



# Psychology of Small Group Behavior

PSY 445  
Spring 2013  
Syllabus



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<b><u>Location:</u></b>	149 Business Administration Building
<b><u>Course Time:</u></b>	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:45 – 9:25am
<b><u>Instructor:</u></b>	Dr. James Grand
<b><u>Office:</u></b>	101J Mary Gladwin Hall
<b><u>Office Hours:</u></b>	Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00-3:00pm and by appointment
<b><u>Contact:</u></b>	<u>e-mail:</u> xxxxxxxx <u>phone:</u> xxxxxxxx

E-mail is the absolute best way to get in contact with me. Please do NOT simply leave me a voicemail and expect me to get back to you without also sending me an e-mail. I will do my best to respond to your e-mail within 24 hours, but an immediate response is not guaranteed; **I may not reply to e-mails sent after 5pm until the next day.**

## Course Description

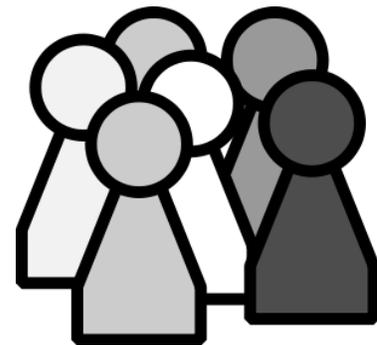
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*“Man is by nature a social animal; an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than human. Society is something that precedes the individual. Anyone who either cannot lead the common life or is so self-sufficient as not to need to, and therefore does not partake of society, is either a beast or a god.”*

—Aristotle

Whether you realize it or not, a great many of your beliefs, experiences, preferences, and behaviors have been—and continue to be—shaped by the groups to which you belong. By the same token, however, you inevitably shape these groups and their members through your experiences as well. This reciprocal influence between individuals and the groups in which they find themselves represents a critical aspect of our everyday lives as human beings, and one that has intrigued people for centuries.

*Psychology 445: Psychology of Small Group Behavior* is designed to introduce you to a variety of concepts, phenomena, and principles relevant to *group dynamics*, or the processes and actions which occur within and between groups and their members over time (Forsyth, 2010). This course explores the characteristics and outcomes associated with individuals interacting in group settings. During this class, we will address a number of topics, including the formation and development of groups, various social and experiential mechanisms which influence groups and their members, and features and consequences associated with poorly versus well-functioning groups.



## Course Goals

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The study of group dynamics is a unique topic in that its primary questions of interest simultaneously acknowledge two key psychological experiences of individuals:

*“How do the emotions, behaviors, thoughts, and motivations of individuals influence group members AND how do groups and their situational contexts influence the experiences of individuals?”*



Understanding the motivations, actions, and perceptions of a single person is a complicated endeavor; attempting to make sense of these things collectively for many individuals operating in a group environment is an even more challenging task. To this end, I have two goals for this course:

1. ***I want to introduce you to the concepts, methodologies, and relevant findings that capture the unique interactions of individuals within and between groups over time.***  
We will accomplish this by covering a broad range of topics in our lectures that focus on both the “bottom-up” influence of individuals on groups and the “top-down” influence of groups on individuals.
2. ***I want to improve your capability to critically analyze and positively influence groups.***  
We will accomplish this by actively engaging in learning activities, assignments, and discussions designed to provide you with an opportunity to try out many of the concepts covered in this course.

## Course Objectives and Example Learning Objectives

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- *You will learn about the methods and approaches used to study/interpret group behavior.*
  - a. Given questions about methodologies for studying groups, such as “Which of the following is an advantage of computational modeling for studying group behavior?” you will be able to choose the most accurate factual answer.
- *You will learn about how, when, and why individuals form groups, develop interpersonal relationships with other members, and establish structures that guide group behaviors.*
  - a. Given a description of a group of individuals interacting in a specific context, you will be able to apply a theory of group development to identify which stage of formation the group is currently experiencing.
- *You will learn about critical processes and mechanisms that shape group members’ interactions and outcomes.*
  - a. Given a description of a group scenario, such as “According to Moscovici’s conversion theory, which of the following actions is most likely to convince other group members to adopt your perspective?” you will be able to choose the most accurate factual answer.
- *You will learn how, when, and why groups can be effective/beneficial while others can be ineffective/detrimental.*
  - a. Given a description of a group context/scenario, such as “Under which of the following conditions would you be most likely to experience social facilitation?” you will be able to choose the most accurate factual answer.
- *You will learn how to observe, evaluate, and influence group behavior.*
  - a. Given a real-life group context/example, you will apply your knowledge of group dynamics to observe, facilitate, and report on positive changes in group behavior.

