General Education Submission Form

Electronic submissions are preferred.

A. GE component for which course is being proposed: Serving Society

B. Submitted by Deborah Dunn, Communication Studies

C. Ideally, submissions should be discussed by the entire department prior to submittal.
   - Chair has reviewed and approved the course (in progress).

D. Course being proposed (please attach syllabus):
   Com 127: Group Communication & Leadership

E. This course
   - [X] Has not been modified, but is being submitted to check its suitability
   - [ ] Has had its syllabus rewritten to communicate the course’s contribution to GE
   - [ ] Has had its contents modified to address the relevant GE issues
   - [ ] Is a new course designed to fulfill the GE requirement

   *This course will be modified pending approval – sample syllabus from previous course is submitted for context, along with content modification proposed.*

F. This course is being submitted as
   - [ ] A Template. Applicable to courses with multiple sections which require only general training in the discipline. The submission should come from the department chair and should clearly identify what course content and what elements of the syllabus the department has agreed will common to all sections. Upon approval by the GE Committee, any course whose syllabus is determined by the department to meet the specifications of the template is approved to satisfy this area requirement. A copy of each syllabus should be forwarded to the G.E. committee for record keeping purposes.
   - [X] An Individual Course. Applicable to courses requiring specialized training in the discipline or are typically offered by a particular instructor. The course should be resubmitted and reassessed in the event of a change in staffing or syllabus.

G. Statement of rationale:
   (Please attach a copy of the syllabus which has been annotated (a) to identify the activities fulfilling each of the expectations for courses in this area and (b) to explain how the activity addresses the expectation. Electronic annotations are preferred.)

*What is included here: 1) the catalog description of the course; 2) the plan to integrate the serving society option; and 3) a syllabus from a previous version of the course – this syllabus has not been brought up to date to include learning outcomes or the serving society component. If the Committee finds this proposal acceptable in “theory” then the syllabus will be revised to incorporate the serving society component and re-submitted to the committee. It would be helpful to obtain immediate feedback as to suitability of serving society option so students may plan their registration appropriately.*
Catalogue Copy:
COM 127 Group Communication and Leadership (4)
Theory and practice of communication in a variety of small-group contexts. Attention given to roles, conformity, decision-making, leadership, and group climate. Special emphasis given to group and leadership dynamics in the church, as well as diverse community and support groups.

Plan to Integrate Serving Society Option

The goal of the assignment is to help students work together, as a team, to tackle a major social issue. Their assignment will include:

- Coming up with a proposal that includes at least 12 hours of service in the community for an important cause or social problem. The student groups themselves will have to identify their goals, their specific form(s) of service, and how they will establish and monitor their own success (or failures). The professor will provide oversight and make sure that the projects are well conceived and that there are mechanisms in place to help them assess, evaluate, and reflect on the work done.

- Students will complete both group and individual evaluations in which they explore their own preconceived ideas, fears, and hopes compared with their feelings, experiences, and commitments after the service is complete.

- Students will write an essay in which they explore the intersections of their Christian faith commitments, the systemic issues they’ve encountered in their service work, and their own experience working within Christian community to tackle the problem.

For the first semester, students will be asked to choose to serve either the Westside Community Project or Not For Sale. Both projects will invite students to confront and cope with issues of economic disparity and class, issues of gender and ethnicity, issues of social or political disenfranchisement, issues of identity, infrastructure, and safety.

Students may choose whether to engage in direct contact (helping run the kids club program on the Westside) or addressing systemic and structural concerns (helping Not For Sale follow and confront human trafficking in California via legal routes to justice).

Some readings will be selected for students that examine issues of group identity, including academic case studies of gangs.

Syllabus

Com 127: Small Group Communication

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Required Texts:
Course Reader – Available for Purchase in Westmont College Bookstore,

**Course Objectives:**

"*Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ.*"

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 1954, p. 21*

- To understand and critique principles & theories of group communication and leadership.
- To develop dialogic and innovative group communication skills; to approach learning as a dialogue (rather than a monologue)
- To develop an understanding and appreciation of what it means to live in ethical and dialogic “community” (Christian and otherwise)
- To cultivate critical thinking and complex problem solving abilities in group interaction and group analysis

"*The Lord did not give us the spirit of timidity, but the spirit of power, love, and self-control.*' The answer to the timidity that keeps us from daring the risks of communication lies in our using all the power we can muster to be really present to others, in love that enables us to stand with them and try to see life from their point of view, and in the discipline that controls our temptation to try short-cuts to security and affirmation." -- Reuel L. Howe, 1963, p. 97

**Course Policies:**

Please make a commitment to come to class prepared -- read what is assigned and organize your thoughts before class. All written assignments must be neatly typed and are due at the **beginning** of class – if you turn your assignment in late, you will lose one full grade for every day that it's late (same policy if your work is done incorrectly or unprofessionally). If you come late to class, or if you miss a class, do not expect material to be repeated to you. It is your responsibility to find out what you missed. For all assignments, always list your references. Use APA style. Put your mailbox number on all written work.

