Western University
Department of Psychology

Psychology 9623 Groups and Teams in Organizations

Fall 2025

WIRB 1110 - Tuesdays, 1:30 PM to 4:30 PM

Welcome to the landing page for our our graduate course involving the science of teams! This course is designed for us to explore how researchers characterize the nature of interactions within small groups. In the spirit of early theorists who pioneered in the empirical investigation of groups, including Kurt Lewin, we will emphasize *application* in real-world small group settings. This includes the 'traditional' workplace as well as specific settings like medicine, the military, and space exploration alongside other applied settings like sport, performing arts, and education.

Enrollment Restrictions

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in psychology, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.

Instructor and Teaching Assistant Information

Instructor: Dr. M. Blair Evans
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Course Description

The purpose of this course is to examine psychological issues associated with work groups (or teams) in organizational settings. Particular attention will be given to the implications, for work attitudes and performance, of the design, structure, and composition of groups, as well as the congruence between structure/process variables associated with the group and those of the organization in which it is embedded. Throughout the course, emphasis will be placed on methodological issues/challenges associated with work group / team research.

Course Format

This is an in-person, seminar style course. Weekly class meetings will typically include discussions focused around assigned readings, as well as didactic, instructor-led learnings. One specified days, we will also focus largely on assignment topics (e.g., specific settings and cases) as well as student-led discussion. As a small, seminar-style course, it is critical for students to demonstrate engagement in ongoing course activities.

Course Learning Outcomes/Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

Learning Outcome	Activity	Assessment
Depth and Breadth of Knowledge. …Recognize traditions within group dynamics that represent 'how' we study groups. …Recall key studies, discussed during class time.	Weekly reading Preparation for paper	Reflection papers Class participation Research paper
Knowledge of Methodologies. …identify hallmark approaches from group dynamics research that include statistical/conceptual approaches (e.g., multilevel modeling to account for individuals nested within groups) as well as ways to garner data from groups (e.g., behavioural observation).	Weekly reading Class participation Paper	Reflection papers Class participation Research paper
Application of Knowledge. … recognize how group dynamics research overlaps with the 'real world'. ….share knowledge about best practices with teams as well as one's own beliefs about how to improve the group environment	Class participation	Student-led discussion Assignments 1 and 2
Communication Skills. …write in an engaging manner … convey complex topics and ideas verbally and in written form.	Research paper Class participation	Student-led discussion Class participation Research paper
Autonomy and Professional Capacity. …recognize the challenges and opportunities when studying teams. …appreciate the limits and ethical challenges that exist when working with groups (e.g., consulting, coaching, studying) and balancing what is best for the individual, team, leader, and organization.	Class participation Weekly reading	Student-led discussion Research paper

Course Materials

The course will be hosted using the OWL Brightspace learning management software, which will include a collection of preparation activities. Primarily, students are expected to prepare using weekly journal article or chapter readings. Students may also, on a weekly basis, be assigned some weekly 'homework' that involves exploring media (e.g., videos, websites, etc) linked from the course website.

Methods of Evaluation

Evaluation for this course spans several forms of written and verbal components:

ASSIGNMENT	DATE OF EVALUATION	WEIGHT
Main paper	Outline (Nov 11) (10%) Final (Dec 10) (35%)	40%
Assign 1: Group dynamics case study	Oct 7	15%
Assign 2: What do we get wrong about team development?	Dec 2	15%
Discussion preparation	Throughout term	10%
Class Participation	Throughout term	20%
TOTAL		**100%**

Students will receive individual assignment outlines within the OWL page. Briefly, assignment components will include:

Participation (20%): Active engagement and participation is vital for this course. Students must come to class prepared with insights and reflections on all key readings and demonstrate a willingness to engage in conversation. The instructor will evaluate participation based on the quality of contributions to the discussions. Early in the term, the instructor will offer any feedback regarding participation, particularly to any students who are falling near (or below) expectations. This feedback is intended to prompt engagement and ensure that all participants understand the extent they are meeting expectations.

Discussion preparation (10%). During the first week of class, students will select an occasion where they will be the 'lead discussant' for one of the assigned empirical course readings. This role will include two key activities:

Reflection (Submitted by 9am, the morning of the selected class): The student will prepare a 400 word reflection on the selected reading. This summary should include a description and summary of the paper, and also include: (a) a critique of any weaknesses in the paper, (b) proposed research questions or approaches building upon the paper, and (c) identifying 1-2 specific lines of discussion the student intends to direct

their peers towards. Submissions will be evaluated based on accuracy of understanding regarding the selected article, as well as the depth of reflection.

Leading discussion. Students will be invited to lead discussion pertaining to their selected article during class time. Discussion should be informal, lasting 20-30 minutes in duration. Students are NOT expected to prepare powerpoint slides or other aids.

Final Paper. Students will develop a novel study idea involving teams, and produce a paper that articulates the theorizing behind it as well as the proposed methods.