## Course Resources

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- **Required Text**

Forsyth, D.R. (2010). *Group Dynamics* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

This book summarizes many of the classic theories and research findings related to group behavior, representing an accessible text on the topic for upper level undergraduate/early graduate students in the social sciences. Note that the focus of this book primarily centers on findings which have emerged from the field of social psychology and therefore strongly emphasizes interpersonal relationships and social experiences/pressures as key drivers of group behavior. Other fields of study favor different perspectives and approaches, some of which we will touch on throughout the course.

- **Supplementary Reading**

In some cases, we will have assigned readings from sources other than the required textbook; most of these are already indicated on your Course Schedule, though I reserve the right to assign additional readings. **These readings ARE required and will be made available to you through Springboard.** If

retrieving these documents will be difficult for you (i.e., don't have easy access to a computer or printer), please let me know at least 2 class period BEFORE the readings are assigned and I will provide you with paper copies of the readings.



- **Course Notes**

I know that many of you are used to downloading PowerPoint slides to follow along with in class or as a substitute for going to class (I was an undergraduate once upon a time too, I know how it is...). However, I don't believe that the passive process of simply following along with my slides as I read to you is an effective way to learn anything, much less content as detailed and complex as group behavior.

To best learn in this class, you need to be actively engaged and attentive during lectures; and as many studies have shown, one of the best ways to do that is by taking notes old school—paper & pencil style (gasp!). However, fear not! To aid your notetaking, I will be providing you with a structured, easy to follow outline **every** lecture period that I encourage you to use to take notes with in class. Note that the outline itself will NOT contain any of the specific information presented in lectures nor will it be enough on its own to understand the lecture material and do well on the tests. They are meant to provide you with an organized guide for taking notes and **REQUIRES THAT YOU COME TO CLASS TO FILL OUT. I will make the guided notes for each week's lecture available on Springboard at the beginning of the week—it is YOUR responsibility to download these notes and bring them with you if you wish to use them.** If you miss class, please try to find a student you trust in the class to fill you in with the notes you missed—I will not be responsible for supplying you with notes missed for unexcused and/or undocumented reasons.

- **Course Website**

I will be using Springboard to store and make available to you a number of important class documents. There you will find copies of this syllabus, the course schedule, the guided notes, and other materials as needed during the semester. Additionally, you will be able to see your current grade in the class on the website. Please let me know immediately if you have or foresee having troubles accessing the website regularly.

- **Other Resources**

Below is a list of resources outside of this course that you may also find useful:

- Office of Accessibility. If you need special assistance for this course because of a disability, please contact the Office of Accessibility to establish reasonable accommodations. More information can be found at [www.uakron.edu/access](http://www.uakron.edu/access) or by calling (330) 972-7928 (TDD: 330-972-5764).
- Study Skills Center. The Study Skills Center is staffed with faculty tutors to assist students in the areas of reading comprehension, test taking, vocabulary improvement, memory enhancement, and a wide range of study strategies. Students receive personalized one-to-one instruction in a relaxed and comfortable environment. Appointments can be made by calling 330-972-7046 or stopping by the check-in area outside Polsky 332. Advance appointments are suggested, but drop-in appointments are available on a first-come, first-served basis. The Study Skills Center is open Monday through Thursday (9am – 5pm), and Friday (9am – 3pm)
- Writing Lab. Assists students with brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing writing for courses across multiple disciplines. More information about services and scheduling appointments can be found at <http://www.uakron.edu/tutoring/bwc/index.dot> or <http://www.uakron.edu/summitcollege/future-students/tutoring-study-tips/writing-lab.dot>.

