

De Anza College, Winter 2023
Comm-15.53: Critical Decision-Making in Groups
Wednesdays 9:30a-11:20a, L45 + Asynchronous Online

Instructor:

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Office Hours – Zoom!:

Tuesday & Thursday 10:00a - 12:00p
drop in those times, or email for appointment any time

A note about contacting me: *Please do it!* You may email me at literally any time, and I will get back to you as soon as I can (within 24 hours Mon-Fri, within 48 hours Fri-Sun). I am available via e-mail or via Zoom during office hours to help you work through course material and assignments in any way I can. Please don't hesitate to ask any questions. ***Don't wait until the last minute!*** Check in with me early and often and I will assist you with the process. I never said it would be easy, but we can do it together.

A note about this quarter: teaching and learning in a pandemic – there is one principle that I want to state explicitly before we get too far into this course: De Anza College has been around for 50 years and will likely be around for 50 more. Your health and wellbeing – physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual – is always more important than your education plan, and this pandemic (and its residual fallout) should put those priorities in stark clarity. Please do not ever hurt yourself to “stay on track.” De Anza will be here next quarter, the quarter after that, etc. We are going to set a plan, take it day-by-day and week-by-week, and remain flexible and empathetic along the way. We're all going to the best we can (“best” being highly subjective to our context), but it's probably still not going to be great. We're in this together, we'll figure this out together, and we'll grow together. But the entire time, we will be empathetic and flexible.

All that being said, here's the plan for the quarter:

Class Meetings

This course will be a 50/50 Hybrid Course. For our purposes, that means we will meet on campus for a total of two hours per week, and at least three hours per week of coursework completed online via Canvas. We are in quite a transitionary and transformative period in academia, and there is a lot of chaos in our educational system right now. We will all do our best to be flexible and empathetic as we navigate moving back into traditional education systems. We will have grace, flexibility, and empathy, but make no mistake: **you must show up to class – in both online and face-face formats – to be successful.** You gotta show up if you wanna get it done. Please see the De Anza webpage [Your Guide to the Quarter](https://www.deanza.edu/quarter-guide/) (https://www.deanza.edu/quarter-guide/) for more information.

- Masking will be optional but strongly encouraged at De Anza college in most indoor spaces this quarter, and i'll tell you right now: our classroom is quite small and 30 people will be a comfortable but close fit. Plan accordingly.
- De Anza College will mandate vaccines and boosters for all people who will be on campus.

Course Description

De Anza College Course Schedule: Study in communication and critical decision making in the context of effective group problem solving with an emphasis on principles of sound reasoning to make a well-reasoned decision. This course explores theory, application, and evaluation of group communication processes, including problem solving, conflict management, decision-making, and leadership, with the goal of understanding different points of view in an increasingly diverse and interconnected global society.

Your Instructor: “The trouble with life isn't that there is no answer, it's that there are so many answers.” – Ruth Benedict
The world is complex, and we should be wary of anyone who tells us otherwise. To navigate through the infinite complexities of the world, we must first learn and utilize critical thinking and investigative skills to try and understand as many perspectives and truths of this world as possible, to discern the most valid and important truths. Second, as a part of this process we must embark on this endeavor collectively. This course aims to both sharpen our critical lenses and strengthen our powers of inquiry, as well as understand the communicative processes of small group dynamics, so that we may collectively take on the challenges of solving the world's problems together for the benefit of us all. ... Easy cake.

Student Learning Outcomes for Interpersonal Communication

After completion of Comm-15, students will be able to:

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of group communication and decision-making through self-reflection and facilitated discussions.
2. Apply a range of group communication models and theories to effectively solve problems and make decisions in a group setting.
3. Demonstrate communication skills necessary for working productively in a group, including active listening, nonverbal communication, managing tension, consensus building and recording group discussion..
4. Develop & present informative and persuasive group presentations supported with quality sources using appropriate citation format.

Required Text/Materials

- Rothwell, J. D. (2021). *In Mixed Company: Communication in Small Groups and Teams (11th ed.)*. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780197602812
- As a hybrid online course, this course requires reliable and regular access to technology, including but not limited to a device capable of accessing our learning management system, Canvas, as well as reliable internet access and audio & video recording capabilities

Course Requirements

Assignment	Points Possible	Your Total
Group Formation Exercises & Activities (SLO 1, 3)	45	_____
Difficult Dialogue Presentation (SLO 1, 2, 3, 4)	75	_____
Creative Solutions Presentation (SLO 1, 2, 3, 4)	75	_____
Online Quizzes (6 @ 15 points)(SLO: 1, 2, 3)	90	_____
Discussion Boards & Thought Projects (5 @ 15 points)(SLO 1, 2, 3)	75	_____
Midterm Exam (SLO 1, 2, 3)	40	_____
Critical Thinking Reflection Paper (SLO 2, 3, 4)	25	_____
Final Group Communication Reflection Paper (SLO: 1, 2, 3)	50	_____
Class Participation & In-Class Activities (SLO: 1, 2, 3)	25	_____
Total	500	_____

