

Psychology 383: Interpersonal Competence & Group Dynamics #11560, Spring 2009

Class Location & Times: SH309, M & Wed 5:00 – 6:15 PM

Instructor: Nancy A. Blum, Ph.D.
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Office: Sierra Hall 304
Office hours: Wednesday 2:30-3:30 PM

Required Text: Forsyth, Donelson, R. (2006). *Group Dynamics* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Course Description: This course presents a survey of the scientific exploration of the nature of interpersonal dynamics and groups. Some of the topics addressed include how groups form, change over time, dissipate unexpectedly, achieve great goals, and sometimes commit great wrongs. It integrates theory & research, basic & applied science, traditional & contemporary topics, and the perspectives of multiple disciplines on groups including psychology, sociology, social psychology, political science, business, etc.. The class format will include both lecture–discussion as well as experiential activities.

Use of this Course: This course is an upper division undergraduate elective toward a BA in psychology. PSY 150 is a prerequisite for taking this class.

Course Objectives: The objectives of this course are to increase understanding of: the development and dissipation of groups, structure of groups, influence and power in groups, conflict and cooperation in groups, performance and decision–making in groups, leadership, collective behavior, and therapy groups as change agents.

Course Requirements: Students are expected to attend all classes, participate in class discussion and experiential exercises, and complete all reading assignments prior to each meeting. Brief out–of–class assignments and written assignments may be required, as may class presentations. No extra credit assignments will be accepted.

Students are expected to check WebCT for test scores, their CSUN e–mail for announcements, and the course website (see above) regularly for communication from the instructor, e.g., study guides, handouts. Students are expected to download and print out handouts for the specified class meeting, and bring the handout to class.

To create an atmosphere of mutual respect, please arrive at class early, remain seated for the entire class, and leave on time, as chronic tardiness, walking around, and leaving early are disruptive to classroom instruction. Please turn off all cell phones and pagers before entering the classroom. Avoid chatting, instant messaging, and text messaging. If you are unable to attend class due to illness or emergency, please consult with other students regarding the class materials missed. It is not necessary to contact me if you must miss a class.

Evaluation: All exams will be entirely objective (all multiple choice). Mid–term exams will be 1–hour long. The final exam will be 100 minutes long and will cover new material as well as cumulative material covered on previous tests.

Evaluation method by percentage of the total grade:

Class attendance and knowledge, respectful in–class behavior, and participation in discussions & experiential exercises	20%
Mid–term exam # 1	25%
Mid–term exam # 2	25%
Final exam	30%

Evaluation (continued):

Grades for each test will be assigned on a curve. Specifically, the student(s) with the fewest incorrect answers (e.g., 4 wrong answers) will receive a perfect score (e.g., 25 out of 25 points). Their number of mistakes becomes a bonus for the rest of the class. For example, if another student has 6 wrong answers, with the 4 bonus points, it counts as only 2 wrong answers ($6 - 4 = 2$) or 23 out of 25 points. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing in any form, you will receive a failing grade for the course and be reported to the university for appropriate disciplinary action.

The instructor will be no more stringent than the following overall percentages in assigning final course grades:

93.0% to 100.0%	A	73.0% to 76.99%	C
90.0% to 92.99%	A-	70.0% to 72.99%	C-
87.0% to 89.99%	B+	67.0% to 69.99%	D+
83.0% to 86.99%	B	63.0% to 66.99%	D
80.0% to 82.99%	B-	60.0% to 62.99%	D-
77.0% to 79.99%	C+	<60.0%	F

Tentative Course Calendar

<i>Monday</i>		<i>Wednesday</i>	
		Jan 21	Ch 1 Introduction to Group Dynamics
Jan 26	Ch 2 Studying Groups	Jan 28	Ch 3 The Individual and the Group
Feb 2	Ch 4 Formation	Feb 4	Ch 5 Cohesion & Development
Feb 9	Ch 5 (continued)	Feb 11	Ch 6 Structure Assignment: Handout for Ch 6 <i>Violating Norms</i> due 2/16
Feb 16	Ch 6 (continued)	Feb 18	Exam #1 (Chapters 1 through 6)
Feb 23	Ch 7 Influence	Feb 25	Ch 7 (continued)
Mar 2	Ch 8 Power Film: The Power of the Situation (Call #83168)	Mar 4	Ch 8 (continued)
Mar 9	Ch 8 (continued)	Mar 11	Ch 9 Performance
Mar 16	Ch 10 Decision Making Assignment: Handout for Ch 10 <i>Leadership Interview</i> due 3/18	Mar 18	Ch 11 Leadership
Mar 23	Exam #2 (Chapters 7 through 11)	Mar 25	Ch 12 Conflict

Mar 30	Ch 12 (continued)	Apr 1	Ch 13 Intergroup Relations
Apr 6	<i>Spring Recess</i>	Apr 8	<i>Spring Recess</i>
Apr 13	Film: Devil on Horseback	Apr 15	Ch 13 (continued)
Apr 20	Ch 14 Groups in Context	Apr 22	Ch 14 (continued)
Apr 27	Ch 15 Groups & Change	Apr 29	Ch 16 Crowds & Collective Behavior
May 4	Ch 16 (continued)	May 6	Instruction & Review
May 11	5:30 PM to 7:30 PM Final Exam	May 13	<i>Have a great summer break!</i>

Additional Course Policies

Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities must register with the Center on Disabilities and complete a services agreement each semester. Staff within the Center will verify the existence of a disability based on the documentation provided and approve accommodations. Students who are approved for testing taking accommodations must provide the instructor with a proctor form signed by a counselor in the Center on Disabilities prior to making testing arrangements. The Center on Disabilities is located in Bayramian Hall, room 110. Staff can be reached at (818) 677-2684.

Make-up Exams:

Make-up exams are discouraged! They will be given only when a student is ill or is facing some serious emergency. Written verification is required. In those instances when a make-up exam is necessary, it is the student's responsibility to 1) contact the instructor immediately (call 818-996-7579) to request the make-up exam; and 2) schedule a make-up exam as soon as the problem has passed. Make-up exams are administered only during my office hours. Students are expected to alter their class or work schedule to take the make-up exam. The final exam must be taken with the class at the scheduled time during finals week (see the Policy on Incompletes).

Policy on Incompletes:

Permission to take an "incomplete" must be received by the instructor before semester grades are due. A special form is required; and it is the student's responsibility to obtain one (available in the Administration Building), fill it out, and turn it in to the instructor. An "incomplete" should be requested only for serious or emergency reasons such as illness on the day of the final exam. A missing final exam is expected to be made up in a short period of time — within a few weeks of the beginning of the next semester — unless extremely unusual circumstances prevail. Please note: If an exam is missing, and an authorized incomplete has not been requested, the instructor will assign a grade of "U" (unauthorized incomplete). The grade eventually and automatically reverts to an "F."