INTEG 210

MAKING COLLABORATION WORK

TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS 5:30-6:50PM; EV2-2002

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Office Hours: **T/Th, 2:30-3:30pm** & by appointment

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1. Course Overview

Collaboration is essential for solving complex, real-world problems. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, the ability to work well in a team is becoming one of the most sought-after skills by employers. Most students have the opportunity to work in groups, but many have not learned the *theory* behind group work or *best practices* for making collaboration work. In this course, you will learn and apply key collaborative theories and practices. For example: What aspects of teams are most important? What problems do teams most commonly face and how can those problems be minimized? How can productive conflict increase creativity and productivity, and how can destructive conflict be reduced?

You will have the opportunity to work in two different groups, where you will apply what you're learning to address a real-world problem. During the course, we will teach you techniques for improving team dynamics, such as creating and using a team charter, identifying and addressing conflict, and providing useful feedback. You will also learn some of the fundamentals of design thinking that will help you work together to address a real-world problem.

Throughout the course, you will have a chance to reflect on your own strengths and weaknesses in team settings and use feedback from your peers to improve your collaborative skills. You will also receive feedback on the group projects themselves, before revising and submitting your work. We expect students will come out of this course feeling more comfortable working in groups, more confident in their ability to identify and address problems on a team, and better able to provide useful feedback to others.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to do the following:
- Apply appropriate theory and best practices to cultivate positive group dynamics
- Proactively identify, analyze, and address problems in collaborations
- Cultivate a collaborative mindset: appreciate the benefits of diversity, embrace productive conflict, develop epistemic humility, cultivate empathy, and be open-minded
- Give, receive, and incorporate constructive feedback
- Transfer best practices beyond this course to other contexts

Course Readings & LEARN Site

This course has a LEARN site: http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/. You are required to use this site to access the readings, post discussion comments, and submit assignments.

- All readings for this course will be posted on LEARN – **there are no textbooks to buy!**
- You are expected to download the readings, complete them, *think about them*, and bring the readings and/or your notes to class ready to discuss. At the beginning of each class, there will be a check-in question where you will be asked to reflect on the assigned reading(s).

2. Student Assessment (A.K.A. Assignments & Grades)

Grading Scheme

Your course grade will be based on participation, individual reflections, and group projects. All graded work will be evaluated out of 100 points in 5-point increments (such as 75, 80, or 85), and "in-between" grades (such as 75-80, which = 77.5) will be assigned where appropriate. (One of the reasons for this is that it is often difficult to discern a one-point difference, such as a 77 vs. a 78, given the nature of the assignments.) There will be an opportunity to receive bonus marks for filling out a survey at the end of the course (see below). **There is no final exam**, but your final reflection is due during the exam period.

Engagement and Participation	20%	
● Attendance, check-ins, in-class/online discussion		Throughout the course
● In-class assignments and activities		
● Evaluations from group members		
Individual Reflections	**40%**	
Reflection 1	(10%)	Wed, September 18
Reflection 2	(15%)	Sun, November 3
Reflection 3	(15%)	Fri, December 6
Group Project 1	**20%**	Sun, October 27
Group Project 2	**20%**	Sun, December 1
Research (optional bonus assignment)	**(+1%)**	

Assignment Guidelines

Detailed instructions for each assignment will be posted on LEARN and discussed in class, where you will have the opportunity to ask questions. **All assignments are due at 10pm** on the date listed. Below you will find brief explanations of each assignment so you have an idea of what is expected.

Participation/Engagement

Your participation/engagement grade will be based on attendance, small group participation, whole-class participation, discussion posts on LEARN, and optional activities like collaborative note-taking. You will also be required to evaluate your group members (and yourself) for the group projects.

● *Attendance*: At the beginning of each class, you will be asked to answer a "check-in" question based on one of the readings for that day. Your check-in sheet will be used to take attendance. You will be allowed **two unexcused absences**; additional unexcused absences will each result in a 5-point decrease in your participation grade. Being late to class will also negatively affect your participation grade (this will depend on how often you are late and how much of class you miss).

● *Small group participation:* Throughout the course you'll be working in small groups – one for the first half of the term, and one for the second. For both groups, you'll need to create and submit a set of group expectations (a "team charter"). In addition, you and your peers will evaluate each other's contributions, which will factor in to your participation grade.

● *In-class participation*: You are expected to make relevant, thoughtful, and respectful contributions to class discussions. If you do not feel comfortable speaking up in class, you may participate via LEARN (however, you are expected to fully participate in your small groups). You are also welcome to volunteer to participate in other ways (e.g., collaborative note-taking).

● *Discussion posts on LEARN*: Any thoughtful and relevant comments and/or questions on LEARN, or to responses to the comments or questions of others, will count towards your participation grade. You are not required to participate online, but you are encouraged to do so, especially if you don't feel comfortable participating in whole-class discussions.

