

DI612: Working in Teams
University of Waterloo
Masters in Digital Experience Innovation
Fall Term 2013, Mondays 4:00-7:00 pm

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Required Text: *Group Dynamics for Teams*, 3rd edition, by Daniel Levi

Overview

Working in Teams draws from the disciplines of Organizational Psychology, Communication, Social Psychology, Cultural Psychology, and Economics. The course is taught in a true scientist-practitioner tradition, balancing the goals of 1) developing a strong knowledge of scientific theory on teams from multiple disciplines, 2) learning and practicing skills in managing and leading teams, and 3) developing a team-based digital redesign proposal in the field of digital experience innovation.

In the course, you will learn to recognize individual work, communication, and decision making styles and how they combine in a face-to-face and virtual team setting. We will examine the design, management, and leadership of teams, focusing on interpersonal processes and structural characteristics that influence team effectiveness. Through observation and reflection, students will analyze and tackle the many hurdles teams face, including negotiation, decision making, conflict resolution, and interactions with the organization and external stakeholders.

Objectives

Course objectives include learning:

- Basic theories of team development, dynamics, and leadership
- How to apply theory to critically analyze your own experiences working in teams
- Skills in basic team functions including: designing team contracts, assigning roles, managing communication, handling conflict, providing feedback and evaluating performance
- How to work in virtual teams & multicultural teams
- The different styles and strategies of team leadership
- To recognize your own personal work and communication style, identifying both strengths and opportunities for improvement
- Best practices for brainstorming and team creativity

Format

True to the scientific-practitioner approach, Working in Teams utilizes two basic learning approaches. In the traditional style of a graduate seminar in the arts, we will read, discuss, and analyze key scientific readings on working in teams. In the style of a professional MBA-type graduate course, we will have multiple opportunities to apply and practice skills with case studies and team exercises that are designed to teach the fundamentals of teamwork in an applied, real-world setting.

Course Materials

- 1) Required text: *Group Dynamics for Teams*, 4th edition, by Daniel Levi.
- 2) Courseware case packet: *MDEI Working in Teams*
- 3) There may be small additional course fees for experiential exercises handed out in class.
- 4) The final course outline is posted on the UW-Learn course site (<http://learn.uwaterloo.ca>). Weekly slides will be posted to the course site on Learn 24 hours following each class. In addition, please check Learn for weekly announcements.

Course Requirements

	Value
Team Project	60% (10% ind, 50% team)
Individual Article Presentations, Leading Discussion	20%
Individual Class Participation	20%

Team Project: Digital Interface Design Project (Total: 60%)

The semester-long assignment involves identifying, analyzing, and suggesting modifications to an existing digital interface that your team finds difficult and/or unfriendly. The project will challenge your skills in teamwork, time management, design, and user experience.

The assignment includes 3 parts and should be completed in 4-6 person teams. You will have some class time during the term to work on your project.

Part 1) Create team contract (DUE: September 30; 10% team grade)

- Consult Levi on creating a team contract
- Your team contract must include at least the following elements:
 - 1) Specific goals
 - 2) Clearly defined roles for each team member
 - 3) Detailed Timeline, including specific meetings (specify face-to-face or virtual) for major project milestones and deliverables
 - 4) Communication methods
 - 5) How you will handle conflict
 - 6) Rules and norms
- Team contract should be 3-5 pages and should be signed by all team members

Part 2) Select your digital interface and develop ideas for redesign (DUE November 25; 20% team grade):

- 1) Select digital interface for your project. Explain what procedures you used to generate ideas and select this particular interface, referencing theories and strategies discussed in class and in your readings (e.g. brainstorming, creativity, group decision making).
- 2) Briefly, describe major weaknesses in the interface and how you recommend making improvements. Develop a plan of action for your team to make these improvements, addressing 1) each team member's roles and responsibilities, 2) team leadership, and 3) team communication strategies.
- 3) Your paper should be a 5-6 page written report, excluding references and appendices.

Part 3) Feedback & Peer Ratings (10% individual grade): There will be two opportunities to conduct formal feedback in your teams, once in the middle of the term and once at the end of the term. Teammates will rate each other using criteria & metrics provided by the instructor. This

portion of your grade will be based on your teammates' evaluation of your contribution and work for the Digital Interface Design Project (10% individual grade)

Part 4) Team in-class presentation (DUE December 2; 20% team grade): Your classmates and I are potential investors. Present your redesign ideas to us and convince us that you are the team we should hire. (20% team grade)

Individual Article Presentations & Leading Class Discussion (dates to be selected in class introduction, during bootcamp; 20% individual grade): Each student will be required to lead a 20-30 minute class discussion of one article or case analysis during the term. We have 18 articles and 25-30 students, so two students will be assigned to most articles. You should read the article and prepare your own questions and notes *individually*. Then, you can meet with your partner to coordinate how to present the article to the class. When you are discussion leader, you will:

