

COMM 531: COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Autumn 2005 – Monday/Wednesday 9:30-11:18 a.m.

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OBJECTIVES

Communication and Conflict Management is designed to explore the dynamics of conflict and negotiation in a variety of communication and relational contexts: interpersonal, small group, organizational/business, and international/cross-cultural. The primary goals of this course are to (1) articulate the relationship between communication and conflict, (2) provide you with a better understanding of yourself and your reactions to conflict, and (3) help you build communication and analytical skills necessary to manage your conflicts more effectively. The following objectives will help you reach these goals: (1) understand the difference between position-based and interest-based negotiation, (2) identify a variety of distributive and integrative conflict tactics, (3) recognize the characteristics of productive and destructive conflicts, and (4) expand your understanding and use of a range of conflict strategies.

Conflict and negotiation skills are best learned via hands-on experiences. Thus, there will generally be at least one in-class activity each class period (e.g., role-play, simulation, questionnaire, etc.). These activities will help illustrate points in the readings and lectures, and enhance further discussion and reflection. Also, the exercises will put you in new and potentially uncomfortable situations so that you will have the opportunity to try out new behaviors and skills in the relatively safe environment of the classroom. *I expect students to be fully committed to and to actively participate in all activities.*

REQUIRED READINGS

McGraw-Hill's compilation of selected chapters from Lewicki, R.J., Saunders, D.M., Minton, J.W., & Barry, B. (2003). *Negotiation: Readings, exercises, and cases* (4th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill and from W. William Wilmot and Joyce L. Hocker, *Essentials of Negotiation and Interpersonal Conflict*, 2004.

Additional readings may be assigned.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

EXAMS: There will be two exams. Exams will be composed largely of multiple-choice or true-false items, but may also include short answer or fill-in-the-blank items. Exams will cover material from lectures, readings, and/or assignments. Unless otherwise noted, these exams will *not* be cumulative.

INDIVIDUAL PAPERS: Two short (2 pages maximum) individual papers will be assigned. Each paper will ask you to reflect on one or more conflict-related issues in your life and/or discussed in class. Though I expect these papers to be thoughtful, I also want

them to be somewhat spontaneous. Thus, specific guidelines for each paper will be distributed *one* class period before the due date (the due date for the second paper is actually the final exam date so you will have more time for that paper).

GROUP PRESENTATION: There are many aspects of communication and conflict management that will not be covered in this class. Your group must pick one of these topics and develop a means of teaching it to the class. The instructor will ask group members to evaluate the quality and quantity of each other's input; individual grades will be a function of both the group grade (assigned by the instructor) and peer evaluations. Specific guidelines for the presentations will be distributed no later than the second week of class. Missing presentations given by your classmates is strongly frowned upon, and students will have 10 points deducted from their presentation grade for *each* presentation they miss (this is in addition to any other attendance related penalties).

GRADING CRITERIA

YOUR GRADE IN THIS CLASS IS A FUNCTION OF THE FOLLOWING:		GRADE:	PERCENT:
Exams	200 points (2 x 100 points)	A	93%-100%
Individual Paper(s)	50 points (2 x 25 points)	A-	90%-92%
Group Presentation	100 points	B+	87%-89%
<hr/>		B	83%-86%
Total	350 points	B-	80%-82%
		C+	77%-79%
		C	73%-76%
		C-	70%-72%
		D+	67%-69%
		D	63%-66%
		D-	60%-62%
		E	Less than 60%

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is required. Students are required to provide official written documentation for excused absences. Excuses for university-sponsored activities must be presented in advance of the absence. No excuses or documentation will be accepted more than one week after the absence. Your final grade will be lowered 14 points (i.e., 4%) for each unexcused absence beyond two classes.

MISSED OR LATE EXAMS OR ASSIGNMENTS: By definition, late assignments are below average. Missed or late assignments create major time and scheduling conflicts, and are unfair to those who are prepared. For these reasons, any late assignment will have 10% deducted from the score as a penalty for *each day* it is late (including weekends). An assignment is considered late when it is submitted after the stated deadline, and deductions will be taken beginning with the missed deadline. For example, if an assignment is due in class on Monday, deductions will begin immediately following the conclusion of class. The *only* exception to this policy will be *documented* and *university accepted* excuses. Such documentation must be presented within one week of the missed activity.

READINGS AND PARTICIPATION: All readings should be done prior to the assigned class period. Students are expected to participate *fully and constructively* in class discussions and activities.