Check your e-mail. On-line discussion (as well as in-class discussion) is part of this course. Also, helpful hints, announcements, or schedule changes are sometimes sent to you via e-mail. If you do not check your Westmont account on a regular basis, then have that mail forwarded to the address you do check regularly. Include your mailbox number on all exams and assignments.

**Words to the Wise:**

This course combines lecture, discussion, activities, and case studies. You will gain most from this course if you are an active and regular participant. During discussions, you should take notes when important points are raised, and make a note of what was discussed. Exam questions often reflect discussion themes. Group activities are a significant portion of the course; group work takes time and your peers will evaluate your work.
Plan ahead. Go through the syllabus and make note of due dates and exam dates in your calendar. Note that you need to schedule reading/work time as well as planning and writing time. Don't wait to schedule activities or readings until they are discussed in class. You have the schedule in advance for a reason.

A word about technology: Back up your files. Save often. Always have a floppy disk to save to. Check for viruses. When you finish a rough draft of a paper, print it out after you've saved it to a back-up disk. For super important projects, make two back-up copies. Know that if you switch computers just to print you may lose some formatting, so include that in your planning time. You may not be able to prepare or execute presentations as planned. Have a back-up plan.

**Student Needs:**
If you have special circumstances (such as a learning disability, academic or athletic team schedule) that I should be aware of, please inform me before the second week. Arrangements to accommodate your need must be made well in advance of any exams or assignments.

**Academic Integrity:**
Westmont is committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Please approach your exams and assignments with honesty and integrity. Plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on exams, copying or purchasing papers or other assignments violate Westmont and class policy (see student handbook). Plagiarism includes presenting someone else's research as your own – and if you don't cite a source, you are implying that you invented this perspective or analysis. Each semester I randomly select a certain number of papers and check sources against originals.

**Office Hours:**
Listed above are my official office hours, but the door is open. I enjoy talking to you, so if you have questions that we did not answer in class, or if you want to explore an idea, come by. If I am not in my office, leave a note or send me an e-mail. I will get back to you.

**Teaching Methods:**
I ask that you enter the course with a willingness to be engaged in a learning dialogue, "...to go into a dialogue with the stance that there is something that I don't already know, with a mutual openness to learn. Through dialogue we can learn, not merely receive information, but revise the way we see something. Something about the dialogue honors inquiry and learning from the inquiry." (Evered & Tannenbaum, 1992, p. 45).

This course relies on your participation, and I will ask you to engage in a variety of exercises – some will seem silly, some will feel threatening. All are designed to help you grow in the area of group communication and leadership. Be sure to complete the assigned reading before each class; otherwise, you will be unable to take effective notes and to enter into the conversation. Lectures and reading material are meant to complement each other rather than repeat each other; thus, attendance is critical. Learning is an active process, and it is simply impossible for you to participate if you aren't here. Any true discussion involves personal exposure and thus the taking of risks. Encouragement, questions, discussion, and laughter are a part of this class, but scoffing or mocking is not. Likewise – rolling of eyes or jabs at your buddy while someone else is speaking is never
desirable and certainly not polite. The readings are challenging and informative. If you don’t “get” a reading the first time around, re-read it. You are a learner in this class, not merely a receiver.

Assignments:
Exams & Quizzes 35%
Essays / Papers / Analyses 25%
Group Work & Peer Evaluations 20%
Service Project 20%

Quizzes:
Quizzes are designed for one purpose – to help you learn. You learn by reading, by discussing what you’ve read, by questioning what you’ve read, by making links to other theories and readings in the course, and by thoughtfully reflecting on what you’ve read. Quizzes will (hopefully) motivate you to complete your reading on a regular basis. You need to study to do well! You should pay particular attention to: Definitions, terms, theories, and the conclusions drawn by the authors. Sometimes questions are asked to test your attention to names and details.

Activities:
You will prepare oral and written presentations on specific topics relevant to group communication and leadership. Activities require work outside of class. Sometimes you will receive group grades; these are based upon the quality of the final results (not upon effort or percentage of work done by individuals). You will, however, receive peer evaluations that will affect your grade in the course.

