

**CUYAMACA COLLEGE**  
**COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD**

**COMMUNICATION 137 – CRITICAL THINKING IN GROUP COMMUNICATION**

3 hours lecture, 3 units

**Catalog Description**

This course is designed to assist students in the development of critical thinking and decision making skills in the small group communication context. There is an emphasis on the basic elements of critical thinking such as evidence, reasoning and language. Students will become familiar with leadership strategies, problem solving techniques, discussion plans, and conflict management as applicable in groups.

**Prerequisite**

None

**Course Content**

- 1) Elements of critical thinking in a small group context:
  - a. Evaluation and use of evidence
  - b. Patterns and application of reasoning
  - c. Semantic factors in critical thinking
- 2) Theories of problem solving
- 3) Decision making methods and use of evidence
- 4) Use of research to support reasoning
- 5) Organizing, evaluating, and reporting information
- 6) Persuasion
- 7) Principles of small group communication:
  - a. Group formation and development
  - b. Group roles
  - c. Leadership and participation
  - d. Conflict management
  - e. Verbal and nonverbal dynamics
  - f. Listening
- 8) Group planning, including agendas and minutes

**Course Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- 1) Investigate, analyze and integrate evidence and reasoning into group problem solving.
- 2) Integrate evidence and reasoning in order to apply critical thinking in group problem solving contexts.
- 3) Implement a number of problem solving methodologies.
- 4) Distinguish differences among problem solving methodologies.
- 5) Determine and apply the most effective problem solving methodology to a specific problem.
- 6) Investigate and analyze communication through observation of and participation in small group discussions.
- 7) Identify and apply the principles of small group discussion (e.g., group roles, decision-making, leadership, conflict management).
- 8) Organize a group discussion.
- 9) Organize presentations effectively.
- 10) Demonstrate the ability to effectively prepare for and deliver presentations within small group settings.

- 11) Analyze and implement group leadership principles.
- 12) Adapt communication strategies to fit the audience and situation.
- 13) Present their views with persuasive force.

### **Method of Evaluation**

A grading system will be established by the instructor and implemented uniformly. Grades will be based on demonstrated proficiency in subject matter determined by multiple measurements for evaluation, one of which must be essay exams, skills demonstration or, where appropriate, the symbol system.

- 1) Exams (written) that require students to identify and apply the principles of small group discussion, analyze and implement group leadership principles, investigate, analyze and integrate evidence and reasoning, and recognize a number of problem solving methodologies and distinguish differences among them.
- 2) Written assignments that require students to identify and apply the principles of small group discussion, and investigate, analyze and integrate evidence and reasoning.
- 3) Student discussions that demonstrate the ability to identify and apply the principles of small group discussion, investigate and analyze communication through observation of and participation in small group discussions, and analyze and implement group leadership principles. Evaluation will be based on criteria established and presented in class.
- 4) Student evaluations of group discussions which assess students' ability to identify and apply the principles of small group discussion, and investigate and analyze communication through observation of and participation in small group discussions. Evaluation criteria are established by the instructor based on principles presented in class.

### **Special Materials Required of Student**

None

### **Minimum Instructional Facilities**

Smart classroom with moveable seats, video recording/playback equipment

### **Method of Instruction**

- 1) Lecture and demonstration
- 2) Group discussion, projects
- 3) Feedback on student discussions

### **Out-of-Class Assignments**

- 1) Reading assignments
- 2) Written exercises
- 3) Conduct research for assigned projects
- 4) Prepare presentations for in-class activities and simulations

### **Texts and References**

- 1) Required (representative examples):
  - a. Engleberg and Wynn, *Working in Groups*, 7th edition, Pearson, 2017.
  - b. Beebe and Masterson, *Communicating in Small Groups: Principles and Practices*. 12th edition, Pearson, 2020.
- 2) Supplemental: As assigned

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Organize a group discussion.
- 2) Demonstrate successful conflict-management strategies.
- 3) Identify and apply the principles of small group discussion (e.g., group roles, decision making, leadership).