

# The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work

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**Course/Unique Number:** SW333/61315

**Semester:** Fall 2017

**Meeting Time:** M/W 2:30 – 4:00 pm

**Meeting Place:** SSW 2.122

**Instructor:** Natalie Beck, DSW, LCSW

**Cell:** (512) 785-1180

**Office Hours:** by appointment

**Email:** nataliebeck@utexas.edu

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## Social Work Practice with Groups

### I. Course Description

This course in the practice sequence focuses on developing group leaders who possess both an understanding of group dynamics and effective leadership skills. The foundation of the course is social work values and the ethical decision making process, as illuminated by the NASW Code of Ethics. The content encompasses both task and treatment groups utilizing an ecosystems developmental framework. The course emphasizes understanding, affirming, and respecting groups with diverse backgrounds, including (but not limited to) race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental ability, age, and national origin. Social work group facilitation is taught utilizing empirically-based theories and interventions to achieve client goals. Students will know how to evaluate the effectiveness of group interventions.

### Ethics and Leadership Flag Course

This course carries the Ethics and Leadership Flag. Ethics and Leadership courses are designed to equip you with skills that are necessary for making ethical decisions in your adult and professional life. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments involving ethical issues and the process of applying ethical reasoning to real life situations.

### II. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of social group work and practice related to the strengths, capacities and resources of individuals within groups.
2. Develop leadership skills with groups in order to help alleviate critical social problems and enhance group well-being.
3. Develop skills in identifying group members' issues, problems, needs, resources, and assets within a framework of group processes, dynamics, and developmental stages.
4. Understand and apply basic concepts of task-oriented group work, including recruiting and selecting members, leadership, group decision making and problem solving, running an effective meeting, and evaluation of task groups.
5. Understand and apply basic concepts of treatment groups, including group formation, facilitation, and termination (assessment, intervention, and evaluation).
6. Develop skills in identifying, analyzing and implementing empirically based group interventions and evaluating group effectiveness.
7. Develop tools and techniques for understanding, affirming, and respecting group members from diverse backgrounds, distinguished by characteristics including (but

- not limited to) race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental ability, age, and national origin.
8. Explore what is involved in making real life ethical choices, establishing a professional self, applying social work values and utilizing the ethical decision making process, as illuminated by the NASW Code of Ethics, to social work with groups.
  9. Demonstrate an understanding of the pursuit of social and economic justice including group/community strategies to combat discrimination, oppression, and economic deprivation for individuals and families.

### **III. Required Readings**

Corey, M. S., Corey, G. and Corey, C. (2014). *Groups: Process and Practice*. (9th ed.). Belmont, CA.: Brooks/Cole.

Additional required weekly readings and handouts will be posted on Canvas.

### **IV. Teaching Methods**

This class will be taught using a variety of methods to foster a stimulating, creative, collaborative and interactive learning community. Experiential learning and exercises to promote self-awareness in relation to group process will be emphasized. The class will be organized as a skill laboratory utilizing small group context and role play to provide opportunities for students to develop group leadership and membership skills. The professor will model group work principles and skills in the leadership of the class. Other teaching methods include class discussion, videos, guest speakers, lecture, and assigned learning activities in the community. For a meaningful experience in this class, students must actively participate, take risks, stretch their creativity and critical thinking skills and attend class regularly. All students are encouraged to provide the instructor feedback and meet with the instructor individually as needed to enhance their learning.

### **Course Requirements**

Students will be required to complete all the assignments listed below. Detailed assignment learning objectives and instructions, including expected demonstration of content mastery and skill development will be provided in a separate handout. All assignments will be discussed in detail in class and students are encouraged to meet with the instructor should they have any questions about the assignments. Grading sheets with point allocation will be provided with the assignment guidelines. All written assignments will be graded on depth and quality of required content, creativity and critical thinking skills, overall professionalism and quality of writing. Specific point totals for each assignment are listed below. **All students are required to complete a grading sheet that is to be turned in with each written assignment to foster their skill and comfort in self-evaluation – a critical component of practice evaluation.**

## V. Course Assignments

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Points</u>
Weekly Learning Reflections (10 x 2 pts each)	20 pts
Interview with a Social Worker	15 pts
Community Support Group assignment	15 pts
Community Task Group assignment	15 pts
Final Take-Home Exam	20 pts
Professionalism/participation	15 pts
Total	100 pts

**Note: Late papers will be penalized 2 overall points per day that they are late.** Please contact the professor before the assignment is due if other arrangements need to be made due to an emergency.

