Course Title and Description
Small Group Decision Making is a three credit course that focuses on the ways in which groups develop tasks, analyze problems, develop and evaluate solutions, and implement solutions. This course will include instruction on the role that communication in small groups and decision making. This course is intended as an overview of contemporary theory and research in small group decision-making.

Course Objectives
The course is designed to expose students to the construction of organizations through the communication of members. This course is in partial fulfillment of the following Communication and Media Department outcomes. Specifically, students should be able to perform the following by the conclusion of the Spring 2017 semester:

- Define small group decision making.
- Develop a workshop that incorporates contemporary theory about small group decision making with practical advice from popular press authors.
- Develop a small group project that effectively overcomes the barriers to effective decision making.

Required Texts


Required Additional Readings
- Reading material for selected topics from a variety of sources will be placed in the “Required Additional Readings” folder on Blackboard.

Attendance
Student attendance in class is essential to learning. Assignments and tests are expected to be delivered on the day assigned. Exceptions will be made only in extreme circumstances at the discretion of the instructor. When absences are due to a University activity, it is the student’s responsibility to notify the instructor of these absences at least one (1) week in advance of the occurrence to allow adequate time for rescheduling. Definitions of excused and unexcused absences will reflect university guidelines. Only formally documented, “university excused” absences will be allowed.

*More than 1 unexcused absences will result in automatic failure of the course*

Grading Procedure
Grades will be based on the following scale:
100-90% - A  89-80% - B  79-70% - C  69-60% - D  Below 60% - E
Grading
Grades are comprised of talking points, classroom engagement activities, position papers, an individual research project, and a course project. There will be no opportunity to makeup in-class activities. There will be no opportunity to makeup in-class activities. Assignments turned in late will receive a 10-percent deduction for every day it is late.

Talking Points
Beginning with the reading material for January 19, students will be expected to submit talking points about each of the readings assigned. The talking points should highlight fascinating and provocative aspects of the reading sources, showcase genuine understanding of the content, and an ability to draw connections between the reading and other topics covered in class. Talking points will be evaluated based upon depth of understanding, the ability to synthesize the reading material, and relevance to the discussion topic. Further directions and rubric for the talking points will be distributed and discussed in class at the appropriate time. Talking Points are each worth 5 points, for a total of 75 points.

Classroom Engagement Activities
During various class periods, students will complete classroom engagement activities that will be used for direct application and discussion of course topics, lecture material, and reading content. There will be ten classroom engagement activities in this course, each worth 5 points, for a total of 50 points.

Position Papers
There will be three position papers in this course, each worth 25 points, for a total of 75 points. The purpose of Position papers is to encourage reflection, critical thinking, and argumentative skills. Position papers allow students to learn about an issue in the organizational communication discipline, take a stand on the issue, and then effectively argue their viewpoint with relevant supporting evidence. Grading will be based upon the quality of information presented to defend one’s viewpoint. Further directions and rubric for the Position Papers will be distributed and discussed in class at the appropriate time.

Popular Press Small Group Book Application Paper and Class Discussion
Popular press (books written for a wide array of audiences) about teamwork, small groups, and small group decision-making number in the thousands. Thus, they represent an opportunity to integrate academic insight and theory with applied prescriptions and advice about small group decision-making. With a group of 2 or 3, students will select a popular press teamwork, small group, or small group decision-making book published between 1990 and 2016 to read, write a paper about, and facilitate a discussion of in class. Papers should address foundational teachings of the book and how they relate to leadership theory and research discussed in the course materials for the class. Discussions of the book in class should capture the attention of fellow students and provide them an opportunity to see the usefulness of connecting popular press literature with academic literature. Decisions about and approval for the book should be provided by February 9. Further directions and rubric for the popular press leadership application paper and class discussion will be distributed and discussed in class at the appropriate time. It is worth 100 points.
**Academic Advising**

Students pursuing the Master of Arts in Communication will be paired with a graduate faculty member advisor in their first semester. Students should contact their advisors within the first two weeks of a semester to arrange a meeting during which degree plans, tracks, and opportunities for professional development should be discussed. If there is any question regarding whom a student’s academic advisor is, the student should contact Dr. Stephanie Rodriguez, Interim Graduate Coordinator, for assistance (stephanie.rodriguez@tamucc.edu; 361-825-5753). To finalize your degree plan and register for graduation, you must also meet with the Graduate Student Academic Advisor in the Academic Advising Center for the College of Liberal Arts. This office is located in Driftwood 203E and can be reached at (361) 825-3466.