## **Course Expectations**

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### Instructor Responsibilities

As your instructor, my responsibilities to you are to:

- Help you learn definitions, concepts, and techniques relevant to understanding group behavior and dynamics through lecture and course assignments.
- Provide accurate information and elaborate on topics relevant to group behavior and dynamics and how it applies to real-world situations and problems.
- Help you succeed and achieve your goals in this class by providing timely feedback and guidance through the course materials

I believe that every student can learn, but I'm also aware that everyone has different goals and learning styles. If you are having troubles learning the way I teach, please speak with me. I will do what I can, within reason, to teach the way you learn.

### Student Responsibilities

As a participative learner in this class, I expect you to:

- **Attend class regularly and read the assigned materials** before the beginning of class. Note that attending lectures is *crucial* to your success in this course.
- **Plan to spend at least 1-2 hours outside of class for every hour we have in class.** I understand that each of you have a variety of other responsibilities and obligations beyond this class. However, we will be covering a lot material over the duration of this course—which means you will be immeasurably more successful if you keep up with the coursework and put in the extra effort to learn what we cover in class.
- **Be courteous and respectful to your classmates and me during class.** Showing respect for all people in our class promotes a scholarly environment. I encourage participation in this class, and as such, many people will be making comments related to the material. At no time is it acceptable for anyone to be mimicked, embarrassed, intimidated, or mistreated by anybody in this class for any reason.

- **Turn OFF your cell phones during class.** Also, if you wish to bring a laptop to class, I ask that you sit near the back of the class so that you will not be distracting other students sitting behind you; additionally, you should not be using your laptop to check e-mail, update your Facebook status, or catch up on your Twitter feeds.
- **Arrive to class on time and do not leave class early.** If you must leave early or arrive late, please let me know ahead of time and sit somewhere where you can leave (or arrive) with the least amount of disruption.
- **Ask questions and/or for help when you need it.** Bring me your questions! I find the content we cover in this class to be extremely interesting, and genuinely want each of you to succeed in this class. If you're confused during class, *chances are that other people are too* and you will be doing us all a favor by bringing it to my attention. When you have a question to ask during class, please raise your hand and wait to be called on. If you feel uncomfortable asking questions during class, don't hesitate to contact me before/after class, during my office hours, or through e-mail.
- **Talk to me if you feel that I am being unfair in my expectations, policies, or grading.** You may wish to refer to your rights and responsibilities as a student should a conflict occur (available online at <http://www.uakron.edu/ogc/UniversityRules/pdf/42-01.pdf>). However, I think that you will find that I do my best to be fair and reasonable if you come to me with a legitimate complaint or problem.
- **Let me know as soon as possible if outside circumstances are impacting your participation in class.** Life happens! If you become seriously ill, experience the death of a loved one, or have a life altering experience that is negatively influencing your participation in our class, please contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss your options. If emergencies arise that require an absence from a session, be sure to get the notes and other information that was covered in class from a student you trust.

These course rules and my expectations for you are non-negotiable. The rules as laid out in this syllabus, the content of the exams, the content of the lectures, and the calculation of the grade you earn are not a starting point for negotiations. While I am always willing to work with you on an individual basis, I cannot negotiate individual terms with each person in the class.

## Keys to Success in this Course

1. Come to lecture *every single day*. Although you will benefit from reading the textbook, I will provide examples, activities, and additional information to supplement your learning that will help you better understand the material. By coming to class and actively participating and attending to the lectures, you will place yourself in a much better position to comprehend the course topics and succeed in this class.
2. Use the guided notes and quizzes to study for your exams. When completed, the guided notes will serve as the most valuable study guide you can have for this course.
3. Review your notes from previous lectures and do your reading assignments before every class. **It will take several exposures to the material before it begins to sink in—trust me.** You will find that your understanding of lectures and your performance in the class will be greatly improved if you are prepared ahead of time.
4. The time to be concerned about your grade is in the first fifteen weeks, not in the last week. I will provide you with your grades on Springboard, but it is your responsibility to monitor them. If you feel like you are falling behind, the sooner you come and see me the better!



