

COMM 4: GROUP DISCUSSION

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Summer 2025
Units:	5
Hours:	5 lecture per week (60 total per quarter)
Advisory:	Demonstrated proficiency in English by placement via multiple measures OR through an equivalent placement process OR completion of ESLL 125 & ESLL 249; not open to students with credit in SPCH 4.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area 1B: Oral Communication & Critical Thinking
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

Student Learning Outcomes

- A successful student will be able to identify components of effective small group interaction.
- A successful student will be able to demonstrate effective methods of interacting with groups.

Description

Analysis of the principles of group interaction and decision making. Participation in discussion groups designed to share information, solve problems and reach consensus.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. identify the components of effective small group interaction.
2. examine the theories of group decision making, problem solving and conflict resolution.
3. examine the roles and responsibilities of individual group members.
4. recognize principles and appraise styles of leadership.
5. demonstrate effective methods of interacting with culturally diverse individual and groups.
6. analyze values, attitudes and beliefs of self and others.
7. identify the diversity of race, ethnicity, lifestyle, age and socio-economic backgrounds in the classroom, workplace and community.

Course Content

1. Principles and theories of small group discussion
 - a. Social exchange theory
 - b. Rules theory
 - c. Task contingency theory
 - d. Structural theory
2. Responsibilities of group members

- a. Roles, status, and power
 - b. Establishing mutuality of concern
 - c. Elements of interpersonal attraction
 - d. Developing trust
3. Styles of leadership
 - a. Trait perspective
 - b. Functional perspective
 - c. Situational factors in leadership
 - d. Leadership emergence
 - e. Training in leadership
 4. Decision making and problem solving
 - a. Critical thinking
 - i. Types and tests of evidence (facts, examples, opinions, statistics)
 - ii. Formulating discussion questions (questions of fact, value, policy)
 - b. Approaches to problem solving
 - i. Descriptive approach
 - ii. Functional approach
 5. Conflict management in small groups
 - a. Groupthink
 - b. Reaching consensus
 6. Small group communication in organizations
 - a. Working in culturally and economically diverse groups
 - b. Working in gender and age diverse groups

Lab Content

Not applicable.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

1. When taught on campus: video camera, television, DVD, VHS recorder; for online work, access to a computer with email and internet capability.
2. When taught via Foothill Global Access: on-going access to computer with email software and capabilities; email address; JavaScript-enabled internet browsing software.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Individual and group presentations
Written outlines for presentations
Research paper
Written examinations

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lectures
Discussions and cooperative learning exercises
Student oral presentations and demonstrations
Electronic discussions/chat

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Adams, Katherine H., and Gloria Galanes. Communicating in Groups: Applications and Skills, 11th ed.. 2021.

Galanes, Gloria, and Katherine Adams. Effective Group Discussion, 14th ed.. 2013.

Although some of these texts are older than the suggested "5 years or newer" standard, they remain seminal texts in this area of study.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Weekly reading assignments from text and outside sources, ranging from 30-60 pages per week
2. Weekly lecture covering subject matter from text assignment with extended topic information and examination of popular culture. Class discussion is required
3. Weekly exercises, which may include individual or group participation and covers assigned reading, lecture topics and group projects
4. When taught online, these methods may take the form of video, audio, animation and web page presentations

Discipline(s)

Communication Studies