NUTC 211
THEORIES OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE AND THEIR APPLICATION IN NUTRITION AND PUBLIC HEALTH INTERVENTIONS

Developing Healthy Communities: Nutrition, Behavior, and Physical Activity Certificate
Tufts University
Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy

SPRING 2017

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Textbook

Credit: 1.0

Description and Goals
For people seeking to build healthier communities, behavioral theories provide valuable frameworks for understanding why people do what they do (or don’t do) and for informing the design and evaluation of programs to promote healthier behaviors. Through readings, discussion, and activities, students will become knowledgeable about the key dimensions of different theories commonly used in nutrition and public health and how those theories can be applied in community practice.
We will generally cover one theory per class session, with a few exceptions. Key components of the course include:

- Weekly readings that explain the theories and explore their relationships to nutrition and physical activity behaviors
- Weekly lectures that further explain theories and how they can be applied
- Short, student-generated memos (two per student over the course of the semester) that explore how a theory relates to a behavior-change situation that one might encounter professionally
- Weekly online discussion forums about the theories in applied situations, including responses to classmates’ memos as well as other activities

Course Objectives/Outcomes
By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Describe the fundamental features of the major theories related to health behavior change.
- Understand how to apply health-related behavior theory to the design and evaluation of community-based nutrition and physical activity interventions.
- Challenge each theory and describe its strengths and limitations in relation to different contexts where theory-based programs might be delivered.
- Continually question, in both work and general life, what drives people to do what they do.
- Have a basic understanding of how and why behavioral constructs are measured.

Academic Conduct
Each student is responsible for upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, as specified in the Friedman School’s Policies and Procedures manual (http://nutrition.tufts.edu/student/documents) and Tufts University policies (http://uss.tufts.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/Academic_Integrity.pdf). It is the responsibility of each student to understand and comply with these standards, as violations will be sanctioned by penalties ranging from failure on an assignment and the course to dismissal from the school. Academic misconduct is any intentional act or omission by a student that misrepresents his or her academic achievements or attempts to misrepresent them. While not an exhaustive list, the following acts constitute academic misconduct:

- Plagiarizing. This includes any cases where a student represents the work of another as his or her own—e.g., the use of any written or oral work from which the student has obtained ideas or data without citing the source or collaboration with another person in an academic endeavor without acknowledging that person’s contribution.
- Submitting the same work in more than one course without the consent of all the instructors.
- Misrepresenting or falsifying data.

Participation Policy
Time extensions, make-up work, and a grade of Incomplete will only be given under extreme circumstances. Requests for these items must be made in advance, in writing, to
the Dean for Academic Affairs and must have prior written approval of the academic adviser and the instructor.

**Communication Policy**
Students should try to seek out information for themselves before contacting the instructor. The answers to your questions may have already been posted by your peers or the instructors in the discussion board, which can be found on the Trunk course website. Please use the discussion board to post questions to your fellow students and the teaching assistant and instructor about any course-related issues. If you cannot find your answer, contact the faculty via email or Skype as soon as possible. Please do not wait until the last minute. An instructor will respond within 48 hours.

**Penalties for late or incomplete assignments**
Assignments should be completed according to the instructions provided in the course website in Trunk and should be completed on time. Assignments turned in past the due date without receiving an extension in advance from the instructor will have 10% per day automatically deducted from the grade for the assignment.

**Assignments and Grading**
The table below provides an overview of the primary course assignments. The sections that follow provide additional detail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
<th>% of grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memos</td>
<td>• Each student writes two short memos over the semester and presents those memos in discussion forums where peers can respond to them.</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• During weeks when they present memos, students also facilitate the discussion among classmates.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Grading criteria are outlined in Appendix 1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>• Students will be organized into small (5-10 member) online discussion groups. These groups will engage in discussion each week through forums in Trunk.</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Each week participation will include:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Dialogue about student memo(s) presented</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Responses to videos or other activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Grading criteria are outlined in Appendix 2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>• Short online quizzes will be completed at midterm and end of the course</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Quizzes will test fundamental understanding of concepts addressed in required readings and online lectures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>• This short (2 pages max) final memo will describe how a specific behavioral theory or theories might inform the design of a program of the student’s choice.</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• This paper should demonstrate solid understanding of theories and synthesis of knowledge from the entire course.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is our belief that the best learning occurs through a continuous dialogue, not the one-way transfer of information from an “expert” to a “student.” Much of the learning in this course will take place through online discussion of the theories and their application, which will occur weekly in small groups to which students will be assigned. Each discussion group will be assigned a specific behavior change scenario for the semester.

