

**The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication**  
**COM 230 - Small Group Communication**

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**Instructor:**

**E-mail:**

**Office:**

**Office Hours:**

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***Read this syllabus carefully. By remaining enrolled in the course, you have accepted the conditions and expectations of the course.*** The requirements and expectations indicated in this syllabus are non-negotiable. Withdraw from the course immediately if any aspects of the course, its expectations, and/or requirements are not acceptable to you.

**Required Text:**

Beebe, S. A., & Masterson, J. T. (2015). *Communicating in Small Groups: Principles and Practices* (11<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson Education Inc. ISBN 978-1-323-15148-8

***We will immediately begin using the text in class.***

**Other Required Materials:**

- Other sources (hand-outs, articles, and website references) are required readings and will be posted on Blackboard
- Access to ASU Student Help and Resources

**Course Description:** COM 230 focuses on the principles and processes of small group communication, attitudes and skills for effective participation and leadership in small groups, small group problem solving, and decision-making. The primary goal of this course is to apply concepts learned through reading and discussion to practical situations in a small group setting.

The course provides students with an opportunity to improve their communication skills through participation in a group project. Groups will be assigned. Periodically, you will be given class time to meet with your group and discuss your projects; however, ***the demands of the assignments also require you to meet with your group outside of class.***

You can be “fired” from your group if you are not adequately participating. Consequently, if you feel that you do not have time for the necessary outside work in this course, please withdraw immediately to give other students the opportunity to enroll.

It is my goal to make each day of participation in this class useful. Your personal, public, and business life will benefit from what you learn in class.

## Course Objectives:

- To understand the principles and theories of small group for face-to-face and virtual groups
- To understand the development cycle of groups
- Be able to define what is and what is not a group
- To develop the following small group communication skills: engaging in effective leadership and effective role performance, engaging in effective problem solving and decision-making, managing and resolving conflict, and conducting presentations
- To utilize the small group communication skills acquired and apply these to practical situations inside and outside of the classroom, learning to function effectively as a member of a group
- To create an awareness and increased sensitivity to one's own communication behaviors and practices within small group interactions, realizing that we are each responsible for our own behavior
- To learn to evaluate small group behavior

As a result of this course you will also

- appreciate the complex nature of within-group interaction.
- improve your ability to critically and creatively apply communication skills in your daily life, particularly in small groups.
- enhance your leadership skills.
- improve your critical thinking.
- complete the class with skills which can enhance your career development.

**Course Readings:** It is expected that you will come to class having read any assigned reading so you may participate in discussion and activities.

## **Grades Based on Individual Performance (550 points)**

### **Exams (300 points)**

You will have a mid-term (100 points) and a final (200 points), both taken in class. Exams cover ALL class material, including readings, lectures and discussions. Both exams will have multiple-choice and true-false questions; the final may include essay questions.

See the Course Calendar for the final exam schedule. It will be taken in our classroom and CANNOT be taken at any other time.

**LATE ARRIVALS TO FINAL:** No student will be permitted to take an exam if he or she arrives late to the exam and any other student, having seen or finished the exam, has left the room. Parking trouble or other transportation problems are not acceptable excuses. Be sure to arrive on campus well before the start of class. Late students will receive a zero for the exam.

### **Quizzes (110 points)**

The class will include 12 (twelve) online quizzes, which are open book and cover the readings. Only 11 (eleven) of the quizzes will count, the lowest score will be dropped. In most cases these reading quizzes will be due PRIOR to any lecture or class discussion; usually on Sundays. The quizzes are facilitated online and can be found under the *QUIZZES* tab in Blackboard. They will include multiple-choice and true/false questions. **IMPORTANT: Sometimes there are TWO quizzes due per week so be sure to review the syllabus.**

You will be allowed two attempts on each quiz, 10 minutes per attempt. Only the highest score will count for each quiz. You cannot "make up" a quiz – once the deadline date/time has passed, those points are gone. Each quiz is worth up to 10 points.

## **Written Evaluations (100 points)**

As a result of taking this course, you will have a collection of assignments documenting the development of your understanding and application of small group process. These can be an important tool for you in future job applications and interviews, because demonstrated skill in working in groups and teams is highly valued in today's marketplace.

