Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills
MGMT 464 – A01
Enterprise Room 173
Mondays Wednesdays Fridays  7:00pm – 10:05pm

Instructor: Lynn Hertrick Leavitt, Ph.D.
Office: Enterprise Hall 049
E-mail: lleavitt@gmu.edu  Cell Phone: 703 505-6885
Office Hours: By appointment
Please email me to make an appointment.
Course Website http://som.gmu.edu/

Course Description
This course provides information to help you understand and manage human behavior in teams and work groups. The knowledge and skills you develop in this course will be critical as you manage relationships with co-workers, bosses, and subordinates; manage, design and change the teams or groups to which you belong; and work to achieve your goals in complex and dynamic organizational settings. Ultimately, the knowledge and skills you develop from this course can help you become a more effective contributor in any team, group or organization that you join.

Course Objectives
This course has three objectives:
1. To help students become familiar with contemporary theories and research findings about teams, their function and their management.
2. To give students experience in applying these different theories and frameworks in order to diagnose and propose solutions to complex and ill-defined problems related to the function and management of teams.
3. To help students more effectively communicate observations and recommendations about teams and teamwork using both oral and written formats.

Required Reading Materials
Course Expectations
Experience has shown that teamwork skills are best learned through a combination of cognitive and experiential learning methods. By reading and studying the assigned material for each class, students will accomplish the cognitive objective as they become familiar with the latest research/theories on organizations and the people in them. By participating in classroom exercises, team projects/presentations, and case analyses, students will gain experience by putting these theories to work in observing, interpreting, diagnosing, and solving complex problems in teams.

The following course requirements are designed to integrate cognitive and experiential learning:

**Individual Work (40%)**
- Individual ‘Team Process’ Paper ........................................ 100 pts
- Participation/Professionalism/Individual Profile .................. 300 pts

**Team Work (60%)**
- Team Case Analysis ......................................................... 200 pts
- Team Teaching/Facilitation ............................................... 400 pts

### Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>84-86.99%</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>60-69.99%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95-99.99%</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>80-83.99%</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>0-59.99%</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-94.99%</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>77-79.99%</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>60-69.99%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89.99%</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>70-76.99%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>50-59.99%</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Hard copies of all assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. ***Late assignments will not be graded, and will receive zero points***

If you have a documented medical reason or other documented emergency that prohibits you from submitting your assignment on time, please contact me via email as soon as you can. Attach the documentation to the assignment and submit to me as soon as possible.

**Individual Work**

*Team Process Paper (100 pts).* During this course, you will be assigned to a team in order to complete various course requirements (discussed below). Each team will provide a laboratory within which you can apply many of the theories and frameworks discussed in class. You will submit a paper (4-5 double-spaced pages, MSWord 12pt Times New Roman Font, 1 inch margins) in which you analyze your team’s functioning by integrating different theories and frameworks learned from this course.

Your paper should: (1) **identify insights** about working in teams that were illustrated through your team’s experience during this summer session (e.g., “it is critical to confront a perceived “free rider” early in the semester” or “it was important to ask the quieter members of the group for their input”), (2) **describe what happened** in your team that led to each insight (be specific and detailed e.g., “when we realized that one of the team members wasn’t offering ideas, Marie encouraged Jason to share his thoughts and from that point forward, Jason participated more often”), and (3) **make recommendations** for improving team work based on the insights you identified (e.g.; “Our team could have worked more effectively if we had encouraged Jason to participate from the beginning because he had some of the best ideas”).

Your ability to write this paper will be significantly enhanced if you keep a **journal** of your team’s activities. (The journal is not a requirement, merely a suggestion). Take some time after each team meeting to record **what took place** during the meeting. Record ways in which the **theories or frameworks from the textbook/class help to explain** what you are observing.
The following questions can help you focus your writing for the Individual Team Process Paper:

1. How do member styles/perspectives differ? How does the team deal with those differences?
2. How do team member motivations differ? How does this affect the process?
3. What roles are assigned to individuals? What roles do they ultimately perform?
4. How does the team make decisions?
5. Who emerges as a leader at various points? What is his/her style? The result?
6. How does the team structure the task? Who did what? Was this efficient?
7. Describe the team's culture. How did it emerge and how was it reinforced?
8. Did the team share norms for high performance? For learning?
9. How could the team have done better?

