

# Groups at Work

## PSYC 276

Fall 2025 Section 01 In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/26/2025

### Contact Information

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**Professor:** Jacquelyn Brady, Ph.D.

**Office:** DMH 320

**Drop-in hours:** TBD

**Course day and time:** Tuesdays from 3:00 PM - 5:45 PM

**Course location:** DMH 353

### Course Description and Requisites

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Group process and performance, types of work groups and tasks, group development (norms, roles and strategies), group leadership approaches and skills, decision-making, team building, high performing and self managing teams.

**Prerequisite:** Instructor consent.

Letter Graded

### \* Classroom Protocols

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#### Respect

My goals are to support and help students learn the course material in a way that maximizes learning and can be applied to academic and professional careers. Thus, the environment of this classroom, while fun, must also be professional and respectful to foster a safe environment for learning. You are always expected to respect and be inclusive and courteous to one another, and this involves being an active listener. Furthermore, you will work in groups, and I ask you to remember that the students in your class can and should be important parts of your professional network in the future. Everyone in this class should be treated with respect (including respecting their time with assignments, showing up on time, etc.). The quality of your professional network begins in the classroom.

This course covers a broad range of exciting topics and I expect that there will be differing perspectives throughout activities and/or discussions, just as there are in the scientific community. In fact, **you are encouraged to critically assess course materials, and your own and others' ideas.** This is part of the critical scientific thinking process that advances understanding. It is important to recognize the value that diverse perspectives bring to the discussion in your critical evaluations, and to ensure you are contributing and evaluating ideas presented rather than people. **Racism, bullying, harassment, and any other inappropriate behavior are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.**

### Academic Honesty

You are held to the highest standard of academic honesty. Academic dishonesty is unacceptable and not tolerated in this course. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct will be followed up with the rigorous pursuit of disciplinary action. Any incident of academic dishonesty will be immediately reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development (SCED) and students may appeal any accusations of academic dishonesty through SCED. Additionally, any plagiarized assignments or incidences of cheating result in an automatic 0 for the assignment. Writing assignments are checked for plagiarism by TurnItIn on Canvas. If an incident of academic dishonesty is particularly egregious, you may receive an automatic F in the course.

### Late Assignments

Late assignments will be accepted if there is a compelling reason for late submission (e.g., documented illness of yourself or the person you are caring for or an emergency), and no points will be deducted. In that case, you must contact me **before** the due date unless this is not possible (i.e., emergency). You will be given an opportunity to complete and submit either the original assignment or an adjusted assignment with a revised due date. Note the deadlines in the class syllabus and plan accordingly. Extra credit is not offered.

### Class Cancellations

Classes may be canceled if the university is closed. Under such circumstances, the closure will be announced on the university website. Classes may also be canceled if the instructor is unable to attend. In that case, an announcement will either be posted on Canvas or made in person during class time.

## Program Information

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**Program learning outcomes (PLOs)** are skills and knowledge that students will have achieved upon completion of the MS in Industrial/Organization (I/O) Psychology degree. Each course in our curriculum contributes to one or more of these PLOs. The PLOs for the degree are:

1. Students of the program will acquire a base of knowledge about the principles of psychology as they are applied to industrial and organizational settings.
2. Students of the program will acquire a base of knowledge about the practice of I/O psychology by applying the concepts of I/O psychology to the functioning of organizations.

## Course Goals

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This course is designed to give you an in depth understanding of two important content areas in I/O Psychology: Work Groups and Teams and Occupational Health Psychology.

The first part of the course focuses on Occupational Health Psychology (OHP), a growing field composed of applied scientist-practitioners emphasizing the importance of understanding health, safety, and well-being of employees. Students will be introduced to OHP as an interdisciplinary field based on theory, research, and practice, and will utilize theoretical and practical frameworks to understand how to solve workplace health and safety hazards.

