

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES,**  
**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION**  
**DEPARTMENT OF LIBERAL ARTS, COMMUNICATIONS STUDIES**

**COURSE:** COMS 2301 – Group and Organisational Communication

**WEIGHTING:** Three (3) credits

**CLASS HOURS:** Wednesday 4-7pm

**LECTURER:** Dr. Michael S. Jeffress  
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Phone: 662-2002, ext. 83030  
Office location: FHE #325

**OFFICE HOURS:** Wednesday 1-3pm

**OFFICE LOCATION:** FHE, room 325

**MODE OF DELIVERY:** Three (3) contact hours per week, in addition to UWI's online teaching and learning support programme – MOODLE. This course will be taught in a seminar format, which means no clear line between lecture and tutorial exists. Students are required to attend the entire seminar each week, 4-7pm.

**MODE OF ASSESSMENT:** Two major group projects will be completed. One will be submitted for a grade in a professionally printed portfolio format; the other will be presented orally in class with accompanying handouts for the audience and a PowerPoint presentation. These two projects together with multiple assignments and possible quizzes add up to 50% of your overall grade. The final exam accounts for 50%. You must complete ALL assignments and pass the exam and the coursework to pass the course.

1. Group Project 1 – 10%
2. Group Project 2 – 20%
3. Other Assignments/Quizzes – 10%
4. Group Analysis Paper – 10%
5. Final Exam – 50%

**G.P.A. System:**

A+ (90-100) A (80-89), A- (75-79) B+(70-74), B (65-69), B- (60-64) C+ (55-59), C (50-54) F1(40-49) F2 (30-39) F3 (0-29).

**MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Group Project 1:**

This presentation is based in event planning and event proposal. This project will require students to choose a campus-wide issue and present their findings and suggestions for improvement or change. To bring campus-wide attention to this issue, you will need to propose

an actual event and plan on the details surrounding this. Your presentation will be professional and should include text, graphs/charts, and photos, as well as research to include print resources and personal interviews. The presentation should also be informative and invite interest. Please keep in mind your audience, which will be UWI students and staff. Detailed packets will follow.

### Group Project 2:

This presentation requires groups to develop a **10-minute** multimedia presentation over a culture and how it affects small group communication. The purpose of this assignment is to help students develop their critical thinking skills, gain practice working in a peer group, and explore how national identity and cultural values can affect small group communication. Each group member will participate in the oral delivery in class. Detailed packets will follow.

Group Analysis Paper: You will be a part of a group from the beginning of the semester and will complete two major group project together. As you participate you should be making mental notes about the group members, norms, and roles which are present in your group, decision-making methods of the group, leadership emergence, and how you participate in these group exercises. As you go through these exercises, you should be thinking about your group and how you handle these activities. A critical evaluation essay of your group will be due at final class meeting. The purpose of this assignment is:

- To aid you in your understanding of the group process and its individual components-- such as decision making, roles, leadership, and norms.
- To help you, through an understanding of the basic group process, to become aware of your own functions and characteristics as a group member so that you may determine your strengths and weaknesses.
- To help you analyze other group members so that you may learn how to respond appropriately in the group setting.
- To help you, through an understanding of the above, find ways in which you can become a more cooperative, more effective group member.

Detailed instructions will be provided in class

### Required Materials:

-Lumsden, G., Lumsden, D., and Weithoff, C. (2010). *Communicating in Groups and Teams: Sharing Leadership* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Wadsworth. ISBN 9780495570462.

-Notebook paper

-Index cards

-Scantrons for quizzes and final exam

-Binders for group presentations

-Other handouts, online readings and videos as assigned.

### Class Policies

- **Contacting the Lecturer:** I prefer that you contact me by e-mail using your student e-mail account. If you e-mail me, please include the following information in any message. Failure to follow this protocol will result in your e-mail being deleted without reply: (1) a proper greeting, e.g., “Hello Dr. Jeffress,” (2) your name, e.g., “This is Pat Clark” (3) which course you are in,

e.g., “from your Coms 2102 course.” (4) a brief explanation of your request, (5) your phone number and best time to reach you (if you want to talk on the phone), (6) correct grammar and spelling in complete sentences, and (7) a proper salutation, e.g., “Kind regards, Pat.” Before you contact me with a question, please make sure that you have first referenced the course outline and checked with a classmate for an answer. You are also welcome to call me at my office or request an appointment to meet with me outside of office hours within normal business hours. I will generally respond to any e-mails or voicemails by the following business day.

