

**Charles University, Faculty of Arts
East and Central European Studies**

Summer 2016

Selected Topics in Social Psychology: Soft Skills

CUFA SOC 355

Instructor: Mgr. Jan Froněk, Ph.D.
Email: fronekjan@seznam.cz
Office Hours: by appointment
Classes: Tue, Wed 6.00 – 8.45, Thu 12.00 – 2.45, J2 (Jindřišská 27, Prague 1)

Important note – This course doesn't take place on 5th and 6th July, **make-up days** are Fridays 24th June and 1st July from 9-11.45 am.

Course Description

Soft skills have got a great impact on our success and satisfaction in life. The concept of soft skills consists of both intra-personal and inter-personal aspects. This course presents a well-balanced practical overview of the soft skills world.

The content will be adapted according to the students, possible topics are:

- Social perception, stereotyping, prejudices.
- Effective communication principles.
- Coaching.
- Self-management.
- Presentation skills.
- Assertiveness and manipulation recognition.
- Resolving conflicts.
- Teamwork, group problem solving.
- Stress management.
- Authenticity, values.
- Creativity.

Self experience is one of the most important outcomes of this seminar and therefore active learning methods will be used in every session (discussion, role-play, simulations, exercises, art, reflective journal, peer counselling, etc.). The whole class is more practice-oriented than theory oriented.

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives

The goal of the course is to enhance the students' awareness of both intra- and interpersonal issues through experience. Specific objectives of the course are:

- students describe their stereotypes about different groups of people
- can name at least three perception mistakes
- use effective communication principles actively (clarity, openness, active listening, feedback)
- use the *GROW* model of coaching
- set their own goals according to the *SMARTER* model in the following life areas: Work & University, Relationships, Body, Meaning (spirit, hobbies, etc.)
- get feedback on their presentation skills
- recognize the assertive and manipulative ways of communication
- try out different strategies of conflict solving
- name crucial principles for effective teamwork and group problem solving
- use at least three techniques for stress management
- are able to make decisions in complicated situations with the help of the *Inner team* model
- reflect on every session in a reflective journal

Recommended Readings

- Stangor, Ch. (2004) *Social groups in action and interaction*. Psychology Press 2004, New York. Chapter 5, 9, 10, 12, 13
- Hargie, O.; Saunders, Ch.; Dickson, D. (2000) *Social Skills in Interpersonal Communication*. Routledge, New York 2000
- Whitmore, J.(2009) *Coaching for performance*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing 2009
- <http://www.coachfederation.org/>
- McCarthy, P.; Hatcher, C. (2002) *Presentation skills: the essential guide for students*. Sage Publications 2002
- Deutsch et al. (2006) *The handbook of conflict resolution: theory and practice*. Jossey Bass 2006
- Smith, J.C. (2002) *Stress management: a comprehensive handbook of techniques and strategies*. Springer Publishing Company, New York 2002
- Schulz von Thun, F. (2009) *Das "Innere Team" und situationsgerechte Kommunikation*. Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag 2009
- Pope, R. (2005) *Creativity: Theory, History and Practice*. Routledge, New York 2005
- <http://www.peer-supervision.com/>

Further reading will be given during the classes: handouts + on-line resources.

A common Google Drive will be set up for students to share interesting articles or links and to download the presentations from class.

Classroom Procedures

Active participation is required:

1. **Participation** in activities during the lessons. The classes start on time.
2. **Reading** articles before class (links will be given to students in the first session).
3. Writing a **reflective journal** after every lesson (500-700 words), sent within 24 hrs.
There is no final paper necessary in this course, instead of it, a continual learning

journal is required. In journals students are supposed to reflect on the findings about themselves, about the group and about the topic of the class.

4. **Presentation** (10 minutes per person), either in the middle of the course or at the end (student will be divided in 2 presentation groups)
5. **Summary** of an academic article on one of the course topics (1000 words), sent either in the middle of the semester or at the end of it, depending on in which presentation group you are.

Apart from quality assessment, all reflective journals, presentations and summaries will be assessed according to the date of their submission:
completed in time | completed late | uncompleted.