**Memos**

*About the memo*

At the start of the semester, students will be assigned **two weeks** (and corresponding theories) during which they will write memos and share them with their groups for discussion.

The memo is a short reflection paper in which the student explores the ideas covered in the week’s readings and how those ideas influence his/her thinking about the assigned behavior-change scenario. Each week, the memos will address the same assigned scenario in order to emphasize the value of applying a different ‘theoretical lens’ to the same situation. We expect there to be some overlap between theories and, students can highlight points of similarity and contrast in their memos and discussions.

*Process and timing*

Students must post their memos to the online discussion board **by 11:59PM Sunday EST**. The students who originate the memo for the week are also responsible for facilitating the discussion, as described in the following section.

During Week 2 of the course (Health Belief Model), the teaching assistant will post a sample memo to which students will respond. After that, 1–2 students in each small group will write a memo each week; their small-group peers will respond to that memo.

Students are expected to submit memos on time and adhere to a **500 word limit**. The instructors will neither read nor grade any content that exceeds this limit. The word limit is in place and enforced to facilitate the development of clear and concise writing skills. There will be the opportunity during the online discussions for elaborating on ideas raised in the memos.

**Discussion**

Substantive discussion is critical to helping students to understand and integrate the concepts covered in this course. Students share their ideas each week in two ways:

*Discussion of memos*

Students are expected to contribute to the discussion by responding to the memos of other students with thoughtful questions, observations, or suggestions for enhancing their application of a theory. Students will be assigned to a small group for discussion and will be expected to read and contribute to the discussion of the memo or memos posted that week. Students are expected to contribute **at least 3** substantive responses to the memo discussion each week. The weekly discussion begins at 12:01AM EST Monday and ends at 5PM EST Thursday.
During the weeks that they are posting their memo, students are expected to act as discussion leaders and help to facilitate the discussion by:

- Raising questions related to the application the week’s theory to the behavioral situation
- Answering, to the best of their ability, other students’ questions about the application of the theory
- Providing a concise summary of the discussion in a weekly wrap-up message posted to the discussion forum by 11:59 pm EST on the Sunday after the memo was posted.

**Discussion in response to activity**

In addition to the memo, most weeks include an activity, such as watching a video clip (and, in some cases, completing a corresponding task). Students must contribute at least 1 reflection on/response to the activity each week.

**Quizzes**

There will be two quizzes during this course based on the materials presented in the required readings and online lectures. Both will be administered in an online format through Trunk. Each quiz will be open for a specified 48-hour period, and you may start your quiz at any time during this period.

Once you start a quiz, you will have 2 hours to complete it. The quizzes will include multiple-choice questions that will test your ability to apply and integrate the material presented in the class up to that point. Quizzes will be open book, but you will be expected to write all answers in your own words in accordance with Tufts policies on plagiarism and code of academic conduct as outlined above in the Academic Conduct section.

Quizzes can be found under the **Tests & Quizzes** link on the Trunk course site.