**Disability Services**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in CCH 116 and the phone number is 361-825-5816.

**Grade Appeal Process**

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

**Expectations of Graduate Students**

1. Ability to contribute engaging and thoughtful discussion points during class.
2. Demonstrated completion of all assigned reading material prior to class.
3. Proficiency in academic writing and use of APA Style.
4. Focus on learning instead of focus on grades.

**Student Conduct**

1. **Know the syllabus**: Be informed on what is to be read, discussed, and submitted for each class meeting.
2. **Respect**: Be courteous of the professor and fellow students and refrain from talking amongst yourselves during lecture and discussion. This also means that proper professional communication is also required.
3. **Preparation**: Attend class ready to contribute and interact with material presented in class.
4. **Punctuality**: Please make best effort to arrive to the classroom before class begins.
5. **Electronic Devices**: All devices that distract from the learning process are prohibited.
6. **Listening/Feedback**: Devote attention during class sessions and heed advice and constructive instruction on assignments provided throughout the semester.
7. **Effort**: This class will be fun and enlightening, yet challenging. Please put forth your best effort each day in the course.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thu Jan 19</td>
<td>Welcome; Overview of Small Group Decision Making</td>
<td>Burtis &amp; Turman (2006), Ch. 1</td>
<td>Talking Points 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu Jan 26</td>
<td>Theories of Small Group Decision Making</td>
<td>Frey &amp; Sunwolf (2005)</td>
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<td>Thu Feb 02</td>
<td>Tasks: Reasons Why Groups Exist</td>
<td>Burtis &amp; Turman (2006), Ch. 2</td>
<td>Talking Points 2;</td>
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<td>Thu Feb 09</td>
<td>Group Member Characteristics: Traits</td>
<td>Burtis &amp; Turman (2006), Ch. 4</td>
<td>Talking Points 3;</td>
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<td>Thu Feb 16</td>
<td>Group Member Characteristics: Communication Competence</td>
<td>Spitzberg &amp; Cupach (2011); Hawkins &amp; Fillions (1999)</td>
<td>Talking Points 4</td>
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<td>Thu Mar 02</td>
<td>Features of Small Groups: Group Climate and Cohesion</td>
<td>Burtis &amp; Turman (2006), Ch. 6; Gibb (1961); Evans &amp; Dion (1991)</td>
<td>Talking Points 6</td>
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<td>Thu Mar 09</td>
<td>Features of Small Groups: Group Hate, Social Loafing, and Incivility</td>
<td>Paulin &amp; Griffen (2015); Stohl &amp; Schell (1991)</td>
<td>Talking Points 7;</td>
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<td>Thu Mar 16</td>
<td>No Class: Spring Break</td>
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<td>Talking Points 8</td>
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<td>Thu Mar 23</td>
<td>Features of Small Groups: Citizenship Behaviors</td>
<td>Burtis &amp; Turman (2006), Ch. 7; Podsakoff, Abearn, &amp; MacKenzie (1997)</td>
<td>Talking Points 9;</td>
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<td>Thu Mar 30</td>
<td>Popular Press Book Workshop</td>
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<td>Talking Points 10; Popular Press Book Paper and Workshop</td>
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<td>Thu Apr 06</td>
<td>Popular Press Book Workshop</td>
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<td>Talking Points 11; Popular Press Book Paper and Workshop</td>
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<td>Thu Apr 13</td>
<td>Outcomes of Small Groups: Innovation and Creativity</td>
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<td>Talking Points 12;</td>
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<td>Thu Apr 20</td>
<td>Outcomes of Small Groups: Unintended Outcomes</td>
<td>Burtis &amp; Turman (2006), Ch. 8</td>
<td>Talking Points 13; Course Project Implications</td>
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<td>Thu Apr 27</td>
<td>Group Workshop</td>
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<td>Talking Points 14;</td>
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<td>Thu May 04</td>
<td>Group Workshop</td>
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<td>Talking Points 15;</td>
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