Students are encouraged to consult with the Undergraduate Writing Center at <http://uwc.utexas.edu> or (512) 471-6222 for assistance with any writing assignments.

### A. Weekly Learning Reflections

This assignment uses weekly written learning reflections to deepen students' ability to apply course content and demonstrate professional use of self in a weekly Experiential Group Lab. The reflections are to be one page, double spaced, and written in first person. Students will submit their reflections via Canvas each Friday beginning 9/22 by 11:59 pm. Reflections content should include students' personal observations, reactions, thoughts, feelings, questions, etc. about the Experiential Group Lab from that Wednesday. There will be 10 total weekly learning reflections worth 2 points each. Late submissions will earn 0 points. Save all weekly reflections as they will be needed for the final exam.

### B. Interview with a Social Worker

Students are expected to interview a practicing social worker that currently leads groups and write and submit an observation paper. Students will also complete a self-evaluation sheet and submit it with their paper. Complete instructions and interview questions are provided on Canvas.

### C. Community Support Group assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to provide students with a community-based learning experience to increase their knowledge of effective support group process and leadership skills. It is designed to build upon any previous academic assignments related to attendance at a community or 12-step support group. Students will attend a community support group meeting and write a brief summary of their observations, demonstrating their knowledge of support group process, leadership skills, actual or potential ethical dilemmas, and the important role of community and/or organizational context. **The group chosen must be open to the community (verify in advance) and must be approved by instructor prior to attendance. Students are to attend the support group individually.** Students will also complete a self-evaluation sheet and submit it with their paper. Complete instructions and information to be included in paper are provided on Canvas.

#### **D. Community Task Group assignment**

The purpose of this assignment is to provide students with a community-based learning experience to increase their knowledge of effective task group process and leadership skills. Students will attend a community task group meeting and write a brief summary of their observations, demonstrating their knowledge of task group process, leadership skills, and the important role of community and/or organizational context. **Students must inform their instructor of the task group they wish to attend prior to the actual meeting.** Students will also complete a self-evaluation sheet and submit it with their paper. Complete instructions and information to be included in paper are provided on Canvas.

#### **E. Final Take-Home Exam**

The take-home exam is designed to help you review, deepen and integrate your learning of course content. Questions are drawn from your assigned readings, class lectures, handouts, class discussions, guest speakers, class exercises and your Experiential Group Lab. This exam is to be completed individually without consultation or discussion with peers and is due 12/6 by 5:00 pm

#### **F. Professionalism/participation:**

Professional behavior and mutual respect are the baseline of social work practice. The instructor will model expected behavior and will refrain from inappropriate activities such as missing or being late to class, coming to class unprepared, using computers or cell phones during class activities, and leaving class early. Students' professionalism points for the course may be maintained by refraining from these activities as well. As partners in learning, both professor and students have responsibilities for every class period. The instructor has prepared an interactive and engaging set of activities for which reading and pre-class preparation by students is critical. Attendance and participation for the full class is expected for all students. Repeated late arrivals to class may be considered as an absence. Classroom exercises, discussions, role plays, guest speakers and other class experiential exercises are essential for the students' professional learning and continued development of self-awareness. This form of learning cannot be "made up" once missed. Consequently 2 points will be deducted for any missed classes (from overall participation points). Students are to notify the professor prior to class by email if they cannot attend class due to an illness or emergency.

