

# Comm 1600 – Group Interaction

Mondays

12:00 – 12:50 pm

HUMN 1B50

**Professor**

Matt Koschmann, PhD

**Email**

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**Office Hours**

Wednesdays 2:00-3:00  
and by appointment

**Office**

Hellems 87B

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303-492-2824

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matt\_koschmann

**YOUR RECITATION** (use the drop-down menus to select your recitation details)

**Section #:**

**Days:**

**Time:**

**Location:**

**Instructor:**

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

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Most of our best and worst experiences in life—both professional and personal—happen in groups with other people. In virtually every area of our lives we have the opportunity (or the requirement) to connect with other people to accomplish some sort of collective outcome that could not be achieved individually. The success or failure of these outcomes almost always depends on the *interaction* of the group—how people communicate with each other and make decisions. Therefore to succeed in our careers and to be good citizens in our society we must be able to work with other people in groups and understand group interaction. Accordingly, the three main objectives of this course are:

- (1) To develop personal skills to become a better group member
- (2) To develop a broader and more critical understanding of group interaction and the place of groups in our society
- (3) To experience a variety of group contexts

To achieve these objectives this course covers the following topics:

- Decision making and problem solving
- Managing conflict
- Creativity and innovation
- Group norms, roles, and socialization
- Gender, diversity, and difference
- Technology and virtual teamwork
- Emotional intelligence
- Leadership and management
- Ethics and values
- Meetings, planning, and coordination

We will explore these topics across two key contexts:

- Professional groups: emphasis on teamwork and task accomplishment
- Civic groups: emphasis on stakeholder representation and public deliberation

This class takes a ***case study approach***, with an emphasis on applied knowledge and skill development. Most assignments, readings, simulations, and activities involve real-world scenarios of uncertainty, ambiguity, and incomplete information in order to develop practical reasoning abilities that enable better decision-making outcomes.

This class also emphasizes an ***organizational communication perspective***, recognizing that most group interaction happens within—and is shaped by—larger organizational and institutional influences.

# COURSE MATERIALS

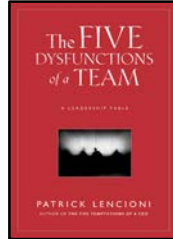
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## Required Coursepack:



Click [HERE](#) to purchase and register

## Required Book:



**The Five Dysfunctions of a Team:  
A Leadership Fable**

Available at the CU Bookstore or online

*\*\*Also available as a free e-book through  
CU library website: [click here](#)*

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## Clickers:



Clickers can be purchased at the [CU Bookstore](#)

Click [HERE](#) to register your i>clicker in CUConnect

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## Movies:



**12 Angry Men**

*Link provided on D2L*



**Thirteen Days**

*Link provided on D2L*

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Additional course readings & materials posted on Desire@Learn (D2L)



<https://learn.colorado.edu>

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

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*All assignments are graded on a 100-point scale and weighted by the percentages listed below*

### **Syllabus Quiz**

**5%**

The purpose of this quiz is to assess your understanding of our course and familiarize you with the online quiz environment of D2L. The quiz is multiple choice and open syllabus.

### **Unit Quizzes**

**35% (4 x 8.75%)**

The purpose of this assignment is to assess the breadth of your knowledge about the course material after each learning unit. The unit quizzes are administered online via the D2L quiz function...they are multiple choice, non-cumulative, and open note/book. *Unit quizzes DO include lecture-specific material that isn't in the readings, but they do NOT include recitation-specific material.*

### **Lecture Clicker Questions**

**10%**

The purpose of this assignment is to ensure consistent lecture attendance and to make lectures more interactive. 1-2 clicker questions will be offered in each lecture session. We do not take formal attendance in lecture, but we do want a consistent turnout of most students to achieve the critical mass needed for this learning environment. You are required to answer 75% of the available clicker questions to earn full credit for this assignment.

### **Recitation & Participation**

**20%**

Recitation sections are the central feature of this course—everything is designed to inform and support your experiences in these smaller learning environments. Therefore it is essential that you are an active participant in your recitation section. Here are the main things that influence your recitation grade:

- \*\* Consistent, substantive involvement in class discussions and activities
- Consistent (not perfect) class attendance
- Don't consistently arrive late or leave early
- Not a distraction in class

*Your TA will also have a number of individual and group assignments that contribute to your overall recitation grade*

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### **Lecture Distractions**

**up to 10% deduction**

We have a large class so it is important that everyone acts responsibly and does not interfere with the learning of other students. We (professor and TAs) have the option to deduct *up to 10%* off your final grade for *consistent* distracting behavior in lecture. This includes:

- Consistently arriving late and/or leaving early
- Cell phone use of any kind
- Laptop or tablet use not related to class
- Other distractions that interrupt or interfere with lecture...especially talking with other students

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS (continued)**

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### **Midterm Project: Mt. Everest Simulation**

**15%**

**Due: Sunday 10/11 @ 11:59 pm**

The purpose of this assignment is to simulate a real-world scenario that emphasizes teamwork and group interaction. After completing the online simulation your group will submit additional materials about your experiences, including a report of your simulation, a meeting agenda, and a group debrief/reflection video. More details for this assignment will be posted on D2L in the “assignments” folder of the “content” link.

