**PSYC 467-DL1 – Psychology Working Groups/Teams**

**Fall 2019**

**Instructor:** Robin Shusko **E-mail**: rshusko@gmu.edu or rshusko@frederick.edu

**This is an online course. No office hours are available; I can be contacted via email.**

**Course Description**

Modern organizations demand synergistic results from collaborative workforce structures. This course teaches specific techniques for participating in and leading work teams to augment multiple performance outcomes. Students gain both an explicit and an experiential understanding of team management, both as a member and as a future leader.

**Course Goals**

Students will be able to clearly identify and practice a broad array of team management techniques, including:

1. Team classification systems, planning & staffing methods, team-based performance monitoring system
2. Management theories (motivation, leadership, interpersonal dynamics) in a team context
3. Facilitating, coaching, decision-making, & conflict resolution in team-based environments

**Before you begin…**

Please make sure you read AND re-read the syllabus before asking questions about the policies, procedures, or format of the course. **I spend a great deal of time writing the syllabus to make sure that it includes answers to all possible questions that you may have, so please do consult the syllabus before emailing me*.*** **As a general rule, you do NOT want to be the student that emails an instructor with a question that was answered in the syllabus.**

**Course Format**

This course will be held entirely online. Information will be presented in PowerPoint lectures, assigned textbook readings, scholarly journal articles, and Ted Talks videos. For each of the chapters, students must review all of the assigned content and write one discussion post and one comment. Eventually, once groups are established, students will also be responsible for submitting a group portfolio, a group project proposal, weekly project-report updates, as well as a final group paper in which they outline the processes involved in carrying out and completing their proposed group goal (see below for more information regarding this project and specific due dates). In addition, there will be two midterm exams. The group project, weekly updates and final paper must be turned in during the week that they are due.

**Lectures**

The course lectures will be all be available on Blackboard at the beginning of the semester, and will include key terminology, important topics, and more detailed explanations of difficult concepts. Students are responsible for understanding all of the information presented in these slides as well as the notes sections of these slides (below each slide).

**Textbook**

Students are required to purchase the textbook for this course. It is absolutely imperative that students acquire this text in order to do well in the course, as they are responsible for understanding all of the information presented within the covered chapters.

Thompson, L. *Making the Team: A Guide for Managers* (6th),Prentice Hall.

Students should also use the textbook to supplement their knowledge and understanding of the information presented in the PowerPoint slides. If students are unsure about a specific concept, they should first consult their textbook for more information regarding this topic. If they are still unsure about a topic, they should email the instructor.

### TED Talks Videos

Here are the hyperlinked Ted Talks Videos for the course. These are also located in Blackboard under the “Videos” folder. Students are responsible for understanding the content presented within the assigned videos.

**[Shiv: Sometimes it’s good to give up the driver’s seat](https://www.ted.com/talks/baba_shiv_sometimes_it_s_good_to_give_up_the_driver_s_seat)**

**[Riccardi: Cross cultural communication](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMyofREc5Jk)**

### [Johnson: Where good ideas come from](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NugRZGDbPFU)

### [Grady: How to save the world (or at least yourself) from bad meetings](https://www.ted.com/talks/david_grady_how_to_save_the_world_or_at_least_yourself_from_bad_meetings?language=en)

### [Shirky: Institutions vs. collaboration (Optional)](http://www.ted.com/talks/clay_shirky_on_institutions_versus_collaboration?language=en)

**[Sinek: How great leaders inspire action (Optional)](http://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action?language=en)**

**Exams**

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The exams will be primarily based on materials covered in the textbook and PowerPoint Lectures. There will also be a few questions related to videos assigned for that week, indicated by the symbol “V”. The exams will be multiple-choice and open book, and students will have ample time to complete them. The exams will ensure that students are fully reviewing and understanding the information presented within the textbook, Powerpoint slides, and videos assigned over the course of the semester.

