

# HYPE AND HUCKSTERS

## Working Collaboratively

Here are some tips about learning to work collaboratively in order to effectively present your research to the program. You will work with different students at different times and to varying degrees, so you can regard this year as a time for experimenting and expanding your skills in collaboration. *The goal is always to learn more deeply than you would on your own.*

### **Courtesy.**

- Gather contact information from your group member and keep it handy.
- Arrive on time for all group meetings, indicating that you value everyone's time including your own. If you will be absent or late, let your group know.
- Be respectful in the way you address and speak with each other.
- Do the work assigned and come prepared to each meeting.

### **Meetings:**

- You can avoid a lot of problems by meeting face to face. Getting to know each other is easier, and the context of gestures and voice tone help in understanding each other's conversational styles. Once you have a good understanding, e-mail and phone conversations can work.
- Clarify your objectives for each task and make sure everyone writes them down.
- Set an agenda for each meeting and try to adhere to it. Check in with the group if, in your opinion, you should spend more (or less) time on a given point.
- Summarize what you accomplished at your meeting and set the agenda for the next meeting.
- One major purpose of your meetings is to coordinate your work so that your presentation is a coherent piece, and not just a series of parts.

### **Choosing Roles:**

- You may find in your first meeting that you have complementary roles. For example, you may have good agenda setters, researchers, summarizers, big picture people, detail-oriented people, mediators, facilitators, connection-makers, etc. Think about what you do best, and offer that role (or roles).
- If you do not meet the expectations of the group within your role, do not despair: try another role. If you cannot imagine another role, usually the group members can help you find another suitable role.
- Try out other roles, especially if no one seems to be filling it. Ask your group for their feedback on how you're doing.

### **Feedback:**

- Provide time in each meeting for feedback. Try to be clear about what is going well

and what is not going well in your group. Speak about how you feel rather than blaming someone else; for example, *I do not feel heard* is better than *You dominate the discussion*.

- If one job is not getting done, make sure you have defined the job clearly and assigned it to someone. If that has been done and the person who accepted the assignment is not doing the job, ask that person to decide on a timeline for finishing it that is acceptable to the group.

### **If there is trouble**

- First, you should try to name the problem. If the group can agree on what the problem is, that is the first step.
- Next, generate a few possible solutions in a brainstorming session. Then, see if you can agree on one that is both expedient and fair.
- Sometimes, the problem is that one individual is not doing the work despite the fact that the group has tried several strategies. If that is the case, the group can decide to FIRE a member.

### **Firing a member of the group**

- If your group decides to fire a member of the group, you must clarify your reasons in writing and speak to both faculty.
- Your next step is to talk to the group member in person about your decision. If this is not possible for some reason, then notification in the usual way the group has been using is fine.
- If you have been fired from your group, you will automatically lose credit for the activity the group was engaged in.