

## **COMN 4310: Communication and Collaboration**

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### Course Description:

This course is designed to acquaint students with theory and research on collaboration, with particular emphasis on the relationship between collaboration and communication. This course is balanced with respect to theoretical and applied emphases, with topics ranging from basic definitions of collaboration to advanced collaboration technologies.

### Assignments:

*Two group presentations:* Each student will work with a group of their classmates (2-3 members total) to present on one of the theoretical units and one of the practice units. The presentation will consist of a comprehensive overview of the selected topic, drawing from both the recommended readings and supplemental readings of your group's choosing. The group will compile and post on blackboard a reading pertaining to the unit (of no more than 25 pages) for their classmates at least one week prior to their presentation. Each group must consult with me prior to their presentation, and this must occur with sufficient time to fully incorporate my suggestions. In their presentation the group should take care to formulate the primary questions driving this research, how these questions relate to the theory and practice of collaboration, and provide answers to these questions. The presentation should not simply be a lecture, but a seminar discussion at the level fitting a doctoral seminar. The group should work hard to ensure that this discussion is robust, critical and insightful. Groups should feel free to explore creative methods of presenting content, but must make sure that these activities promote and sharpen discussion, rather than replacing it. Each presentation is worth 25% of the final grade.

*Four discussion questions prepared for guest speakers and group presentations:* Each student will write-up and ask at least four questions, over the course of the quarter, of our guest speakers and their classmates. These questions need to be clear, concise and lucid. The student should type out the question, followed by three paragraphs explaining of what motivated the question, how it is grounded in the readings, and why discovering the answer is important. Each discussion question is worth 5% of the final grade.

*A group facilitation simulation:* Each student will work in a group (of three) to construct a case that calls for a large group meeting to address/resolve the problem at hand. This case will be given to the class and roles will be assigned to each class member. The group will then run the class through a simulation of the large group intervention designed to address the case. The group should select a proven intervention method (a comprehensive list of these methods can be found at <http://ncdd.org/rc/item/category/dd-methods>). After the simulation the group should evaluate the intervention, using a combination of feedback methods (discussion and surveys). The group will then prepare a report that sets out the case, details the intervention method (why it was chosen, its design, and the desired effects), reports the results of the evaluation, and offers a reflection on how to improve the process based on these results. The simulation and report is worth 30% of the final grade.

**Texts:** We will be reading from a variety of sources. Required readings will be posted on blackboard (either by me or the group designated to present on a particular unit).

## Course Schedule

### **9/11: Introduction and Case Study**

### **9/18: Defining Collaboration and Explicating the Collaborative Process**

Readings: Hicks & Larson, *Collaborating with Others*; Hicks et al., *The Influence of Collaboration on Program Outcomes*; Ansell & Gash, *Collaborative Governance*; Selections from Larson (*Teamwork*; *When Teams Work Best*; *Humanitarian Leader*)

### **9/25: The Elements of Successful Collaboration**

Guest Speaker: Carl Larson

### **10/2: Building and Sustaining Collaborative Networks**

Guest Speaker: Danielle Varda

**10/9:** Theory unit 1: **A Bio-Informational Perspective on Collaboration:** Alex Pentland, *Honest Signals*; Alex Pentland, *The New Science of Great Teams*.

Practice Unit 1: **Collaborative Communication I:** from Frank LaFasto & Carl Larson, *When Teams Work Best*; Bruce Stone et al., *Difficult Conversations*.

Introduction to **Designing and Facilitating Collaborative Processes**

**10/16:** Theory Unit 2: **Affective Energy:** from Frank LaFasto & Carl Larson, *When Teams Work Best*; Ryan Quinn and Jane Dutton, *Energy as Coordination in Conversation*; Ryan Quinn, *Energizing Others in Work Connections*; Randall Collins, *Emotional Energy as the Common Denominator of Rational Choice*; Stephen Marks, *Multiple Roles and Role Strain*.

Practice Unit 2: **Collaborative Communication II:** Ryan Quinn & Roger Quinn, *Lift Facilitation Case from Group 1:*

**10/23:** Theory Unit 3: **Affective Contagion:** selections from Tony Sampson, *Virality*; Theresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect*; Nikolas Christakis & James Fowler, *Connected*.

Practice Unit 3: **Positive Organizational Practices:** selections from Kim Cameron & Gretchen Spreitzer (Eds), *Oxford Handbook of Positive Organizational Scholarship*

**Facilitation Case from Group 2:**

**10/30:** Theory Unit 4: **Plural Subjectivity:** selections from Margret Gilbert, *Living Together*; Raimo Tuomela, *The Philosophy of Sociality*; Brain Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*; Erin Manning, *More than One*.

Practice Unit 4: **Teamwork:** from Carl Larson & Frank LaFasto, *Teamwork*; Marcia Hughes & James Terrell, *The Emotionally Intelligent Team*

**Facilitation Case from Group 3:**

**11/6:** Theory Unit 5: **Process Quality:** from Tom Tyler, *Why People Cooperate*; Alan Lind, *Fairness Heuristic Theory*; Peter Corning, *The Fair Society*; Johnston et al, *Managing Inclusion*.

Practice 5: **Building Collaborative Communication Climates and Cultures:** from Fritz Steele and Stephen Jenks, *The Feel of the Workplace*; Charles Redding, *Communication in the Workplace*; Frank LaFasto & Carl Larson, *When Teams Work Best*; Charles Glisson & Peter Hemmelgarn, *The effects of organizational climate on the quality and outcomes of children's service systems*.

**Facilitation Case from Group 4:**

**11/13:** Theory Unit 6: **The Ethics of Collaboration:** from Ella Myers, *Worldly Ethics*; Joan Tronto, *Caring Democracy*

Practice Unit 6: **Collaborative Leadership**: from David Chrislip & Carl Larson, *Collaborative Leadership*; Frank LaFasto & Carl Larson, *The Humanitarian Leader in Each of Us*; Frank LaFasto & Carl Larson, *When Teams Work Best*

**Facilitation Case from Group 5:**