Each evaluation will be based on a specific topic(s). Information related to the evaluations are posted under the *ASSIGNMENTS* tab on the Blackboard site. You will need to use material from the text, lectures, and your personal experience in the group to answer the given questions. You may wish to tie each topic to relevant issues that your group faces. This means reacting to the issues, resolved/unresolved problems, your feelings about the group, your role, and the roles of other members, task versus social dimensions, cohesiveness, progress on task, etc. Include what you consider to be the most relevant issues facing you and the group. **BE SPECIFIC**. The purpose of your evaluations is to apply small group theory to what you are experiencing as a group member.

Only I will have access to your evaluation unless you choose to share it with others. You can be as creative as you want, as long as you fulfill the basic criteria stated above.

All evaluation entries should be typed, double-spaced in 12-point font with 1" margins and **submitted through SafeAssign no later than 11 p.m. on the due date**. See the course calendar for due dates.

### Evaluation #1: 25 points

You will write a 400-750 word paper based on the following questions: What are your experiences in small groups (work, school, etc.)? Have your experiences been positive or negative? What role(s) do you usually take in groups?

### Evaluation #2: 25 points

You will write a 400-750 word paper based on the following questions related to your group experience: What is working well? What is getting in the way? What can you do to improve the performance of the group?

### Evaluation #3: 25 points

You will write a 400-750 word paper based on the following questions: If you could start this project over again, what would you do differently and why? What would you keep the same and why? What is the most important lesson you learned this semester and why was it important?

### Evaluation #4: 25 points

You will write a 400-750 word paper pertaining to your experience with your virtual group based on the following questions: How was this group different from and similar to your face-to-face group? What were the biggest challenges and how did your group overcome them? What advice would you give to someone about working in a virtual group like this?

## **Group Project Peer Performance Evaluation (40 points)**

For the face to face group project, you will be evaluated by your fellow group members on your performance. There are 8 rating categories based on the ethical standards of group behavior. Scores will be averaged on a 5 point scale. If you fail to complete the peer evaluations on your fellow group members, you will receive a 0 for the assignment, regardless of the feedback from your peers.

## **Grades Based on Group Performance (250 points)**

You will have the opportunity to participate with a group of peers on a project. To be the most effective group, you will be required to meet outside of class. These meetings will be arranged by your group. It is not unusual for groups to meet weekly or more often at times during the course. Each group assignment involves a group effort and each member will receive the same grade. Detailed instructions will be provided.

### **Proposal for Group Project (50 points)**

Select, plan and carry out AS A GROUP a project worthwhile to the community. This must include direct, face-to-face contact with the public/community, and that all group members must participate at the same time, working together in the project. Your group must select an existing organization with which to volunteer – one that ALREADY offers volunteer opportunities. Your group should not consider creating your own opportunity.

How can you determine if your proposed project is “worthwhile to the community”? Ask yourself if this is work you would be proud to discuss when you were applying for a job with a major corporation. If not, find another project.

It is assumed that some advance research will be necessary to create your proposal. One source of possible projects is the ASU Community Service Program, (480) 965-0305; [www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/mu/community](http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/mu/community).

Your proposal should include:

- Organization with which your group will volunteer
- Why this organization fulfills the requirements of the project
- Projected date of completion of volunteer project
- Projected necessary steps to carry out volunteer project (meeting times, travel, etc.)
- Timeline for completion of paper and presentation

Careful preparation of this proposal makes it significantly easier for your group to complete your project successfully.

Your proposal should be primarily in narrative, paragraph form, typed, not more than three pages, with sufficient specifics to convince the instructor that the project is both worthwhile and can realistically be carried out within the time constraints of the course. If it does not sufficiently meet these criteria, you will be required to adjust your proposal accordingly.

It is possible that in carrying out your project, your group may need to deviate somewhat from the approved proposal. If significant changes are necessary, you must notify me immediately.

### **Group Project Presentation (100 points)**

Each group member must participate in this presentation. The presentation will receive a grade, which will go to all members. However, any member absent for a presentation will receive two grades lower than the group for the presentation.