Final Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage of Total Points	Total Point Range
A	93-100	465-500
A-	90-92	450-464
B+	87-89	435-449
B	83-86	415-434
B-	80-82	400-414
C+	77-79	385-399
C	72-76	360-384
D+	67-71	335-359
D	63-66	315-334
D-	60-62	300-314
F	0-59	0-299

Brief Descriptions of Assignments

(More detailed assignment sheets to be given as the due dates approach)

Group Formation Exercises & Activities (45 points, 9%)

This course revolves around the strong cohesion and synergy of a small group. We will engage in several exercises and activities to build cohesion in our groups.

Difficult Dialogue Presentation (75 points, 15%)

Your group will choose a current topic, situation, social justice issue, and/or taboo topic and research five different angles, perspectives, or positions to take on that topic, and present these distinct angles to the class.

Creative Solutions Presentation (75 points, 15%)

Your group will investigate a current social justice issue and come to a decision on the best course of action to take; enact a law or policy, support a nonprofit organization, etc. and present that decision to the class.

Online Quizzes (90 points, 18%)

Throughout the quarter you will be required to complete six (6) short quizzes that will test your knowledge of course content, including information from both required readings and in-class lessons. Quizzes will be taken via Canvas.

Discussion Boards & Thought Projects (75 points, 15%)

Periodically, you will be required to engage in topical discussion board with your peers to have a conversation regarding group communication, or to analyze a situation that requires critical thinking.

Mid-Term Exam (40 points, 8%)

Near the halfway mark of the quarter, you will be required to do a short exercise to test your knowledge of key concepts from the first half of the course.

Critical Thinking Reflection Paper (25 points, 5%)

A paper to demonstrate your critical thinking skills; analyze an issue you are familiar with that has dominated by cultural norms, and reflect upon from different angles using our critical thinking skills.

Group Communication Paper (50 points, 10%)

For the final exercise in class, you will be asked to reflect on the entire quarter's journey with your group, applying a number of small group communication course concepts to your experience.

Class Participation (25 points, 5%)

In a communication course, the classroom time and space is incredibly important, perhaps sacred. Developing a community within the classroom is crucial to the success of this course, and *class participation* is an evaluation of your contribution to the community we are creating. There will be several frequent low-stakes assignments to measure your perpetual and ongoing commitment and contributions to the classroom community, both online and face-to-face.

Extra Credit (0 points, 0 %)

Very rarely will extra credit be offered, but plenty of extra credit will be given... ~\(\varphi\)_/

Course Policies

Attendance & Coursework

This class is going to be a blend of synchronous classroom meetings and online coursework. Attendance for the synchronous meetings will be mandatory in so much as all things in college are mandatory; you will be expected to know and apply the content covered in discussions. Since most of the coursework will be online, the expectation regarding attendance and coursework will be measured with rhythmic regularity. I will expect every student to attend the face-to-face meeting each week and check in on Canvas exercises twice each week. There will always be flexibility if there is communication, so if you know you are going to be irregular with your course engagements, let me know! Missing the equivalent of 2 calendar weeks in class and on Canvas without notifying the instructor may result in being dropped from the course.

Assignments

All assignments will be submitted via Canvas. *I will not accept assignments via e-mail without prior discussion.* Assignments will be accepted late up until the time I have completed evaluations and returned all feedback to students (usually 7-10 days), or the end of the quarter, whichever comes first.

Class Etiquette

This class is based on active engagement with the subject matter; therefore, full class attendance, punctuality, and focus on course material are essential. I feel that class time is sacred. **Having enrolled in this class, you are making a commitment to yourself, your instructor, and your peers.** We will learn much from each other, so long as we are all present and contributing to the learning environment. Furthermore, *the audience is a crucial part of the public speaking process; show up for each other, support each other, and we'll grow together.* The Communication Studies Department expects all members of the class (teachers and students) to treat each other with respect in their communication practices. This includes: 1) coming to class on time ready to participate; 2) listening to others actively and dialogically; 3) staying focused on the material of the class; 4) not disrupting class; and 5) *engaging in genuine dialogue, even amidst differences of opinion.*

- **Keys to Class Etiquette:** it is part of the course curriculum to learn the practices of effective interpersonal interaction, and we will practice these skills during class discussions. But here are a couple of basic rules:
 - *You cannot not communicate: everything you do in class contributes positively or negatively to the class culture.*
 - *Listen first and listen to understand; we are all here for new ideas, so let's embrace them.*
 - *Contribute bravely but own our perspectives and our questions (the devil needs no advocates).*

Plagiarism & Academic Integrity

The Center for Academic Integrity defines academic integrity as a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. From these values flow principles of behavior that enable academic communities to translate ideals to action. The entire campus affirms the importance of academic integrity, fosters a “love of learning,” and holds each person responsible for defining and supporting academic integrity standards. In all phases of teaching and learning, the responsibility for fostering and maintaining campus-wide academic integrity must be shared by all.