### **Final Project: Group Case Study**

**15%**

**Due: Tuesday 12/15 @ 11:59 pm**

The purpose of this group assignment is to assess the depth of your knowledge about the course material, and for you to demonstrate your understanding of a case study approach. Your group will create an original case study about group interaction that emphasizes several aspects of our course material. Your case study also needs to include a “teaching note” that lists key terms, learning objectives, questions for discussion, and suggestions for future reading. More details for this assignment will be posted on D2L in the “assignments” folder of the “content” link.

### **Extra Credit**

**up to 2%**

There are two opportunities for extra credit in this class: (1) Attend the Josephine Jones lecture and submit a 500-word response paper, or (2) read an assigned book and submit a 1500-word response paper. More details are provided on D2L in the “extra credit” folder of the “content” link. You can only do one of these extra credit opportunities.

## **COURSE GRADING**

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This course follows the standard CU grading system:

A	93% and above	C	73 – 76.5%
A -	90 – 92.5%	C -	70 – 72.5%
B +	87 – 89.5%	D +	67 – 69.5%
B	83 – 86.5%	D	63 – 66.5%
B -	80 – 82.5%	D -	60 – 62.5%
C +	77 – 79.5%	F	59% or below

We use the following criteria to guide our grading decisions:

A	Excellent...exceeds the minimum requirements with distinction
B	Good...goes beyond the minimum requirements to a fair degree
C	Average...meets the minimum requirements of the assignment
D	Poor...only meets some of the minimum requirements of the assignment
F	Failing...does not meet most of the minimum requirements of the assignment

### **Additional grade considerations**

The only thing we grade is your product...not your effort or intentions. We don't grade based on what you need to keep a certain GPA or what you think you're entitled to.

We're happy to discuss any graded assignment with you, but please wait 24 hours after receiving your grade for any discussions...and it's best to have grade discussions in person instead of email.

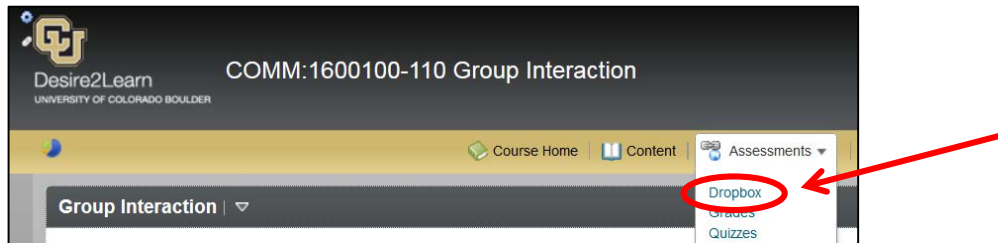
We love to talk with students about their assignments BEFORE they are due. After assignments are due there is very little we can do, other than to explain our decisions.

# COURSE POLICIES

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## Assignment Submissions

Please submit assignments electronically through the dropbox feature in Desire2Learn unless otherwise noted:



## Technology Use in Class

We welcome your responsible technology use in our class...both in lecture and recitation. Laptops and devices are allowed for class-related applications, but cell phones are not permitted.

## Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services (DS) by the end of the second week of the semester so that your needs may be addressed. DS determines accommodations based on documented disabilities  
303-492-8671, Willard 322, [www.colorado.edu/sacs/disabilityservices](http://www.colorado.edu/sacs/disabilityservices)

## Religious Observance

I will make reasonable accommodations for students who have conflicts between religious observance dates and course requirements. Please approach me with these requests before the end of the second week of the semester.

## Academic Misconduct

Cheating, plagiarism, or unacknowledged assistance is unacceptable. Web-based plagiarism-detection services will be utilized. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu); 303-725-2273).

Please see the Honor Code at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>

## Deadlines


Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due on the date/time indicated in the weekly schedule. Late work is not accepted unless you contact us BEFORE the due date with a legitimate reason.