Reflections

You will be asked to write three individual reflections – one at the beginning of the course, one after your first group project, and the third after your second group project (at the end of the course). These reflections have two purposes: (a) to give you the opportunity to consider your personal strengths when it comes to working in groups, as well as areas in which you would like to improve and how you think you might do so, and (b) to critically reflect on the group dynamics from previous collaborative experiences (Reflection 1), and from each of the two group projects in this class (Reflections 2 & 3).

Group Projects

One of the main features of this course is the chance to collaborate with students from diverse backgrounds. You will be part of two small groups during the course in which you will discuss course material, engage in in-class activities, and work together to address a real-world problem. For each project, your group will be required to create the following:

- A *team charter*, where you'll lay out agreed-upon guidelines for your group
- A *problem statement*, describing how you currently understand the problem you're addressing
- *A team health assessment*, which will be done part-way through the project to highlight what is going well and identify any problems or potential issues before they become serious
- *An empathy map*, showing how you've evaluated your solution and made appropriate revisions
- *Your design / proposed solution*, which may take a variety of forms (written, video, etc.)
- *A brief discussion* of the changes you made to your design in response to feedback from others
- *A short reflection* on your group process

Details regarding grading will be in the assignment directions. Note that the same mark will be given to all students in a group. If you feel some group members contributed significantly more or less than others, **you should contact the instructor as soon as possible** (within three days of receiving your mark). In that case, I will ask each group member for more information to determine appropriate individual marks.

Late Policy

Late submissions will result in a 5-point decrease in your mark for each day or part of a day they are late. Late submissions for group projects will not be allowed except in extreme circumstances (note, though, that only the final project submission will be graded – the earlier submissions of each aspect, such as the team charter, won't be graded but will receive feedback that you can use to improve your group work). For individual assignments, you will have **a total of 2 free grace days you can use** for late submissions. You do not need to inform the instructor before using grace days. If you have accessibility needs or extenuating circumstances arise, please contact the instructor ASAP so I can make an accomodation.

3. University Resources

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The AccessAbility Services (AS) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum.

- **If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AS at the beginning of each academic term.** AS will then contact me to let me know what, if any, accommodations need to be made; they will NOT disclose the nature of your disability.
- In case you have an accommodation requiring assistance with note-taking, please note that this course will have a set of Google Docs, embedded in LEARN, with lecture and discussion notes created by other students in the course. (Also, note that there are no exams in this course.)
- For more information about AccessAbility, see https://uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/

Mental health issues & Counseling Services

The University of Waterloo, the Faculty of Environment, and Knowledge Integration consider students' well-being to be extremely important. We recognize that throughout the term students may face health

challenges – physical and/or emotional. **Please note that help is available**. Mental health is a serious issue for everyone and can affect your ability to do your best work. Counselling Services is an inclusive, non-judgmental, and confidential space for anyone to seek support. They offer the following services:

- **Confidential counselling** for a variety of areas including anxiety, stress management, depression, grief, substance use, sexuality, relationship issues, and much more.

- **Workshops** held throughout term to assist you with areas like stress management, managing your mood, procrastination, mindfulness, depression, coping skills, etc.

- **Assistance with academic accommodations** due to a mental health issue (Counselling Services can help get you set up with AccessAbility Services).

For more info about Counseling Services, including seminars, workshops, and group therapy, see https://uwaterloo.ca/campus-wellness/counselling-services

4. University Policies

Academic Integrity

- In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. The University's guiding principles on academic integrity can be found here: http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/

- **NOTE**: If an instructor suspects a student of violating academic integrity, UW policy states that **they MUST report such suspicions** to the Associate Dean of the student's home faculty. If the student is found guilty and it is a first offense, they will receive a 0 on the assignment and a 5-point penalty on the course grade.

- **Students are strongly encouraged to review the material** provided by the Academic Integrity office specifically for students: http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/Students/index.html

- **Students are also expected to know what constitutes academic integrity**, avoid committing academic offenses, and take responsibility for their actions. Student who are unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who need help in learning how to avoid offenses should seek guidance from the instructor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean, Undergraduate. Students may visit: https://uwaterloo.ca/library/get-assignment-and-research-help/academic-integrity/academic-integrity-tutorial

Respectful Behavior

- **Disruptive behavior**: Many students don't realize that Policy 71 (Student Discipline) covers both academic (e.g., plagiarism) and non-academic offenses, such as disrupting other students' learning. In particular, Policy 71 prohibits "disruptive, dangerous, aggressive or threatening behaviour, including by electronic means." **The instructors are committed to creating a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment.** If you have been the target of hostile or disrespectful behavior, or think you have witnessed another student engaging in such behavior towards other students in the class, please contact the instructor immediately.

