NOVA COLLEGE-WIDE COURSE CONTENT SUMMARY
CST 115 – SMALL GROUP COMMUNICATION (3 CR.)

Course Description

Emphasizes the development of presentational ability in a group, decision-making, group maintenance, and leadership and participant skills within groups. Incorporates a preliminary study of group dynamics. Lecture 3 hours, Total 3 hours per week. 3 credits

General Course Purpose

CST 115 is designed to examine principles and generate experiences of effective group communication including decision-making; leadership; group behaviors and maintenance; navigating, managing, and resolving conflict; project management; and group/team presentation strategies.

Course Prerequisites/Corequisites

None.

Course Objectives

Upon completing the course, the student will be able to:

Communication
- Demonstrate effective communication skills orally and in writing within a small group setting.
- Evaluate and interpret verbal and nonverbal aspects of group communication

Critical Thinking
- Evaluate and synthesize information in order to describe how different methods of group decision making, critical thinking, and creative problem solving techniques can affect a group in its decision making
- Investigate, analyze, and integrate evidence and reasoning into group problem solving

Civic Engagement
- Recognize, describe, and analyze diversity issues affecting group communication (gender, culture, age, sexual orientation, etc.)
- Demonstrate effective problem-solving techniques within a small group setting

Professional Readiness
- Develop and demonstrate skills in the use of technology in a group communication setting
- Demonstrate effective use of soft skills in a group communication setting

Introduction to Group Communication
- Compare and contrast group communication to communication in other contexts.
- Describe and demonstrate characteristics of competent communication appropriate for a group member
- Recognize and describe the benefits and drawbacks of group collaboration
- Identify and describe elements of the Transactional Model of Communication

Listening
- Describe and explain the steps of the listening process
- Identify, describe, and make a plan for minimizing barriers to listening and poor listening habits
- Demonstrate the effective use of various listening response styles appropriate to various communication environments

Group Development
- Describe and differentiate the stages of group development
- Identify and explain their own individual and group's progress through the stages of group development
- Identify and explain how groups manage norms and issues of identity and power
- Develop and manage appropriately-negotiated norms for group maintenance and performance enhancement

Meetings
- Organize, moderate, and participate in regular team meetings with a clear purpose and a successful outcome
- Describe, evaluate, and practice key roles in facilitating group discussions and deliberations, including chairperson and note-taker

Group Diversity
- Describe and evaluate barriers to communication in the context of a diverse group setting
- Describe and analyze group dynamics based on various cultural differences including (but not limited to) personality, generational, racial, socioeconomic, religious, political, etc.

Problem-Solving and Conflict
- Review, analyze, and report on the communication skills needed for creative problem solving, and managing conflict and tension in the small group setting
- Utilize appropriate problem solving, conflict management, and decision-making methods while performing group tasks
- Discuss the symptoms of, brainstorm, and implement strategies to reduce groupthink

Communication Climates in Groups
- Differentiate between supportive and unsupportive communication behaviors, both verbal and nonverbal, and how they impact a group's climate.
- Perform supportive communication behaviors, both verbal and nonverbal, that contribute to a positive team climate.

Leadership
- Apply conceptual ideas (e.g. group role theory, leadership theories, and goal and motivational theories) to practical communication situations.

Presenting in Groups
- Develop, organize, and deliver oral messages supported with ideas and information suitable to the topic, purpose, audience, and occasion.

Major Topics to be Included

Introduction to Group Communication
Listening
Group Development
Meetings
Group Diversity
Problem-Solving & Conflict
Communication Climates in Groups
Leadership
Presenting in Groups