Assignments and Grading Policy

Grades based on letters A through F will be given. ECES does not provide courses with pass/fail grades.

Participation + reading	40 %
Reflective journal	20 %
Presentation	20 %
Summary	20 %

Attendance

Regular and punctual class attendance is mandatory for all students. Absence of 180 minutes is allowed. Three or more absences (90 minutes each) lower the grade automatically (A to A-, A to B+ in case of 4 absences etc.). Students must attend at least 70 % of the course. If a student attends less than 70 % of the class meetings, he or she will receive the final grade 'F' on their transcript.

Presentation Policy: Missing the presentation will result in an F (when applicable). If the student wants to switch the date, he/she must find someone to do it and both students must confirm the change in e-mails to the professor at least 10 days in advance. If the student is sick and has a medical note, then the professor must agree with the student on how the work will be made up for.

Final Test or Paper Policy: Completing the final test or paper is required. Failure to submit the final test or paper according to the deadline will result in a letter grade F for the entire course.

For further details, please see the Attendance Policy at the ECES website under “Academic Policies and Procedures”: <http://eces.ff.cuni.cz/>.

Make Up Days:

Two make up days are scheduled during the semester. If a class needs to be made up during these days, it is **mandatory** that you attend. Public holidays will be made up as well.

Student Responsibility and Code of Conduct

Students are subject to the general standards and requirements of Charles University in regard to attendance, examinations, and conduct, as well as to the specific requirements of the

program. The student is expected to assume the initiative in completing all requirements at the time specified.

It is the responsibility of the student to be informed concerning all regulations and procedures required. In no case will a regulation be waived or an exception granted because a student pleads ignorance of the regulation or asserts that he/she was not informed of it by an advisor or other authority.

Charles University expects all students to adhere to the highest standards of ethics and academic integrity. Students certify that all work (whether an examination, research paper, research project, form of creative expression, or any other academic undertaking) submitted for evaluation, presentation, or publication meets these standards.

All forms of academic fraud are strictly prohibited. An automatic grade, F, will result for the entire course if a student is found guilty of academic misconduct.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Plagiarism
- Cheating
- Falsification
- Violation of professional ethics
- Misrepresentation of research data

Weekly Schedule

Session 1

Course introduction, Social perception, Getting to know each other

Course introduction (topics, requirements, expectations, full value contract, soft skills definition)

Social perception

How do I perceive the others, especially foreign people? Perception clues. Social categorization. Stereotypes and prejudices: how to use and avoid them. Johari Window.

Getting to know each other

Who am I? What do we have in common? How rich is the mosaic of our group?

Recommended reading

Stangor, Ch. (2004) *Social groups in action and interaction*. Psychology Press 2004, New York. Chapter 5

Session 2

Effective communication.

Effective communication

basic principles, levels of communication, non-verbal aspects, questions, listening, giving feedback, giving and following instructions, barriers in communication, leading a discussion.

The class is based on Watzlawick's axioms of communication and Schulz von Thun's 4-ears-4-tongues model.

Homework before class

Watch <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmecyCCdknk&feature=channel> and make notes about your understanding of this situation (something like a "layman's communication analysis theory"). These notes will be used as a basis for discussion in class.

Recommended reading

Hargie, O.; Saunders, Ch.; Dickson, D. (2000) *Social Skills in Interpersonal Communication*. Routledge, New York 2000

Session 3

Coaching.

Coaching

What is coaching – a definition. Life/Business/Sports, etc. coaching, The GROW model, setting SMARTER goals, Scaling in coaching. Types of questions. Practice in small groups.

Homework before class

Watch <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UY75MQte4RU&feature=related> and make notes about the key elements and steps of coaching shown in the video.

Recommended reading

Whitmore, J.(2009) *Coaching for performance*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing 2009

<http://www.coachfederation.org/>

Session 4***Assertiveness and Manipulation.***

Assertiveness

4 types of behaviour: aggressive, assertive, passive and manipulative. What is assertiveness, what are its basic rules. Assertive techniques (broken record, open door, saying no) in practice. Eleven assertive rights – reflection. Behaviour test.