**Discussion Boards**

**Discussion Posts**

**All original posts are due by WEDNESDAYS at 11:59pm. All comments are due by SATURDAYS at 11:59pm. No exceptions.**

***Original Post.*** For each chapter, students must also complete one post and one response, either of which can pertain to the article, book chapter, or video. Remember that you will be tested on all of the content.

This post must be related to the chapter content for that week (PowerPoint and/or textbook). For these posts, students must submit a unique, interesting and relevant video, link, popular press article, scholarly article, or a current event article related to a topic presented within that chapter that the student found interesting (cannot duplicate the article or video that I assign— nor one previously posted by another student). Along with their post, students must provide a summary of the chosen material, an explanation of why the post is interesting/relevant to the given chapter, and any other comments or ideas that the student had regarding their posting.

Another option is for students to describe one of their own experiences and relate it to the content that week.

\*\*Note that a post with just the synopsis of the article/video or chapter content will NOT get students full credit as it is considered the less important component.

These responses should **be at least five full sentences**, filler *sentences will not be accepted.* That is to say, each sentence must contribute to your overall point. **Your response should demonstrate that you spent sufficient time and effort thinking of a constructive response to the original post. Please remember to be respectful and polite regarding other students’ opinions and ideas when posting these responses. I encourage healthy discussions and debates through these discussion threads.**

The goal of these posts is to spur discussion among classmates, so they should be as thought-provoking and engaging as possible in order to encourage other students to read and respond.

***Response.*** Students must also read and respond to a discussion post of at least one other classmate. These responses should include overall thoughts/ideas spurred by the post, other reasons why the post was interesting, other ways that the post was relevant to topics outlined within the course, aspects of the post that the student may agree/disagree with, and/or any other observations that the student would like to make about the post. These responses should be at least four full sentences. Please note, I will not count “filler” sentences such as, “I really liked this article” or “Great job!” Your response should demonstrate that you fully read/watched the linked content posted by the commenter and spent sufficient time and effort thinking of a constructive response.

**For each chapter, the first person in each group to post an individual post on Blackboard will have the option of posting two original posts rather than writing one post and one response. This way, students who decide to finish the course early do not have to wait for other students to catch up before completing these discussion-board assignments.**

Students must submit their discussion posts and responses for each chapter and article/video by the due dates listed. **Students will be allowed to drop their lowest two discussion post grades.** This is done to account for any unforeseen circumstances that may prevent a student from submitting the discussion post/response in time. **Thus, there will be NO exceptions for late work.**

There will be a total of 12 content posts, but **only 10** will be required and count towards your grade. Each post will be worth **10 points** (5 points for the discussion post (either on the chapter or the article/video) and 5 points for commenting on another post). **There is no partial credit given for late discussion posts. Late posts will be counted as missing**. *If a student misses a discussion post (i.e., if you miss the 11:59 PM deadline) it* ***cannot*** *be made up at a later date. However, you will have the flexibility to miss* ***two*** *class posts without penalty.* The post questions and set up can be found in the “Group Discussion Posts” tab>Click Your Group>Under Tools Click Group Discussion Board>Click the appropriate Chapter>Create new thread. I strongly recommend saving your discussion posts in a word doc before posting on blackboard.Blackboard will log you off if you have been inactive for a while.

**Team Project**

**No late work will be accepted. If your team project component is submitted late you will not receive credit.**

I know sometimes, we don’t love group work. The reality is, this is a teams class! Of course, there has to be teamwork. Furthermore, virtual teams are the new reality of the modern workplace. This is excellent experience. Please *also* note that you will have the opportunity to provide feedback on group members at the end of the semester. In addition, you lay out the specific responsibilities of each group member in the proposal, so I will have a pretty good idea of who is doing work and who is slacking. However, the grades given will be for the entire team and will grade the entirety of the project. So, if group member X didn’t do their part, the rest of the group has to make up for it. This does stink but it is reality. However, that person will receive a 0 on the deliverable.