The second part of the course focuses on historical, theoretical, and practical approaches to understanding and improving the functioning of work teams, including team design, team effectiveness, and team dynamics. Students will work as part of a team and complete reflection activities and simulations to strengthen their understanding of concepts related to effective team functioning.

## Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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

CLO1: Identify physical and psychosocial hazards in the workplace that cause poor employee and organizational outcomes (readings, lectures, in-class activities, OHP project).

CLO2: Describe how key concepts and theories can be used to promote employee safety, health, and well-being (in class activities, lectures, readings, OHP project).

CLO3: Create, evaluate, and troubleshoot interventions to promote safety, health, and well-being in the workplace (in-class activities).

CLO4: Identify the key concepts and theories central to effective team functioning (lectures, readings, in-class activities).

CLO5: Apply concepts of effective team functioning to evaluate and make decisions related to applied work scenarios (in class activities, case studies).

CLO6: Apply course concepts and theories to develop individual teamwork skills (in-class activities, group projects, simulations, and presentations).

CLO7: Analyze and apply seminal theoretical and empirical research to organizational settings (in-class activities, group project).

## Course Materials

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You will be required to purchase an HBR coursepack, and details will be provided via Canvas.

Recommended Books:

Schonfeld, I. S., & Chang, C. H. (2017). *Occupational Health Psychology*. Springer Publishing Company.

Additional course materials, including readings (or reading citations), and assignments will be provided on Canvas <http://sjsu.instructure.com>.

For help with using Canvas, see Canvas Student Resources page ([http://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/teaching-tools/canvas/student\\_resources](http://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/teaching-tools/canvas/student_resources))

## Course Requirements and Assignments

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SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (typically three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in University

Policy S12-3 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>

### **Participation (15%)**

Participation at the graduate level is critical for your and your peers' learning, thus expectations at the graduate level are high and are reflected as such via the point allotment. I do not expect anyone to be an expert in the material or have the right answers to thought questions. Still, I do expect you to put forth effort and engagement in the course to support the classroom as a collaborative learning environment where we can all focus on the material and understand it.

Given that you are all professionals, I fully expect all students to participate to their maximum ability in all assignments (individual and team), readings, and discussions.

Participation points are only lost under circumstances where infractions occur. Several types of infractions may result in a point loss and I provide just a few examples here: a) this class meets only 1x a week, thus arriving late or not attending sessions will have a serious impact on your ability to meaningfully contribute to class discussion, b) failure to regularly speak up when questions are posed to the class, c) a lack of timely preparation for discussions (i.e. by completing assigned readings) or for team activities (not effectively completing your assigned parts in time for group meetings) is equivalent to a lack of participation, d) serious disruptions to the classroom that undermine the learning environment, and/or e) a lack of collegiality.

Note that not all infractions are equal. The type of infraction and typical student behavior will change the number of points deducted. For example, a student who is always collegial and shows up ready to contribute but has an off day (i.e., doesn't speak up during class, or fails to post one discussion question) may not incur a point loss at all. On the other hand, a student who has a serious infraction or multiple types or incidences of infractions may receive a zero on participation.

Please also note that if a lack of participation occurs on a major assignment (i.e., not helping to conduct the employee interviews/writing on the group project), participation will be affected along with the overall possible score on the project.

### **Discussion Posts (8%)**

There will be 8 weeks during which you are required first to complete the assigned readings and then to post questions on the discussion board. Your questions must be posted by Saturday at 5:00 PM for the discussion facilitators to use them in organizing their discussion facilitation session. Failure to post your questions on time will result in a loss of points for the week.

### **In-Class Skill-building Activities (15%)**

Skill-building exercises or topic-based activities will be provided during our meetings and/or as homework assignments. The type of exercises and activities will vary, some will be individual based while others will be group activities. Many of these exercises are designed to give you a brief, applied experience in applying course theory, content, and decision-making. For example, you may be asked to respond to a hypothetical organizational issue as an internal HR consultant. Other assignments will be more open-ended; for example, some weeks you will be responsible for individual reflections. Assignments completed during class are generally due at the end of class, unless otherwise noted. Homework due dates, on the other hand, will vary depending on the assignment. Failure to submit assignments of appropriate graduate-level quality will result in a grade of 0 for the assignment.