## Course Evaluation

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### Quizzes (10% of your total grade)

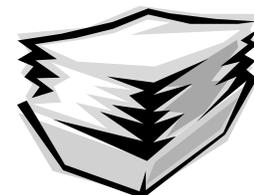
- There will be 12 pop quizzes given over the course of the semester.
- Only your 10 best quiz scores count towards your final grade.
- Quizzes will cover material from recent lectures and/or assigned readings.
- Each quiz will consist of 5 multiple choice questions (1 point each) plus one bonus question.
- ***IMPORTANT: NO make-up quizzes will be given for any reason; if you miss a quiz, you will receive zero points for that quiz. Note that you can miss two quizzes without penalty.***

### Exams (60% of your total grade)

- There will be three (3) non-cumulative exams each worth 100 points.
- The exams will primarily consist of multiple-choice questions, but may also include matching, true/false, and short answer questions.
- The exams will cover material from lectures and assigned readings.
- *The dates of your exams can be found on the course schedule.* Exam 1 (**Thursday, February 14, 2013**) and Exam 2 (**Thursday, March 21, 2013**) will take place during normally scheduled class hours. Exam 3 will take place during finals week on **Wednesday, May 6 from 10:00 – 11:55am** in accordance with the University's schedule for final examinations.
- ***IMPORTANT:*** Make-up exams will NOT be given unless there are extreme circumstances (documentation of illness or death in the family) and will be considered on an individual basis. ***If you miss an exam, you will receive zero points for that exam.*** If you know you will miss an exam due to an unavoidable conflict, you need to let me know ahead of time.

### Application Assignments (30% of your total grade)

- There will be six (6) application assignments over the course of the semester.
- Only your five (5) best application assignments count towards your final grade.
- The application assignments will be short papers, activities, or tasks that will ask you to apply what you have learned in the course to a realistic example in your daily life; further details about each assignment will be provided later.
- ***ALL application assignments are to be completed individually unless otherwise indicated.***
- You will generally have at least one week to complete the application assignment from the time it is assigned in class.
- Although the specific tasks of each application assignment will differ, you can expect each assignment to be roughly equivalent in their requirements (i.e., approximately 2-3 page written document, etc.).
- ***You must either upload your application assignment to Springboard or hand in a printed, paper copy of your written assignment by the deadline listed on the due date.***
- If you choose to upload to Springboard and there is a problem with the attachment (i.e., I can't open it, document is blank/corrupted, etc.) you will receive **ONE free pass for the entire semester** where I will allow you to resubmit the assignment to me with no penalty. After that, I reserve the right to NOT accept future assignments where I cannot access the attachment.
- ***IMPORTANT:*** I will NOT accept late assignments unless there are extreme circumstances (documentation of illness or a death in the family). ***If you do not turn an application assignment on time, you will receive zero points.*** You may always turn the assignment in ahead of time.



## Course Grading

Your final grade is based on the total number of points you earn on the quizzes, exams, and application assignments according to the following table:

Assignment/Exam	Total Points	Percentage of Final Grade
Quizzes (10 x 5 points each)	50	10%
Exams (3 x 100 points each)	300	60%
Application Assignments (5 x 30 points each)	150	30%
Total	500	100%

The table below will be used to assign your course grades based on the 500 point maximum. If you accumulate the total points listed below, you are *guaranteed that grade in the course*. Total points get rounded to the nearest whole number (e.g., 449.4999 is 449 but 449.5000 is 450). Imagine you are the professor assigning grades—you have to draw the lines somewhere, and someone is always going to be just below the lines.

Final Grade Conversions		
Number of points	Percentage	Grade
465 or above	93%-100%	A
450 – 464	90%-92.9%	A-
435 – 449	87%-89.9%	B+
415 – 434	83%-86.9%	B
400 – 414	80%-82.9%	B-
385 – 399	77%-79.9%	C+
365 – 384	73%-76.9%	C
350 – 364	70%-72.9%	C-
335 – 349	67%-69.9%	D+
315 – 334	63%-66.9%	D
300 – 314	60%-62.9%	D-
299 or less	0%-59.9%	F

### My Grading Policy

I will do my best to grade and return your coursework as quickly as possible, but please understand that there are a lot of you and only one of me. I will try to return your application assignments back to you within a week after their due date.

