

Communication Studies 151: Small Group Communication (Section 8167)

West Los Angeles College

Fall 2015 (8/31-12/20)

Instructor: Linda Alexander, Ph.D.

Office Hours/Contact Information

- Virtual office hours in ETUDES Chat: Thursdays 6-6:45am or by appointment.
- In-person office hours: Tuesday/Thursday 11am-12pm. GC 280J.
- Best to contact me through the ETUDES “Private Message” option in our course site (allow at least 48 hours for a response).

Dear Communication Studies Student,

I hope you will find this to be an exciting and informative class. In this TOTALLY ONLINE course, we will explore the nature of communication in small groups. Emphasis is placed on developing skills to assume roles of leadership and active participation. We will also examine creative decision making and problem-solving. A unique aspect of the class is that you will prepare and deliver online presentations. Should you have any questions about the course material, or have any issues that you would like to discuss, I invite you to reach out to me. In the coming weeks, you and I will work together to maximize your potential in our class.

Thank you for the opportunity to teach you!

Dr. Alexander

Course Description

Communication Studies 151 provides an analysis of the purposes, principles and types of discussions. Emphasis is placed on developing skills to assume roles of leadership and active participation. Creative decision making, groupthink, the nature of power, conflict management, anger management and problem solving are explored.

Institutional Student Learning Outcomes

“A. Critical Thinking: Analyze problems by differentiating fact from opinions, using evidence, and using sound reasoning to specify multiple solutions and their consequences.”
In class discussions and exercises, analyze ideas.

“B. Communication: Effectively communicate thought in a well-organized manner to persuade, inform, and convey ideas in academic, work, family and community settings.”
In assignments and class exercises, exchange ideas and present different points of view.

Communication Studies Program Outcomes

- Employ effective interpersonal communication skills and strategies that foster improved relationships with other individuals in dyads or small groups.
- Employ small group communication strategies.

Communication Studies 151 Student Learning Outcomes: At the end of the course, the successful student will be able to:

1. Define, analyze, and apply group problem-solving concepts.
2. Evaluate communication strategies used in an experiential group problem-solving situation.

Course Objectives

- Employ conflict resolution techniques
- Distinguish differences in gender communication awareness
- Demonstrate empathy
- Employ effective interpersonal skills
- Employ good listening techniques
- Participate in discussion in classes, in the workplace and in the community
- Analyze nonverbal communications including artifactual communication

Required Textbook and Other Materials

- *Communicating in Groups, 9th Edition*, by Katherine Adams and Gloria Galanes (2015)
- The textbook is available in the WLAC bookstore.
- Supplemental materials may be provided by the instructor.
- You will need the textbook for this class so you should get a copy as soon as possible.

COURSE FORMAT: ALL OF THE COURSEWORK WILL TAKE PLACE ONLINE IN ETUDES.

***STUDENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION**

- I will frequently post announcements in ETUDES and send out emails to you. PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOUR EMAIL INFORMATION IN ETUDES IS CORRECT.
- Class Announcements and emails (Private Messages sent through Etudes) should go straight to your email. **You can check the email info that is linked to Etudes by clicking on Account (it's a tab at the top of the Etudes screen).** Edit your email information if necessary.
- West emails should be going to your LACCD.edu email address. Learn how to automatically forward West emails from your LACCD account to your personal account so you do not miss important information. View this video: <http://www.wlac.edu/online/emailhowto.asp>

LOG INTO OUR COURSE SITE OFTEN AND CHECK YOUR EMAIL AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

*Please note: If you have not logged in and participated by the end of the first week of class you may be dropped. Students who are dropped might not be reinstated.

Computer Access/Technical Requirements

- ALL of the coursework will take place online.
- You must have access to a computer that meets technical requirements. If you haven't already done so, please make sure that your computer is properly configured for ETUDES.
- Go to: http://www.wlac.edu/online/NG_Tech_Reqs.htm
- Carefully read through "Technical Requirements" and make sure to address all the issues on this page.

***TO ACCESS OUR CLASS, LOG IN AT:** <http://myetudes.org>

Your login ID is the first 2 letters of your first name + the first 2 letters of your last name + the last 5 digits of your Student ID Number (not your social security number). If you do not know your Student Identification Number you can look it up using the Student Information System (SIS) at <http://www.laccd.edu>

If this is your first ETUDES class your password is your Month and Day of birth. However, since ETUDES passwords are permanent, if you have already taken a class using ETUDES your password has not changed.

Example: Juan Straub, 88-459-0210, born July 4

* User ID: just90210 * Password: 0704

After you login, you will see a list of the courses you are enrolled in on the top menu bar to the right of My Workspace. Just click on a course number to access a course. Once you have entered the course, use the left-side menu to navigate the course.