**Quiz 1:**
- Must be completed by the end of Week 6
- Will cover material from the start of the course through the end of Week 6

**Quiz 2:**
- Must be completed by the end of Week 12
- Will cover material from Week 7 through the end of Week 12

***Please keep in mind that for each online quiz you will need a good internet connection. You should also plan accordingly by making sure you can access Trunk at the location you choose to take your quizzes. Some offices and corporations have firewalls that will block a system like Trunk.***

In the week prior to each quiz, additional instructions will be shared. These will include a troubleshooting guide to address potential technical difficulties. After all quizzes have been completed, we will distribute an answer key. If you have questions about the quiz, please first review the answer key. If you still have questions, feel free to contact the TA and instructors.
Final Paper
On the last day of class, a short final paper (2 pages maximum) is due, describing how a specific behavioral theory or theories might inform the design of a program intervention of your choice. Students will submit an idea for their chosen program to the instructors in week 11.

The final paper is more formal than the memos and should include:
- A brief background describing the health issue and program/intervention on which you’ve chosen to focus
- A description of which theory or theories (up to 2) you would choose to use in guiding program/intervention design and why
- Discussion of how you would apply the theory/theories in designing, implementing, and/or evaluating the program
- Citations/references to class readings.

Students will be graded based on whether the paper:
- Effectively defends choice of theory or theories
- Demonstrates ability to think critically about behavioral theory
- Is formally written with appropriate use of references

Readings
For the most up to date information regarding assigned readings, instructions, and due dates please log in to your Trunk course site. Required readings are listed in the “Syllabus” tab as well as in the “Weekly assignments” tab. Students should complete readings each week prior to listening to the lecture and participating in discussion forums.

The main text for this course is Glanz, Rimer, and Viswanath (2015) Health Behavior: Theory, Research, and Practice, 5th edition. Other articles for each class will be available in PDF format on the course website on Trunk.

Technical Support for Online Courses and Programs @ Friedman
Online course support is provided by Friedman support staff and/or IT Support. Please do not contact course instructors or the TA for technical support.
- **Telephone:** (617) 627-3376
- **Email:** trunk@tufts.edu
- **Hours:** 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

When reporting a problem, please include:
- The name and number of your online course (e.g. "NUTC 211 Online")
- Your operating system and browser
- A detailed description of the problem

This information will expedite the troubleshooting process. If you are sending a support request via email, please use your Tufts email address.
Accommodation of Disabilities:
Tufts University is committed to providing equal access and support to all students through the provision of reasonable accommodations so that each student may access their curricula and achieve their personal and academic potential. If you have a disability that requires reasonable accommodations please contact the Friedman School Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at 617.636.6719 to make arrangements for determination of appropriate accommodations. Please be aware that accommodations cannot be enacted retroactively, making timeliness a critical aspect for their provision.
Course Schedule

* This schedule is subject to modification at the instructors’ discretion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 19 -</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Orientation (Part 1)</td>
<td>Sarah Sliwa, Dan</td>
<td>• Post an introduction on the discussion forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 22</td>
<td></td>
<td>What is theory? (Part 2)</td>
<td>Hatfield</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Individual-Level Health Behavior Theories</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 23 –</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Health Belief Model</td>
<td>Sarah Sliwa</td>
<td>• Post responses to TA’s memo on discussion board (at least 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 29</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Theory of Reasoned Action/Planned Behavior</strong></td>
<td>Dan Hatfield</td>
<td>• Post responses to small group memo on discussion board (at least 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Trans-theoretical Model/Stages of Change</strong></td>
<td>Eleanor Shonkoff</td>
<td>• Post response to weekly activity on discussion board (at least 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 6 –</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>Dan Hatfield</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 12</td>
<td></td>
<td>**Self Determination Theory, Motivational</td>
<td>Dan Hatfield</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviewing**</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Post responses to small group memo on discussion board (at least 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Quiz 1 due</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Post response to weekly activity on discussion board (at least 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 13 –</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Behavioral Economics</td>
<td>Sarah Sliwa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 19</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Models of Interpersonal Influences</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 6 –</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Behavioral Economics</td>
<td>Sarah Sliwa</td>
<td>• Post responses to small group memo on discussion board (at least 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 12</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Social Support</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Post response to weekly activity on discussion board (at least 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 13 –</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Social Cognitive Theory</td>
<td>Sarah Sliwa</td>
<td>• Post responses to small group memo (at least 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 19</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Mar 20 –</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Post response to weekly activity on discussion board (at least 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 26</td>
<td></td>
<td>Social Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Date</td>
<td>End Date</td>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 27 – Apr 2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Social Networks</td>
<td>Ariella Korn</td>
<td>• Post responses to small group memo on discussion board (at least 3) • Post response to weekly activity on discussion board (at least 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 3 – Apr 9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Diffusion of Innovations</td>
<td>Dan Hatfield</td>
<td>• Post responses to small group memo on discussion board (at least 3) • Post response to weekly activity on discussion board (at least 1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Models of Multilevel Influences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 10 - April 16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Eco-Social Models and Combining Multiple Theories</td>
<td>Dan Hatfield</td>
<td>• Post responses to small group memo on discussion board (at least 3) • Post response to weekly activity to discussion board (at least 1) • Quiz 2 due</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 17 – Apr 23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Finals week</td>
<td>Dan Hatfield, Sarah Sliwa</td>
<td>• Final paper due</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Topics, Learning Objectives and Assignments
This schedule is subject to modification at the instructor’s discretion.