Course Readings Include:
*The Team That Wasn’t (read entire case plus expert opinions)
*Elite Teams Get the Job Done
*The Secrets of Team Facilitation
*Jamming
*The Pursuit of Attention (Derber)
*Introduction (from the Reach of Dialogue; Anderson, et. al.)
*Communication and the Ground of Dialogue (Cissna & Anderson)
*The Ethical Community
*Sharing the Journey (excerpts from Wuthnow)
*Rhetorical Power of a Compelling Story: “Tough Love” Case Study
*Homeboys and Hoods (Conquergood’s Case study of street gangs)
*The Pilgrim Must Embark (case study of home for AIDS patients)
*Understanding the Group as a System
*Symbolic Convergence Theory
*Group Decision Fiascos: Space Shuttle Challenger & Groupthink
*Bay of Pigs Case Study
*Abusive Groups: *The EST in the business
*Over the Line
*Making a Decision Like a Tribe
Course Essays/Papers Include:
* Reaction & Analysis to: Into Thin Air
* Field Observations of Conversational Narcissism (Derber)
* Field Reports of Service Projects
* Self-Assessment & Analysis of Your Group Experience
FIELD OBSERVATIONS INSPIRED BY DERBER

For this assignment you will need to work with your group. You will receive a group grade for the project. This will require advance planning, advance analysis, and cooperation. You cannot do this the night before it is due. You must start the work well in advance of the due date. The point of this exercise is to observe and record natural conversations.

Step One: Invite a group of college students to a night of pizza or movies or something (unless you're an R.A. you have to provide inducements for students to show up). Ask them to just hang out and talk. This may work best with people who already know each other, but who have NOT had small group communication! You may want to put them in very small groups (3 or 4) and give them a general conversation topic to get started on. Tell them there are no rules, just enjoy. Obtain permission to record the conversations (video would be ideal). Assure them that you will not use the recordings for any purpose other than a research project. Don't tell them the nature of the project (and don't gossip about the project or the cat will get out of the bag). Ideally, you'll get some "real" conversations. After about 10 minutes, rotate partners and tape again. After about another 10 minutes, thank them and send them home (or let them eat pizza or watch a movie -- whatever you promised). Before they leave, tell them the nature of the class (small group) and tell them you'll be analyzing their conversation. If they object, get uncomfortable, protest, don't use them for the analysis (you need to be ethical). Assure them again that this will not end up on TV at Spring Sing or in a Westmont promo. Thank them profusely. Tell them that if they have questions, they can contact you or me (565-6780).

Step Two: Decide which conversations to analyze. Ideally, this decision should be random (eeny meeny…). Now, thoroughly analyze the tape on a micro level. Make a transcript of the conversation, exactly, word-for-word. You need about 10 minutes of total conversation time -- you could do a five minute excerpt, and then another five minute excerpt. You don't need a ton of footage. Just enough to analyze some real conversation. Analyze your transcripts and the video. Who speaks most? Who interrupts? What do faces/bodies look like when they're talking?

Step Three: Using Derber's categories, count the numbers of: (this is content analysis!)
- Shift-Responses
- Support-Responses
- Active Practices
- Passive Practices

Step Five: Present your findings in easy-to-read tables or graphs or charts and simple paragraphs/ sentences. Write a concluding paragraph in which you discuss whether or not the conversations you analyzed support Derber's thesis. If they did not, why do you think that's the case (Derber's shortcoming or limitations of your own research?). See Instructions for Reporting on your projects.
FIELD OBSERVATIONS OF BONA-FIDE GROUPS

For this assignment you will need to work with your group. You will receive a group grade for the project. This will require advance planning, advance analysis, and cooperation. You cannot do this the night before it is due. You must start the work well in advance of the due date. The point of this exercise is to observe and record natural group interactions.

Step One: Decide on a social support group that is interesting to you. You may choose to focus on church groups, group homes, missions, recovery groups, or any other kind of social support group. The most important thing is that you are respectful and ethical and that you obtain permission well in advance and promise a certain measure of confidentiality. People probably won't want you to record the groups, so note taking will have to suffice. You may not watch a group on TV or video. You must go in person. Once you have explained the nature of your interest and have promised confidentiality, find a mutually agreeable date and time. Ideally, all group members should attend. In some cases, that's not possible. Do your best. Do your homework. Find out as much as you can about the group ahead of time. Obtain any histories or publications.

Step Two: Attend the group meeting. Try to be unobtrusive. Don't lie to people. Be considerate. Arrive on time, don't leave early, and take notes inconspicuously. If people look nervous, hold off on notes and try to write your notes out later before you forget. If possible, interview people after the meeting and ask them questions you think are relevant or interesting to your study of small groups.

Step Three: Write up your own analysis of the group meeting (and the group in general) that you just observed. Link your observations with the theories you've learned in class and the readings you've completed. See project summary requirements.