**Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Group Project: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Why a group contract?** This document was created collaboratively as a guideline for effective group work.

Add, edit or adapt any of the suggestions below. It is recommended to use the language used by the students in class discussions as much as possible.

**Each group agrees to...**

* Establish early on **online communication** where the group will collaborate and communicate: [1] online collaborative group document to record your progress (e.g., google docs), and [2] a way to communicate as a group (e.g., online group chat, Slack).
* Outline an **overall timeline** of tasks and communicate that timeline (and any updates) consistently in the same spot. (Each group should assign one person to make sure any updates happen in a timely manner.)
* Communicate **weekly clear tasks** (think [S.M.A.R.T.](https://www.snhu.edu/about-us/newsroom/2018/09/what-are-smart-goals)) that will move your group along.

Lack of clarity and vague expectations (that are open to interpretations) allows for frustration and disappointment. You either did it or you didn’t.

E.g., instead of “do research for next week”; try “find 2 credible sources on our topic, add their MLA citations to our google doc, and write 2-3 sentences why they are reliable sources and how they will help our project. First come first serve: if you see that someone already posted the source you found, you have to go find another one. Scan the source, don;t read them, between 30-45mins of work expected”

These weekly tasks should be communicated somewhere the whole group has agreed to document their work. It is up to each person to refer to this doc and assume there is work every week.

* Consider **assigning roles** (and rotating if you want) to facilitate group work: meeting facilitator, progress presenter (when needed) and note-taker. Be creative and come up with other roles.
  + **Coordinator** checks with other team members before meetings/classes to remind them of when and where they will meet and what they are supposed to do. Keeps everyone on task and makes sure everyone is involved. S/he also makes sure group’s agree on next steps (tasks, meetings, and new roles).
  + **Recorder** takes notes (important information, decisions or tasks) and adds it to the online group notes, as well as prepares any work to be submitted in class that day for the group.
  + **Reporter** reports on behalf of the group, when needed, to the instructor and/or the rest of the class.
  + **Checker** checks that [1] all group members understand and feel good about the work being done/submitted and [2] double-checks the work before it is handed in, adding the names on it of every team member who participated actively in completing it.

Designate a coordinator, recorder and checker for each assignment. Add a monitor for 4-person teams.

* Give each other chances, show compassion and some flexibility. Try to avoid surprises. Try to communicate uncomfortable feelings with each other and problem-solve together before turning to the instructor for help.
* If you are stuck on a problem with the work, please try your best to practice “three before me” (Kagan, 1992): consult three different sources of information--other texts, resources and students--and document your efforts before coming to the instructor.
* Consult with your instructor if a conflict arises that can’t be worked through by the team.

**Each student agrees to..**

* Assume there is group work to do each week, and do their assigned share.
* Take responsibility for their absences by communicating ASAP with the rest of the group, and sharing their contribution of work before class.
* Provide an honest self-assessment and group assessment at important points of the group work process (especially the end)
* Review returned assignments. Make sure everyone understands why points were lost and how to correct errors.

**Instructor agrees to…**

* Give groups regular time for groups to check-in and sometimes work in class. (Instructors recognize that students are busy and benefit from in-class time to get work done.)
* Meet with each group to offer support and coaching
* Communicate clear pathways for critical problems in group work Some suggestions are…
* Communicate clear assessment tools for group projects

**Clause of non-resolution: how to remove a member from your group**

**Not completing work:** Students should be given two documented chances before other group members request that the student be removed from the group. At this point, students must communicate to their request and these attempts to the teacher in writing (and ideally to the student). The instructor will set up an appointment to discuss with the student alternative options. (Examples: [1] student can complete their project independently for a maximum of 70% of the group project grade; or [2] the amount of work the student has to complete on their own might be the added challenge.)

**Dealing with interpersonal conflicts:** Students make an effort to work it out together before consulting the instructor. Students will practice active listening with instructor, where each student will describe their point of view and the other students listen without interrupting and then paraphrase back to make sure they understand. See Oakley (2004) for more suggestions.

Resources and references

Hansen, R.S. (2006). Benefits and problems with student teams: Suggestions for improving team projects.*Journal of Education for Business,* September/October, 11-19.

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Oakley, B., Felder, R. M., Brent, R., & Elhajj, I. (2004). Turning student groups into effective teams. *Journal of student centered learning*, *2*(1), 9-34.

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