If you were to ever consider breaking this code of academic integrity ... don't. If you are unclear about plagiarism, please see me. Plagiarism occurs when a student misrepresents the work of another as their own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgement, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as their own. Any assignment found to be plagiarized **will be given an “F” grade (zero points)**. All instances of plagiarism in the Communication Studies Department will be reported to the Division Dean and may be reported to the Vice President of Student Services for further action.

For Your Information & Consideration

***most of De Anza's student services are working to assist you remotely. Nobody has ever succeeded in life or in college on their own, especially during times like these. You will have to ask for help, the trick is to know when and who to ask:*

Disabilities and Accommodations

College is supposed to be hard – if it was easy everyone would do it – however a disability should not be the barrier that makes college impossible. Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the Disability Support Programs and Services. The mission of the Disability Support Programs and Services (DSPS) Division is to ensure access to the college's curriculum, facilities, and programs, and to promote student success in realizing individual educational and vocational goals. For more information, please visit Disability Support Programs & Services Division at RSS 141, or at the [DSPS Website](http://www.deanza.edu/dsp) (<http://www.deanza.edu/dsp>)

Student Success Center

One potential challenge in college is the increased expectations of academic skills; everything comes up a notch. Need a hand? Student Success Center peer tutors can relate and are ready to help! Go to the [SSC homepage](https://www.deanza.edu/studentssuccess/) (<https://www.deanza.edu/studentssuccess/>) and click on the yellow links for schedules and Zoom links. The SSC is ready to offer: Individual Weekly or Drop-in Tutoring: Come with assignments or questions, or just drop by to see how tutoring works. Workshops, group tutoring and group study: Most people learn better with others...give it a try! Support for online learning: Speak with a friendly peer tutor or SSC staff member about motivation and organization strategies for online classes. We get it and are going through the same things, so let's support each other! After-hours or weekend tutoring: See the [Online Tutoring](https://www.deanza.edu/studentssuccess/online tutoring/) (<https://www.deanza.edu/studentssuccess/online tutoring/>) page for information about NetTutor (via Canvas) or Smarthinking (via MyPortal).

Stress and Mental Health

Balancing the rigors of academia with the ever evolving and complex social world students find themselves in can be challenging and potentially dangerous. If you feel you are having particular difficulty meeting all of the demands of your new lifestyle, perceived or real, do not fret! You are not alone. From time to time, problems of everyday living can be resolved through talking with friends, family, or someone whom we trust to help us. However, there are times when seeking help outside of one's familiar environment might be more helpful. Psychological Services is here to meet such needs. For more information, visit Psychological Services at RSS 127, or the [Psych Services website](https://www.deanza.edu/psychologicalservices/) (<https://www.deanza.edu/psychologicalservices/>)

Student disclosures of sexual violence

De Anza College is committed to fostering a campus free of sexual and gender-based violence including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as a De Anza College student, the course instructor is required to notify the Vice President of Student Services. To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact: **Campus Police** 408.924.8000; **Health Services** 408.864.8732; **Psychological Services** 408.864.8732; or **Dean of Student Development** 408.864.8828.

LGBTQ+ Students

To maximize your success as a college student, it is crucial for all students to build upon strong foundations both in and out of the classroom. However, despite much recent legal, political, and social change, being of a minority gender or sexual identity can potentially create instability in these crucial foundations. If you are an LGBTQ+ student struggling with identity or finding community, please see the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Center in MLC-250 or online at the [WGS Center Website](https://www.deanza.edu/wgs-center/) (<https://www.deanza.edu/wgs-center/>)

Undocumented Students

Applying, transferring, registering, and paying for college can be a complex maze of forms and deadlines for any student, and this complexity is compounded for students with undocumented residency. Undocumented students have extra layers of regulatory complexity to navigate, in addition to the fear and uncertainty surrounding legal citizenship status. However, De Anza College, its staff and faculty, are steadfast in their commitment to supporting our undocumented students in our communities. If you are an undocumented student and seek knowledgeable, honest, and trustworthy assistance with financial aid programs such as AB540 and

the California DREAM Act or have any other concerns about your citizenship or academic pathways, please reach out to HEFAS at the HEFAS website (<https://www.deanza.edu/hefas/>) for more information.