Class Participation/Professionalism/Individual Profile (300 pts). A great deal of our in-class time will be spent doing activities that require the participation and professionalism of each student (discussions, team exercises, simulations, team facilitation, etc.). The success of these activities will depend on your active involvement. Thirty percent of your grade will be based on your professionalism and contributions you make to the quality of our classroom discussions and activities. The first exercise is to complete an Individual Profile (25 pts) during the first class that will allow me to know you better and help me divide you into teams.

Each class period is worth a maximum of 25 participation points. If I see evidence that you are not professional nor participating: e.g. lateness, leaving early, lack of preparation, disruption of the class, or other behaviors that indicate the lack of a professional and responsible attitude toward the class or assignments, points will be deducted.

Team Work

Team Case Analysis (200pts). With your team, you will write an analysis of one case (to be distributed by the instructor). The case analysis should be 6-7 double-spaced pages (MSWord, Times New Roman 12 pt font with one inch margins). This assignment is due at the *beginning* of class on the day the case is discussed. Instructions for analyzing a case are included in this syllabus, along with suggestions for writing a good case analysis.

Team Teaching/Facilitating (400 pts). Each team will be responsible for one chapter in the textbook, and required to “teach” the material (1 hour per team) during class on a designated day by facilitating active learning exercises, (role plays, simulations, or other engaging techniques). Using PowerPoint slides and mini-lectures and/or debriefing to connect the material in the chapter to the active learning exercises is expected. At least three additional resources (articles, books, websites, YouTube/Video links etc) related to the chapter topic are expected to enhance the information in the chapter. You do *not* need to cover every topic in the chapter. Each team may select what it believes to be most important or interesting. Decide what each team member’s role will be during “team teaching/facilitation.”

A Note on Team Grades and Free Ridership. All team members will get the same grade on each of the team assignments. Plan ahead, schedule meeting times early and be in contact with each other often.

Guidelines, Recommendations and University Policy/Information

This course requires your commitment and focus in order to be successful. We only meet for 5 weeks. Please review your schedule and develop a plan for completing the assignments on-time. Assignments are constructed to help you achieve the goals of this course. Again, class participation is required for this course. If you are unable to meet the requirements of this course, I encourage you to take it another time. This course was designed so that all students are capable of excelling if they put forth the effort.

If you are subject to any religious-related holidays that will affect your participation in class please provide me with a written and signed summary of the specific dates by the second day of class. Also, if you have any medical conditions of which I should be aware, please provide me with an explanation in writing and with any necessary supporting documents by the second day of class.
You are expected to **sign-in** at the beginning of each class. You are responsible for your signature and excuses of “I was there but forgot to sign the sheet” will not be accepted. Records of your signatures will be kept as documentation and be a component of your participation grade.

Additionally, please be respectful of your classmates and me by coming to class on time. *Excessive lateness will not be tolerated because it is distracting and disrupts the flow of the class.* Students who arrive after the sign-in sheet has been accounted for will be recorded as ‘late’ and will lose points for participation on that day. In fairness to your classmates, **lateness and leaving early will affect** your participation grade.

**Acceptance:** I want this class to have an atmosphere in which everyone feels comfortable making mistakes and speaking his/her mind. I believe that an untrusting environment stifles creativity and information sharing. Diversity makes the classroom and workplace more interesting and is important for learning and performance. Therefore, I expect that all comments made in class will be respectful. Inappropriate comments and/or behavior will not be tolerated.

**Etiquette:**
- Keep cell phones off/silent and refrain from text messaging during class.
- Do not use your laptop in this course as it is distracting to me and other students.
- Use appropriate language when communicating with me and other students via e-mail. Please make sure that you act in a professional manner (that includes spell checking your messages).