The project presentation will cover

- The social need that this project, and/or event, and/or organization fills.
- The history of your project, and its outcome.
- An insightful analysis of how your group functioned, according to the terms and concepts in your textbook and class discussions.

You will be graded on the success of your group in carrying out its goal for the presentation and the quality of the presentation itself in conveying this information to your audience. The time limit is 10-15 minutes with an additional 5 minutes for questions (a total of 20 minutes maximum).

### **Group Case Study Paper (100 points)**

The purpose of the group paper is to analyze the history and dynamics of your group over the semester (including each member's role, your project, and your presentation), relating all to the concepts and ideas learned in this course. Consider the group's goals, how successfully they were achieved (or not), and the communication factors that affected the process and outcome. Insights from your individual evaluations should help in your analysis of the complexities of group interaction and the relationship between small group theory and practice.

You are expected to cogently demonstrate your command of the course material. The paper will be evaluated in terms of your ability to apply the concepts of communication to the behavior of the group and its members. Make explicit connections between the course content and your observations.

The group process paper must be entirely a collaborative effort. You will NOT fulfill the assignment if you simply divide the paper into areas to be covered by different group members.

Your group paper will be graded on the thoroughness of your analysis, relevant and accurate application of course material, and grammar/spelling as well as meeting APA guidelines. The paper should be five-seven typed pages. This will require you to write concisely and effectively – a skill much valued outside academics. Both the proposal and the paper will be submitted through SafeAssign.

## **Grading:**

• Quizzes (11 of 12 counted) 10 pts. ea.	110 points
• Mid-term	100 points
• Final Exam	200 points
• Evaluation #1	25 points
• Evaluation #2	25 points
• Evaluation #3	25 points
• Evaluation #4	25 points
• Project Proposal	50 points
• Project Presentation	100 points
• Group Paper	100 points
• Peer Performance Review	40 points
• Negative Attendance Points	NO LIMIT
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>800 points</i>

## **Grading Scale:**

<u>Grade:</u>	<u>Point Total:</u>
A+	792 - 800
A	744 - 791
A-	720 - 743
B+	696 - 719
B	664 - 695
B-	640 - 663
C+	616 - 639
C	560 - 615
D	480 - 559
E	0 - 479

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** I do not “give” grades. Grades are earned based on individual and group performance over the semester. Individual graded assignments do not determine your final grade. Consistent work over the entire semester is totaled to determine a final letter grade based on points earned. Thusly, the point breakdown listed here will be strictly followed; points are NOT “rounded.”

You may be tempted to skip assignments that appear to have a small point value. Be aware that each 0 score creates a major drag on your potential points for the course, and those deficiencies quickly add up.

**GRADE CHALLENGES:** Grade challenges need to be submitted to the instructor in writing within one week.

## General Course/Instructor Expectations

1. *You will be prepared for class.*

The interactive nature of this class requires your preparation and engagement.

Students who require special assistance or accommodation, and students participating in university-sanctioned absences (including religious holidays), should let me know within the first week of class. Students with university-sanctioned travel generally will need to complete assignments and exams in advance.

No late work will be accepted without advance arrangements made with the instructor or extensive documentation of an emergency situation.

2. *You will accept that your classmates are here to learn.*

When the instructor is speaking, you should not be speaking. A quiet environment helps support the learning of others around you.

Because communication courses by their very nature cover personal topics, it is important that we work together for an atmosphere of respect and support. Please respect the privacy of your classmates outside the classroom. It can be a very small world. An important part of your development as a scholar is modeling how to disagree with the concept versus the person.

Any form of disruptive behavior can result in loss of attendance points. Verbal or physical aggression before, during or after class will result in permanent removal from the class and notification of proper authorities. See the Student Conduct information, below.

3. *You will attend all class sessions.*

Your input is valuable to your classmates, to the instructor, and to your learning. You cannot participate if you are not present. We will start promptly; be on time. Expect the class to last the full period. If a class session is missed, you are responsible for getting any notes from your classmates. See Attendance Policy, below.

