

**PSYC 467: Psychology of Working in Groups and Teams**  
**Thursdays 7:20 to 10:00pm; Thompson Hall 114**  
**Instructors: Marissa Shuffler & Katherine Hildebrand**

**Course Goals and Description:**

This course is designed to teach students both knowledge and skills that are required for working effectively in groups and teams. Challenges such as communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, and task-related issues will be explored through readings, lecture and discussion, class exercises, and applied problem-solving activities. The understanding of group processes that will be developed from active participation in all parts of the class will provide students with teamwork skills that are highly sought by organizations today.

Teamwork is learned like any other skill. As in basketball or playing the piano, developing effective teamwork skills requires practice. Thus, it is necessary to provide students with the opportunity to practice newly learned teamwork skills in a non-threatening environment. Specifically, this course requires extensive participation in class and in out-of-class exercises. These activities allow students to experience first hand team-related processes, phenomena, and dilemmas. This means that individuals in the course must be open to both giving and receiving constructive feedback regarding their behavior and the behavior of their peers in group settings.

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**Katherine Hildebrand**

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 12:00 - 1:00

Robinson B210

**Required Text:**

Forsyth, D.R. (2005). *Group dynamics* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

**Readings:**

We will assign several additional journal articles throughout the semester that will complement the reading from the text book.

**Major Course Activities:**

- A. Reading and mastering technical/scientific material.
- B. Discussing concepts, issues, phenomena, and research findings.
- C. Participating in in-class group exercises.
- D. Completing a weekly journal entry relevant to that day's topic.
- E. Analyzing the development of both self-competencies and team-processes.
- F. Integrating the above activities in course assignments and exams

**Course Schedule:**

Topic	Instructor	Dates	Readings/Assignments
Introduction to groups	Marissa & Katherine	January 26	Chapters 1 & 2
Individual & the group	Marissa	February 2	Chapter 3
Group formation	Katherine	February 9	Chapter 4
Cohesion & development	Marissa	February 16	Chapter 5
Structure	Marissa	February 23	Chapter 6
Influence	Katherine	March 2	Chapter 7
*Group Presentations*	Marissa & Katherine	March 9	<b>Group Paper Due</b>
Spring Break!	No Class	March 16	
<b>Midterm</b>	Marissa & Katherine	March 23	
Performance	Marissa	March 30	Chapter 9
Decision making	Katherine	April 6	Chapter 10; <b>Term Paper Due</b>
Power & Leadership	Marissa	April 13	Chapters 8 & 11
Conflict	Katherine	April 20	Chapters 12 & 13
*Group Presentations*	Marissa & Katherine	April 27	<b>Group Paper Due</b>
Review		May 4	
<b>Final Exam</b>		<b>May 15, 7:30pm-10:15pm</b>	

\*\*Readings should be completed prior to the day of class! All readings and projected dates are subject to change. Any revisions to the syllabus will be announced in class. It is YOUR responsibility to make note of any changes to the syllabus.

**Class Format:**

*Class Attendance:* Attendance is *strongly* encouraged. Remember that the *majority* of your grade is determined by leading and participating in class discussions. If you have a reasonable absence from class (illness, family emergency), please let the instructor know **PRIOR** to class in order to make appropriate arrangements.

*Class Participation:* This class is being conducted seminar-style we will not be lecturing at you, but will require participation in discussions of the course material and articles in order to earn participation points. Participation points will be assigned as follows:

*Score Participation Criteria*

- 20 **Outstanding:** Demonstrates excellent preparation: has analyzed readings, case or material exceptionally well. Offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of material to further class discussion. Contributes to activities and class discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds thoughtfully, suggests alternatives to approaching material and demonstrates active involvement.
- 15 **Very Good:** Demonstrates good preparation and constructively participates in all class activities and discussions; occasionally demonstrates insight by asking questions or making statements that are relevant, add to, and facilitate the class discussion
- 10 **Fair:** Demonstrates adequate preparation; occasionally participates in class discussion or other class activities Generally demonstrates respect for professor and other classmates. Offers only straightforward information without elaboration or frequency.
- 5 **Poor:** Present, not disruptive. Tries to respond when called upon but does not offer much or fails to engage in in-class activities.
- 0 **No credit:** Absent or present yet not prepared or attentive.

Please be courteous and do not bring cell phones, computers, or any other type of electronics to class. If cell phones are brought to class, they must be turned off or set to silent mode. The use of these items in class will lead to a reduction in participation points!

**If it is found that students are not participating during discussions with quality contributions, unannounced quizzes will be incorporated into the daily lectures.**

Journals: In an effort to tie what you are learning and experiencing in class back to the “outside world” you will complete a journal entry every week. Each journal entry should be at a minimum 1 typed, double-spaced page. You will choose a topic that we discuss in class or cover in the reading for that week and write about some instance where you see this applied in your life or an experience you’ve had perhaps in your work setting, in a classroom, on a sports team, at the grocery store, in an elevator, etc. The goal is for you to begin to recognize how the principles of teamwork and group interaction apply to everyday life. **Journal entries are due at the beginning of each class; late entries will result in a grade of ZERO – no excuses!**

Group Presentations: Due to the nature of this course, it is important to give you practice working in a group. Therefore, there will be two group presentations: one at the beginning and one at the end of the semester. These presentations will involve a PowerPoint presentation, handout, and short paper/outline. More specific information will be provided when the assignment is given and groups are chosen.

Term Paper: You will be required to write one paper for this class, which will be due on **April 6<sup>th</sup>**. For this paper, you should choose a concept that appeals to you from our textbook, find at least five key articles that have addressed this concept (these should be post-1990), and *discuss how they contribute to our understanding of the concept, their strengths and weaknesses, and their implications for future research*. Rather than address each article separately, your challenge will be to integrate these articles, addressing how they compliment, support, or contradict one another. More details about the paper will be provided in class.

Exams: Exams will cover information from the textbook, lectures, discussions, and group presentation. There will be 2 exams during the semester; a midterm and a final. If you miss a test date without making prior arrangements with the instructor, you will receive a grade of ZERO. The final exam **will** be cumulative.

Grading: Grades will be determined based upon the following scales:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Total Points</u>
Class Participation (20 points/class)	240
Journals (10 points/entry)	120
Group Presentation 1	100
Group Presentation 2	100
Midterm	100
Final	100
Term Paper	100
<b>Total Possible Points</b>	<b>860</b>

The final grade will be determined as follows:

- A = 90% or above
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%
- F = 59% or below

Extra Credit: Points also may be obtained by participating in psychological experiments. Each hour of participation adds the equivalent of 5 points to your final point allocation. The MAXIMUM number of participation hours is five (or 25 points). Other extra credit opportunities may also arise; your instructors will inform you of these.

Cheating: Will not be tolerated. This class will adhere very strictly to the policies set forth by George Mason's Honor System and Code. PLEASE READ AND FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THIS CODE!! You may find the honor code at the following web address: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>. If you are caught in violation of the honor code, you will receive 0 points for the given assignment.

Students with Disabilities: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see us and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. We are more than willing to work with you, in collaboration with the Disability Resource Center, to make appropriate accommodations. You may also find it useful to refer to the Disability Resource Center's website to explore the services that they provide: <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/resources.html>

E-mail: **We communicate primarily through e-mail.** We assume that you check your e-mail. We will be making class announcements, addressing class questions, and sending additional materials, assignments, etc., to your GMU e-mail account. You must activate this account! If you prefer to use another e-mail account, you can have your e-mail forwarded from your GMU account. You should check your account the evening prior to each class for announcements.

Important Dates:

Last day to add - Feb. 7th

Last day to drop - Feb. 24th