**Appealing Grades:** Every effort will be made to ensure that your assignments are graded fairly and accurately. If, however, you disagree with a grade on a particular assignment, the following steps should help to both resolve your concern as well as promote your learning:
  1. Prepare and document your reasons for requesting a grade revision.
  2. Present your case (in writing) to me. I will either agree with you (and change your grade) or explain why the original grade was appropriate.

**Grading Note:** I will **not** accept 'retroactive excuses' by students. By this I mean bringing up circumstances at the end of the semester as a basis for requesting a better grade. If unique or unusual circumstances occur that might prevent you from doing as well as you normally would (such as illness, medical emergency, unavoidable work commitments, etc.), let me know at the **beginning** of the semester, or at least as **soon as possible**. Documentation is important (such as a doctor’s note, note from Mason’s Student Health Center, or email from your employer).

**Academic Integrity.** The Honor System and Code adopted by George Mason University will be enforced for this class. For a full description of this code please refer to: (http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/acadpol.html).

**One specific component of the Honor Code relative to this course:**

When using material from the textbook or other sources (including the internet), non-original thoughts, concepts, etc. should be cited in accordance with standard academic guidelines (e.g., APA or MLA).

**ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me AND contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) as soon as possible (703) 993-2474. ALL academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

**UNIVERSITY INFORMATION**
Students can sign-up for the Mason Alert System to provide emergency information of various sorts at [http://alert.gmu.edu](http://alert.gmu.edu)

Emergency posters exist in classrooms explaining what to do in the event of a crisis. Further information about emergency procedures exists at [http://www.gmu.edu/service/ercert](http://www.gmu.edu/service/ercert) In case of inclement weather, call 703 993-1000 for the latest updates about class cancellation and/or university closings.
CLASS SCHEDULE (may be modified as necessary)

5/23  TOPICS: Overview of course. Introductions. Individual Profiles (complete and submit)
Assignments: Read Chapters 1 & 2 (for the next class session)

5/25  TOPICS: Teams in Organizations: Facts & Myths
Performance & Productivity: Criteria & Potential Threats
Assignments: Read Chapters 3 & 4 (for the next class session)
DUE: Written/signed summary of any religious-related holidays, documentation of unavoidable work commitments, medical conditions and/or disabilities that would impact you in this course.

5/27-5/30  MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY (no class)

6/1  TOPIC: Rewarding Teamwork. Designing a Team (Teams will be assigned during class) *Select Topic/Date for Team Teaching/Group Facilitation* (in class)
Assignments: Read Ch. 5 for next class. Begin working on Case Study/Team Analysis Paper (Due 6/13).

6/3  TOPIC: Team Identity, Emotion & Development: Trust, Respect, Task/People Management
Assignments: Read Chapter 6 for next class.

6/6  TOPIC: Communication & Collective Intelligence (Team ___)
Assignments: Read Chapter 7 for next class.

6/8  TOPIC: Team Decision Making: Pitfalls and Solutions (Team ___)
Assignments: Read Chapter 8 for next class.

6/10  TOPIC: Conflict in Teams: Leveraging Differences to Create Opportunity (Team ____)
Assignments: Read Chapter 9 for next class

6/13  TOPIC: Creativity: Mastering Strategies for High Performance (Team ____)
DUE: Case Study/Team Analysis Paper
Assignments: Read Chapter 10 for the next class.

6/15  TOPIC: Networking, Social Capital, and Integrating Across Teams (Team ____)
Assignments: Read Chapter 11 for the next class.

6/17  TOPIC: Leadership: Managing the Paradox (Team ____)
Assignments: Read Chapter 12 for the next class.
Begin writing Individual Team Process Papers (Due 6/22)

6/20  TOPIC: Inter-team Relations: Competition and Cooperation (Team ____)
Assignments: Read Chapter 13 for next class.