- **Ethical behavior**: Policy 33 (Ethical Behavior) addresses expectations for ALL members of the university, including faculty, staff, and students. The general principle of Policy 33 is that "each member of the University endeavour to contribute to the existence of a just and supportive community based on equality and respect for individual differences." Any disrespectful or offensive behavior will not be tolerated. Policy 33 prohibits "a poisoned environment (or one that is intimidating, hostile, or offensive)." Please contact an instructor you have concerns about unethical behavior in this class.

Misconduct & Grievance

- **Misconduct**: When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 (Student Discipline). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 (Student Discipline), https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71

- **Grievance**: Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; see Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances), Section 4: https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70

- **Appeals**: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances), other than a petition, or Policy 71 – (Student Discipline) should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals) www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm

Course Policies

- **Communications with Instructor:** All communication with students must be through either the student's University of Waterloo email account or via Learn. If a student emails the instructor or TA from a personal account they will be asked to resend the email using their UW email account.

- **Recording lecture:** Use of recording devices during lectures is only allowed with explicit permission of the course instructor. If allowed, video recordings may only include images of the instructor and not fellow classmates. Posting of videos or links to the video to any website, including but not limited to social media sites such as facebook, twitter, etc., is strictly prohibited.

- **Unclaimed assignments:** All graded assignments will be submitted and returned online, via LEARN. Digital copies of assignments will be retained by the instructor for at least one month following the end of the term. The instructor may keep the assignments for longer, unless a student requests that they be destroyed.

- **Religious Observance:** Students need to inform the instructor at the beginning of term if special accommodation needs to be made for religious observances.

Notification of Research Opportunity

During the first class you will be asked to complete a survey about your experiences and attitudes regarding collaboration and teamwork. This will enable the instructor to tailor the course to the students (e.g., the information will be used to form groups and to determine what topics might be of most interests to students taking the course). You will also be asked to fill out an optional second survey at the end of the course and will receive a +1 bonus mark in your overall course grade for doing so. The

instructor will compare the survey responses to determine how well the learning outcomes were met and to improve the quality of the course in the future.

The course instructor has received a Learning Innovation and Teaching Enhancement grant to use this data for **research purposes** (beyond just improving the course), but only with students' consent. The purpose of the research is to better understand the experiences and attitudes of UW students when it comes to collaboration, and to determine how the course shapes those views and experiences.

At the end of the course, you will have the opportunity to opt in to having your survey responses and/or course assignments used as part of this research. **If you do not opt in, your data will <u>not</u> be used for research purposes, and there will be no consequences for not opting in.** Here are some things to keep in mind when considering whether to participate in this research study:

- <u>You will not be asked to do any extra work</u> (e.g., complete additional assignments) for this research; you will only be asked to fill out a consent form at the end of the course.
- Participation in this study is <u>completely voluntary.</u> If you choose not to participate (that is, if you do not give consent to have your data used for research purposes), it <u>will not affect your grade</u> in any way. <u>You will still receive the +1 bonus mark for completing the second survey no matter how you respond to the consent questions</u>.
- The instructor will not know whether you consented to the study until <u>after final grades have been submitted</u>. Prof. Plaisance is working with another faculty member and a graduate student in another department to conduct this research; only the graduate student will know who consented. The graduate student will de-identify the surveys before sharing the data, meaning they will remove your name and student ID number (and replace it with a random participant number) before sharing it with the instructor.
- If you do consent to letting us use your data for research purposes, we will only share de-identified data (that is, your personal identity will be kept confidential).
- You will receive an information letter about this study before filling out each survey, and you will receive the consent form after you've filled out the second survey. That way, you will know what sorts of questions you responded to, and how you responded, before you decide whether to consent to having your data used for research purposes.

If you have any questions, please contact the instructor, Katie Plaisance (kplaisan@uwaterloo.ca) or the graduate student researcher, Chris Lok (cblok@uwaterloo.ca). This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a UW Research Ethics Committee (ORE#23237). If you have questions for the committee contact the Office of Research Ethics at 519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca.

Land Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that we live, work, and study on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometers on each side of the Grand River.

- For more information about land acknowledgments in Ontario, visit: http://www.lspirg.org/knowtheland
- For information about indigenization at UW, see: https://uwaterloo.ca/faculty-association/information-faculty/faculty-guide-working-waterloo/indigenization-waterloo

5. Course Schedule: Topics & Assignments

Assignments in **bold** will be graded; those not in bold will be reviewed by the instructors, who will provide formative feedback. You will then be asked to submit those components with your final project submission (and may revise them or respond to the feedback <u>before</u> your work is graded).