

Universidad de Puerto Rico  
Río Piedras Campus  
College of Humanities  
Dept. of English

INGL 4006 Group Discussion  
Spring Semester 2017-2018

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**Required Text:**

Rothwell, J.D. (2011). In Mixed Company: Small group communication (8th) Texas, Harcourt.

**Course Description:**

This course weaves theory of communication in small groups with practice in participating in small groups. The course is designed with an emphasis on communication competence, helping students to create an awareness and appreciation of the myriad ways in which communication affects group members and group outcomes. Toward this goal of communication competence, certain skills will be developed and practiced.

- **Analysis skill development:** evaluation, reflection, synthesis, application, developing arguments
- **Group process skill development:** group presentation, group writing, knowledge-building, group responsibility

**Course Objectives:**

- To develop an understanding of group communication theories and applications
- To understand the different roles that each person plays in a group setting
- To examine a variety of leadership principles and how each may be effective in different contexts
- To consider how the decision-making process differs when working in group settings
- To analyze conflict management styles in group settings
- To explore the ways in which technological advances have changed the group process
- To appreciate the strengths that each individual has to offer to the group
- To promote collegiality, tolerance, and patience amongst group members
- To critique the influence that power has on group members
- To be able to objectively observe group processes
- To become more competent group members overall

## **Assignments**

**Exams:** Each exam covers half of the textbook content and will consist of short essays of application and analysis

**Class Discussion:** This is meant to prepare you for the group project presentation by giving you a sense of how groups can conduct presentations dynamically and effectively. Discussions are completed in your project groups, as the rest of the class observes and learns. The only preparation involved is to read a chapter and then complete some outside research individually. I will give each group feedback on their performance, from which the whole class can benefit.

**Group Project/Presentations:** Each student is required to participate in a group for the entire semester in order to work on a long-range group project. The project is called PPPPP: Problem, Possibility, Pursuit, Presentation, Portfolio. A detailed description of this assignment will soon follow. This is considered the capstone project of this course, so my expectations are high. Ultimately, more than half of your grade for this course will be derived from the quality of your project. You have the whole semester to develop this project. Work for this project will be primarily done outside of class. At points throughout the semester you will hand in parts of the project for feedback, giving you the opportunity for revision and improvement.

## **Alternate Instructional Methods:**

The professor has the option of covering up to 11.25 hours of the 45- hour course with alternative methods to make up class hours missed due to strikes, natural events or professor's absence.

## **Course policies:**

- **Ley 51:** Los estudiantes que reciben servicios de Rehabilitación Vocacional deben comunicarse con el profesor al inicio del semestre para planificar el acomodo razonable y equipo asistivo necesario conforme a las recomendaciones de la Oficina de Asuntos Estudiantes. También aquellos estudiantes con necesidades especiales que requieren de algún tipo de asistencia o acomodo deben comunicarse con el profesor.
- **Plagiarism:** I will not tolerate academic dishonesty in any form. ALL work must be original. If in doubt, cite the source. Contact me if you have any questions regarding plagiarism. Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. It is not an acceptable defense to claim, "I didn't know I was plagiarizing," "I didn't know what I was doing was plagiarism," or "I didn't know that plagiarizing was prohibited." In an academic environment, plagiarism is one of the most serious offenses a student can commit. Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional representation of another person's ideas as your own. Plagiarism sometimes confuses students. It is plagiarism to turn in any portion of someone else's paper, speech, or outline as your own work. It is plagiarism to use any portion of a paper from a "file" of previously used research and present it in

class as your original work. It is plagiarism to take passages from someone's work and include it in a speech, paper, or outline without citing the original author. It is a form of academic misconduct to knowingly allow another student to use your work as their own, or to use another's work as your own. ***All material submitted for evaluation must be the original work of the student.***

- **Attendance:** Attendance is expected at all classes. Courses in communication require a high degree of class participation and interpersonal interaction. For this reason, students are expected to attend all classes. A strong emphasis will be placed on in-class participation and learning. Poor attendance prevents proper speaker/audience interaction in the classroom and will result in the reduction of your final grade. Absences beyond three will automatically reduce your class grade by 5 percent. Students who do not or cannot attend classes regularly, for whatever reasons, cannot demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes for the course. Students with more than three absences will find their grades affected. I am under no obligation to provide make-up assignments for students who have missed class. ***Finally, if you miss class it is your responsibility to get class notes from another student in the class. I will not provide copies of my notes under any circumstances.***
- **Respect:** This class is based on discussion. Some of the ideas expressed within the discussions may differ from one student to another. This is good and will help the class to better grasp concepts that the course is designed to foster. In order for these discussions to take place, all class members need to respect the thoughts and feelings of their peers. It is certainly fine to challenge others' ideals, but please do so in a non-offensive manner. This course is designed to help students become better communicators and members of the overall community. Please keep this in mind at all times.
- Cell phones must be set to vibrate and not ring during class. If you must answer make sure you leave the classroom and return promptly.
- The assigned group project will require primarily work time outside of class. It is your responsibility to attend your group's schedule meetings and to participate fully in the success of your group. AT the end of the course, you will receive a grade from your peers in your group based on your contribution and performance.
- All students will take exams at the scheduled time. NO makeup exams will be given. There is no need to provide a makeup since they are take home. Please be advised that you will hand in the exam the DAY and TIME I schedule. NO LATE exams will be accepted.
- All papers submitted must be typed, with NO errors. Margins should be one inch. Use a 10 or 12 Arial or Times New Roman font. Double-space and include page numbers.

- Note that the schedule I provide is subject to change at any time. You are responsible for keeping up with scheduling changes as they occur.

### **Evaluation Method:**

2 Short Essay Exam Questions (50 points each)	100 pts	16%
3 oral presentations from text chapters (15 points each)	45 pts	7%
2 Short Response Pieces (10 points each)	20 pts	4%
Final Research Project	350 pts	57%
*Class Grade	100 pts	16%
Total	615 pts	100%

### **\* Important Evaluation Factors**

**Attendance Policy: one (1) absence = - 3 pts.; 3 late arrivals = 1 absence**

**Participation**

**Responsibility – NO MAKE-UP WORK**

### **Grading System:** A, B, C, D, or F

#### **Grading procedures:**

This class requires professionalism in all forms of communication. For that reason, I will be expecting high quality in students' written assignments and speaking performances.

"A" work is outstanding. It is outstanding because it is obvious that the student has gone above and beyond the requirements of the assignment. These students demonstrate creativity, enthusiasm, and overall academic excellence.

"B" work is good. Assignments in this category range from those just above average to those that are nearly A's. Students receiving B's have shown thoughtful reflection, but may have some flaws in writing or speaking style. "B" work still goes beyond the minimum requirements.

"C" work is average. Students receiving C's vary from those who meet the requirements to those who quickly throw an assignment together. "C" work demonstrates competence, but not mastery of course material.

"D" work is poor. Often "D" assignments lack organization, critical thought, and effort. These concerns are often the outcomes of apathetic attitudes.

"F" work is unacceptable. Students should not receive an "F" if they make an effort to attend, participate, and process the information covered.

\*Syllabi adapted from the class syllabus of Dr. Janet MacLennan and Dr. Julie Parenteau who have taught this course previously.

\*\*Syllabi is subject to change at the professor's discretion