



# EFFECTIVE: SEPTEMBER 2003 CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

**A.** Division: Instructional Effective Date: August 30, 2002

**B.** Department / Program Area: LLPA/CMNS Revision  New Course   
 If Revision, Section(s) Revised: All sections except A, B, C, E  
 Date of Previous Revision: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Current Revision: \_\_\_\_\_

**C:** CMNS 210 **D:** Working Effectively in Groups **E:** 3

Subject & Course No.	Descriptive Title	Semester Credits									
<p><b>F:</b> Calendar Description:            In this highly interactive course, students gain knowledge and understanding of group theory and process. Students also learn skills that allow them to contribute to effective group functioning. Core theoretical components include group development, group dynamics, elements of effective and ineffective groups, and power in groups. Skills and structured tools for managing conflict in groups as a group member and leader are also examined.</p>											
<p><b>G:</b> Allocation of Contact Hours to Type of Instruction / Learning Settings</p> <p>Primary Methods of Instructional Delivery and/or Learning Settings:</p> <p>Lecture: 2 hrs Seminar: 2 hrs</p> <p>Number of Contact Hours: (per week / semester for each descriptor)</p> <p>4 hrs</p> <p>Number of Weeks per Semester:</p> <p>14</p>	<p><b>H:</b> Course Prerequisites: CMNS 216 or permission of instructor</p>										
	<p><b>I:</b> Course Corequisites: None</p>										
	<p><b>J:</b> Course for which this Course is a Prerequisite</p> <p>None</p>										
	<p><b>K:</b> Maximum Class Size:</p> <p>20</p>										
<p><b>L:</b> PLEASE INDICATE:</p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 5%;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 85%;">Non-Credit</td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>College Credit Non-Transfer</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>College Credit Transfer:</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Requested</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">SEE BC TRANSFER GUIDE FOR TRANSFER DETAILS (<a href="http://www.bccat.bc.ca">www.bccat.bc.ca</a>)</p>			<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Credit		<input type="checkbox"/>	College Credit Non-Transfer		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	College Credit Transfer:	Requested
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**M:** Course Objectives / Learning Outcomes

## Overarching Objective:

By the end of the course, successful students gain knowledge of foundational group theory and acquire interpersonal, team-work and leadership skills that allow them to work effectively in groups.

## Knowledge:

By the end of the course, successful students are able to:

- 1) Describe elements of effective groups
- 2) explain a variety of group development models
- 3) describe different types of power and their effects on groups
- 4) articulate potential and actual sources of conflicts in groups
- 5) describe a variety of group assessment tools
- 6) describe the elements and strategies of effective leadership.

## Skills:

By the end of the course, successful students are able to:

- 1) use theory, models and basic group concepts to discuss the nature and effects of group dynamics
- 2) discern and respond to relational, task and individual needs in a group
- 3) employ a variety of group process skills, including structured decision-making and problem-solving tools
- 4) articulate a personal code of ethics for working in groups
- 5) demonstrate foundational skills for managing conflict in groups
- 6) diagnose and suggest effective remedies for group dysfunction.

## Attitudes:

By the end of the course, successful students gain appreciation for:

- 1) the dynamic complexity of group participation
- 2) their personal impact on group dynamics
- 3) the value of working effectively in groups.

**N:** Course Content:

- 1) What is a group?
  - characteristics
  - kinds of groups
  - benefits and disadvantages of working in groups
- 2) What are some theoretical approaches to the study of group work?
  - models of group communication
  - systems theory
  - uncertainty reduction theory
  - symbolic convergence theory
  - social exchange theory
- 3) What are the elements of an effective group?
  - individual and relational satisfaction
  - clarity of goals and procedures
  - goal accomplishment
  - interaction process
- 4) What is the influence of self in groups?
  - communication style
  - assessment of preferences and challenges in group modalities
- 5) How do groups grow and develop?
  - models of development
  - group development phase and levels of group functioning
  - communication at different group phases

- 6) What roles do people take in groups?
  - roles as functions in a group system
    - ❖ task functions
    - ❖ relational functions
    - ❖ hindering functions
- 7) How can one improve group effectiveness?
  - decision-making processes
  - tools for facilitating group process
    - ❖ brainstorming
    - ❖ creative decision making in groups
      - delphi, nominal group, syntectics techniques
  - problem-solving tools
- 8) What role does power play in group dynamics?
  - kinds of power
  - use and misuse of power in groups
  - balancing power for optimum group functioning
- 9) What ethical standards facilitate group work?
  - definitions and terms
  - ethical considerations in group work
  - standards for ethical group work
- 10) How does conflict manifest itself in groups?
  - definitions, terms and assumptions
  - sources of conflict in groups
  - differences in conflict between individuals
  - addressing conflict in groups
  - conditions for and factors influencing effective management of conflict in groups
- 11) What are some sources of group dysfunction?
  - task related dysfunction
  - dysfunction in group relationships
  - decision-making and problem-solving difficulties
  - groupthink
- 12) How can one help a dysfunctional group?
  - creativity as a counter to groupthink
- 13) What are some tools for assessing group effectiveness?
  - approaches to assessment of group effectiveness
  - evaluation tools
  - sharing and effectively implementing results of evaluation
- 14) How do leaders emerge in a group?
  - strategies for choosing a leader
    - ❖ appointing
    - ❖ electing
    - ❖ emerging leaders
    - ❖ collaborating in leadership
- 15) What constitutes “effective group leadership?”
  - traits
  - self-regulating skills
  - interpersonal, group and conflict management skills

16) How can one become a more effective group leader?

- sources of leadership knowledge
- gaining leadership skills
- developing and articulating a vision.

**O:** Methods of Instruction

This highly interactive course emphasizes learning through doing. Working individually or in small groups, students are involved in focused analysis and interpretation of interpersonal communication. A discussion-based teaching model is used with the expectation that students actively prepare for, participate in and extract meaning from case studies, simulations and role plays. Group meetings may be videotaped for analysis and evaluation of group process.

**P:** Textbooks and Materials to be Purchased by Students

Suggested texts:

Cragan, John F. and Wright, David W. Communication in small groups: Theory, process, skills (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Company, 1985.

Harris, Thomas E. and Sherblom, John C. Small group and team communication (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002.

**Q:** Means of Assessment

Analysis and discussion of current group skills	10%
Assessment and evaluation of improved group skills	10%
Case studies	15%
Team-based and individual analysis of group development	40%
Personal code of ethics for working in groups	15%
Professional conduct, participation and attendance	10%

**R:** Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition: specify whether course is open for PLAR  
Not at this time.

Course Designer(s)

Education Council / Curriculum Committee Representative

Dean / Director

Registrar