

**Group Processes**  
**Arts & Sciences 1138, Freshman Seminar**  
**1 Semester-hour Credit**  
**Day/Time      Room**

**Professor Name: David Melamed**  
**e-Mail: melamed.9@osu.edu**

**Office Hours: TBD**

**Course Description**

We spend most of lives in groups. Friendship cliques, families, clubs, and work groups are examples of some of the many groups to which you probably belong. This course examines theories and patterns involved in the structure and processes of groups. Through exercises and discussion we will explore, for example, the challenges of collective action, how interdependence shapes both differentiation (power, conflict, inequality) and integration (cohesion, trust, affect), and how normative processes (status, conformity) structure and control group interaction.

**Texts**

All reading material will be made available as PDFs on Carmen.

**Course Policies**

Attendance is required. If you are going to miss class, please notify the instructor in advance and arrangements may be made to make up for missed activities and discussion. Since, aside from the classroom exercises, this is a discussion-based course, it is imperative that students read the course material before class. Participation in classroom discussion is one of the main mechanisms of evaluation.

**Grading**

This course uses a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading scheme. A final grade of 70% or higher qualifies for an "S." Anything less than a 70% qualifies for a "U."

**Participation:** Participation in classroom discussion constitutes 35% of the course grade. In week 8 you will receive feedback on your participation up to that point in the semester.

**Group Exercise Development:** Students will form groups of 3-5 students and develop a classroom exercise to illustrate one of the topics on the syllabus. In addition to developing the exercise for the rest of the students, the group will present what the exercise illustrated and the implications of the group process. The group exercise constitutes 40% of the course grade. In addition to my evaluation of the group, each group member will grade everyone's contribution to the group (after all, free-riding is one topic we will consider in the course!). Topics which may be covered by student groups are denoted by an asterisk (\*).

**Paper:** Students will write a brief (3-4 page) reflection paper. The paper should apply the theories and concepts learned in class to your own experiences. A detailed paper rubric will be handed

out. Papers are due at the end of the semester. Papers constitute 25% of the course grade.

### **Academic Misconduct**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentlife.osu.edu/pdfs/csc\\_12-31-07.pdf](http://studentlife.osu.edu/pdfs/csc_12-31-07.pdf)).

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

### **Biographic Information**

David Melamed has research interests in Group Processes, Social Networks, Research Methods, and Stratification. He has published many articles on Group Processes and is an Associate Editor of *Social Justice Research* and a member of the Editorial Board for *Social Psychology Quarterly*. At the Ohio State University he teaches Sociological Aspects of Deviance, Introduction to Sociology, and a graduate seminar on Social Network Analysis. At other institutions he has taught courses on Group Processes, The Social Psychology of Gender, and Statistics.

## **Weekly Schedule**

### **Week 1 – Intro to the course & Background**

READ: Ridgeway, Cecilia. 1983. “An Introduction to Small Groups.” Pp. 3-31 in *The Dynamics of Small Groups*. New York: St. Martin’s Press.

### **Week 2 – How to study groups**

READ: Webster, Murray, Jr. 1994. “Experimental Methods.” Pp. 43-69 in *Group Processes: Sociological Analyses*, edited by Martha Foschi and Edward J. Lawler. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

### **Week 3 – How to study groups**

READ: Zelditch, Morris. 1969. “Can You Really Study an Army in the Laboratory?” Pp. 528-539 in *A Sociological Reader on Complex Organizations* edited by A. Etzioni. New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston.

**Week 4 – Status**

READ: No reading this week.

**\*Note: We will not meet in our regular classroom. Please check Carmen for an announcement on where we will meet.**

**Week 5 – Status**

READ: Berger, Joseph and Murray Webster. 2006. “Expectations, Status, and Behavior.” In *Contemporary Social Psychological Theories* edited by P. Burke. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

**Week 6 – Where do Status Beliefs come from?**

READ: Ridgeway, Cecilia. 2006. “Status Construction Theory” in *Contemporary Social Psychological Theories* edited by P. Burke. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

**Week 7 – Social Dilemmas**

READ: Yamagishi, Toshio. 1995. “Social Dilemmas.” Pp. 311-335 in *Sociological Perspectives in Social Psychology*, edited by K. S. Cook, G. A. Fine, and J. S. House. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

**Week 8 – Social Dilemmas**

READ: Lynn, Michael and Andrew Oldenquist. 1986. “Egoistic and Nonegoistic Motives in Social Dilemmas.” *American Psychologist*. 41(5): 529-534.

**Week 9 – Conformity and Social Control**

READ: Milgram, Stanley. 1965. “Some Conditions of Obedience and Disobedience to Authority.” *Human Relations* 18(1):57-76.

**Week 10 – Conformity and Social Control**

READ: Milgram continued...

**\*Week 11 – Conformity and Social Control**

READ: Asch, Solomon. 1955. “Opinions and Social Pressure” *Scientific American*. 193: 31-35.

**\*Week 12 – Emotions**

READ: Stets, Jan. 2006. “Emotions and Sentiments” in *The Handbook of Social Psychology* edited by J. Delamater. New York: Springer.

**\*Week 13 – Power**

READ: Molm, Linda. 2001. “Theories of Social Exchange and Exchange Networks.” Pp. 260-272 in *Handbook of Social Theory*, edited by G. Ritzer and B. Smart. London: Sage Publications.

**\*Week 14 – Justice**

READ: Hegtvedt, Karen. 2006. “Justice Frameworks” in *Contemporary Social Psychological Theories* edited by P. Burke. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

**DUE: Course paper is due.**