

# **COMM 15: Critical Decision Making in Groups**

## **De Anza College: Spring Quarter 2023**

**Instructor:** Stephanie Anderson (She/Her) – Communication Studies Department  
**Office Hours:** Mondays: 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM by appointment on Zoom  
**Email:** AndersonStephanie@fhda.edu (this is the most effective way to reach me)  
**Prerequisites:** Eligibility for English 1A or ESL 5  
**Transferable:** This course meets the Communication Requirement: 5 units of credit.

### **Online Course**

This class will meet asynchronously this quarter, but we will have synchronous scheduled speeches. You will deliver your speeches to your classmates live on Zoom. The speeches are scheduled for Wednesday afternoons. I will be sending out a sign-up sheet, and you will choose a time that works with your schedule. These requirements are being passed down by the California Community College Academic Senate, so we are required to have you present live in front of at least 8-10 classmates for each speech. Your cameras are also required to be on while you deliver your speeches. Please note, I am greatly invested in seeing you succeed in this course. I understand there will be a learning curve for all of us, but please try to check in on Canvas and stay up to date on assignments.

### **Course Materials**

Libretext. (2020) Book: An introduction to group communication, Libretext

Other readings as specified by the instructor.

### **Course Description**

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.

### **Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's)**

In addition to the course objectives, there are also specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) associated with COMM 15. Specifically, by the end of this course, students will:

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.

### **Policies**

#### **Attendance, Participation, and Student Communication**

This class is an intensive, skills-building class for most students—a class that involves and evolves from our collective discussions and risk-taking. This means that it is in your best interest to actively participate in every online discussion. For each discussion, you will need to post your initial response, and then respond to two of your peers. **All initial posts are due by 11:59pm on Wednesdays, and peer responses are due on Fridays by 11:59pm.**

Your absence robs your peers of the audience members they need to further hone their speaking skills. I will not respond to each student directly on the discussion board, but I will write you feedback when I grade the assignment.

## **Instructor Communication**

Within this class, I will send out weekly check-ins through Canvas each Monday. The check-ins will include a video and text for you to read. I highly recommend you watch the check-in videos along with the video tutorials I post under the assignments. If you have not logged into Canvas or completed the Welcome Module by the second week of class, you will be dropped. If you do not submit assignments for two weeks or more (without instructor consent), then you will be dropped from the course.

## **Instructor Contact Policy**

### **E-mail.**

The best way to contact me is through email or Canvas messages. I understand all of us are being pulled in various directions this quarter, but I cannot help you succeed if you do not meet me halfway. Please note that I commonly respond to emails around noon and 8pm each weekday. I usually respond to emails within 24 hours, so if you have not heard back from me within a day or two, please reach out again.

### **Office Hours**

My office hours are on Mondays from 4pm-8pm over Zoom. Please email me to schedule an appointment. Don't be afraid to stop in on Zoom: Sometimes it's easier for me to answer questions one-on-one (and perhaps for you to ask them) in that environment.

## **Grading**

I typically have a one-week turnaround for grading assignments. You should see my feedback on Canvas within a week after you submit your assignment.

## **Assignments**

### **Late work**

**I do not accept late speeches.** This rule is in place because late speeches impact the entire class. If you do not submit your speech on time, then your peers cannot submit their peer reviews on time. Please be prepared to deliver your speeches by the due date.

All other assignments should be completed by the due dates noted on Canvas. If you push too many assignments back and miss too many due dates, the amount of work will pile up, and you will not have enough time to complete everything.

You are welcome to work ahead if needed, but to avoid confusion, I suggest not working too far ahead since I will be sharing important information about assignments in our weekly check-ins, and that information will help you complete the assignments.

## **Regarding Help with Assignments**

I am happy to provide further insight or additional explanations if you are unclear on the expectations of an assignment. Before you reach out to me, please take the following steps:

- 1.) Check the syllabus.
- 2.) Check Canvas.
- 3.) Check with your squad.

- 4.) Reach out to your peers on our Class Question Discussion Board. If your classmates are unable to provide you with an answer, I would be happy to help you through email or Zoom. I want you to succeed in this course, and I am happy to help you, but it is your responsibility to reach out to me if you are struggling with an assignment.

