The main objective of this PhD seminar is to provide an overview of contemporary theory and research about groups. We will examine a range of group phenomena from multiple theoretical perspectives that transcend disciplinary boundaries and include: identity, creativity, shared cognition & transactive memory, decision making, emotion, motivation, socialization and online groups. This semester we will explore the degree to which theory and research on small groups scale up to large groups supported by web 2.0 technologies. Special attention will be given to group processes in organizations. Previous coursework on groups will be helpful, but is not essential. Class time will be spent discussing the assigned readings and developing research ideas. This is a very interactive and experiential course.

**Required Course Readings (for purchase):**


All other readings will be available on our course blackboard site at least one week in advance.

**Seminar Structure:**

Each class will be divided into two parts. The first part is on class readings for the week. I will present an overview and introduction to the topic then we’ll discuss the readings. One student will be assigned as discussion leader on each reading. The second part of class will be devoted to a group activity or generating research ideas.
Course Requirements and Evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Leadership</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Proposal &amp; Presentation</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
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</table>

Discussion Leadership

Students will assume the role of discussion leader for one of the assigned weekly readings for most weeks of the semester. Discussion leaders will be randomly chosen on the day we are discussing the readings in class. Serving as a discussion leader involves preparing discussion questions and a few insights on the articles. Discussion leaders should assume that everyone has read the article and is prepared for discussion. The discussion should lead to a deeper understanding of the main points of the article. (We’ll spend about 15min on each article.) Creativity is encouraged.

Presentations and Papers

The main assignment is a research proposal. A brief written description and presentation of your topic for class feedback is due on Mar 27. Final presentations will be on the last day of class: May 1. Final papers are due on May 8 by 5pm.

Specific guidelines on the proposals and presentations will be given later in the semester.

Class Participation:

Of course, I expect everyone to be well prepared for class: to read all assigned weekly readings, and to actively contribute to class discussions.

Academic Integrity Policy:

The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University’s Academic Integrity code as detailed in the SCampus Guide. The “2009-2010 SCampus” (http://www.usc.edu/scampus) contains the university’s student conduct code and other student-related policies.

Instructors expect students to be aware and to comply with USC University policies regarding academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: plagiarism, cheating on exams, fabricating data for a project, submitting a paper to more than one professor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone other than you.

If you have any questions about the definition of academic dishonesty, consult the resources found on the Student Judicial Affairs Web site (http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS) or ask a faculty member. “Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism” addresses issues of paraphrasing, quotations, and citation in written assignments, drawing heavily upon materials used in the university’s writing program; “Understanding and avoiding academic dishonesty” addresses
more general issues of academic integrity, including guidelines for adhering to standards concerning examinations and unauthorized collaboration.

**IMPORTANT!** Proposals will be uploaded to “Turnitin,” which is proprietary plagiarism detection software. This software will compare your paper with other papers in their database, published articles, and text from websites. Any group paper that receives a high plagiarism index score will receive a failing grade of 0. (All group members will receive a 0.)

It is the policy of the School of Communication to report all violations of the academic integrity to the University Student Judicial Affairs office (SJACS) and to the USC Annenberg School for Communication Dean’s Office on Student Affairs. These offices may decide to take additional action. Any serious violation or pattern of violations will result in the student’s expulsion from the Communication degree program.

**Disabilities Policy.** Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday-Friday, 8:30-5:00. The office is in Student Union 301 and their phone number is (213) 740-0776.
## Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 16</td>
<td>Course Overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 23</td>
<td>Wisdom of Crowds I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 30</td>
<td>Wisdom of Crowds II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 6</td>
<td>Communication and Collective Behavior in Animals</td>
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<td>Feb 13</td>
<td>Group Creativity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 20</td>
<td>Group Decision Making</td>
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<td>Feb 26</td>
<td>Studying Group Process</td>
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<td>Mar 5</td>
<td>Shared Cognition and Emotion</td>
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<td>Mar 12</td>
<td>Transactive Memory</td>
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<td>Mar 19</td>
<td>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 26</td>
<td>Midterm Topic Presentations</td>
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<td>Apr 3</td>
<td>Group Context, Structure and Norms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 10</td>
<td>Group Identity, Diversity and Power</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 17</td>
<td>Time, Development and Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 24</td>
<td>Dress Rehearsal and Feedback Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Final Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 8</td>
<td>Final Papers are due by 5:00pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading List (subject to change)

Jan 23  
Wisdom of Crowds I: The Popular Press


Howe, J. (2006). The rise of crowd sourcing. Wired. (June)

Jan 30  
Wisdom of Crowds II: Theory and Research


Crowdsourcing.org (for recent news about crowdsourcing)

Feb 5  
Communication and Collective Behavior in Animals


Frans de Waal Ted Presentation: “Do animals have morals? http://www.ted.com/talks/frans_de_waal_do_animals_have_morals.html


**Feb 13**  

**Group Creativity**

Thompson, L. (2003). Improving the creativity of organizational work groups. (and executive commentary by Leo Brajkovich), *Academy of Management Executive*, 17, 96-111.


**Feb 20**  

**Group Decision Making**


**Feb 27**  

**Studying Group Process**


Poole, Research methods for studying groups and teams. Taylor & Francis/Routledge


Mar 6 Shared Cognition and Emotion


Mar 13 Transactive Memory


**Mar 20** No Class – Spring Break

**Mar 27** Midterm Research Topic Presentations and Feedback

**Apr 3** Group Context, Structure and Norms


**Apr 10** Group Identity, Diversity, and Power


April 17 Time, Development and Change

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group_development


Apr 24 Final Presentation Dress Rehearsals & Feedback Session

May 1 Final Presentations