Outline (5%; Nov 11): A detailed outline of the final paper, including a proposed paragraph-by-paragraph structure, an annotated bibliography, and the proposed research question and broad methods intended to be used. Length may vary, but it is anticipated the formal outline will be two pages in length. Note that the annotated bibliography may extend farther.

Paper (35%; Dec 10): Students will produce a comprehensive paper, with a maximum work count for the main text of 4000 words (not including references, figures, or tables). The paper will build upon feedback from the outline and involve an introduction that communicates relevant past studies and the theorizing behind the project – as well as research questions. The paper will also include a methods section that includes all relevant details that would be brought to bear to conduct the study – including participants, recruitment, materials, and analyses. The paper should apply APA style and be submitted by December 10th. There will be 10% deductions in the grade applied on a daily basis, unless an extension is determined prior to the paper submission date.

Group Dynamics Case Study / Context (15%; Oct 7): This class emphasizes application – so we would like to embrace application to real-life groups! In the first week of class, students will form pairings and prepare to lead discussion pertaining to group dynamics within a specific context or team setting. The students should prepare (and share) 4 powerpoint slides maximum, and present for 10 minutes about their chosen team environment. This could include: (a) introducing prior studies conducting investigations in the given setting, (b) providing a rich description of the team setting (e.g., what types of team tasks; how are groups composed; what are relevant stressors), and (c) introducing what specific concepts or research questions seem critical for investigating within that setting. Powerpoint slides should be submitted by 9am, the morning of October 7th, to be prepared in time for class.

What do we 'get wrong' with group development: 800 word Blog post (15%; Dec 2): Students will prepare (and submit) a blog post written for a lay or professional (non-academic) audience, that focuses on a critique regarding what that audience gets 'wrong' about team development. The students may cite, at most, two academic papers – and this assignment is meant to be prepared in an engaging and nearly conversational online tone. During class, we will share and discuss relevant blog posts. Blog posts should be posted 'publicly' within the OWL Brightspace discussion section, by 9am the morning of Dec 2, leading in to class time.

Course Timeline

Date	LECTURE TOPIC	Readings and preparation	Activities
Sep 9	Introduction to course. History of applied research involving teamwork.	Hackman (1998) Mathieu et al. (2017)	
Sep 16	Models and theories. Research methods applied to groups.	Ilgen et al. (2004) Kane & Emich (2024)	
Sep 23	Team inputs and team structure.	Evans et al. (2012) Dannals et al. (2020) Mayo (2022)	
Sep 30	*Sep 30 – Truth and Reconciliation Day – no meeting*		
Oct 7	Team composition Settings and contexts of teams research	Cronin & Weingart (2007) Emich et al. (2024) Käosaar & Burke (2024).	**Assign 1 - contexts**
Oct 14	Group cohesion, social identity, and other emergent states.	Allen & O'Neill (2015). Grossman et al. (2022). Graupensperger et al. (2018)	
Oct 21	Teamwork and coordination	Wiltshire et al. (2018) Lingard et al. (2002) Cohen et al. (2010)	
Oct 28	Team cognition	Mohammed et al. (2021) Rosenman et al. (2018) Wildman et al. (2014)	
Nov 4	***Reading week***		
Nov 11	Psychological safety in teams (special topic)	Edmondson (1999) Lehmann et al. (2023) Verreson et al. (2025)	**Discussing outlines.**
Nov 18	Managing and developing teams	Shuffler et al. (2018). Maynard et al. (2021) Dannals and Brooks (2024)	
Nov 25	Managing and developing teams	King et al. (2008) Hughes et al. (2016) Lingard et al. (2005)	
Dec 2	Team development discussion. Revisiting research methods.		**Assign 2 – team devel**
Dec 9	Writing preparation day	-	
Paper submission: Dec 10.			

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism-detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).

Health/Wellness Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Accessible Education Western (AEW)

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

PROPOSED READING LIST.

Allen, N. J., & O'Neill, T. A. (2015). The trajectory of emergence of shared group-level constructs. *Small Group Research*, *46*(3), 352-390.

Cohen, E. E., Ejsmond-Frey, R., Knight, N., & Dunbar, R. I. (2010). Rowers' high: behavioural synchrony is correlated with elevated pain thresholds. *Biology letters*, *6*(1), 106-108.

Cronin, M. A., & Weingart, L. R. (2007). Representational gaps, information processing, and conflict in functionally diverse teams. *Academy of management review*, *32*(3), 761-773.

Dannals, J. E., & Brooks, H. (2024). Four Tips for Improving Your Team's Social Norms. *Management and Business Review*, *4*(1), 30-33.

Dannals, J. E., Reit, E. S., & Miller, D. T. (2020). From whom do we learn group norms? Low-ranking group members are perceived as the best sources. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *161*, 213-227.

