
**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Course Number: SW 333

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Semester: Spring 2013

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SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH GROUPS

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.

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. (PB 11, 35, 38)
2. Develop leadership skills with groups in order to help alleviate critical social problems and enhance group well-being. (PB 1, 2, 3, 4, 38)
3. Develop skills in identifying group members' issues, problems, needs, resources, and assets within a framework of group processes, dynamics, and developmental stages. (PB 11, 12, 13)
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. (PB 29, 30, 31)

5. Understand and apply basic concepts of treatment groups, including group formation, facilitation, and termination (assessment, intervention, and evaluation). (PB 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, and 40)
6. Develop skills in identifying, analyzing and implementing empirically-based group interventions and evaluating group effectiveness. (PB 5, 11, 12, 36, 37, 38, 39, and 40)
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 (PB 11, 30)
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. (PB 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)
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. (PB 1, 29, 30)

The School of Social Work has been continuously accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since 1952. In order to maintain our accreditation status, we engage in ongoing curriculum assessment to demonstrate compliance with CSWE's Education Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Several required courses in our curriculum are part of this ongoing assessment, including this course. Below is a list of the specific Educational Policies (EP) and Practice Behaviors (PB) that are assessed in this course. The complete EPAS can be obtained from your Student Handbook.

EP Competency 2.1.1

Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly. Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession's history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession's enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth.

PB1 Advocate for client access to the services of social work

Objectives: 2, 8, and 9

Assignment: Community Support Group Assignment, Task Group Assignment, assigned readings, class discussion, exams

PB2 Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development

Objectives: 2 and 8

Assignment: Weekly Reflections, Small Group Experiential and Written Analysis, classroom exercises and discussion

PB3 Attend to professional roles and boundaries

Objectives: 2 and 8

Assignment: Community Support Group Assignment, Task Group Assignment, Small Group Experiential and Written Analysis, assigned readings and exams

PB4 Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication

Objectives: 2 and 8

Assignment: Community Support Group Assignment, Task Group Assignment, Small Group Experiential and Written Analysis

PB5 Engage in career-long learning

Objectives: 6 and 8

Assignment: Weekly Reflections, Small Group Experiential and Written Analysis, exams

PB6 Use supervision and consultation

Objectives: 8

Assignment: Weekly Reflection, Small Group Experiential and Written Analysis, class exercises

EP Competency 2.1.2

Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice. Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law.

PB7 Recognize and manage personal values to allow professional values to guide practice

Objectives: 8

Assignments: Weekly Reflections, Small Group Experiential and Written Analysis, class exercises

PB8 Make ethical decisions by applying NASW Code of Ethics and, as applicable, IFSW/IASSW ethical principles

Objectives: 8

Assignments: Small Group Experiential and Written Analysis, exams, class exercises

PB9 Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts

Objectives: 8

Assignments: Weekly Reflections, Small Group Experiential and Written Analysis, exams

PB10 Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions

Objectives: 8

Assignments: Exams, class exercises

EP Competency 2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments: Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information.

PB11 Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom

Objectives: 1, 3, 6, and 7

Assignment: Community Support Group Assignment, Task Group Assignment, Weekly Reflection and exams

PB12 Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation

Objectives: 3 and 6

Assignment: Community Support Group Assignment, Task Group Assignment, exams and classroom exercises

PB13 Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues

Objectives: 3

Assignment: Weekly Reflection, Community Support Group Assignment, Task Group Assignment, Small Group Experiential and Written Analysis and exams

EP Competency 2.1.10a: Engagement

PB29 Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

Objectives: 4, 5, and 9

Assignments: Class exercises and exams

PB30 Use empathy and other interpersonal skills

Objectives: 4, 5, 7, and 9

Assignments: Small Group Experiential and Written analysis and class exercises

PB31 Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes

Objectives: 4 and 5

Assignments: Small Group Experiential and Written Analysis and exams

EP Competency 2.1.10b Assessment

PB32 Collect, organize, and interpret client data

Objectives: 5

Assignments: Community Support Group Assignment, Task Group Assignment

PB33 Assess client strengths and limitations

Objectives: 5

Assignments: Community Support Group Assignment, class exercises

PB34 Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objective

Objectives: 5

Assignments: Small Group Experiential and Written Analysis, exams

PB35 Select appropriate intervention strategies

Objectives: 1 and 5

Assignments: Exams and class exercises

EP Competency 2.1.10c Interventions

PB36 Initiate actions to achieve organizational goals

Objectives: 5 and 6

Assignments: Task Group Assignment and exams

PB37 Implement prevention intervention that enhances client capacities

Objectives: 5 and 6

Assignments: Class exercises and exams

PB38 Help clients resolve problems

Objectives: 1, 2, 5, and 6

Assignments: Community Support Group Assignment, exams

PB39 Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients

Objectives: 5 and 6

Assignments: Community Support Group Assignment, Task Group Assignment, exams

PB40 Facilitate transitions and endings

Objectives: 5 and 6

Assignments: Small Group Experiential and Written Analysis and exams

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.