**Please note:** I genuinely want you to enjoy this course and be successful. I am here to help, so please do not hesitate to contact me. I will do my best to make the course engaging and practical. You can expect that I will treat you professionally and with respect. I ask for the same. I expect all students to give their best and treat me, their tutors and classmates with respect. We will come from different backgrounds. We will have different cultural backgrounds. We will have different religious and political philosophies. We will not agree on all points, but we will listen respectfully and everyone should feel free to express his/her beliefs and opinions and no one should feel personally attacked if there is disagreement. We are here to engage in critical thinking about issues that affect us all. We will discuss and debate ideas and issues, but our aim should always be to engage in civil discourse in order to promote critical thinking, create understanding, encourage tolerance and champion social justice and equality for all.

- **Attending Seminar is Extremely Important:** Developing the discipline of attending lectures and tutorials and being on time and exercising due diligence to stay on top of the readings and assignments and study for the exams help build character and important life skills. I expect you to attend all lectures and tutorials. If you are absent, then you should have a justifiable excuse, e.g., an illness or family emergency. Late work will not be accepted for credit without prior approval and will only be approved for unavoidable circumstances out of the student’s control and for which student has proper documentation (Note: job schedule conflicts do not justify missing class). The fact of the matter is that if you are not in regular attendance, then you will not be able to pass the course. It is the same as if you had a job but did not show up to work: you would not get a pay check and would probably lose the job in short order. Roll will be called at the beginning of lecture every week. Each tardy or early departure = -2% off your final grade; each unexcused absence = -10%) Students are allowed two excused absences. If you get very ill or otherwise habitually miss class, then you will need to drop the course and try again when circumstances are more favourable. Students who miss more than three seminars will receive a failing grade for the course.
- **Extra Credit.** Everyone has the same opportunities to earn the same points throughout the semester. No extra credit will be awarded.
- **Electronic devices policy.** Research actually supports the fact that taking handwritten notes results in better student outcomes. For this reason and to minimize distractions during lecture, no electronic devices are permitted. This means no laptops, notebooks, smart watches or glasses, and positively no cell phone use. These devices *may* be utilized during tutorials at the discretion of the lecturer or tutor for the purpose of doing research or completing assignments, but they should be kept in your book bag or otherwise out of sight unless permission is granted. If you have a special need to use assistive technology or you may need to keep your phone on vibrate mode in case of an emergency, then please see the instructor before class for permission. Students who violate this policy may be asked to leave and be marked with an unexcused absence for the day.

- **All assignments must be completed.** Completing all assignments is not a guarantee that you will pass the course, but you definitely will not pass the course if you do not complete all of them. No assignment is optional; all must be completed.
- **Participation:** In this course, students are expected to read, write, listen and participate in the exchange of ideas with their instructor, tutor and peers. All members of each group must participate fully in any group work conducted. Peer assessment will be enforced.
- **Preparation:** Preparation for seminar requires completing assigned readings in advance and perhaps some further reading, writing and discussion. Preparation for assignments requires a review of concepts, drafting/rehearsing/previewing an oral/written/graphic presentation and actual sharing of presentations. Completion of group projects will require coordination of group member schedules for tasks completed outside of class.
- **Academic Honesty:** All work should be original to the student. All sources used must be properly cited. Turnitin will be utilized to screen writing samples for plagiarism. Any plagiarism or other form of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for the assignment for the first occurrence. A second occurrence will result in being dismissed with a final grade of “F” for the course and be reported to the relevant academic authorities.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

<b>Class Period</b>	<b>Lecture Topic</b>	<b><u>Readings</u></b>
Jan 18	Introduction to the course	
Jan 25	Small Groups and Teams and the Role of Culture	Ch. 1
Feb 1	Leadership	Chs. 2, 11; Appendix A, pp. 334-39
Feb 8	Teamwork	Ch. 3, 4
Feb 15	Team Building Workshop	Reading will be assigned in class
Feb 22	Task Questions and Problem Solving <b>Group Assignment 1 Due</b>	Ch. 5, 8, (review pgs. 84-85; Appendix B, pp. 341-56
Mar 1	Creative and Logical Thinking	Chs. 6, 7
Mar 8	Verbal and Nonverbal Communication	Ch. 9
Mar 15	Listening and Questioning	Ch. 10
Mar 29	Conflict in Small Groups	Chs. 12, 13
Apr 5	<b>Group Assignment 2 Presentations</b>	
Apr 12	<b>Group Assignment 2 Presentations</b> <b>Group Analysis Papers Due</b>	
TBA	Final Exam	

**Disclaimer:** This course outline is a living document and subject to change.