

# Working in Teams

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**DSC 106: Data Visualization**

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# Why does 106 require so many team projects?

Authenticity

After graduating, ~100% of your work will happen in teams

Urgency

Lack of collaboration / communication skills is a top reason HDSI grads don't get hired.

Learning

New ideas, might be fun!

## But what about bad experiences?

Here are some previous complaints from past 106 students:

Unequal work

"I did almost 100% of all the things in the project while my teammates never contributed."

Communication

"They were highly uncommunicative leading to most project deliverables happening at the last minute."

Procrastination

Priorities

"D. has work and he has to work around 18 hours a week"

# Teamwork expectations

Not everyone will contribute equally to every assignment.  
That's ok!

Team members will have different strengths and weaknesses. That's ok too!

We will intervene in **team citizenship** issues only.

**Golden rule:** Do what you agreed to do by the time you agreed to. If you can't, seek help and communicate clearly and early.

# Team citizenship

We **will** adjust grades for:

- Lack of communication
- Disrespectful communication
- Not attending team meetings (without excuse)
- Failing to complete agreed tasks on time without communication

We will **NOT** adjust grades for:

- Unequal contributions
  - Procrastinating
  - Meeting more / less often
- ...as long as your team agrees!

Notice how all of these issues are communication issues?

# Team Grading Process

Starting from Project 2, team feedback required.

Not filling out team feedback form = not submitting project.

For each teammate (and yourself), rate **citizenship** (not contributions) and provide optional explanation.

Low rating without explanation = discarded

**Ratings used to adjust grade.**

# Team Grading Process

	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Rater 4	Indiv. Avg.	Team Avg.	Adjustment
Member 1	100	100	100	100	100.0	95.6	+5%
Member 2	90	100	40	100	82.5	95.6	-14%
Member 3	100	100	100	100	100.0	95.6	+5%
Member 4	100	100	100	100	100.0	95.6	+5%

[https://dsc106.com/projects/team\\_grading\\_preview/](https://dsc106.com/projects/team_grading_preview/)

Can lead to substantial grade adjustments, see for yourself.

# But what about adversarial team grading?

Course staff will follow up in tricky cases, may request / collect evidence.

**Avoid avoiding conflict:** set high standards and give honest feedback **before** problems start spiraling.

"Hey are you coming to our meeting?" (x3) is not honest enough.

"I'm frustrated that you gave a last-minute excuse for not making it to our meeting." is better.

# Step 1: Establish Communication and Meetings

1. Agree on communication. Email? Slack? Text?
2. Agree on expectations. Most teams have difficult because they aren't explicit enough here.
  1. Read emails daily? On weekends?
  2. Respond to urgent chat messages within 3h?
  3. Be available for chat during certain hours?
3. Set internal deadlines for integrating work.
4. Set realistic expectations. Everyone has other classes, clubs, etc. so communicate availability openly.

# Step 2: Maintain Accountability

1. Make use of individual strengths of team members, cover for weaknesses (e.g. split up, pair, help, etc.)
2. Usually someone needs to take on team management tasks. Consider rotating.
3. Write down explicit deliverables.  
**Who does what by when.**
4. Every meeting should end with a list of deliverables.
  1. No objections to deliverables within 24h counts as agreement with task assignment.
5. We will ask for team deliverables when you submit future project checkpoints.

# Remember: common sources of conflict

Different working patterns

Some people want to start early, some want to start the day before deadline.

Some people respond to every message right away, some people read email once a day.

**Discuss and set explicit expectations.**

# Remember: common sources of conflict

Different abilities  
or unexpected  
difficulties

Some people have more prior experience with visualization, or JS, or climate data.

Work in pairs, plan time for rework and integration. Contribute to teams in different ways.

**Work around differences, this is your responsibility.**

# Remember: common sources of conflict

Unreliable team members, poor team citizenship

E.g. not starting work in agreed time, not responding, not attending meetings.

Have written, clear deliverables with deadlines.

**Talk about deliverables within team, talk to course staff, peer grading.**

# Why these skills are important

**Super** common behavioral interview question: "Tell me about a collaboration that didn't work out so well, and what you would do differently in the future."

"I had trouble getting my teammates to contribute to my 106 project, so I ended up doing all the work myself. But we got an A eventually thanks to my hard work!"

Grade: F

(Candidates who say this wouldn't get accepted to my research group, at least.)

# Why these skills are important

**Super** common behavioral interview question: "Tell me about a collaboration that didn't work out so well, and what you would do differently in the future."

"I had trouble getting my teammates to contribute to my 106 project, so during the next team meeting I **voiced my concerns**.

Since my teammates had other priorities besides 106, we eventually **came to an agreement**: my teammates would do easier tasks and would complete them earlier so I would have enough time for integration without too much stress."

Grade: A