Week 1: Orientation (Part 1) and What is Theory? (Part 2)

Learning Objectives:
Upon completion of this class, students will be able to:
• Identify the goals of the course and expectations for students
• Recognize how the application of behavior change theories can strengthen intervention design
• Explain what defines a behavioral theory
• Summarize how, broadly speaking, theory can inform community practice
• Know the meaning of a behavioral construct

Lecture:
Sarah Sliwa, PhD
Dan Hatfield, PhD

Required Readings:

**Review the course syllabus in full.

Assignments:
• Briefly introduce yourself to your classmates and instructors on the discussion forum in Trunk. We’re especially interested in your personal and professional goals in taking this course, but you’re of course welcome to share any other information that might help your instructors and classmates get to know you better.

***
Week 2: Health Belief Model

Learning Objectives:
Upon completion of this class, students will be able to:
- Define a rational actor model
- Explain the concepts of perceived risk, barriers, benefits
- Give examples of cues to action

Lecture:
Sarah Sliwa, PhD

Required Readings:


Assignments:
- Post responses to small group memo on discussion board (at least 3)

***
Week 3: Theory of Planned Behavior/ Theory of Reasoned Action

Learning Objectives:
Upon completion of this class, students will be able to:
- Contrast the TRA/TPB with the HBM
- Explain the constructs of behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs
- Discuss the relationship between intention to act and action
- Describe how TRA/TPB might be applied to a community-based communications intervention

Lecture:
Dan Hatfield, PhD

Required Readings:


Assignments:
- Post responses to small group memo on discussion board (at least 3)
- Post response to weekly activity on discussion board (at least 1)

***
Week 4: Self-Efficacy

Learning Objectives:
Upon completion of this class, students will be able to:
- Describe different methods of increasing self-efficacy
- Distinguish self-efficacy from self-esteem or self-confidence
- Examine the confluence of outcome expectations and self-efficacy in predicting behavior
- Give examples of strategies that might build self-efficacy in an intervention setting

Lecture:
Dan Hatfield, PhD

Required Readings:


Assignments:
- Post responses to small group memo on discussion board (at least 3)
- Post response to weekly activity on discussion board (at least 1)
Week 5: Trans Theoretical Model/Stages of Change

Learning Objectives:
Upon completion of this class, students will be able to:
• Identify the stages of change and how they differ from one another
• Discuss the processes of change
• Describe how identifying stages can be used for intervention targeting
• Explain the non-linear nature of progression through the stages

Lecture:
Eleanor Shonkoff, PhD

Required Readings:


Assignments:
• Post responses to small group memo on discussion board (at least 3)
• Post response to weekly activity on discussion board (at least 1)

***
Week 6: Self Determination Theory and Motivational Interviewing

Learning Objectives:
Upon completion of this class, students will be able to:
- Enumerate different levels of internalization of motivation and the influence of external rewards on behavior
- Summarize the basic principles of motivational interviewing
- Describe the relationship between the SDT and MI
- Explore applied strategies for using SDT to promote healthy behaviors in a the context of a community intervention

Lecture:
Dan Hatfield, PhD

Required Readings:


Optional Readings:
These readings encourage further thinking about ethical considerations and potential unintended consequences of policy and environmental approaches to address obesity.