#### **VI. Grading Scale**

94.0 and above	A	74.0 to 76.999	C
90.0 to 93.999	A-	70.0 to 73.999	C-
87.0 to 89.999	B+	67.0 to 69.999	D+
84.0 to 86.999	B	64.0 to 66.999	D
80.0 to 83.999	B-	60.0 to 63.999	D-
77.0 to 79.999	C+	Below 60.0	F

## VII. Course Schedule

**\*The instructor reserves the right to modify course content as needed\***

Class #	Topic	Dates	Readings Due	Assignments Due
1	Welcome/Introduction	W 8/30		
	No class – Labor Day	M 9/4		
2	Introduction to group work in social work  Professional self-care	W 9/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corey, Corey, &amp; Corey Chs. 1 (p. 1-12) &amp; 2 (p. 26-36)</li> <li>• Standards for Social Work Practice with Groups</li> <li>• NASW Policy Statement on Professional Self-Care</li> </ul>	Student Learning Assessment
3	Universal therapeutic factors in groups Strengths perspective in group work	M 9/11	Canvas readings	Self-care Plan
4	Practice theories in group work	W 9/13	Corey, Corey, & Corey Ch. 4	Signature Strengths Inventory
5	Ethical considerations and decision making in group work  Preparation for Experiential Group Lab	M 9/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corey, Corey, &amp; Corey Ch. 3</li> <li>• NASW Code of Ethics</li> <li>• Texas State Board of Examiners Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Guidelines for Ethics – American Group Psychotherapy Assn.</li> <li>• Ethical Guidelines for Group Counselors – Assn. for Specialists in Group Work</li> </ul>	
6	Experiential Group Lab 1	W 9/20		
		F 9/22		Weekly Learning Reflection 1
7	Group leadership skills	M 9/25	Corey, Corey, & Corey Ch. 2 (p. 36-57)	Self-Assessment of Group Leadership Skills (from text)
8	Experiential Group Lab 2	W 9/27		

Class #	Topic	Dates	Readings Due	Assignments Due
		F 9/29		Weekly Learning Reflection 2
9	Stages of group development Planning a group	M 10/2	Corey, Corey, & Corey Part 2 intro (p. 145-146) & Ch. 5	
10	Experiential Group Lab 3	W 10/4		
		F 10/6		Weekly Learning Reflection 3
11	Initial stage of groups	M 10/9	Corey, Corey, & Corey Ch. 6	
12	Experiential Group Lab 4	W 10/11		
		F 10/13		Weekly Learning Reflection 4
13	Transition stage of groups/ Midterm course evaluation	M 10/16	Corey, Corey, & Corey Ch. 7	Interview with a Social Worker
14	Experiential Group Lab 5	W 10/18		
		F 10/20		Weekly Learning Reflection 5
15	Working and final stage of groups	M 10/23	Corey, Corey, & Corey Chs. 8 & 9	
16	Experiential Group Lab 6	W 10/25		
		F 10/27		Weekly Learning Reflection 6
17	Multicultural group work and social justice	M 10/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corey, Corey, &amp; Corey Ch. 1 (p. 12-23)</li> <li>• NASW Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence</li> </ul>	Community Support Group assignment
18	Experiential Group Lab 7	W 11/1		
		F 11/3		Weekly Learning Reflection 7
19	Task groups	M 11/6	Canvas readings	
20	Experiential Group Lab 8	W 11/8		
		F 11/10		Weekly Learning Reflection 8
21	Group work with children and adolescents	M 11/13	Corey, Corey, & Corey Part 3 intro (p. 323) & Ch. 10	Community Task Group assignment
22	Experiential Group Lab 9	W 11/15		
		F 11/17		Weekly Learning Reflection 9
	No class – Thanksgiving break	M 11/20 & W 11/22		

Class #	Topic	Dates	Readings Due	Assignments Due
23	Group work with older adults	M 11/27	Corey, Corey, & Corey Ch. 11 (p. 394-418)	
24	Experiential Group Lab 10	W 11/29		
		F 12/1		Weekly Learning Reflection 10
25	Course review and closing/ Course evaluation	M 12/4		
		W 12/6		Final Take-Home Exam by 5:00 pm

### VIII. University Policies

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HONOR CODE.** The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

**PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND CIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM.** The professor expects students to act as professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as ethnicity, gender, sex, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, national origins, and sexual orientations, among others. We expect to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect. Social Work also deals with complex and controversial issues. These issues may be challenging and uncomfortable, and it would be impossible to offer a substantive classroom experience that did not include potentially difficult conversations relating to challenging issues. In this environment we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. Nevertheless, the professor requires that students engage one another with civility, respect, and professionalism.