# WEEKLY SCHEDULE

UNIT 1: FOUNDATIONS			
Week/Dates	Topics	Readings/Assignments	
Week 1 Aug 24-28	Lecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Course introduction</li> <li>▪ Contexts of group interaction</li> </ul> <b>**clicker practice**</b>	No readings – lecture notes only  <b>**Bring your clicker**</b>
	Recitation 1	Recitation overview	Introductions, in-class activities & materials
	Recitation 2	Professional & civic contexts of group interaction	Reading #1: Rebuilding communities
Week 2 Aug 31-Sept 4	Lecture	Rethinking communication	Reading #2: Making social worlds (ch 2) Reading #3: Communication as constructive Reading #4: Communication as practice
	Recitation 1		Discuss readings 2, 3, & 4
	Recitation 2		Additional in-class activities & materials
Syllabus Quiz: available Tuesday 9/1 @ 8:00 am...must be submitted by Friday 9/4 @ 5:00 pm			
Week 3 Sept 7-11	Lecture	<b>No lecture – Labor Day</b>	
	Recitation 1	Case study approach	Reading #5: Case study approach
	Recitation 2		Reading #6: Unprepared for the preparedness group
Week 4 Sept 14-18	Lecture	Hidden forces of group interaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Systems &amp; institutionalization</li> <li>▪ Interaction design</li> </ul>	No readings – lecture notes only
	Recitation 1	Systems & institutionalization	Reading #7: Permission to walk Reading #8: Interaction design notes
	Recitation 2	Interaction design	Reading #9: The new science of building great teams Reading #10: A different kind of public meeting
Unit 1 Quiz: available Friday 9/18 @ 2:00 pm...must be submitted by Monday 9/21 @ 10:00 am			




## UNIT 2: TEAMWORK

Week/Dates		Topics	Readings/Assignments
Week 5 Sept 21-25	Lecture	Teamwork & group development	Book: <i>Five Dysfunctions of a Team</i> Reading #11: Book review of <i>Five Dysfunctions</i>
	Recitation 1		
	Recitation 2		
Week 6 Sept 28-Oct 2	Lecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meetings, planning, &amp; coordination</li> <li>▪ Midterm project explanation</li> </ul>	No readings – lecture notes only
	Recitation 1		
	Recitation 2	Prepare for midterm simulation	In-class meetings with assigned groups
Week 7 Oct 5-9	Lecture	Emotional intelligence	Reading #12: Emotional intelligence
	Recitation 1	 <p><b>No recitations scheduled</b>  <i>Meet with group for Mt. Everest simulation assignment</i>  <i>TAs available during recitation time</i></p> <p><b>All simulation assignment materials due by Sunday 10/11 @ 11:59 pm</b></p>	
	Recitation 2		
Week 8 Oct 12-16	Lecture	Technology & group interaction	Reading #13: Virtual work
	Recitation 1	Simulation de-brief	Discuss reading 13
	Recitation 2	Technology & group interaction	Additional in-class activities & materials


**Unit 2 Quiz: available Friday 10/16 @ 2:00 pm...must be submitted by Monday 10/19 @ 10:00 am**

## UNIT 3: DECISION MAKING

Week/Dates		Topics	Readings/Assignments
Week 9 Oct 19-23	Lecture	Decision making	Reading #14: Hidden traps in decision making Reading #15: What you don't know about making decisions
	Recitation 1	 In-class simulation: Judgement in a Crisis	
	Recitation 2	Simulation de-brief	
Week 10 Oct 26-30	Lecture	Ethics & decision making	Reading #16: Ethics of boarder enforcement Reading #17: Google's dilemma in China Reading #18: Deep water horizon disaster
	Recitation 1		Discuss readings 16, 17, & 18
	Recitation 2		Additional in-class activities & materials
Week 11 Nov 2-6	Lecture	Creativity & innovation	Reading #19: Pixar creativity Reading #20: Get back in the box
	Recitation 1		Discuss readings 19 & 20
	Recitation 2		Marshmallow challenge

**Unit 3 Quiz: available Friday 11/6 @ 2:00 pm...must be submitted by Monday 11/9 @ 10:00 am**

## UNIT 4: CONFLICT, DIFFERENCE, & DIVERSITY

Week/Dates		Topics	Readings/Assignments
Week 12 Nov 9-13	Lecture	Managing group conflict	Reading #21: How teams can have a good fight Reading #22: Choose the right words in an argument Reading #23: Conflict strategies for nice people
	Recitation 1	Movie discussion: 12 Angry Men	
	Recitation 2	Group conflict case study	Reading #24 (a, b, c, or d): conflict case study
Week 13 Nov 16-20	Lecture	Difference & diversity	Reading #25: Difference matters Reading #26: The power of talk Reading #27: Myth of Mars & Venus
	Recitation 1		Discuss readings 25, 26, & 27
	Recitation 2		Additional in-class activities and materials
<b>Unit 4 Quiz: available Friday 11/20 @ 2:00 pm...must be submitted by Monday 11/23 @ 10:00 am</b>			
Week 14 Nov 23-27	<b>No class – Fall break &amp; Thanksgiving</b>		
Week 15 Nov 30-Dec 4	Lecture	 Final project explanation	
	Recitation 1	<b>In-class meetings to work on group case study project</b>	
	Recitation 2		
Week 16 Dec 7-11	Lecture	Last lecture	
	Recitation 1	<b>In-class meetings to work on group case study project</b>	
	Recitation 2		
<b>Group case study project due: Tuesday 12/15 @ 11:59 pm</b> <i>one file per group submitted via D2L dropbox</i>			

\*\*There is no final exam for this class, only the group case study project\*\*