Assignments:
- Post responses to small group memo on discussion board (at least 3)
- Post response to weekly activity on discussion board (at least 1)
- Quiz 1 due
Week 7: Dual-Process Models

Learning Objectives:
Upon completion of this class, students will be able to:
• Explain how emotions and the unconscious shape behavior
• Describe the role habit plays in determining behavior and the benefits and drawbacks of habit replacement

Lecture:
Sarah Sliwa, PhD

Required Readings:


Optional Reading:
Rothman AJ, Sheeran P, Wood W (2009). Reflective and automatic processing in the initiation and maintenance of dietary change. Ann Behav Med 38:S4-S17. [Figure 1 is especially useful]

Assignments:
• Post responses to small group memo on discussion board (at least 3)
• Post response to weekly activity on discussion board (at least 1)

Optional activity:
Implicit association test

***
Week 8: Behavioral Economics

Learning Objectives:
Upon completion of this class, students will be able to:
- Describe basic tenets of behavioral economics
- Apply concepts within appropriate individual and group interventions
- Compare and contrast behavioral economics principles with concepts from other theories

Lecture:
Sarah Sliwa, PhD

Required Readings:


Optional Reading:

Assignments:
- Post responses to small group memo on discussion board (at least 3)
- Post response to weekly activity on discussion board (at least 1)
**Week 9: Social Cognitive Theory**

**Learning Objectives:**
Upon completion of this class, students will be able to:
- Explain the basics of inter-personal behavioral theory and the influence of the immediate environment on behavior
- Apply the concepts of observational learning and reciprocal determinism
- Describe the place of self-efficacy in the SCT

**Lecture:**
Sarah Sliwa, PhD

**Required Readings:**


**Optional Reading:**


**Assignments:**
- Post responses to small group memo on discussion board (at least 3)
- Post response to weekly activity on discussion board (at least 1)

***
**Week 10: Social Support**

**Learning Objectives:**
Upon completion of this class, students will be able to:
- Explain the mechanisms through which social support may influence individual behavior
- Identify multiple types of social support
- Describe how social support aligns with several previously discussed theories

**Lecture:**
Sarah Sliwa, PhD

**Required Readings:**


**Assignments:**
- Post responses to small group memo on discussion board (at least 3)
- Post response to weekly activity on discussion board (at least 1)

***
Week 11: Social Networks

Learning Objectives:
Upon completion of this class, students will be able to:
• Introduce the role of social network characteristics in determining social support, diffusion of behaviors and norms, and social capital
• Identify potential mechanisms of how social networks might influence health behavior and health outcomes
• Discuss how one might consider different social network structures in designing a campaign or group intervention

Lecture:
Ariella Korn, MS, MPH

Required Readings:


Assignments:
• Post responses to small group memo on discussion board (at least 3)
• Post response to weekly activity on discussion board (at least 1)

***
Week 12: Diffusion of Innovations

Learning Objectives:
Upon completion of this class, students will be able to:
- Identify the attributes of an innovation that make it more likely to diffuse
- Describe the innovation-decision process that individuals/groups undergo as they adopt innovations
- Explain how characteristics of an innovation, characteristics of adopters within a social system, and characteristics of communication channels influence diffusion
- Understand characteristics of the Positive Deviance (PD) approach and compare/contrast PD with Diffusion Theory

Lecture:
Dan Hatfield, PhD

Required Readings:


Assignments:
- Post responses to small group memo on discussion board (at least 3)
- Post response to weekly activity on discussion board (at least 1)
Week 13: Eco-Social Models