If you have trouble accessing the course on, or after, the start date, visit the Online Student Help Desk at <http://www.wlac.edu/online/helpdesk.asp>. Review the Common Login Mistakes information on the left for solutions to common login problems. If your problem is not addressed, contact the Distance Learning Program Office at (310)287-4305 or via email: shemwer@wlac.edu.

Communication 151 is an online class and all coursework takes place in our ETUDES course site. You are expected to engage in extensive reading, do online presentations, participate actively in discussions, complete written assignments, and take quizzes based on the required textbook. Students are expected to complete and submit coursework on time. Modules contain course information.

Grading: Students are encouraged to submit their work early if possible rather than wait until the deadline. Please note that in general, submissions are not opened/evaluated until about 1-2 weeks after a deadline has passed.

IMPORTANT: Go to the Assignments, Tests and Surveys area and note the due dates for the written assignments. Do the same in the Discussions area. Discussion topics have two deadlines (see " DISCUSSION BOARD" section below). Quizzes will remain open until the end of our session, but they should be taken in a timely manner. **Make a note of ALL coursework deadlines as soon as possible, as late work cannot be submitted.**

Grading Criteria	Maximum Points
Quizzes (10 total, 20 points each)	200
Oral Presentation Demo	25
Oral Presentations (3 total, 100 points each)	300
Audience Member for Presenters (3 total, 25 points each)	75
Participation in Discussion Forums (10 total, 30 points each)	300
Writing Assignments (2 total, 100 points each)	200

TOTAL: 1100 points (900 to 1000 = A; 800 to 899 = B; 700 to 799 = C; 600 to 699 = D; 599 and below = F). Note: Percentages (90%, 80%, etc.) are based on 1000 points, not 1100. **This means that there are 100 extra credit points built into the grading structure!**

*In order to pass the course, all assigned work must be completed and meet course standards.

Academic Integrity Policy: Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated (WLAC 2012-2014 Catalog, pg. 41).

Student Conduct: Disruptive, disrespectful, or obstructive behavior will be dealt with in accordance with the LACCD Standard of Student conduct. Disciplinary action can be taken if student behavior interferes with instruction (WLAC 2012-2014 Catalog, pg. 42).

Dropping the Class: According to college policy, you will be excluded for excessive absences or for not following the Standards of Student Conduct. It is your responsibility to drop the class. Failure to drop a class can result in an “F” in the class (WLAC 2012-2014 Catalog, pg. 46).

3 Attempts to Pass: In the past, a student at any LACCD college could have attempted to pass a class up to 7 times. Up to 4 'W's and up to 3 'D' and/or 'F' grades were permitted. Effective July 2012, the rule changes. A student may only attempt to pass the same class 3 times. Receiving a 'W,' 'D,' or 'F' count as attempting to pass the class. Students who unsuccessfully attempt a class 3 times but still want another opportunity to pass the class will have to enroll in the class at a non-LACCD campus or go through the appeal process with Admissions. (WLAC 2012-2014 Catalog, pg. 48).

Disabled Student Services

If you know or think that you have any learning or physical disabilities, please contact Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) Office in HLRC 121 at (310) 287-4450.

Instructional Support (Tutoring) & Learning Skills Center, Heldman Learning Resources Center (HLRC) | (310) 287-4486

QUIZZES

There are ten quizzes, 20 points each. Each quiz is timed (you have 30 minutes to complete it) and you can only take the quiz one time. Quizzes will remain open until the end of the semester but you should complete them in the appropriate Module. Quizzes are available in the Assignments, Tests, and Surveys area of our course site.

ONLINE ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Your first online presentation is a demo that is worth up to 25 points. After that, you will prepare and deliver 3 oral presentations, 100 points each. Information will be presented to several of your classmates in real time. Specific materials will be submitted for each presentation. ***Students must have access to appropriate technology (laptop, computer, etc. with a working microphone and webcam) and good Internet connection.**

AUDIENCE MEMBERSHIP

Students will be in the audience for three online oral presentations. Being an audience member is worth up to 25 points for each session. ***Students must have access to appropriate technology (laptop, computer, etc. with a working microphone and webcam) and good Internet connection.**

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

You will submit two written assignments, 100 points each. Assignments have a specific deadline, and each assignment has a set of instructions. You will submit assignments by pasting content in the appropriate submission box. No attachments, please. Assignments are submitted in the Assignments, Tests, and Surveys area of our course site.

STUDENTS ARE ALLOWED TO SUBMIT EACH ASSIGNMENT ONLY ONCE. All submissions are accepted “as is.” It is your responsibility to make sure that you are submitting the correct document. Proofread your work. Excessive spelling and grammatical errors may result in points being deducted.

