this email.

Blackboard: Please check your grades regularly on the Blackboard throughout the semester and report any discrepancy you find promptly to ensure accuracy of the grade book.