## **Accommodations**

My number one goal as an instructor is to help you accomplish your goals. If you need accommodations, please let me know how I can support you. As someone with a few different non-visible disabilities, I understand that it can be difficult to have these conversations with your instructor at the beginning of each class, so I appreciate your willingness to discuss your accommodation with me. I also encourage you to reach out to our [Disability and Support Resource Services](https://www.deanza.edu/dsps/) (<https://www.deanza.edu/dsps/>) and [speak with a counselor](https://www.deanza.edu/dsps/our-counselors.html) (<https://www.deanza.edu/dsps/our-counselors.html>). You can contact a counselor by emailing [dss@deanza.edu](mailto:dss@deanza.edu) or calling 408.864.8753. You can also look through our [Disability Information Student Handbook](https://www.deanza.edu/dsps/dss/dish.html) (<https://www.deanza.edu/dsps/dss/dish.html>) for more information. If you prefer in-person services, you can stop by the Advanced Technology Center AT 209 Monday-Thursday from 8am-5pm, and Friday from 8am-3pm. I look forward to working with you in this class.

## **A Note to English Language Learners**

Limited English language skills will not be a barrier to success in this course. The course blends both written and spoken components, so if you have stronger writing skills than speaking skills (or vice versa), there will still be assignments in which you can excel.

## **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 all of my LGBTQ students, I want to make it clear that you belong here, and I am grateful for everything you contribute to our class. If you are an LGBTQ+ student struggling with identity or finding community, please see the Women, Gender, and [Sexuality Center](https://www.deanza.edu/equityoffice/wgs-center/) in MLC-250 (<https://www.deanza.edu/equityoffice/wgs-center/>).

## **Undocumented Students**

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](http://www.deanza.edu/vida/hefas.html) (<http://www.deanza.edu/vida/hefas.html>) for more information.

## **Academic Integrity**

Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at De Anza College, and the Student Honesty Policy, requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. You should, therefore, submit your own, original work for this course. I will uphold De Anza College's policy on academic honesty. Consequently, an instance of academic misconduct (e.g., plagiarism, cheating, taking credit for others' work, submitting work for another course as work for this one, etc.) will likely result in disciplinary action, which may include recommendation for dismissal and a failing course grade. Here is more information about [academic integrity](https://www.deanza.edu/policies/academic_integrity.html) ([https://www.deanza.edu/policies/academic\\_integrity.html](https://www.deanza.edu/policies/academic_integrity.html)) at De Anza.

## Respect

This course is complex and can be challenging for many students. Many of your peers have varying levels of speech anxiety or may be English language learners. Others may have other diagnosed (or undiagnosed) conditions which make a highly participative class like COMM 15 even more of a challenge. Work together to help your classmates improve. Give them due attention when they are presenting. That means, but is not limited to, having your cameras on (when possible) and putting your phones away while they have the floor.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE MONITORING FORM

*You will receive additional, detailed instructions for each assignment over the course of the semester. **You must access the criteria for these documents on the Canvas website.***

<b>MAJOR SPEECHES</b>	<b>Speech 1: Difficult Dialogues</b>	<u>    </u> out of 150 pts
	<b>Speech 2: Community Engagement Speech</b>	<u>    </u> out of 225 pts
<b>OUTLINES</b>	Difficult Dialogues Full-Sentence Outline	<u>    </u> out of 50 pts
	Policy Speech Full-Sentence Outline	<u>    </u> out of 75 pts
<b>SELF REFLECTIONS</b>	Difficult Dialogues Self Reflection	<u>    </u> out of 15 pts
	Policy Speech Self Reflection	<u>    </u> out of 15 pts
<b>FEEDBACK</b>	Difficult Dialogues Peer Feedback	<u>    </u> out of 15 pts
	Policy Speech Peer Feedback	<u>    </u> out of 15 pts
<b>READING RESPONSES</b>	Reading Response #1: CH 2 and 3	<u>    </u> out of 15 pts
	Reading Response #2: CH 4 and 7	<u>    </u> out of 15 pts
	Reading Response #3: CH 12 and 8	<u>    </u> out of 15 pts
	Reading Response #4: CHs 9 and 11	<u>    </u> out of 15 pts
	Reading Response #5: CH 10	<u>    </u> out of 15 pts
<b>SYMPOSIA PROPOSALS</b>	Difficult Dialogues Proposal	<u>    </u> out of 20 pts
	Policy Speech Proposal	<u>    </u> out of 20 pts
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	Online Activity 1: Speech Sign-up	<u>    </u> out of 5 pts
	Online Activity 3: Code of Ethics	<u>    </u> out of 20 pts
	Online Activity 3: Group Interview Speech	<u>    </u> out of 20 pts
	Online Activity 4: Information Literacy	<u>    </u> out of 20 pts
	Online Activity 5: Creating Synergy	<u>    </u> out of 20 pts
	Online Activity 6: Group Think	<u>    </u> out of 20 pts
	Online Activity 7: Annotated Bibliography	<u>    </u> out of 20 pts
	Online Activity 8: Outline Peer Review	<u>    </u> out of 20 pts
	Online Activity 9: Dinner Party	<u>    </u> out of 20 pts
	Online Activity 10: Future Changes	<u>    </u> out of 20 pts
	Online Activity 11: Fallacies	<u>    </u> out of 20 pts
	Online Activity 12: Heart Transplant Speech	<u>    </u> out of 20 pts
	Online Activity 13: Outline Peer Review	<u>    </u> out of 20 pts
<b>MEETING AGENDAS AND MINUTES</b>	Meeting 1 Agenda	<u>    </u> out of 20 pts
	Meeting 1 Minutes	<u>    </u> out of 20 pts
	Meeting 2 Agenda	<u>    </u> out of 20 pts
	Meeting 2 Minutes	<u>    </u> out of 20 pts
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<u>    </u> out of 1000