### Extra Credit

You will have the opportunity to earn up to **15 total** extra credit points on your final grade. Extra credit can **ONLY** be earned through:

- Research participation through the Psychology department HPR. Note that you **MUST register** with the HPR in order to participate in research for extra credit (even if you have already registered in a previous semester). Information about how to register, access, and participate through the HPR can be found on this course's Springboard page.
- Complete a 2-page critique of up to **three** empirical journal articles approved by me (each summary is worth up to 5 extra credit points). The content of the articles must be



related to groups and/or teams research to qualify. Critiques should cover a thoughtful examination of the study's purpose, method, and results. If you intend to do an article critique for extra credit, **you MUST inform me by Thursday, April 25, 2013**. The final day to turn in a critique for extra credit is **Thursday, May 2, 2013**.

## Course Rules and Policies

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- Academic Honesty:  
Article 3359-41-01.D.1 of the Code of Student Conduct states that "Academic misconduct is any activity that compromises the academic integrity of the student and university, and undermines the educational process." Consequently, you as students share with me the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards in this course. (See *Code of Student Conduct* at [www.uakron.edu/sja/code-of-conduct.dot](http://www.uakron.edu/sja/code-of-conduct.dot))

Therefore, unless authorized by me, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including assignments, exams, and quizzes, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Students who violate The University of Akron rules and policies may receive a penalty grade, including but not limited to a failing grade on the assignment or in the course.

Examples of cheating in this course include:

1. Claiming or submitting academic work of another's as one's own
  2. Obtaining, providing, accepting, or using any materials containing questions or answers to any exam or assignment without instructor authorization
  3. Completing or attempting to complete any assignment or exam for another individual without instructor authorization
  4. Allowing any examination or assignment to be completed for oneself, in part or in total, by another without instructor authorization
  5. Altering, tampering with, stealing, destroying, or otherwise interfering with the research, resources, or other academic work of another person
  6. Fabricating or falsifying data or results
  7. Helping another student to commit cheating by intentionally failing to report an observed instance of academic dishonesty
  8. Cheating on any exam, quiz, or writing assignment
- Plagiarism  
According to the Office of Student Conduct Academic Dishonesty guide, plagiarism involves "Submission of an assignment as the student's original work that is entirely or partly the work of another person."

If you do a paper for this class, you **MUST** write it in your own words. Very occasionally you may wish to use the exact words of a source (published or unpublished); in this case, be sure that you use quotation marks to indicate the quoted material and also be sure to cite the source accurately in the text of the paper and reference list. In psychology, writing quotations should be used sparingly. It is possible to plagiarize a source, even if no full sentences are copied word-for-word. If you make minor wording changes, but keep the organization, sentence structure and/or words of a source, you are plagiarizing. If you take ideas from a source, but don't indicate where the ideas came from with an accurate reference, you are technically guilty of plagiarism.

In sum, when writing papers, *please be careful*. Reference your sources and write in your own words. According to the Academic Dishonesty guide and the University's Student code of Conduct, "Plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty" may lead to grade penalty, "formal disciplinary probation, suspension, or dismissal."

