

**Common Course Outline**  
**CMNS 251**  
**Small Group Communication**  
**3 Credits**

**Community College of Baltimore County**

**Description**

**CMNS 251 – Small Group Communication** develops student competence in applying theories of group communication in a variety of contexts such as family, professional, and social settings. The course emphasizes the importance of critical group characteristics such as diversity, roles, planning, group cohesion, conflict negotiation, and leadership.

**3 Credits**

**Prerequisites:** CMNS 250

**Overall Course Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. identify the characteristics of small groups in various contexts;
2. analyze the effects of group structure upon cohesiveness and goal accomplishment;
3. explain the stages of group development and the types of communication interaction in each stage;
4. apply appropriate listening, language, and nonverbal communication skills in group settings;
5. assess the effects of mediated communication and virtual groups upon the effectiveness of group communication;
6. discuss the impact of goals, norms, and rules upon the success of groups;
7. explain the effects of task, relational and dysfunctional roles upon goal accomplishment and cohesiveness;
8. describe social interaction styles of group members;
9. describe aspects of diversity that affect perception and develop cohesiveness;
10. analyze the effects of ethical intent and interaction in groups;
11. analyze the effectiveness of various processes for making decisions and solving problems;
12. differentiate among the various conflict management approaches and their impacts on group effectiveness;
13. analyze the impact of leadership skills and approaches on task accomplishment and cohesiveness;
14. demonstrate effective use of written communication to document group meetings; and

15. demonstrate effective organization and delivery in group presentations.

### **Major Topics**

- I. Characteristics of Small Groups;
- II. Stages of Group Formation and Maintenance
- III. Planning and Organizing Group Work
- IV. Norms and Rules
- V. Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Strategies
- VI. Ethics in Small Group Communication
- VII. Diversity in Small Groups
- VIII. Basic Communication Skills in Groups: Language, Listening, Nonverbal
- IX. Conflict Management
- X. Relational Trust and Group Cohesiveness
- XI. Leadership Theories and Applications
- XII. Technology and Mediated Communication
- XIII. Presentational Group Formats
  - A. Symposium
  - B. Panel Discussion
  - C. Forum

### **Course Requirements**

Grading procedures will be determined by individual faculty members but will include the following:

#### **Grading/Exams:**

- minimum of 2 written tests
- minimum of 2 group projects resulting in oral presentations using professional audio-visual aids, at least one of which must require academic research sources
- minimum of 1 paper of at least 1000 words, using academic research sources
- minimum of 1 substantive assessed assignment as defined by instructor, such as group projects, analyses of communication simulations, reflective papers, and/or journals

#### **Written Assignments:**

Students are required to use appropriate academic resources.

#### **Other Course Information:**

This course is a requirement for the Communication and Media Studies Area of Concentration.

This course is the second in the required 2-semester sequence for Humanities and Social Science.