 With all that in mind, please email me if you have any concerns during the course of the semester.

At the beginning of the semester, students will brainstorm ideas for this group project in which they will work together to accomplish an open-ended group goal. Some examples: complete a fitness program (e.g., set a group weight-loss goal, set a group running goal, learn a series of yoga poses), develop a new skill-set (e.g., cooking foods from different cultures, learning the basics of a new language, learning a new computer program, learning to play a new instrument, learning a new sport), solving some societal problem (e.g., pollution, poverty, prejudice), or any other goals that your group are interested in achieving (be creative)! The groups will be the same as your discussion group. I will wait to assign these groups until week 2, so that all the adds/drops will stabilize.

 It is important that this goal is one that is mutually agreed upon (to the extent possible) and one that each individual member is capable of achieving. Keep in mind the elements of SMART goals when creating your goal. The goal can take any form, as long as it **follows the SMART (Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, timely) principles, is group-based, and includes a mechanism for monitoring teammates’ progress**. As a key aspect of managing teams is keeping members motivated, the focus of the project will be on developing a team goal and meeting with teammates on a weekly basis to track team progress toward the goal.

This project is made up of a team portfolio, a team proposal, weekly progress updates, as well as a final paper. Team-members must work together collaboratively to make sure all assignments are completed in a timely manner. **Thus, if any of the assignments are submitted after the due date, the entire team will be penalized. Individual team-members who consistently engage in social loafing, however, will be penalized based on my own observations of each team members’ performance as well as individual team-member survey responses collected towards the end of the semester (see below).**

**Team Portfolio**

Teams will be completing a team portfolio at the beginning of the semester (one portfolio for the whole group). This portfolio will include a team commonalities exercise, a team portfolio, a team inventory, and a team charter, and is intended to aide team functioning throughout the course of the semester. Please download the Team Portfolio Instructions document on Blackboard for more information on how to complete this assignment. This assignment must be submitted by posting them as attachments to the Discussion Board under the appropriate folder and as an email attachment to rshusko@gmu.edu with the subject “PSYC 467 GROUP PORTFOLIO”. Teams must submit the projects using both methods by the assigned due date in order to receive credit. No late work will be accepted!

**Team Proposal**

The groups must submit their goal in a formal proposal by the due date listed (one paper for the whole group). This proposal must be four full pages of text in length (excluding headers and the proposed timeline; 12 point, double spaced, Times New Roman, standard margins) and must include the following sections: definition of proposed goal, how this goal fits the definition of a group goal, how close each member currently is to achieving the goal, expected outcomes from achieving the goal, and a proposed weekly timeline for achieving the goal (see Blackboard for full instructions). I will be giving the groups formal feedback on these proposals, which they may need to revise before commencing the actual project. These papers must be submitted by posting them as attachments to the Discussion Board under the appropriate folder and as an email attachment to rshusko@gmu.edu with the subject “PSYC 467 GROUP PROPOSAL”. **Teams must submit the projects using all of the methods by the assigned due date in order to receive credit. No late work will be accepted!**

**Team Progress Updates**

***The group must meet at least once a week, outside of class*** to work on the goal, to monitor one another’s progress, to keep each other motivated and accountable, and to complete a weekly progress report. **“Meeting once a week” can be over skype/facetime/google hangout**. These weekly reports should be at least one page in length (double spaced, 12 point font, Times New Roman – excluding headers) but may be longer. These reports should include the following sections: summary of the progress that the group has made towards their goals over the past week, any issues or complications that the group has experienced, plans for how to address these deficiencies moving forward, as well as short-term goals that the group plans to achieve by the following week (see Blackboard for full instructions). One paper should be submitted as a group each week (excluding holidays listed on the Calendar) by posting the paper to the Discussion Board as an attachment AND copy pasted within the appropriate folder and as an email attachment to rshusko@gmu.edu with the subject “PSYC 467 GROUP PROJECT UPDATE”. Teams must submit the projects using both methods by the assigned due date in order to receive credit. No late work will be accepted!