### **Article Presentation/Discussion Lead (17% total; 12% group, 5% individual)**

Given that we are doing two mini-courses over the course of the semester, insightful discussion about readings and topics is critical. Part of being an I/O student means that you need to develop essential skills of evaluation related to research, and become confident in guiding the conversation around given organizational topics (you will be the expert in your job!). There is no better way to do that than to become the "teacher" or the "expert". Thus, part of this class will require you to become an expert on a class topic before the class, and facilitate a discussion that 1. Presents a new empirical article from a high-impact journal, 2. Plans a discussion geared toward advancing students' understanding of the topic, both in terms of the readings and my lecture. You should include student discussion questions, and plan to facilitate among the whole group. You will work as part of a team to complete this assignment. You will earn a group grade on overall completing the requirements, and an individual grade based on your individual skills (i.e., projecting your voice, participation in guiding and sharing the article, etc.). A full description of the assignment will be provided on Canvas.

### **Projects and Papers**

There will be two major projects in this course, the OHP project, and the Final Team Simulation and Reflection. You will complete the OHP project and simulation in a team, while your reflection will be an individual assignment.

### **OHP Project (25%)**

The OHP project will involve interviewing employees or analyzing data to identify an OHP problem that can be addressed, submitting a brief report that utilizes theory to identify and solve (or intervene upon) the problem, and completing an in-class presentation. The final score will comprise a group component (paper and presentation) and an individual component (presentation). Details can be found on the course website.

### **Team Simulation Reflection (20%)**

The Team Simulation Reflection Assignment (20%) will include reflecting on a simulation experience through the lens of course concepts.

Detailed instructions for major assignments will be posted on Canvas, and detailed instructions for smaller assignments will be provided in class.

## ✓ Grading Information

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### Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points
Participation	15 (15%)
Discussion Posts	8 (8%)
Discussion Lead	17 (17%)
In-class Skill Building Assignments	15 (15%)
OHP Project	25 (25%)
Team Simulation and Reflection	20 (20%)

### Final Letter Grade

Percent Earned	Final Grade
94 to 100%	A
90 to 93.99%	A minus
87 to 89.99%	B plus
83 to 86.99%	B
80 to 82.99%	B minus
77 to 79.99%	C plus
73 to 76.99%	C

70 - 72.99%	C minus
67 - 69.99%	D plus
63 - 66.99%	D
60 - 62.99%	D minus
Less than 60%	F

Unless there is an error in grading input, final grades will not be adjusted after all assignments have been graded.

## University Policies

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Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

## Course Schedule

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The following is a **tentative** course schedule. A corresponding reading list will be provided on Canvas, and you are responsible for understanding what readings are due and when based on the reading list dates. There may be changes to topics, readings, due dates, and activities throughout the term, and you will always be notified in class or via Canvas if this happens. Bold represents a significant due date.

Date	Topics and Major Assignments
8/26	Introduction, Overview, History of OHP, NIOSH, and Research Methods
9/2	Physical and Psychological Cost of Stress. Theories of Stress.
9/9	Interpersonal Stressors, workplace mistreatment.
9/16	Organizational Stressors
9/23	Work/non-work Interface, Recovery

9/30	OSH: Safety, Safety Culture and Climate, Physical Stressors, fatigue, sleep
10/7	Physical and Mental Health interventions, TWH, Flourishing, and Future of OHP
10/14	OHP Project Group Presentations
10/21	Creating the Team, Team Formation, and the Team Lifecycle
10/28	Team Processes and Social Dynamics
11/4	Team Communication
11/11	Veteran's day, no class
11/18	*Team communication simulation*
11/25	No Class
12/2	*Simulation*
Dec 11 (Thur)	1:00 - 3:00 Reflection Due