

**SPC4425: Small Group Communication**  
**Spring 2024**  
**Period 3: MWF 9:35 a.m. – 10:25 a.m.**  
**Location: Anderson Hall (AND) Room 0134**  
**Section: 3230**  
**Class Number: 18471**  
**Class Dates: 1/08/24 - 4/24/24**

**Instructor: Pasha Agoes, Ph.D.**

**Email: pasha.agoes@ufl.edu**

**Office: 209 Rolfs Hall**

**Phone: (352) 294-7588**

**Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

**(Or by appointment)**

**COURSE MEETING LOCATION & TIME**

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9:35 a.m. – 10:25 a.m. at Anderson Hall (AND) Room 0134.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES**

In this class, students will learn how to communicate in small groups with emphasis in practical applications, skill development and current research and theory.

The intended learning outcomes for this course are the following:

1. To *understand* the importance and process of small group communication.
2. To *identify* and *critically examine* the four phases of group development.
3. To *recognize* and *appreciate* the importance of communication, decision-making, problem solving, leadership, and teamwork in groups.
4. To *apply* course concepts by conducting a group presentation using a case study approach.

**In this class students will learn about the following topics:**

1. Small Groups: Power, Definition, Attraction.
2. Small Group Communication: A System of Interaction.
3. Norms, Roles, Cohesion, and Groupthink.
4. Phases of Group Development: Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing.
5. Diversity in Groups: The Strength of Different Perspectives.
6. Verbal and Nonverbal Communication.
7. Listening and Feedback: The Other Half of Communication.
8. Group Evolution: Teams.

9. Decision Making and Problem Solving.
10. Creativity in the Small Group Process.
11. Group Process and Presentation Techniques.
12. Productive Conflict Management.
13. Leadership in Small Groups.
14. Observing and Evaluating a Small Group.
15. Computer-Mediated Small Group Communication.

#### **REQUIRED TEXT**

***Small Group and Team Communication, Fifth Edition, by Thomas E. Harris and John C. Sherblom. (2011, reissued 2018 by Waveland Press, Inc.)***

#### **RECOMMENDED TEXTS**

Will be provided by Dr. Agoes as needed via Canvas.

#### **INSTRUCTOR EXPECTATIONS**

Students should expect that Dr. Agoes will:

1. Convey knowledge of and passion for course material.
2. Conduct the class in a manner that is engaging.
3. Assign meaningful work that allows you to engage the course, its content and material.
4. Grade assignments and provide helpful feedback in a timely manner.
5. Reply to your emails in 48 hours or less.
6. Attempt to relate material in this course to your personal and professional life, as well as to relevant global, social, and political contexts.

#### **STUDENT EXPECTATIONS**

Students are expected to give themselves to and engage this course fully. If students do this, they will **gain invaluable knowledge and experiences**. To help accomplish this goal, students are expected to:

1. Complete all assigned readings each week.
2. Complete and submit all assignments on time.
3. Participate actively in all discussions and course activities.
4. Contribute positively to the classroom and group climate.
5. Take a self-motivated approach to the course, including personal accountability for your behavior and academic progress in the class.
6. Stay in contact with Dr. Agoes throughout the semester to manage any issues.

#### **CANVAS REQUIREMENT**

Check your UFL.edu email and our Canvas course regularly. All class functions are performed on Canvas. If you have computer/internet or Canvas-related problems or questions, contact the UF Computing Help Desk at (352) 392-HELP [4357], or email [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

### Exam

The exam may be taken one time only and may be completed only during the exam availability dates indicated on the course calendar. The exam consists of multiple choice, multiple answer, matching, true/false, and/or written response questions.

### Chapter Quizzes and Exams

Quizzes (formative assessments) are taken in class on a weekly basis to check learning. Students will also take two exams (summative assessments).

### Reflection Notes

Each week students are expected to upload a reflection (1-2 paragraph is fine) on Canvas regarding their thoughts on that week's content, and reply to two other students to stimulate discussion.

### Case Study Group Presentation

Students will be required to pick a topic of their choice using a case study approach. A separate and detailed assignment description will be provided.

## GRADES

### Points:

Assignments	Points
Quizzes (12 quizzes. One quiz is worth 5 points each).	60
Reflection notes (13 reflection notes worth 3 points each).	39
Group Presentation	100
Peer Evaluation for Group Presentation	24
Exam 1	100
Exam 2	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>423 points</b>

### ASSIGNMENT LETTER GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

A/- = Excellent. In addition to excellent quality and performance, work that earns an "A" exceeds minimum requirements and expectations.

B+/- = Very good. A grade of "B" indicates successful completion of all assignment requirements with little room for improvement. Please note that all minimum requirements must be satisfactorily completed to earn a grade of "B" or better. Writing skills and overall performance are above average.

C+/- = Good. A grade of “C” is the most commonly earned grade on course assignments. It indicates work in good standing. All minimum requirements are met, although some might need improvement. Writing skills are average to excellent.

D = Passing but below average. The assignment’s minimum requirements are not met and/or quality of work is less than average.

