

Group Communication
1545 Summer 2013

- 12 class members equates to 2 groups of 6 each (done 7/22/13)
- Chosen randomly
 - Random selection usually distributes assets and liabilities across groups, but
 - Self-selection usually segregates them to groups:
 - ☹ One group will be highly cohesive based on earlier relationships, or
 - ☹ One group will be highly competent based on knowledge/skill and willingness to work (high standards), and/or
 - ☹ One group will be “lost in space” because they are socially unskilled, or they are uninformed/unskilled, or they don’t have high standards
- Create a working group.
- Either [Option A] select one issue/question from the list provided. Conduct exploratory research on the question and on related issues. Decide how to divide up focused research. Conduct focused research. Meet to decide by consensus on the group’s findings and on the position (body of information) the group will present and defend. Decide what information will be presented and by what method.
- **OR**
- [Option B] Your group chooses a specific community problem occurring in the greater Youngstown area. Each group must agree on one clear problem question and receive instructor approval. Example problems include: Is hunger a problem in Youngstown? Are at-risk youth a problem in Youngstown? Is animal cruelty a problem in Youngstown? Is low voter turnout a problem in Youngstown? Is the fracking boom a wolf in sheep’s clothing? Is the Mahoning Valley “Hollywood” Race Course a wolf in sheep’s clothing? Then develop a plan/solution for your problem. Prepare a group presentation as in Option A, above.
- **OR**
- [Option C] Your group will assess (1) what is the most debilitating community problem facing Youngstown now and in the near future, and (2) what is the single most powerful collective action that can be taken to moderate or eliminate it?

Your presentation must use at least six “credible” sources of information. Citations of information from these sources are required and a reference page listing the sources should be attached to your preparation outline.

- A group presentation in which each person speaks for about 8 minutes. Your aim is to present results of research and discussion – a mainly informative challenge. The group presentation must have a beginning, middle and end. Individually prepare, then rehearse as a group. Create one consolidated set of Powerpoint slides for the group. Again, **rehearse** the presentation as a group. Present on the assigned day.
- Organizing the group, conducting research, and choosing a group position are together one part of the assignment.
- Assigning presentational content to individuals, preparing presentational elements and making a presentation are another part of the assignment.
- Bring 2 copies of the **Informative/Group** critique sheet.
- Do not plan to take questions. You may provide “take-aways.”
- Often such presentations take the informational form of “state your case and prove it.” In other words, the group says that the group has been persuaded by evidence that the question should be answered affirmatively (or negatively). Then, the group continues, that information will be summarized in a clear and concise way so that audience members can see why they reached that conclusion.
- You must create a group. Watch for stages of development: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/forming-storming-norming-performing>
- You must lead.
 - You must make sure that the group’s job gets done. That requires “task leadership.”
 - You must make sure that everyone receives personal satisfactions. That’s called “social leadership.”
 - You must make sure that destructive behaviors are controlled. Especially:
 - ▶ Withdrawal from interaction (until the spotlight is on): (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Little_Red_Hen)
 - ▶ Dominance of the agenda (the know-it-all)
 - ▶ Star (the clown, show-off, etc.)
- ★ **Appoint a Group Process Secretary. This person will keep records of group actions as they pertain to (1) stages of development, (2) consensus-building and conflict management, and (3) leadership.** Additionally, the secretary will record an overall

assessment of group member contributions, specifically naming exceptionally strong AND exceptionally weak ones. Pay attention to task-oriented, social-oriented and blocking behaviors. Submit the record on presentation day.