- 1) Individually prepare 3-5 discussion questions for the class, writing your own possible responses and follow-up questions to be handed in to Professor on day of presentation
- 2) One student will present a 3-5 minute summary of the article to the class
- 3) Both students will lead the discussion (calling on classmates, deciding how long to spend on each question, leading discussion if it goes astray)
- 4) One student will conclude the discussion with a critical and analytical summary of the class discussion

Class Participation (20% individual grade)

You are expected to attend class in person each week. If you need to miss a class, please let the instructor know at least 24 hours in advance. For illness, please provide proper documentation. The class participation portion of your grade will be based on your individual class attendance and quality contribution to discussion and in-class activities.

Course Outline

Before First Class

Readings: Levi Chapters 1 & 2

Coutu, D. (2009) Why teams don't work: An interview with J. Richard Hackman, *Harvard Business Review*.

Please note: There is no class meeting on Monday September 9. We will assign first class readings during bootcamp so you can come to class prepared on September 16.

September 16

**Basic Team Processes
4:00-7:00 pm**

In Class:

Article presentations
Review basic team processes
Team experiential exercise
Select teams for Team Project & initial Team Project meeting

Readings: Levi Chapters 3 & 4

*Caya, O., Mortensen, M., & Pinsonneault, A. (2013). Virtual Teams Demystified: An Integrative Framework for Understanding Virtual Teams. *International Journal of e-Collaboration (IJeC)*, 9(2), 1-33. (posted on Learn)

*Maynard, M. T., Mathieu, J. E., Rapp, T. L., & Gilson, L. L. (2012). Something (s) old and something (s) new: Modeling drivers of global virtual team effectiveness. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 33(3), 342-365.

September 23 **Creativity, Brainstorming, & Virtual Teams**
4:00-7:00 pm

In Class: Article presentations
Brainstorming methods & Povernoodle Intro
Create team contract and begin brainstorming

Readings: Levi Chapters 12 & 15

*Chamakiotis, P., Dekoninck, E., & Panteli, N. (2013). Factors influencing creativity in virtual design teams: An interplay between technology, teams and individuals. *Creativity and Innovation Management*.

*Paulus, P.B. & Yang, H.C. (2000). Idea generation in groups: A basis for creativity in organizations. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 82, 76-87.

September 30 **Communication & Motivation in Teams**
4:00 pm-7:00 pm

In Class: Article presentations
Team experiential exercise

Readings: Levi Chapters 5 & 6

*Barsade, S. (2002). The ripple effect: Emotional contagion and its influence on group behavior. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 47 (4), 644-675

*Cheshin, A., Rafaeli, A., & Bos, N. (2011). Anger and happiness in virtual teams: Emotional influences of text and behavior on others' affect in the absence of non-verbal cues. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 116(1), 2-16.

*Pentland, A.S. (2012). The new science of building great teams. *Harvard Business Review*.

Hand in: *Team Contract*

*Johnson, M. D., Hollenbeck, J. R., Scott DeRue, D., Barnes, C. M., & Jundt, D. (2013). Functional versus dysfunctional team change: Problem diagnosis and structural feedback for self-managed teams. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 122(1), 1-11.

Hand in: *Team Project Report*

December 2 **Digital Interface Design Presentations**
4:00 pm - 7:00 pm

In Class: Present Digital Interface Design Project
(Note: no written assignment.)

University Notes

Cross-listed course:

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

Academic Integrity:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. 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.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals.

Other sources of information for students:

Academic Integrity website (Arts) Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo)

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

Note for students with disabilities: The AccessAbility Services office, located in Needles Hall Room 1132, 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 the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Group Assignment Checklist

Please read the checklist below following the completion of your group assignment. Once you have verified these points, hand in this signed checklist with your group assignment.

1. All team members have referenced and footnoted all ideas, words or other intellectual property from other sources used in the completion of this assignment.
2. A proper bibliography has been included, which includes acknowledgement of all sources used to complete this assignment.
3. This is the first time that any member of the group has submitted this assignment or essay (either partially or entirely) for academic evaluation.
4. Each member of the group has read the full content of the submission and is assured that the content is free of violations of academic integrity. Group discussions regarding the importance of academic integrity have taken place.
5. Each student has identified his or her individual contribution to the work submitted such that if violations of academic integrity are suspected, then the student primarily responsible for the violations may be identified. Note that in this case the remainder of the team may also be subject to disciplinary action.

Course: _____

Assignment: _____

Date: _____

Name (print)	Signature	Sections Contributed	Sections Edited