**Learning Objectives:** Upon completion of this class, students will be able to:
- Distinguish between different levels of influence on individual behaviors
- Give examples of ways the community, policy, social, and built environment can influence individual behavior
- Discuss potential methods of intervening at each of these levels to change health behavior
- Identify evaluation challenges associated with applications of the eco-social model

**Lecture:**
Dan Hatfield, PhD

**Required Readings:**


**Assignments:**
- Post responses to small group memo on discussion board (at least 3)
- Post response to weekly activity on discussion board (at least 1)
- Quiz 2 due

***
Week 14: Finals week

Lecture:
No lecture this week.

Required Readings:
No readings this week

Assignments:
• Final paper due
### Appendix 1: Grading criteria for memos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Expected Level of Competence</th>
<th>Moving Towards Expected Level of Competence</th>
<th>Below Expected Level of Competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timely submission of assignment</td>
<td>- Complete and submit memo on time.</td>
<td>- Memo is submitted late.</td>
<td>- Memo is not submitted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Style guidelines                       | - Writing is clear and succinct. Demonstrates care in writing, which may be informal, but thoughtful.  
  - The memo has a smooth flow of ideas and is well organized and logical. | - Writing lacks clarity in some places. Flow of ideas could use some improvement.       | - Writing lacks clarity throughout.                                                  
  - Flow of ideas is rough.               |                                                                                               | - Memo is not well organized.                                                         | - Memo is not well organized.                                                        |
| Demonstrates careful reading & inquiry into subject | - Demonstrates serious contemplation of the readings.  
  - Shows original thought that goes beyond the obvious. | - Demonstrates reading was completed, but relies primarily on summary rather than integration of information. | - Reading assignment scanned, but not read carefully or gives little indication that readings were completed. |
| Application of theory to group behavioral situation | - Articulates strengths and limitations of theory’s application to professional context.  
  - Elaborates on statements with accurate explanations, reasons, or evidence. | - Provides general discussion of theory’s application but lacks thoughtful critique.  
  - Takes a position with respect to theory application but with little evidence or explanation.  
  - Examples to support points are not well integrated or not effective. | - Missing or limited theory application.  
  - Little evidence used to support points or evidence is out of context. |
## Appendix 2: Grading criteria for discussion responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Expected Level of Competence</th>
<th>Moving Towards Expected Level of Competence</th>
<th>Below Expected Level of Competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Quantity and timeliness of contributions** | - Frequently reads the messages in the discussion area.  
- Postings well distributed throughout the week.  
- Contributes with at least 3-4 responses each week (3+ in the memo forum and, in weeks with an activity, 1+ in the activity forum). | - Reads messages in the discussion area a few times per week (e.g. two times per week).  
- Postings concentrated during the week (i.e. all within a brief period of time).  
- Contributes less than 3-4 constructive messages each week. | - Reads messages in the discussion area intermittently (e.g. once per week) and contributes to the discussion only sporadically. |
| **Quality and relevance of post** | - Messages are concise, clear, and thoughtful.  
- Messages contribute something original or build upon what has been said; they are neither repetitious nor simply stating agreement/disagreement. | - Posts topics that are related to the discussion content, but messages only address peripheral issues.  
- Messages dominated by opinion rather than analysis.  
- Repetition of questions or points made by others. | - Posts topics which do not relate to the discussion.  
- Makes, short, irrelevant remarks or responds with minimum effort (e.g. “I agree with Sally”) |
| **Interaction with others** | - Questions are raised to stimulate discussion.  
- Encourages a variety of viewpoints.  
- Responds to questions and comments from others.  
- When disagreeing, does so respectfully.  
- Comments are primarily student-to-student with comments and questions to the instructor as necessary. | - Participation is evident, but posts do not involve others or encourage others to think critically. | - Rarely raises questions to stimulate discussion and rarely responds to the questions and comments raised by others.  
- Comments are predominantly student-to-instructor and are rarely student-to-student. Comments are unconstructive or discourteous. |

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