E = Not passing. Minimum requirements are not met and quality of work is poor, or work displays plagiarism.

### **FINAL GRADES**

Below is the percentage and point break-down for each letter grade. Please be advised that final letter grades are determined by the number of points earned.

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	94.0 – 100 %
A-	90.0 – 93.99 %
B+	87.0 – 89.99 %
B	84.0 – 86.99 %
B-	80.0 – 83.99 %
C+	77.0 – 79.99 %
C	73.0 – 76.99 %
C-	70.0 – 72.99 %
D+	67.0 – 69.99 %
D	62.0 – 66.99 %
D-	60.0 – 61.99 %
E	0 – 59.99 %

### **Special Note Concerning an Incomplete**

A grade of “Incomplete” is given only to a student with extreme circumstances that prevent the student from completing course requirements during the semester in which they are enrolled. Please be forewarned that an “Incomplete” can only be given to a student who has completed at least 50% of the class and who is passing the course with a grade of “C” or better at the time the Incomplete is negotiated. See the University’s policy for more information.

**Note:** A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For more information on UF's Grading Policy, see:  
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx#hgrades>

## GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

### ATTENDANCE AND LATE WORK POLICY

**Our class meets in-person** during our scheduled time. Class attendance is **required**. Students are expected to participate during class meetings.

Students get three absences in this class; no questions asked. Afterward, Dr. Agoes will begin to deduct **20 points for each unexcused absence from the final grade**. An **excused absence is possible** with a note from a clinic or doctor, a letter notification for a career interview, or a notification from the Athletic department.

Excused absences are consistent with university policies in the undergraduate catalog (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>) and require appropriate documentation.

Dr. Agoes will take attendance in each class. If a student is quarantined due to COVID-19, the student must contact the professor and provide documentation. If several students in class are absent due to COVID-19, Dr. Agoes may choose to record lectures and provide access to those quarantined students.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** Late work is either points deducted or rejected. All assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. EST (before midnight) the latest. It is imperative that students plan ahead. It is the student's responsibility to be certain that their computer is compatible with Canvas. In the event of an extreme emergency that will prevent a student from participating in class assignments for an extended period of time (e.g., hospitalization), please notify Dr. Agoes as soon as possible to discuss options for a grade of Incomplete (for more about grades of Incomplete, see notes under "Final Grades").

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

All submitted work during the course, written or oral, will be the student's **personal, original work, and properly cited**. If a student violates this rule, evaluations of work will be done accordingly. Further, if necessary, adjudication will be processed by procedures approved by the University of Florida Honor Court.

### STUDENT CONDUCT

The Dial Center for Written and Oral Communication strives for a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. Students are expected to behave according to the UF student code of conduct in their classes. This means treating their instructors and fellow classmates with respect. To ensure a positive learning environment, students should not: Make complaints publicly (in front of other students); attack the instructor verbally, physically, or in written form; or express reactions in the classroom that would bring harm to other students.

Failure to meet the UF code of conduct can impact a student's class participation grade or result in referral to the UF judicial office. Class atmosphere can be made or broken by the

approach that students take to the challenges of the course. Students that support others, show good humor in the face of obstacles, show dedication in the face of setbacks, and show grace when others are not doing as well will help to create a positive communication climate.

**In a communications class, it is especially important for everyone to:**

1. Display respect for all members of the classroom – including the instructor and students.
2. Pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities.
3. Avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom.
4. Avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading the newspaper, surfing the internet, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, etc.)

**U Matter, We Care:** Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The *U Matter, We Care* initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) so that the *U Matter, We Care* Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor are available by phone at 352-392-1575. The *U Matter, We Care* Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that **asking for help is a sign of strength**. In case of emergency, call 911.

**DISABILITY AND SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS**

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should contact Dr. Agoes privately, as soon as possible, and discuss accommodations necessary to ensure a successful and educational experience. It is the student's responsibility both to notify Dr. Agoes and to make the first contact with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Additionally, the student must provide written documentation from the DRC at least one week prior to the date in which the student is requesting accommodation.

Other resources are available at <https://disability.ufl.edu/>

Counseling and Wellness resources

- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

**RIGHT TO PRIVACY**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) ensures that student records (for any students over 18 years of age) are kept confidential. Dr. Agoes will not release a student's grade to anyone other than the student, or school officials who are given permission to view the student's progress. Anyone other than student (or an approved school official) may not

request any information (beyond simple directory information) about a student, their progress, or their status as a student in Dr. Agoes' class—this includes parents, partners, and other students. For more information, see the University of Florida website for The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

#### **ACCEPTABLE USE OF COMPUTER SYSTEM**

As a student in this class, you are subject to the Acceptable Use Policies for UF's computer systems. Anyone violating these policies will receive an automatic grade of "E" for the course and will be referred to the University for Disciplinary Action as deemed appropriate by the University of Florida Honor Court.

#### **CHANGES TO COURSE SYLLABUS/CALENDAR**

Dr. Agoes reserves the right to update or change portions of this course syllabus and calendar in order to make the class a better experience for everyone. This may be in response to suggestions from students, from Dr. Agoes' own observations, or as the result of requirements by the Department, College, or University. Changes will be posted to the course site on Canvas, and also communicated in class.