**Final Paper**

**In addition to these weekly progress reports, groups will submit a 12-15 page (double-spaced, 12 point font, Times New Roman – excluding headers, standard 1 inch margins**) paper on their goal experience at the end of the semester (one paper for the whole group). Unlike the weekly summaries, the final paper needs to be based in research and should include the following sections: overview of team goal (one page), the final progress that the team made towards their stated goal including evidence of each member’s progress (two pages), processes and set-backs involved in working towards achieving the goal (with particular emphasis on the difficulties associated with dispersed teams, unless all team-members were able to meet in person) (five pages), how the team dealt with set-backs (three pages), which motivation strategies were/were not effective for various members (and why) (two pages), and an overview of what was learned and reflections of the project (two pages). The page numbers are merely suggestions **but do indicate the level of detail** I am expecting within each section (see Blackboard for full instructions). Teams must submit their final papers by posting the paper to the Discussion Board under the appropriate folder and sending them as an email attachment to rshusko@gmu.edu with the subject “PSYC 467 GROUP PROJECT PAPER.” Teams must submit the projects using both methods by the assigned due date in order to receive credit. Again, no late work will be accepted!

**Student Feedback**

Towards the end of the semester, students will complete a short survey regarding their own individual experiences with the group project and will rate each other member within their team. These ratings will be factored into the group member’s grades for this project. **This is to control for social loafing and differences in team-member engagement/work output**. Students who do not complete these surveys on time will receive a 20% deduction for their project grade.

**Grade Breakdown**

**Syllabus Quiz \*\***(this must be completed before any work will be graded)

**Exams**  *100 points each, 200 points total*

**Discussion Board Participation** *10 posts will count, 100 points total*

**Team Project**  *300 points*

***Project Portfolio*** *50 points*

***Project Proposal***  *50 points*

***Project Updates***  *100 points, 20 points each*

***Project Paper***   *100 points*

**Total**   *600 points*

**Grading Scale:**

A+ = 97-100% B+ = 87-89% C+ = 77-79% D = 60-69%

A = 93-96% B = 83-86% C = 73-76% F = <60%

A- = 90-92% B- = 80-82% C- = 70-72%

**Additional Information**

**Email and Communication Policies**

For questions regarding course content, grading criteria, or grade disputes, please email the instructor – rshusko@gmu.edu. If you have an issue with one of the exam questions, please email me and include, your name, the chapter in question, the specific exam question (copy/pasted), the answer choice that you selected, the correct answer choice according to Blackboard, the reason why you believe your answer choice was correct, as well as the specific PowerPoint slide number and/or page number that supports your claim. I am more than happy to, and have in the past, curved exams for poorly worded items, but please do be sure to send me this information so I can quickly and appropriately respond to your dispute.

I try to respond to all student emails as quickly as possible, but if you do not hear from me within 48 hours, please feel free to email me again as this is unusual, and I may have had an issue with receiving your initial email.

If you have any questions that may be difficult to discuss via email, you can email me to schedule a phone appointment.

Please remember that all four components of the Team Project (portfolio, proposal, weekly updates, and final paper) should be emailed to the rshusko@gmu.edu email address with the appropriate subject line. You should receive an immediate email confirmation for these submissions, which you should save for your records (email my personal email if you do not receive this confirmation).

Please make sure you re-read the syllabus before asking questions about the policies, procedures, or format of the course. I spend a great deal of time writing the syllabus to make sure that it includes answers to all possible questions that you may have, so please do consult the syllabus before emailing me. **As a general rule, you do NOT want to be the student that emails an instructor with a question that was answered in the syllabus.**

**Official Communications via GMU E-mail:** Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors; notices form the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their mason e-mail account and are required to activate that account and check it regularly. I can only respond to gmu.edu email addresses, so please only use your Mason email in correspondence with me.