4. *You will maintain high standards of personal civility.*

What you learn in this course is highly relevant to today's workplace and marketplace. We will model ourselves on standards of behavior reflecting professionalism and respect. For a detailed discussion of expected standards, see the Student Conduct section, below.

5. *You will maintain the highest standard of academic integrity.*

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication strongly believe in academic integrity; thus, instructors in the College and School do not tolerate cheating or plagiarism. Review the Plagiarism Policy, below.

## Specific Course Policies

### **Attendance:**

Attendance will be taken during every class period. You are expected to be in class, to be on time, and to be well prepared.

You will be allowed 2 absences. Each subsequent absence will result in a 5 point deduction from your final point total.

The exception to this is if you provide official documentation proving a legitimate reason for missing class:

- If you are too ill to come to class to take an exam or participate in your group presentation, you must have a signed (and dated) document from your doctor saying you had to miss the exam/presentation (on that particular day) because of your illness.
- If you miss class because of the death of a loved one, you must provide proof as requested by your instructor.
- If you will miss class because of the observance of a religious holiday, please let me know at least a week in advance.
- If you are active in University-sponsored events (athletic teams, debate, etc.) you must supply the appropriate school-provided documentation.

I reserve the right to determine what qualifies as a legitimate reason for missing class and/or as acceptable documentation.

Please note that group presentations must be given on the assigned dates. If a student is late or absent, the group must still make the presentation. Additionally, being absent on a day that an assignment is due does NOT mean you can turn the assignment in late.

Exams are given only on the assigned dates. If you are absent on an exam day, you will not be able to make-up the exam.

I will post lecture slides in Blackboard. DO NOT assume that these slides will encompass all information necessary for each chapter/section/topic. Reading, note taking, and active participation are critical if you wish to attain a good grade in this class.

### **Blackboard:**

To succeed in this course it is essential that you have regular and reliable online access to Blackboard, that you be familiar with and able to use the Blackboard system, and that you regularly (i.e., daily) check the Announcements in the course Blackboard. (The “course menu” consists of the tabs, or “navigation buttons,” located on the left side of our course Blackboard site. Announcements are in chronological order and appear when you open the course site.)

***Gradebook:*** Your class grade will be registered on the Blackboard site. You will utilize the gradebook to verify that you have correctly submitted a paper via SafeAssign.

***SafeAssign:*** ALL written assignments will be submitted through SafeAssign by 11 p.m. on the due date posted on the syllabus.

NOTE: Each time you submit an assignment through SafeAssign, verify that your paper was submitted correctly. To do this, go to the grade center for your Friday breakout group. If you see a white exclamation point (“!”) inside of a green box present in the space where your grade will be, then your assignment was successfully received. It is your responsibility to verify this PRIOR to the deadline as no assignments will be accepted and graded that are not successfully submitted through SafeAssign.

“Computer problems” do not excuse late work. It is your responsibility to be certain that your available computer is compatible with Blackboard, and to do this well ahead of any assignments being due. In



general, you should prepare your assignments and submit online assignments at least one day ahead of deadline, in anticipation of technical problems, including University-based problems.

**Course Contact:** Periodically, I will post announcements and/or send out individual and class emails. All email sent via Blackboard is automatically sent to students' asu.edu accounts. Therefore, you must regularly check your ASU email. Of course, you can forward your ASU email to another account if you wish.

**General Course Questions/Connecting with your classmates:** The Blackboard menu item called Hallway Conversations is the place to post questions, raise issues, and make suggestions. Because Hallway Conversations is an open forum – all students can see what goes on there – you can benefit from what others have to say, and you can participate in the conversation.

- You must subscribe to this Forum right away to avoid missing important course information. By subscribing, you'll receive an email notice when questions or answers are posted.
- Put the subject matter of your question/comment in the reference line of your post so that everyone can use this as a resource for future reference.
- I'll post responses as quickly as possible.

If you have private issues or concerns, feel free to email directly. Note: ASU has strong firewalls. It's best to use your ASU email for contact. Email from accounts other than your ASU account might not get through.

