

COMM 15: Critical Decision Making in Groups

De Anza College: Winter Quarter 2025

Instructor:	Stephanie Anderson (She/Her) – Communication Studies Department
Office Hours:	Fridays: 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM by appointment on Zoom (https://fhda-edu.zoom.us/j/6292058699)
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 specific speech dates are below:

- Wednesday 1/15
- Wednesday 2/12
- Wednesday 3/5
- Wednesday 3/19

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 an overview for you to read. I highly recommend you regularly check the announcements tab on Canvas to see announcements. 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 Fridays 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

If an assignment impacts another student, I will not accept it late. This included late speeches, peer reviews, discussion posts, and peer responses. This rule is in place because your classmates are reliant on you to complete the assignment. For example, 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 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 Title IX Coordinator. To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact Lauren Balducci balduccilaureen@deanza.edu; Campus Police 408.924.8000; Health Services 408.864.8732; or Psychological Services 408.864.8732. You can also [file a report](https://www.deanza.edu/titleix/) (<https://www.deanza.edu/titleix/>).

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, the [Pride Center](https://www.deanza.edu/pride-center/index.html) is a great resource (<https://www.deanza.edu/pride-center/index.html>).

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) 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.***

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

Date	Topics	Readings	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Week 1 1/8	Introductions; Course Overview What is a Group? Why Communicate in Groups? Group Communication Theory Ethics in a Diverse Society	Ch. 2 Ch. 3	Online Activity #1: Code of Ethics Reading Response #1 – Ch. 2 & 3
Week 2 1/15	Group Membership Group Development Group Life Cycles Why People Join Groups		Online Activity #2: Group Interview Speech Online Activity #3: Speech Sign-up Online Activity #4: Information Literacy
Week 3 1/22	What is Group Think? Norms Among Group Members Membership in Digital Groups Preparing and Researching Presentations Choosing Supporting Materials		Online Activity #5: Creating Synergy PROPOSALS DUE
Week 4 1/29	Listening in Groups Listening to Understand Types of Listening Group Members and Listening Strategies to Improve Listening APA and Source Citations	Ch. 4	Online Activity #6: Group Think Online Activity #7: Annotated Bibliography Meeting 1 Agenda Due
Week 5 2/5	ROUGH DRAFT PEER REVIEW Planning and Facilitating Meetings Post Meeting Group Communication Outlining and Organizing Speeches	Ch. 7	Reading Response #2 – Ch. 4 & 7 Online Activity #8: Outline Peer Review Meeting 1 Minutes Due
Week 6 2/12	SPEECH 1: DIFFICULT DIALOGUES SPEECH DUE		OUTLINE DUE Online Activity #9: Dinner Party
Week 7 2/19	Group Leadership Teamwork and Leadership Diverse Forms of Leadership	Ch. 12	Peer Responses Due Speech #1 Reflection Due Online Activity #10 Future Changes
Week 8 2/26	Group Motivation and Collaboration Effective Motivation Strategies Feedback and Assessment Examining Fallacies in Society	Ch. 8	PROPOSALS DUE Reading Response #3 – Ch. 12 & 8 Online Activity #11: Fallacies

Week 9 3/5	Effective Collaboration Strategies Facilitating the Task-Oriented Group	Ch. 9	Online Activity #12 Heart Transplant Speech Meeting 2 Agenda Due
Week 10 3/12	ROUGH DRAFT PEER REVIEW Group Problem Solving Group Decision Making	Ch. 11	Online Activity #13: Outline Rough Draft Peer Review Reading Response #4 – Ch. 9 & Ch. 11 Meeting 2 Minutes Due
Week 11 3/19	SPEECH 2: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SPEECH DUE Managing Conflict Leadership and Conflict Conflict Styles Effective Conflict Management	Ch. 10	OUTLINE DUE Reading Response #5- Ch. 10
Week 12 3/26	Final		Peer Responses Due Speech #2 Reflection Due