**Blackboard*:*** I will post notes, resources, grades, and announcements on Blackboard. You should frequently check Blackboard because you will be responsible for the material posted. Additionally, all assignments will be turned in through Blackboard. To use Blackboard, you will need to go to <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu>.

**Honor Code:** Coursework is expected to be the student’s own original work. Students may use books, notes, and other sources to prepare assignments. Under no circumstances are students to collectively write papers with another student, turn in work previously submitted, reference notes or class materials during tests, or use material from other sources (textbook, websites, journal articles etc.) without proper citation (APA style). This will be considered plagiarism and will not be tolerated. All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code.  You can find a copy of the Honor Code at academicintegrity.gmu.edu.  All violations of the Honor Code *will be reported* to the Honor Committee for review. I reserve the right to enter a failing grade for any student found guilty of an honor code violation.

**Disability Accommodations:** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please contact me and the Disability Resource Center (DRC) (Sub 1, Rm. 4205) at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

**Add/Drop/Withdrawal Deadlines**

Last Day to Add: September 3, 2019

Last Day to Drop without tuition penalty: September 9, 2019

Last Day to Drop (50% tuition liability): September 17, 2019

Withdrawal Period (100% tuition liability): September 18 - 30



**Course Schedule**

**Weeks run from Sunday – Saturday**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Assignment Due** | **Content** |
| 8/26 | Course Begins!**Syllabus quiz** ***Due by 8/31 at 11:59 pm*** | *Rheingold* Ted Talk |
| *Fried* Ted Talk |
| 9/1 | Discussion post and comment #1***Due by 9/4 at 11:59 pm and 9/7 at 11:59 pm respectively*** | Ch 1 - Teams in Organizations |
| 9/8 | Discussion post and comment #2***Due by 9/11 at 11:59 pm and 9/14 at 11:59 pm respectively*** | Chapter 3 – Leadership |
| *Shiv* Ted Talk |
| 9/15 | Discussion post and comment #3 | Ch 2 – Designing the Team |
| 9/22 | Discussion post and comment #4**Team Portfolio Due 9/28 at 11:59pm** | Ch 4 - Team Identity |
| *Riccardi* Ted Talk |
| 9/29 | Discussion post and comment #5**Team Proposals Due****Team Proposal Due 10/5 at 11:59pm** | Ch 5- Performance & Productivity |
| 10/6 | **Midterm Exam due 10/12 @ 11:59pm** |  |
|  |  |  |
| 10/13 | Discussion post and comment #6**Project Update #1****Due 10/19 at 11:59pm** | Chapter 11 Networking and social capital |
| 10/20 | Discussion post and comment #7**Project Update #2** **Due 10/26 at 11:59pm** | Ch 9 – Creativity |
| *Johnson* Ted Talk |
| 10/27 | Discussion post and comment #8**Project Update #3****Due 11/2 at 11:59pm** | Ch 6 - Team Mind |
| *Grady* Ted Talk |
| 11/3 | Discussion posts and comment #9**Project Update #4****Due 11/9 at 11:59pm** | Ch 7 - Decision Making |
| 11/10 | Discussion post and comment #10**Project Update #5****Due 11/16 at 11:59pm** | Ch 8 – Conflict in Teams |
| 11/17 | Discussion post and comment #11 | Ch 12 - Virtual Teams |
| 11/24 | Discussion post and comment #12 | Ch 10 – Subgroups and multi teams |
| 12/1 | **Team Final Paper Due****Due 12/7 at 11:59pm** |  |
| 12/11-12/18 | **Final Exam Period****Due 12/18 at 11:59pm** |  |
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***\*This syllabus is subject to change. Please attend lectures and monitor the course website***

***regularly to be informed of any changes made to the course.\****