### **Writing Requirements:**

The required format for all papers is .doc, or .docx, **NOT .pdf**, etc. If you use the SAVE AS feature to change the file type, be sure to check the document before you submit it. All papers should be typed in black 12-point Times Roman font, double-spaced (except as directed) and have one-inch margins. [NOTE: Your computer default setting may not be 1". Reset it, as needed. Contact the ASU Helpdesk if you need assistance.] Any citations must be formatted in APA (American Psychological Association) style.

You are expected to write at a collegiate level using Standard English (consider grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.). If English is not your native language please take your papers to the ASU writing center before the papers are submitted for final grading. You can find information about the writing center by visiting <https://tutoring.asu.edu/writing-centers>. Papers submitted with excessive grammar and spelling errors will receive 0 points. I reserve the right to determine what constitutes "excessive."

You can find more resources on Blackboard under the Evaluation Paper Resources section. I strongly suggest that you watch Formatting and Structure Tutorial on the Blackboard here before you write your first paper.

Grading will be based on:

1. meeting ALL of the defined requirements.
2. clarity of expression.
3. quality of reasoning (logical, consistent, sufficient).
4. mechanics (good writing, spelling, grammar, APA style, proper formatting, etc.).

### **Plagiarism Policy:**

Plagiarism is intentionally or unintentionally using another's work (including wording, phrases, or original ideas) without giving the person proper credit. This includes representing anyone else's words as your own. Exact words can be used ONLY in direct quotes, clearly presented as such.

Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, or allowing another student to copy your work, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination.

If you have turned the work in for another class, it is considered self-plagiarism and violates University policy. Even within this course, each assignment must be a new paper; you may not duplicate material across assignments.

Instructors who find compelling evidence of academic dishonesty will actively pursue one or more of the following actions: Assigning a grade of XE ("failure through academic dishonesty") to the student, advocating the suspension or expulsion of the student from the College, and/or referring the student to Student Judicial Affairs. If a student who is charged with academic dishonesty is found to be in violation, then one or more of these disciplinary actions will be taken. For further information, please read the Student Academic Integrity policy and the code of conduct for Arizona State University: <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>.

Remember, any academic dishonesty in this course will result in failure of the course, and could also lead to disciplinary action by the college or university.

### **Submission Policy:**

Work needs to be submitted to SafeAssign by the due date.

Please DO NOT e-mail your assignments. I will only accept assignments via e-mail if you have a reasonable, documented excuse and/or if cleared with your instructor ahead of time. I am not responsible for attachments that do not open (or that are unreadable when they do open), or for late, lost, misdirected, misguided, or imaginary emails. Lastly, DO NOT turn papers/assignments in to the front office of the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication.

**Deadlines:** Deadline for all online assignments is 11 p.m. on the due date. Computer and/or system problems do NOT excuse late work or missed quizzes. Penalties will apply to all late work unless advance arrangements have been made with the instructor.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you have computer problems using Blackboard, do NOT contact your instructors for help. If you have computer/internet or Blackboard-related problems, you must immediately contact the Help Desk 24/7 at 1-855-ASU-5080 or the helpdesk tab on your "My ASU" page. Additionally, you can visit the technology studio at the Computer Commons.

### **Student Conduct:**

The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication strives for a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. In a communication class, it is especially important that we...

1. display respect for all members of the classroom – including the instructor and students;
2. pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities;
3. avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading the newspaper, surfing the internet, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, etc.); and
4. avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom.

This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, it represents examples of the types of things that can have a dramatic impact on the class environment. Your final grade may be reduced each time you engage in these sorts of behaviors.

Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference by other members of the class. An instructor may withdraw a student from a course when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process under USI 201-10 (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/usi/usi201-10.html>). This includes students who are verbally or physically aggressive towards the instructor or another student before, during, or after class. As noted in this document, "An instructor may withdraw a student from a course with a mark of 'W' or 'E' when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process. Disruptive classroom behavior for this purpose is defined by the instructor." In cases where disruptive behavior does not warrant removal from class, at the instructor's discretion a student's final grade will be lowered by 25% instead.

Students are required to adhere to the behavior standards listed in the Arizona Board of Regents Policy Manual Chapter V – Campus and Student Affairs: Code of Conduct (<http://students.asu.edu/srr/code>) as well as the ACD 125: Computer, Internet, and Electronics Communications (<http://asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd125.html>).