6/22  TOPIC: Teamwork via Information Technology: Across Distance and Culture (Team ___)
DUE: Individual Team Process Papers

6/24  TOPIC: TEAM ADJOURNING/TRANSFORMING
INSTRUCTIONS FOR CASE ANALYSIS

1. **David Fletcher:** Your analysis should answer two questions:

   (1) Why has Fletcher had difficulties realizing his goal of an effective and highly-functioning investment research team?

   (2) What can he do (specific recommendations and action steps) to improve the effectiveness of his team?

Some issues you might want to consider in your analysis include:

(a) How have individual differences in background, personality, motivation, organizational position, and/or incentives contributed to the problems?

(b) How has Fletcher’s approach to selecting, training, rewarding, motivating, and coordinating his team members contributed to the problems?

(c) How have conflicts been resolved within the team?

(d) Is there anything about the nature of the team’s work that might impact how the team has functioned/should function?

Suggestions for Writing Team Case Analysis Paper

1. **Executive Summary.** A good executive summary provides a one-paragraph description of your report and convinces the reader of its importance. It should include the following:

   a. **Concise statement of purpose,** e.g., "This report addresses the current problems with inter-group coordination at ABC Corporation, particularly . . . ".

   b. The **major points in your analysis,** e.g., "We suggest that these problems are primarily due to . . . ".

   c. Your **recommendations,** e.g., "We are recommending that management address these problems by . . . ". (You may choose to use a bullet format for recommendations or major points.)

2. **Analysis.**

   a. **1st Paragraph.**

      - State the conclusions you will be drawing from your analysis, e.g., "This section argues that the inter-group coordination problems at ABC derive from three sources: 1) weak leadership,"

      - Briefly anticipate the arguments you will present to support those conclusions, e.g., "We arrived at these conclusions by applying leader-member exchange theory to . . . ".

      - Describe the sub-sections that follow, e.g., "Our discussion is organized as follows: . . . ".

   b. **Body of the Analysis.** Present specific arguments and evidence to support each of the conclusions you introduced in the first paragraph, e.g., "Weak Leadership. An analysis of Joe's leadership style using leader-member exchange theory suggests that . . . ".

   c. **Additional Hints.**

      - Use appropriate concepts from class to sharpen and integrate your analysis.

      - Assume that the reader is already familiar with the facts of the case.

3. **Recommendations**

   a. **1st Paragraph.** State the recommendations you will be making, e.g., "We propose 3 solutions . . . ".

   b. **Body.** Give your rationale for each recommendation, including an in-depth discussion of benefits and barriers. For each recommendation, identify **specific** action steps that must be taken. Explain what will be done, who should be involved, when it should take place, etc.

   c. **Look forward.** Whereas your analysis was based on the past, your recommendations should look to the future. Don't tell management what they should have done. Focus on what to do now.
SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING INDIVIDUAL TEAM PROCESS PAPERS

Papers will be evaluated based on the following three criteria:

1) **Structure and Organization** (20%): Was the paper clearly written and well-organized?
   - **Specifics:** clear thesis statement, outline of key points, spelling and grammar, etc.

2) **Rigor of Analysis** (50%): Was each conclusion about team process supported with detailed evidence from the team experience?

3) **Depth of Insight** (30%): Did the paper demonstrate a sincere effort to develop personal insights about how teams work and about how you individually work in teams? (Or was it an attempt to please the instructor by writing what you thought she wanted to hear.)

GRADING RUBRIC FOR TEAM PRESENTATIONS/GROUP FACILITATION

In order to give you the most amount of space for “creativity” yet still have some parameters/guidelines so you know how I will evaluate each team’s presentation/group facilitation, this is my grading rubric.

There is a maximum of 400 points for the presentation.

100 points = **Organization**
- Outline of presentation (submitted to me before beginning the presentation)
- Clearly defined role for each team member
- Smooth flow from mini-lecture (PPT) to experiential learning activity to
debrief/explanation of “how” the activity(ies) fits with the concept(s) from the chapter, etc.
- Clear, understandable directions for case study, activity, role play etc.