**UNANTICIPATED DISTRESS.** Students may experience unexpected and/or distressing reactions to course readings, videos, conversations, and assignments. If so, students are encouraged to inform the professor. The professor can be responsive and supportive regarding students' participation in course assignments and activities, but students are responsible for communicating clearly what kind of support is desired. If counseling is needed, students may contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at [512-471-3515](tel:512-471-3515) or online at <https://cmhc.utexas.edu/>.

**POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION.** Public social networks are not private. Even when open only to approved or invited members, users cannot be certain that privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. If social work students choose to participate in such forums, please assume that anything posted can be seen, read, and critiqued. What is said, posted, linked to, commented on, uploaded, subscribed to, etc., can be accessed and archived, posing potential harm to professional reputations and prospective careers.

Social work students who use social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and other forms of electronic communication (i.e. blogs, etc.) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Social work students are expected to make every effort to minimize material which could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. Because of this, social work students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image.

Students are asked to consider the amount of personal information posted on these sites and are obliged to block any client access to involvement in the students' social networks. Client material should not be referred to in any form of electronic media, including *any* information that might lead to the identification of a client or compromise client confidentiality in *any* way. Additionally, students must critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding community agencies and professional relationships, as certain material could violate the standards set by the School of Social Work, the Texas Code of Conduct for Social Workers, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.

Social work students should consider that they will be representing professional social work practice as well as The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work program while in the classroom, the university community, and the broader area communities.

**POLICY ON SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY.** Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>.

**USE OF COURSE MATERIALS.** The materials used in this course, including, but not limited to exams, quizzes, and homework assignments, are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized duplication of the course materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of course materials without the specific, express approval of the professor may be a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This sharing includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of distributing those materials to other current or future students.

**DOCUMENTED DISABILITY STATEMENT.** Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471- 6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). A student should present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed and followed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>.



**RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS.** By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, examination, work assignment, or project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

**TITLE IX REPORTING.** In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the University of Texas at Austin is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from discriminatory conduct based on gender. Faculty, instructors, staff, and/or teaching assistants in their supervisory roles are mandated reporters of incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or sexual misconduct. Students who report such incidents will be informed of University resources. Incidents will be reported to the University's Title IX Coordinator and/or the Title IX Deputy for the SSW, Professor Tanya Voss. Students, faculty and staff may contact Professor Voss to report incidents or to obtain information. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may also be found at <http://socialwork.utexas.edu/dl/files/academic-programs/other/qrg-sexualharassment.pdf>.

**CAMPUS CARRY POLICY.** The University's policy on concealed fire arms may be found here: <https://campuscarry.utexas.edu>. You also may find this information by accessing the Quick Links menu on the School's website.

**CLASSROOM CONFIDENTIALITY.** Information shared in class about agencies, clients, and personal matters is considered confidential per the NASW Code of Ethics on educational supervision and is protected by regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as well. As such, sharing this information with individuals outside of the educational context is not permitted. Violations of confidentiality could result in actions taken according to the policies and procedure for review of academic performance located in sections 3.0, 3.1, and 3.2 of the Standards for Social Work Education.

**USE OF E-MAIL FOR OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO STUDENTS.** Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible for keeping the university informed about a change of e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

**SAFETY.** As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.

**BEHAVIOR CONCERNS ADVICE LINE (BCAL).** If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a

partnership between the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call [512-232-5050](tel:512-232-5050) or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

**EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY.** Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors in the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you are given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.