### **Disability Service:**

Students needing accommodations in this course due to disabilities must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) before requesting accommodations. Please contact me at the beginning of the semester, as I will be more than willing to make the necessary arrangements. The DRC is located on the first floor of Matthew's Center. They can be contacted at <http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/>. They can also be contacted at 480-965-1234 (voice)/480-965-9000 (TDD).

### **Technology in the Classroom:**

Laptops are permitted for academic purposes. If you use a laptop during class, please note:

- be prepared for me to monitor your use
- accept moments when you are requested to put away electronic devices
- I reserve the right to override electronic use at any time

Cell phones must be on "silent" or off during class. No iPods or other entertainment devices will be allowed during class (no earphones, no texting, no Facebook, etc.). *You will be asked to leave class if you are using your cell phone during our short time together.*

### **Food and/or Drinks:**

Please keep your work area clean. If you consume any food or liquid during class, please clean up after yourself.

### **Class Notes:**

I strongly encourage informal networks in class. It is a good idea to exchange phone numbers or email addresses with one or more students. Do NOT rely on the instructor to provide you with class lecture notes or assignments if you are unable to attend class.

### **Feedback:**

I welcome feedback about the course. If we wait until university evaluations at the end of the semester, I cannot make changes that will help you. I regularly ask the class for feedback. Please share your thoughts with me in a collaborative manner during the semester. You can make suggestions in class, with me privately during office hours, or via email.

### **Important Caveat:**

I reserve the right to update or change portions of this syllabus in order to make the course a better experience for everyone. This may be in response to suggestions from students, from my own

observations, or as the result of requirements by the School, College, or University. Changes will be announced in class and posted on the course Blackboard site.

### **Course Schedule Changes:**

A tentative course schedule is attached to this syllabus. It indicates all reading assignments, exam dates, presentation dates, and all other assignments that are due. This is a tentative schedule that may change at any time. I will notify the class of any changes, it is the students' responsibility to find out what changes (if any) were made to the course schedule.

### **Contacting the Instructor**

I aim to be easily accessible to you in a variety of contexts, including face-to-face or email (which is the best way to contact me). At the same time, I also ask that you make use of the teaching materials available in the syllabus and on Blackboard. These materials were designed to answer many questions, so please check them before approaching me. Contacting me at the last moment does not shift your responsibility for completing an assignment. And please do not expect a response "A.S.A.P." simply because you waited until the last moment.

Please allow up to 48 hours for a response to any correspondence. If a response has not been provided to you within 48 hours, please try contacting again.

### **When sending an email use professional language and include the following:**

- subject line that includes COM 230 and the class session
- address the party
- sign your name

### **Office Hours:**

Office hours provide an opportunity for you to have one-on-one time with me to discuss issues and questions that you might have related to this course. Please use office hours. If your schedule does not work with my office hours, please collaborate with me to find a time that works.

### **Team Conflict and Instructor Intervention:**

Conflict is a normal and inevitable part of group development. Occasionally, teams are confronted with a significant amount of conflict that requires instructor intervention. In these instances, I will be available to intervene in the form of facilitator to discuss group issues and (re)establish group goals. This is not an invitation to seek assistance for every group conflict, but rather an option if no other processes to alleviate group conflict are successful. Generally, the process is as follows:

1. Inappropriate behavior that undermines group behavior is observed.
2. The group member is approached by the group (or by a specified individual) to discuss the issue.
3. If inappropriate behavior persists, the group documents and signs a document that outlines the issue, expected future behavior, and ramifications if behavior is not improved. A copy of the document is provided to the instructor.
4. If no change, the instructor steps in as a last resort to facilitate a group discussion regarding the issue and expected changes.

If severe enough, a group may fire a non-productive member of the group by taking a vote (simple majority), drafting a letter of grievance to me and copying that student on the letter, and finally conducting a meeting with the member and me. The instructor reserves the right to overrule a group decision at any time. The fired member will not be given an alternate group assignment, but may ask other groups if they can join their group. Groups must attend to all steps as outlined above before action will be taken.