The Food Pantry

Living in the Bay Area & Silicon Valley is financially challenging, to put it lightly, and to try to attend school on top of that can be logistically impossible. It takes a certain level of financial stability to make it happen, which is a luxury we don't all have. Also, college is hard enough as it is, and it is even harder if you are truly hungry. If you qualify for EFAP, De Anza College has an on-campus food pantry available to you to help ease the financial burden and the health burden to maximize your success in your collegiate journey. See the Food Pantry website (https://www.deanza.edu/outreach/food_pantry.html) for more information.

Course Calendar

*Subject to change (and, honestly, *likely* to change) at any time by the instructor. Changes will be communicated in class, online, **AND** in writing. Please keep an eye on Canvas and your De Anza e-mail accounts for updates and adjustments to the course calendar. Thank you for your flexibility.

**All readings should be done *before* coming to class on the calendar due date.

Winter 2023: Comm-15.53

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Class Activity/Subject</i>	<i>Reading Due</i>	<i>Assignments</i>
1	1/9 – 1/14	Syllabus, Course Expectations, & Ice Breakers <i>Communication Competence in Groups: Communication Defined, Communication Competence & Small Groups, Listening</i>	Ch. 1	1. Student Survey 2. Discussion Board #0: Crowd Sourcing Tech Support 3. DB/CTTP #1: Groupbate & Small Group Vent Session
2	1/17 – 1/21 Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday – Monday January 16th – Campus Closed, Classes Canceled	<i>Groups as Systems: Interconnectedness & Adaptability</i> <i>Virtual Groups & Social Media: Pros, Cons, & Doing it Better</i>	Ch. 2, Ch. 12	1. Quiz #1 2. DB/CTTP #2: Group Qualities & Questions
3	1/23 – 1/28	<i>Introduction to Critical Thinking & Critical Theory</i> <i>Power: Power (re)Defined, Power in Groups</i>	Hooks, Tannen, Lazere, Rothwell Appendix B	1. Group Interview Responses (FlipGrid) 2. Choose Your Group Worksheet
4	1/30 – 2/4	<i>Critical Thinking, Logic, & Reasoning</i> <i>Group Development: Periodic Phases, Competition and Cooperation</i>	Ch. 10, & Yep, McIntosh, & Crosley-Corcoran	1. Quiz #2 2. Group Formation: Video Conferencing 3. Group Formation: Group Contract 4. DB/CTTP #3
5	2/6 – 2/11	<i>Roles in Groups: Types of Roles, and Adaptation</i>	Ch 3 & Ch. 5	1. Quiz #3 (library tutorial) 2. Difficult Dialogue Annotated Bibliographies

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Class Activity/Subject</i>	<i>Reading Due</i>	<i>Assignments</i>
6	2/13 – 2/16 President's Day Holiday, Friday February 17 – Monday February 21; Campus Closed, Classes Canceled	<i>Roles & Leadership: Emergence, Adaptability, & Perspectives</i>	Ch. 6	1. DB/CTTP #4 2. MIDTERM EXAM
7	2/21 – 2/25 President's Day Holiday, Friday February 17 – Monday February 20; Campus Closed, Classes Canceled	<i>Developing Group Climate: Positivity and Negativity, Competition and Cooperation, Communicating for Climate</i>	Ch. 4, Appendix A	1. Quiz #4
8	2/28 – 3/4 Friday, March 3rd: Last day to drop classes with a "W" grade	DIFFICULT DIALOGUE CONVERSATIONS		1. Quiz #5 2. <i>Difficult Dialogues Presentation Outline</i>
9	3/6 – 3/11	<i>Conflict Management & Negotiation: Conflict, Styles of Management, & Negotiating Strategies</i>	Ch. 11	1. DB/CTTP #5
10	3/13 – 3/18	<i>Decision Making & Problem Solving: Critical Thinking and Effective Decision Making, Creative Problem Solving, & Barriers to Effective Problem Solving.</i>	Ch. 8 & 9	1. Quiz #6 2. Critical Thinking Reflection Paper: Academic Pre-Mortem
11	3/20 – 3/25	<i>Group Workshop for Final Presentation</i>		1. Creative Solutions Presentation Outlines
Final Exam Week	3/27 – 3/31 Final Meeting: Wednesday, March 29th, 9:15a-11:15a Quarter is <i>OVER</i> : Friday, 3/31, 11:59p	CREATIVE SOLUTIONS PRESENTATIONS		1. Intragroup Evaluation & Scores 2. Group Communication Final Paper