#### **COURSE FEEDBACK**

Dr. Agoes welcomes feedback about the course. Students are free to share their thoughts with Dr. Agoes in an open and constructive manner during the semester. Students can make suggestions to Dr. Agoes privately during office hours, or via email.

#### **OFFICIAL COURSE EVALUATION**

“Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

#### **QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, COURSE PROBLEMS**

If a student has any concern regarding the course, contact Dr. Agoes via immediately. However, please do NOT contact Dr. Agoes for computer, internet and/or Canvas-related problems. Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at (352) 392-HELP [4357], or email to [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu) for these matters.

#### **UF RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES POLICY**

For University of Florida Students, the following guidelines apply: Students, upon prior notification of their instructors, shall be excused from class or other scheduled academic activity to observe a religious holy day of their faith. Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered in their absence. Students shall not be penalized due to absence from class or other scheduled academic activity because of religious observances.

If a faculty member is informed or is aware that a significant number of students are likely to be

absent from class because of a religious observance, the faculty member should not schedule a major exam or other academic event at that time. Of special note in the Spring 2024 semester are the periods of Lent and Easter (February 14-March 31), Ramadan (March 10-April 9), and Passover (April 22-30), you may anticipate many of our students requesting an excused absence on selected days in these times for observance.

A student who is to be excused from class for a religious observance is not required to provide a second party certification of the reason for the absence. Furthermore, a student who believes that he or she has been unreasonably denied an education benefit due to religious beliefs or practices may seek redress through the student grievance procedure.

The UF Religious Holidays Policy is available at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/#religiousholidaystext>

### CLASS SCHEDULE

DATE	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Week 1 Week of Jan. 8	-Introduction to the Course -Getting to Know You -Discuss the Syllabus -Chapter 1: Small Groups: Power, Definition, Attraction.	Quiz 1 on Friday Reflection note 1 due on Sunday 11:59 p.m.
Week 2 Week of Jan. 15 (Jan. 15 is a holiday)	Chapter 2: Small Group Communication: A System of Interaction.	Quiz 2 on Friday Reflection note 2 due on Sunday 11:59 p.m.
Week 3 Week of Jan. 22	Chapter 3: Norms, Roles, Cohesion, and Groupthink	Quiz 3 on Friday Reflection note 3 due on Sunday 11:59 p.m.
Week 4 Week of Jan. 29	Chapter 4: Phases of Group Development: Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing.	Quiz 4 on Friday Reflection note 4 due on Sunday 11:59 p.m.
Week 5 Week of Feb. 5	Chapter 5: Diversity in Groups: The Strength of Different Perspectives.	Quiz on 5 Friday Reflection note 5 due on Sunday 11:59 p.m.
Week 6 Week of Feb. 12	Chapter 6: Verbal and Nonverbal Communication.	Quiz 6 on Friday Reflection note 6 due on Sunday 11:59 p.m.
Week 7 Week of Feb. 19	Chapter 7: Listening and Feedback. <b>EXAM #1: (CH 1-5) on Friday, 2/23</b>	<b>Exam Due.</b> <b>No reflection note due.</b> <b>No quiz.</b>



Week 8 Week of Feb. 26	Chapter 8: Group Evolution: Teams.	Quiz on 7 Friday Reflection note 7 due on Sunday 11:59 p.m.
Week 9 Week of Mar. 4	Chapters 9 and 10: Decision Making and Problem Solving, and Creativity in the Small Group Process.	Quiz on 8 Friday Reflection note 8 due on Sunday 11:59 p.m.
Week 10 Week of Mar. 11	<b>Spring Break</b>	<b>NO WORK – HAVE FUN!</b>
Week 11 Week of Mar. 18	Chapter 11 and 12: Group Process and Presentation Techniques, and Productive Conflict Management.	Quiz 9 on Friday Reflection note 9 due on Sunday 11:59 p.m.
Week 12 Week of Mar. 25	Chapter 13: Leadership in Small Groups.	Quiz 10 on Friday Reflection note 10 due on Sunday 11:59 p.m.
Week 13 Week of Apr. 1	Case Study Presentations (All Groups)	<b>Reflection note 11 due on Sunday 11:59 p.m.</b> <b>No quiz.</b>
Week 14 Week of Apr. 8	Chapter 14: Observing and Evaluating a Small Group.	Quiz 11 on Friday Reflection note 12 due on Sunday 11:59 p.m.
Week 15 Week of Apr. 15	Chapter 15: Computer-Mediated Small Group Communication.	Quiz 12 on Friday Reflection note 13 due on Sunday 11:59 p.m.
Week 16 Week of Apr. 22	<b>Exam Review on April 22</b> <b>FINAL EXAM: (CH. 6-15) on April 24 at 207 Rolfs Hall.</b>	<b>No quiz.</b> <b>No reflection note due.</b> <b>Study for Final Exam.</b> <b>Take Final Exam.</b>