Manipulation

Recognizing manipulation – basic types. Answering to manipulation.

Homework before class

Watch <http://www.storyofstuff.org/movies-all/story-of-bottled-water/> and make mind-map notes about the manipulation mechanisms shown in the video.

Session 5***Presentation skills.***

Presentation skills

Mastering the material (markers, flip chart, PP, computer, etc.), the group (group dynamics, attention management, involving others) and oneself (stress management, having a unique presentation style).

In class we will not learn *about* presentation skills, we will give presentations and learn *from* them. Therefore, the skills of giving feedback will be crucial during this session. Feedback will be given to presenters orally as well as by written assessment.

Homework before class

For your presentation you might need help of some online tip and tricks websites, such as this <http://www.aresearchguide.com/3tips.html> or any other you find.

Recommended reading

McCarthy, P.; Hatcher, C. (2002) *Presentation skills: the essential guide for students*. Sage Publications 2002

Session 6***Conflicts.***

Conflicts

Types of conflicts. Styles of conflict resolution. Empathy.

Preparing for a short drama (using the *Open stage* method which derives from the *Theatre of the Oppressed* methodology) showing an interpersonal conflict.

Scheme of the session: warming-up, preparing the play, participation in the drama situations, reflection. Theoretical background to conflicts. Marshal Rosenberg's approach of Nonviolent Communication.

Homework before class

Bring a brief description of your own interpersonal conflict situation (you experienced it personally or you saw it from nearby).

Recommended reading

Deutsch et al. (2006) *The handbook of conflict resolution: theory and practice*. Jossey Bass 2006
Stangor, Ch. (2004) *Social groups in action and interaction*. Psychology Press 2004, New York. Chapter 12, 13

Session 7

Teamwork, group problem solving.

Teamwork

The difference between a group and a team. Team members' features (MBTI, Belbin's types), Team processes (Tuckman).

Elements of effective teamwork.

Teamwork in practice (with a guest lecturer).

Homework before class

Search for "teamwork" images, choose your favourite, print it out and bring it to class.

Recommended reading

Stangor, Ch. (2004) *Social groups in action and interaction*. Psychology Press 2004, New York. Chapter 9, 10

Session 8

Stress management.

Stress management

What is stress, its sources and types, coping strategies, relaxation techniques in practice.

Stress and performance. Flow model. Comfort zone model.

If possible, we will attend a yoga class combined with a stress management lecture.

Recommended reading

Smith, J.C. (2002) *Stress management: a comprehensive handbook of techniques and strategies*. Springer Publishing Company, New York 2002

Session 9

Authenticity.

Authenticity

Listening to inner voices (the *Inner team* model – Schulz von Thun), self-awareness, concentration, self-knowledge, self-development techniques.

Inner Shadow (C.G. Jung).

The Myth of Myself – a lecture by Alan Watts.

Values

Values as basis for decision making. Values test and visualization.

Homework before class

Read this article <http://www.ultrafitnessdynamics.com/476/authenticity/> and write down 2 questions that come to your mind.

Recommended reading

Schulz von Thun, F. (2009) *Das "Innere Team" und situationsgerechte Kommunikation*. Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag 2009 (in German)

Session 10

Creativity.

Creativity

What it is, Where it comes from, How to use it fully. Various art-based expressive techniques. Finding space for creative expression in our everyday lives. Sharing favourite pieces of art.

For this class, a field trip is planned to a Creative Café.

Homework before class

Read <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/Newsletters/20Sep11.htm>, choose 1 of those 3 techniques, try it on your personal topic and bring the outcome to class.

Recommended reading

Pope, R. (2005) *Creativity: Theory, History and Practice*. Routledge, New York 2005

Session 11

Peer counselling

A structured moderated group counselling method – a case seminar.

6 steps, 4 roles, 8 techniques. Any soft-skills topic can be handled by this method, therefore the content of this session will be freely on students to choose.

Homework before class

Study this website <http://www.peer-supervision.com/>

Session 12

Final session.

Course evaluation, students' presentations.

.