- Disruptive Behavior:  
Student behavior in the classroom should be conducive to the teaching and learning process for all concerned. All students have a right to scholarly relationships with faculty based on mutual trust and civility. The Code of Student Conduct generally defines disruptive activities as “Behavior that the student knew or reasonably should have known would cause a disruption or obstruction of teaching, research, administration, disciplinary proceedings, or other university activities.” Students whose conduct adversely affects the learning environment in this classroom may be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Judiciary Affairs process.
- Harassment  
It is the policy of this institution that there shall be no unlawful discrimination against any individual in employment or in its programs or activities at The University of Akron because of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, disability or status as a veteran. The University of Akron prohibits sexual harassment of any form in all aspects of employment and in its programs and activities and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual and racial or ethnic orientation in employment and admissions.
- Recording and Course Material Policy:  
It is the policy of the Department of Psychology at The University of Akron that audio and/or video recording by students or others of lectures or classroom discussions of any kind shall be done only with the prior express permission of the instructor; and further, that recordings and material distributed by the instructor shall be restricted to the personal use of students duly registered in the course and shall not be sold or redistributed in any manner whatsoever without the written permission of the instructor.
- Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:  
Any student who feels she/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Accessibility at 330-972-7928. The office is located in Simmons Hall Room 105.
- Course Drops and Adds:  
Students whose names do not appear on the university’s official class list by **Monday, January 28, 2013** will not be permitted to participate (attend class, take exams, or receive credit). The last day to drop this course with no grade or withdrawal reported is **Monday, January 28, 2013**. The last day to drop this course with no refund and no grade reported is **Sunday, March 3, 2013**. You should immediately make a copy of your amended schedule to verify you have added or dropped this course. Note that a new withdrawal policy went into effect beginning the Fall 2011; please review the notice provided at <http://www.uakron.edu/dotAsset/8396a776-f025-487c-980e-ccb99028829.pdf> for further information.
- Class Attendance:  
Documented attendance records will not be taken for this course, though students are expected to attend every class session. Because examinations are based on materials covered in class and in the book, class attendance is paramount to your success in this course. Students whose names do not appear on the official class list for this course may not attend this class. Students who fail to attend the first four scheduled class sessions may be dropped from the course.

## Course Schedule (Subject to Change)

Dates		Topic	Reading	Assignment Due Dates
<b>Week 1</b>				
1/15	T	Syllabus & Introduction to Course		
1/17	Th	Introduction to Group Dynamics	Chapter 1	
<b>Week 2</b>				
1/22	T	Methods/Fundamentals of Studying Groups	Chapter 2	
1/24	Th	Belonging and Identity	Chapter 3	
<b>Week 3</b>				
1/29	T	<b>NO CLASS</b>		
1/31	Th	Group Formation	Chapter 4	Application #1 (Due Fri, 2/1)
<b>Week 4</b>				
2/5	T	Group Cohesion	Chapter 5	
2/7	Th	Group Development	Chapter 5	
<b>Week 5</b>				
2/12	T	Group Structure	Chapter 6	
2/14	Th	<b>EXAM 1</b>		Application #2 (Due Fri, 2/15)
<b>Week 6</b>				
2/19	T	<b>President's Day Observance – NO CLASS</b>		
2/21	Th	Influence & Power in Groups	Chapters 7 & 8	
<b>Week 7</b>				
2/26	T	Power & Leadership in Groups	Chapters 8 & 9	
2/28	Th	Group Performance & Collaboration	Chapter 10	
<b>Week 8</b>				
3/5	T	Group Performance & Collaboration	Chapter 10	
3/7	Th	Decision-Making in Groups	Chapter 11	Application #3 (Due Fri, 3/8)
<b>Week 9</b>				
3/12	T	Decision-Making in Groups	Chapter 11	
3/14	Th	Teams	Chapter 12	
<b>Week 10</b>				
3/19	T	Teams	Chapter 12	
3/21	Th	<b>EXAM 2</b>		Application #4 (Due Fri, 3/22)
<b>Week 11</b>				
3/26	T	<b>Spring Break – NO CLASS</b>		
3/28	Th	<b>Spring Break – NO CLASS</b>		
<b>Week 12</b>				
4/2	T	Intergroup Relations	Chapter 14	
4/4	Th	Intergroup Relations	Chapter 14	
<b>Week 13</b>				
4/9	T	Groups in Context	Chapter 15	
4/11	Th	<b>NO CLASS</b>		

Week 14				
4/16	T	Crowds & Collective Behavior	Chapter 17	
4/18	Th	Crowds & Collective Behavior	Chapter 17	
Week 15				
4/23	T	Group Conflict	Chapter 13	
4/25	Th	Group Conflict	Chapter 13	Application #5 (Due Fri, 4/26)
Week 16				
4/30	T	Changing Group Behavior	16 & Schein	
5/2	Th	Changing Group Behavior	16 & Schein	
Finals Week				
5/7	W	<b>EXAM 3</b> (10:00-11:55am)		Application #6 (Due Mon, 5/6)