100 points = **Professionalism**
- Appropriate attire (no suits necessary) to accentuate the presentation
- Introduction of team members
- Crisp, clearly written (no spelling/grammatical errors) PowerPoints, handouts, exercise directions, activity guidelines, etc.
- Good eye-contact and interaction with audience and team members

100 points = **Visuals**
- Variety of visual aids such as You-tube, videoclips, e-pictures, charts, handouts, props, materials, etc.

100 points = **Time management**
- Presentation remains within the 60 minute time frame.
- Each component (mini-lecture, video-clip, activity, discussion, role-play, case analysis) timed appropriately (not rushed or drawn-out)
- Speaking at a volume and pace appropriate to the room size, acoustics and audience
SUGGESTIONS FOR CREATING A HIGH-PERFORMING TEAM

The following suggestions can help make the difference between a frustrating, ineffective team experience and a fulfilling, effective team experience.

1. **Work to Develop Positive Norms.** During your first few team meetings, you will be developing norms for how your team will operate, e.g., norms for learning, performance, sharing ideas, dealing with conflict, attending meetings, respect for one another, etc. Once established, team norms can be difficult to change so it is critical that you work to develop positive team norms from your first meeting and challenge any negative norms that seem to be emerging.

2. **Discuss Your Goals for the Team.** Many teams do not have an initial discussion about what they want to accomplish. Rather, they become very task-oriented and don't keep the big picture in mind. Take the time to outline your expectations and remind yourselves of those expectations from time to time.

3. **Dividing Labor and Integrating Work.** In attempting to involve all team members equally in a given project, teams will often make one of two mistakes: (1) they try to involve every member in every aspect of every project or (2) they divide a project up into pieces without ensuring that these pieces can and will be integrated into a coherent whole. Both approaches are recipes for failure and frustration. Effective teams are explicit about assigning different project tasks to different individuals (or pairs of individuals) and then deciding how those different portions will be integrated into one coherent product. This may involve the assignment of different roles which change from project to project (e.g., “project integrator”, “task coordinator”).

4. **Discuss Your Schedules Early.** An early discussion of your outside commitments can help the team to plan meetings as well as assign workloads. For example, if you know that you will be busy during a particular project, you may decide to take a heavier load on a subsequent project with the advance approval of the team.

5. **Embrace Differences.** One of the biggest misconceptions that people have when they first begin team work is that disagreements are to be avoided and that conflict is bad. Nothing could be further from the truth. Your team will disagree about how to analyze cases, how to proceed with assignments, or even whether someone is contributing as much as he/she should. If you ignore these points of difference or expect the instructor to resolve them you will sacrifice much of the learning that team work affords and your team performance will suffer as a consequence. The key is to approach differences with candidness, respect, and common courtesy.

6. **Anonymity in the Individual Team Process Paper.** Your grade will not be adjusted based on what others in your team say about you in their team process paper. However, team members may decide that they are uncomfortable having their real names used in the team process papers. You may want to discuss this issue as a team.

7. **Have Fun!** Working in a team can be energizing and fun. Be creative and take advantage of this excellent opportunity to learn from one another and to learn about teams.
INDIVIDUAL PROFILE

Please clearly print this information.

Name: _____________________________________________________________

The purpose of the Individual Profile is to introduce yourself to me and help me learn a bit more about you as a student and individual. Include information such as: your academic major/minor/certificate; where you were born/raised; family (siblings, parents, spouse, children and/or pets); extra-curricular activities in which you are/were involved at Mason, hobbies (or what you enjoy doing in your spare time), where you work and/or volunteer, career/life aspirations – and anything else you would like me to know about you.

Major:____________________________________________________________________________

Minor/Certificate:________________________________________________________________________

Born/Raised/Currently Living:

Family:

Hobbies/Interests/Extra-curricular activities:

Current Job(s) __________________________________________________________

Career/Life Aspiration(s) _________________________________________________________

Anything else you would like me to know about you: