Course Number: SOWO 851

Course Title: Social Work Practice With Groups, Spring 2009

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Course Description: Course is designed to enable students to become more knowledgeable and skillful as social group workers. Phases of group development and worker tasks in each phase provide the course framework.

Course Objectives:
It is expected that each student will demonstrate learning in two areas:

1. **Theoretical knowledge** about frameworks and concepts needed for social intervention with groups.
   
a. The theoretical and value base and major concepts of models of social group work, as well as concepts from other group approaches that are relevant to students’ practice.
   
b. Selected concepts from small group theory and research (e.g., group development, group composition, group norms, group goals, and group structure).
   
c. Selected content related to race, gender, sexual orientation, poverty, rurality, and other critical factors.

2. **Application of theoretical knowledge** to experience with groups.
   
a. Ability to select theoretical content as a basis for understanding groups and planning social intervention, adapting the theory as appropriate.
   
b. Awareness of own role, as a worker and as a member, in various group situations, and of the impact of this role on other group participants and on group processes.
   
c. Ability to diagnose group conditions, and on the basis of this diagnosis, to facilitate group movement, as a worker and as a member.
   
d. Ability to perform selected group work practice skills, such as assessing, goal setting, problem solving, programming, and evaluating.
   
e. Ability to evaluate the effectiveness of own interventions and the usefulness of theory selected.
Expanded Description: This course is designed to provide students with knowledge and skills relevant to group work practice in both concentrations and across all fields of practice. Students learn basic information, and through course readings, papers, and presentations, apply this information about social interventions with groups to their specific areas of interest. This course builds on the human behavior and practice foundation courses, is grounded in ecological and developmental theory, and is linked to fieldwork experience through paper assignments, small group classroom assignments and class discussions. As consideration is given to how group work practice takes place with particular client systems and within current societal and professional conditions, the course is tied in direct and indirect ways to concentration courses related to human behavior, social welfare policy, evaluation of practice, and practice at other system levels, including individual, family, organizational and community.

Areas of skill to be developed during the course of the semester focus on: assessment of group structure and processes; interventions in support of individual member goals, group goals, and group development; and evaluation of worker interventions and goal achievement. Particular skills are associated with each segment of the syllabus: composition; group development; group assessment; goal setting and contracting; co-leadership; interventions at individual, group and environmental levels; diversity and cultural competence; programming; problematic group situations; and evaluation.

Readings:

- The text is available at the Health Affairs Bookstore.
- There is a copy of all other required readings available on the fifth floor of the School of Social Work in the files of readings marked SOWO 851 Galinsky.
- Most required readings are also available in E-Reserves and those available are marked in the syllabus with an E next to the reading. Go to http://eres.lib.unc.edu/default.asp and look up materials for SOWO 851-Galinsky. (Those readings which did not receive permission from the publisher for electronic copying are available through the regular hard copy reserves in the Undergraduate Library). (Some readings may be marked by an E on the syllabus, but not be available in E-reserves because of changes in online availability by publishers of the material.)
- Other readings which cannot be found on the internet or on reserve can be accessed through the instructor.
- Optional readings, which are provided for each section at the end of syllabus, must be located by individual students themselves in the libraries of the University.

In addition, several references are available, but not required, for purchase. They are valuable additions to a personal library.


**Recommended Journals:**
- Groupwork
- International Journal of Group Psychotherapy
- Research on Social Work Practice
- Small Group Research
- Social Work
- Social Work with Groups
**Group Experiences:** It is preferred that each student be working with a client or task group during the current semester. There are many kinds of group experiences that can serve this purpose. These groups will serve as a basis for small group assignments, general class discussion and written assignments. However, if no such group experience is currently available, there are alternative paper assignments already available.

**Teaching Methods:** This course is structured as a seminar; all class members are expected to share responsibility for participating in discussions and for presenting materials needed by the class. Some classroom time will be spent working in small task groups; therefore, class attendance is crucial. Task group experiences are selected to reinforce learning about group processes and issues, including diversity and ethical issues. Assigned and independently selected readings, seminar participation, prior and current group experiences, structured assignments, videos, guest speakers and the class group itself will provide the material necessary for learning about group operation.

The attached “Schedule” gives the approximate dates for readings and assignments. This plan will be adjusted later, when guest speakers and student presentations are scheduled.

**Assignments and Evaluation:** In-class and written assignments are intended to facilitate integration of theoretical content with practice skill.

a) There are three seminar papers relating client group experiences (or alternate group experiences) to readings: paper on composition (15%); paper on goals (20%); and paper on group development (30%). There is also a presentation on social intervention (25%). Details about these assignments are contained in a separate handout, "Paper and Presentation Assignments." See "Schedule" for dates when papers and the presentation are due.

b) Ten percent (10%) of the grade will be determined by the instructor’s evaluation of in-class performance, based on contributions to discussions and small group tasks, and responsiveness to others’ comments.

**Grading System:**

- **H = 94-100**
- **P = 80-93**
- **L = 70-79**
- **F = 69 and below**
**Policy on Incompletes and Late Assignments:** All papers and assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates noted on the Schedule, unless a change in date has been announced by the instructor in class. Extensions on due dates may be granted in cases of sickness or family emergencies. In all others cases, grades will be lowered for late papers.

**Policy on Academic Dishonesty:** Students are expected to conduct all academic work within the letter and spirit of the Honor Code of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which prohibits the giving or receiving of unauthorized aid in academic processes.

Please refer to the *APA Style Guide*, The SSW *Manual*, and the SSW Writing Guide for information on attribution of quotes, plagiarism and appropriate use of assistance in preparing assignments. All written assignments should contain a signed pledge from you stating that, “I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in preparing this written work.”

In keeping with the UNC Honor Code, if reason exists to believe that academic dishonesty has occurred, a referral will be made to the Office of the Student Attorney General for investigation and further action as required.

**Policy on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities which affect their participation in the course may notify the instructor if they wish to have special accommodations in instructional format, examination format, etc., considered.
Seminar Readings

All the required seminar readings are listed here. Some changes may be made during the semester as appropriate. Readings which are optional, valuable supplements but not required, are listed separately in the Optional Reading section (pp. 17-25). See the attached “Schedule” for dates required readings are to be completed.

I. FRAME OF REFERENCE

A. **Organization and Expectations of the Course**  January 13

B. **Social Group Work Approaches**  January 20

Required Readings


OR


II. BEGINNING THE GROUP

A. **Composition**  January 27

Required Readings


B. **Assessment** January 27

**Required Readings**


C. **Group Development** February 3

**Required Readings** Read Galinsky & Schopler, Schiller, and 1 other set. Tuckman articles highly recommended.


D. **Goal-Setting** February 10

**Required Readings**


E. **Contract Negotiations** February 10

**Required Readings**


Standards of Group Work, AASWG.

F. **Co-Workers** February 17

**Required Readings**


III. **WORKING WITH GROUPS**

A. **Strategies of Social Intervention** (an ecological perspective)

1. **Interventions with Individual Systems and with Special Groups:**
   **Leadership** February 17

**Required Readings**


OR


2. **Interventions with Group Systems** February 24

**Required Readings**


OR

Alternative Readings: Some helpful sources for small group theory and research are:


3. **Interventions with Environmental Systems** February 24

Required Readings


4. **Additional Group Techniques and Literature** March 3; March 17

Assignments

- Visit two web sites with support groups in the form of chat rooms or discussion forums. Some examples are:
  - [http://www.supportpath.com](http://www.supportpath.com)
  - [http://www.dbsalliance.org/Info/findsupport.html](http://www.dbsalliance.org/Info/findsupport.html)

- Do a search on a topic of interest to you for the evidence for group work practice with this issue, problem, or population. Be prepared to report to the class the results of your search from the Web or from hard copies at the library. You may also do this assignment in pairs or larger groups of 3, 4, or 5.

Required Readings (Choose 4 readings from those listed below)


B. Race, Gender, Class, and Sexual Orientation TBA

Required Readings (students will select several articles of their choice)


**C. Programming TBA**

**Required Readings**


**D. Interventions for Selected Group Situations TBA**

**Required Readings (with some choice)**


IV. **ENDING AND EVALUATION**

**TBA**

**Required Readings (with some choice)**


OPTIONAL READINGS – NOT REQUIRED BUT USEFUL

I. FRAME OF REFERENCE

A. Organization and Expectations of the Course

B. Social Group Work Approaches

Optional Readings


- Mayadas, N.S., Smith, R., & Elliott, D. Social group work in a global context, pp. 45-57.
- Breton, M. An empowerment perspective, pp. 58-75.
- Kurtz, L.F. Support and self-help groups. pp.139-159.
- Nash, J.K., & Snyder, S.E. Prevention groups. pp. 176-191


II. BEGINNING THE GROUP

A. Composition

Optional Readings


B. Assessment

Optional Readings


C. Group Development

Optional Readings


**D. Goal-Setting**

**Optional Readings**


**E. Contract Negotiations**


**F. Co-Workers**
III. WORKING WITH GROUPS

A. Strategies of Social Intervention (an ecological perspective)

1. Interventions with Individual Systems and with Special Groups; Leadership

Optional Readings


2. Interventions with Group Systems

Optional Readings


3. Interventions with Environmental Systems

Optional Readings

4. Additional Group Techniques and Literature

Optional Readings


- Gitterman, A. The mutual aid model, pp. 93-110.
- Getzel, G. S. Groups in physical and mental health, pp. 195-211.
- Malekoff, A. Strengths-based group work with children and adolescents, pp. 227-244.
- Rittner, B. Groupwork in child welfare, pp. 245-258.
- Campbell, R. Groups for older adults, pp. 275-291.
- Staples, L. H. Social action groups, pp. 344-359.
- Carr, E. S. Accessing resources, transforming systems: Group work with poor and homeless people, pp. 360-383.
- Abramson, J. S., & Bronstein, L. R. Group process dynamics and skills in interdisciplinary teamwork, pp. 384-399.
- Ephross, P. H., & Vassil, T. V. Group work with working groups, pp. 400-414.


B. **Race, Gender, Class, and Sexual Orientation**

**Optional Readings**


group work with African-American women (pp. 65-88). Boston: Allyn and Bacon. -E


C. Programming

Optional Readings


**D. Interventions for Selected Group Situations**

**Optional Readings**


Optional Readings


See also the November 2008 issue of *Research on Social Work Practice 18*(6). Several articles report on practice research using groups.