Edmondson, A. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Administrative science quarterly*, *44*(2), 350-383.

Emich, K. J., Lu, L., Ferguson, A., Peterson, R., McCourt, M., Martin, S., ... & Woodruff, C. T. (2024). Better together: Member proactivity is better for team performance when aligned with conscientiousness. Academy of Management Discoveries, 10(2), 250-272.

Evans, M. B., Eys, M. A., & Bruner, M. W. (2012). Seeing the "we" in "me" sports: The need to consider individual sport team environments. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*, *53*(4), 301.

Graupensperger, S. A., Benson, A. J., & Evans, M. B. (2018). Everyone else is doing it: The association between social identity and susceptibility to peer influence in NCAA athletes. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *40*(3), 117-127.

Grossman, R., Nolan, K., Rosch, Z., Mazer, D., & Salas, E. (2022). The team cohesion-performance relationship: A meta-analysis exploring measurement approaches and the changing team landscape. *Organizational Psychology Review*, *12*(2), 181-238.

Hackman, J. R. (1998). Why teams don't work. In *Theory and research on small groups* (pp. 245-267). Boston, MA: Springer US.

Hughes, A.M. et al. (2016). Saving lives: A meta-analysis of team training in healthcare. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 101,* 1266-1304.

Ilgen, D.R., Hollenbeck, J.R., Johnson, M., & Jundt, D. (2005). Teams in organizations: From Input-Process-Output Models to IMOI Models. *Annual Review of Psychology, 56*, 517-543.

Kane, A. A., & Emich, K. J. (2024). The value of small samples to groups and teams research: Accumulating knowledge across philosophies of science. *Group & Organization Management*, 10596011241282703.

Käosaar, A., & Burke, C. S. (2024). The effect of challenge characteristics on teamwork and affective states in ICE. *Group & Organization Management*, 10596011241304132.

King, H. B., Battles, J., Baker, D. P., Alonso, A., Salas, E., Webster, J., ... & Salisbury, M. (2008). TeamSTEPPS™: team strategies and tools to enhance performance and patient safety. *Advances in patient safety: New directions and alternative approaches (Vol. 3: Performance and tools)*.

Lehmann, M., Pery, S., Kluger, A. N., Hekman, D. R., Owens, B. P., & Malloy, T. E. (2023). Relationship-specific (dyadic) humility: How your humility predicts my psychological safety and performance. Journal of Applied Psychology, 108(5), 809.

Lingard, L., Espin, S., Rubin, B., Whyte, S., Colmenares, M., Baker, G. R., ... & Reznick, R. (2005). Getting teams to talk: development and pilot implementation of a checklist to promote interprofessional communication in the OR. *BMJ Quality & Safety*, *14*(5), 340-346.

Lingard, L., Reznick, R., Espin, S., Regehr, G., & DeVito, I. (2002). Team communications in the operating room: talk patterns, sites of tension, and implications for novices. *Academic medicine*, *77*(3), 232-237.

Mathieu, J.E., Hollenbeck, J.R., van Knippenberg, D., Ilgen, D.R. (2017). A century of work teams in the Journal of Applied Psychology, 102, 452-467.

Maynard, M. T., Mathieu, J. E., Rapp, T. L., Gilson, L. L., & Kleiner, C. (2021). Team leader coaching intervention: An investigation of the impact on team processes and performance within a surgical context. *Journal of applied psychology*, *106*(7), 1080.

Mayo, A. T. (2022). Syncing up: A process model of emergent interdependence in dynamic teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *67*(3), 821-864.

Mohammed S, Rico R, Alipour KK. Team cognition at a crossroad: toward conceptual integration and network configurations. Acad Manage Ann. 2021;15(2):455–501.

Rosenman ED, Dixon AJ, Webb JM, Brolliar S, Golden SJ, Jones KA, Shah S, Grand JA, Kozlowski SWJ, Chao GT, Fernandez R. A simulation-based approach to measuring team situational

awareness in emergency medicine: a multicenter, observational study. Acad Emerg Med. 2018;25(2):196–204.

Shuffler, M. L., Diazgranados, D., Maynard, M. T., & Salas, E. (2018). Developing, sustaining, and maximizing team effectiveness: An integrative, dynamic perspective of team development interventions. *Academy of Management Annals, 12,* 688-724.

Verresen, R., Vangrieken, K., & Loeys, T. (2025). Team Psychological Safety (De) Composition: Connecting Lower-Level Dyadic Perceptions to Higher-Level Beliefs. *Small Group Research*, 10464964251347901.

Wildman JL, Salas E, Scott CPR. Measuring cognition in teams: a cross-domain review. Hum Factors. 2014;56(5):911–41.

Wiltshire, T. J., Butner, J. E., & Fiore, S. M. (2018). Problem-solving phase transitions during team collaboration. *Cognitive science*, *42*(1), 129-167.