CLASSROOM CIVILITY: We want to build a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. In a communication class, it is *especially* important that we (1) display respect for all members of the class – including the instructor and students, (2) pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities, (3) avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading the newspaper, doing work for other classes, receiving cell phone calls, etc.), and (4) avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom. This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, it represents the minimal standards that help make the classroom a productive place for all concerned. Your final grade will be reduced by two points *each time* you engage in these sorts of behaviors – *especially* cell phones or pagers going off.

WRITTEN WORK AND PRESENTATIONS: Students must use correct spelling and grammar in all written and oral assignments. *Grades on poorly written or presented assignments will be lowered by up to 10 percent.* In-class activities and exams may be handwritten. All other submitted work must be typed. All written assignments must conform to guidelines established in the Fifth Edition of the American Psychological Association’s (APA) Publication Manual. *Grades on written assignments not conforming to APA guidelines will also be lowered by up to 10 percent.* A citation for the most recent edition of the *APA Publication Manual* is included under recommended readings. An APA template and variety of other helpful APA hints are also available at the instructor’s Online Office.

E-MAIL & COMPUTER WORKS: All assignments must be submitted in hard copy. However, I may at times use electronic mail for class updates. Please read your mail regularly (at least 2-3 times per week) so you can keep up to date on upcoming assignments.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT: Intellectual dishonesty is a fancy term for cheating. Cheating and plagiarism in any form, regardless of any justification, will not be tolerated. The Ohio State University’s *Code of Student Conduct* (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: “Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process,” Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University’s *Code of Student Conduct* is never considered an excuse for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the *Code of Student Conduct* and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct at http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM). If COAM determines that you have violated the University’s *Code of Student Conduct*, the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University. If you have any questions about this policy or what constitutes

academic misconduct, please contact the instructor or visit the COAM web page at <http://oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html>.

*Academic misconduct in this class also consists of reading/viewing/discussion the confidential briefing information held by your opponent(s) in any role-play scenario. This means you **MAY NOT** (1) read/view the confidential briefing information of role play scenarios used in this class or previous offerings or other sections of this class, or (2) show your briefing information to your opponent at any time, or read or quote verbatim from any part of that information at any time.*

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION POLICY: Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible (*documentation should be provided no later than the second week of class*) so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities. Course material will gladly be made available in alternate formats whenever necessary.

TENTATIVE DAILY SCHEDULE

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS/EXERCISES	WHAT'S DUE
1	W 9/21	Introduction to Class	Questionnaire 1 Personal Bargaining	Distribute Individual Paper 1 Assignment
2	M 9/26	Conflict & Negotiations	Wilmot & Hocker Chap 2 Exercise 6-G Techna Personal bargaining results	Individual Paper 1 Due Distribute Group Project/ Presentation Assign
	W 9/28	Characteristics of Conflict Distributive Bargaining Conflict Styles	Reading 1-3 Conflict Styles Survey	Conflict styles survey results
3	M 10/3	Distributive Bargaining	Readings 3-2 & 3-3 Exercise 4	Exercise 4
	W 10/5	Mixed-motive Bargaining	Exercise 2	Group project/ Presentation approval
4	M 10/10	Integrative Bargaining/ Principled Negotiation	Readings 4-1 & 4-2 Exercise 24	Exercise 24
	W 10/12	Persuasion in Conflict & Negotiation	Elaboration likelihood model	Influence in action examples
5	M 10/17	Communication in Conflict & Negotiation		Questionnaire – Comm. Competence/results
	W 10/19	Exam I		
6	M 10/24	Individual & Personality Differences; Influence Tactics	Reading 10-3	Questionnaire – Tactics Go over tactics questionnaire
	W 10/26	Individual & Gender Differences	Reading 10-2 Group meetings	Pass out Decision Survey
7	M 10/31	Perception Biases in Conflict & Negotiations	Reading Chap 5 Exercise 27 (tentative)	Review Decision Survey
	W 11/2	Teams and Groups	Decision Making Exercise	Hidden Profile
8	M 11/7	Power	Reading 6-1 Exercise 16	Bring \$2 to Distribute
	W 11/9	Managing Difficult Negotiations Alternative Dispute Resolution Guest Speaker Eric McGraw	Reading 12-1 Reading 13-1 Group Meetings	Best Practices for Negotiators
9	M 11/14	Ethics in Conflict & Negotiation	Reading 7-2, Exercise 12	Questionnaire The Sins II Scale
	W 11/16	Exam 2		Exam 2
10	M 11/21	Group Presentations		Group Presentations
	W 11/23	No Class	Library Day	No Class
11	M 11/28	Group Presentations		Group Presentations
	W 11/30	Group Presentations		Group Presentations LAST DAY OF CLASS Paper #2 Instructions
		FINAL EXAM DATE		Individual paper #2 due