Your final grade is based on the following point scale:

A = 1000-940 points	A- = 939–900 points	B+ = 899-870 points
B = 869-840 points	B- = 839-800 points	C+ = 799-770 points
C = 769-700 points	D+ = 699-670 points	D = 669-640 points
D- = 639-600 points	F = 559 and fewer points	

### **TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE: COMM 15**

This schedule is tentative, and is subject to change with fair notice. I will announce any changes in class.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENTS DUE</b>
Week 1 4/12	Introductions; Course Overview What is a Group? Why Communicate in Groups? Group Communication Theory Ethics in a Diverse Society	Ch. 2	<b>Online Activity #1: Speech Sign-up</b>  <b>Online Activity #2: Code of Ethics</b>
Week 2 4/19	Group Membership Group Development Group Life Cycles Why People Join Groups	Ch. 3	<b>Reading Response #1 – Ch. 2 &amp; 3</b>  <b>Online Activity #3: Group Interview Speech</b>
Week 3 4/26	What is Group Think? Norms Among Group Members Membership in Digital Groups Preparing and Researching Presentations Choosing Supporting Materials		<b>Online Activity #4: Information Literacy</b>  <b>Online Activity #5: Creating Synergy</b>  <b>PROPOSALS DUE</b>
Week 4 5/3	Listening in Groups Listening to Understand Types of Listening Group Members and Listening Strategies to Improve Listening APA and Source Citations	Ch. 4	<b>Online Activity #6: Group Think</b>  <b>Online Activity #7: Annotated Bibliography</b>  <b>Meeting 1 Agenda Due</b>
Week 5 5/10	ROUGH DRAFT PEER REVIEW Planning and Facilitating Meetings Post Meeting Group Communication Outlining and Organizing Speeches	Ch. 7	<b>Reading Response #2 – Ch. 4 &amp; 7</b>  <b>Online Activity #8: Outline Peer Review</b>  <b>Meeting 1 Minutes Due</b>
Week 6 5/17	<b>SPEECH 1: DIFFICULT DIALOGUES SPEECH DUE</b>		<b>OUTLINE DUE</b>  <b>Online Activity #9: Dinner Party</b>
Week 7 5/24	Group Leadership Teamwork and Leadership Diverse Forms of Leadership	Ch. 12	<b>Peer Responses Due</b>  <b>Speech #1 Reflection Due</b>  <b>Online Activity #10 Future Changes</b>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENTS DUE</b>
Week 8 5/31	Group Motivation and Collaboration Effective Motivation Strategies Feedback and Assessment Examining Fallacies in Society	Ch. 8	<b>PROPOSALS DUE</b>  <b>Reading Response #3 – Ch. 12 &amp; 8</b>  <b>Online Activity #11: Fallacies</b>
Week 9 6/7	Effective Collaboration Strategies Facilitating the Task-Oriented Group	Ch. 9	<b>Online Activity #12 Heart Transplant Speech</b>  <b>Meeting 2 Agenda Due</b>
Week 10 6/14	ROUGH DRAFT PEER REVIEW Group Problem Solving Group Decision Making	Ch. 11	<b>Online Activity #13: Outline Rough Draft Peer Review</b>  <b>Reading Response #4 – Ch. 9 &amp; Ch. 11</b>  <b>Meeting 2 Minutes Due</b>
Week 11 6/21	<b>SPEECH 2: POLICY SPEECH DUE</b> Managing Conflict Leadership and Conflict Conflict Styles Effective Conflict Management	Ch. 10	<b>OUTLINE DUE</b>  <b>Reading Response #5– Ch. 10</b>
Week 12 6/28	<b>Final</b>		<b>Peer Responses Due</b>  <b>Speech #2 Reflection Due</b>