Each assignment must be at least 800 words minimum. Points will be determined by: 1) information content, 2) the details and examples provided to illustrate your understanding of the assignment, 3) responding to every aspect of the assignment, 4) meeting the minimum word count, and 5) citing your source or sources. Quality and quantity.

When you are asked to refer to various readings to complete assignments and/or discussion responses, you must cite your sources in MLA or APA format and include a list of references. You can use your textbook as a guide. The WLAC library also has additional information on citation format.

***PLAGIARISM**

Please note that when asked to consult the textbook or other materials, DO NOT simply copy sentences word for word from a source and put it into your assignment submissions. **YOU MUST SAY THINGS IN YOUR OWN WORDS**. If you copy more than three words in a row from a source (such as your textbook), you must use quotation marks ("___"). Otherwise, you are committing plagiarism, and the penalties are severe (see "Academic Dishonesty Policy" in the previous section of this syllabus). In addition, you are required to cite your source (such as your textbook) when you use information from that source. You are **REQUIRED** to give credit to an author in terms of the author's ideas, words, etc. **Basically, you should cite your sources in the text of all written work AND include a list of references.**

DISCUSSION BOARD

There are ten discussion topics, 30 points each. You will submit your posts into the submission box. No attachments, please. Discussions can be accessed in the Discussions area of our course site.

You are expected to actively participate in the Discussion Board by 1) replying to the topic posted by me and 2) replying to at least one other person's post. *You will only be **REPLYING** to messages. You must cite your sources in MLA or APA format and include a list of references.

Each discussion topic has two deadlines. In general, the first is on Thursday, 11pm (reply to me), and the second is on Sunday at 11pm (reply to a classmate's post). For each topic, the initial reply to my original post must be done by the first deadline, and the follow-up post must be done by the second deadline.

By submitting the **FIRST** post several days before the actual close date, everyone gets a chance to respond to what others have said. Submit your responses in a timely manner, as each topic will close promptly at 11pm on the final deadline date, and late posts will be locked out. Note that deadlines are based on Pacific Standard Time.

I will keep an eye on your posts but will not participate, as the discussion board is a place for students to interact with each other. Keep in mind, however, that any online communication, such as emails and discussion board postings, must always be courteous, civil, and respectful.

Discussion Grades: What is a strong discussion board post vs. a weak post? Each discussion topic has specific instructions that will indicate expectations. Points are determined by the quality and quantity of comments.

Example: “Do you agree with the research finding that there are distinct differences in the amount of talking done by women vs. men in group meetings? Be sure to include specific examples and lots of detail to support your answer.”

=>**Strong original response:** “In my own experience as a manager of a small business here in LA, I've noticed that men seem to talk more than women in our monthly meetings. And seniority doesn't play a huge role in this difference. For example, there are two men who started working for us just last year. They're always very active in the meetings. Sometimes, they even interrupt my assistant manager, Sally, who's been with the company for over six years!”

=>Weak original response: "I think women talk more than men anytime."

=>**Strong follow up reply to another person's post:** "Nancy has a good point. I've also been in meetings where the women seem to talk about all these personal issues, while the men just sit there checking their messages. I'm not sure why this is, but I often wish the project manager would just focus everyone's attention on the agenda more so we can get things done better."

=>Weak reply to another person's post: "Right on, Nancy!"

*Each student is expected to submit their own work. DO NOT COPY SOMEONE ELSE'S DISCUSSION RESPONSES AND SUBMIT AS YOUR OWN. See "[Academic Integrity Policy](#)" in the previous section of this syllabus for penalties.

DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE!

- Computer problems can occur at your end or on the ETUDES site. Computer-related problems are not an excuse for submitting late discussion posts or for not submitting them at all.
- Keep in mind that ETUDES can sometimes run slow, so plan accordingly.
- **You should do all your work off-line, make sure to save it, and then submit it in ETUDES.** Work can be lost if the computer connection breaks down while you are composing something in the ETUDES site.
- Please observe all deadlines, as they are firm deadlines. **Late work will not be accepted.** Giving time extensions to some and not to others is simply not fair to everyone. Students are encouraged to work ahead whenever possible. This will help you to keep to your schedule should unexpected events occur during the semester.

Dear Communication Studies Students,

Who is your best resource in this class? Me!

I encourage you to ask any questions you might have by sending me a Private Message in Etudes or finding a mutually convenient time for a virtual meeting.

Please know that you are capable of doing excellent work in this class by following instructions, asking for clarification when necessary, managing your time well, and applying yourself to the task at hand.

I look forward to getting to know you as the semester progresses!

Dr. Alexander