REQUIRED READINGS

Required Text

Toseland, R. W., & Rivas, R. F. (2012). *An introduction to group work practice* (7th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

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

Students are also expected to review:

UTSSW Standards for Social Work Education

<http://www.utexas.edu/ssw/dl/files/academic-programs/other/standards-sw-education.pdf>

NASW Code of Ethics

<http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>

Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners Code of Conduct

http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/socialwork/sw_conduct.shtm

NASW Standards for Cultural Competence

<http://www.naswdc.org/practice/standards/NASWCulturalStandards.pdf>

AASWG Standards for Social Work Practice with Groups

http://www.aaswg.org/files/AASWG_Standards_for_Social_Work_Practice_with_Groups.pdf

NASW Policy Statement on Professional Self Care

<http://www.naswdc.org/nasw/memberlink/2009/supportfiles/ProfesionalSelf-Care.pdf>

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.**

Assignment	Points	Due Date
Weekly Written Learning Reflection To be submitted on line by 5pm on Fridays (5 points each)	75 points	Fridays 5pm 1/18-5/3
3 Exams (50 points each)	150 points	2/12, 3/7, 4/23
Community Support Group Assignment	50 points	2/26
Task Group Assignment	50 points	4/4
Small Group Experiential and Written Analysis	75 points	4/30
Total	400 points	

Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

Point Total	% Equivalent	Grade
376-400 points	(94-100)	A
360-375 points	(90-93)	A-
348-359 points	(87-89)	B+
336-347 points	(84-86)	B
320-335 points	(80-83)	B-
308-319 points	(77-79)	C+
296-307 points	(74-76)	C
280-295 points	(70-73)	C-
268-279 points	(67-69)	D+
256-267 points	(64-66)	D
240-255 points	(60-63)	D-
239 or below	(59 and below)	F

CLASS POLICIES

This class will operate under the guidelines of professional accountability in the classroom. All students are expected to review the Standards for Social Work Education found on the School of Social Work website and in the BSW Student Handbook. The following policies will be observed:

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.

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 to keep the university informed about changes to their email address. Students should check their email 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>

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). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

Professional Conduct in Class

Students are expected to act like professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time, be prepared to participate in discussions, and show respect for one another's opinions. In the classroom environment, students will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions and may not always agree with ideas expressed by others. However, students are expected to engage one another with respect, courtesy and professionalism. This entails listening to the opinions, concerns and feelings of others with openness, speaking honestly about one's own experience, offering suggestions and ideas in a positive and respectful manner, and being willing to promote group cohesiveness in the learning environment. **Use of cell phones and laptops is not permitted during class.**

Attendance and Participation

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. Students are to notify the instructor prior to class at the given office phone number or by email if they cannot attend class due to an illness or emergency. The instructor reserves the right to add or deduct 10 points to students' final point total based on their attendance and quality of classroom participation.

Religious Holidays

According to 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, an examination, a work assignment, or a 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.

Maintaining Confidentiality

Information shared in class about agencies and clients is considered to be covered by the NASW Code of Ethics regarding the sharing of information for educational supervision purposes. Agencies are aware that de-identified information is shared in classes for this purpose. However, discussions outside of class with individuals not in this class or with other members of the class regarding information shared in class about clients is considered a breach of confidentiality. All students are expected to maintain confidentiality.

Papers

Students are expected to produce high quality work in terms of appearance, writing style and content. Points will be deducted for errors, misspellings, incorrect grammar, poor organization, repetition of information, and inferior work processing. When using information from other sources, references and bibliography should conform to the current APA style citation. Students are encouraged to consult with the Undergraduate Writing Center at <http://uwc.utexas.edu> 471-6222 for assistance with any writing assignments. Plagiarism is a serious violation of university rules and will be dealt with according to university policy.

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://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/>).

Time Management

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date indicated. **Late papers will be penalized 5 points per day that they are late.** Contact the instructor before the assignment is due if other arrangements need to be made due to an emergency.

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.

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 that 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.

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 among 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 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 of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered 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.

Feedback

Students will be asked to provide feedback on their learning and the professor's teaching strategies in informal as well as formal ways. It is very important for the professor to know the students' reactions to what is taking place in class, ensuring that together the professor and students can create a dynamic and effective learning community. Students are encouraged to provide ongoing feedback to the instructor during class and office visits.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Class Description	Readings
1/15	Course Overview Group as a Social Microcosm The Classroom as a Learning Laboratory	Course Syllabus
1/17	Introduction to Groupwork in Social Work Practice	T & R Ch. 1 Introduction, Appendix A3 Standards for Social Work Practice with Groups
1/22	Historical Overview	T & R Ch. 2 Historical and Theoretical Developments
1/24	Strengths Perspective and Practice Theories in Groupwork	Blackboard reading
1/29	Ethical Considerations in Groupwork	T & R pp 5-10 Blackboard reading

1/31	Therapeutic Factors	Blackboard reading
2/5	Group Leadership and Coleadership Essential Leadership Skills	T & R Ch. 4 Leadership
2/7	Multicultural Groupwork Practice	T & R Ch. 5 Leadership and Diversity
2/12	Exam #1	
2/14	Stages of Group Development	T & R pp. 90-94 Blackboard reading
2/19	Planning a Group	T & R Ch. 6 Planning the Group
2/21	Beginning Stage	T & R Ch. 7 The Group Begins, T & R Ch. 8 Assessment
2/26	The Middle Stage Group Process and Group Dynamics Community Support Group Assignment Due	T & R Ch. 3 Understanding Group Dynamics T & R Ch. 9 Treatment Groups Foundation Methods
2/28	Challenges to Group Leadership Challenging Member Behaviors	T & R Ch. 10 Treatment Groups: Specialized Methods
3/5	Therapeutically Working with Conflict	Blackboard reading

3/7	Exam #2	
3/12 & 3/14	Spring Break – Enjoy!	
3/19	Ending Stage - Termination	T & R Ch. 13 Ending the Group's Work
3/21	Evaluation	T & R Ch. 14 Evaluation
3/26	Task Groups	T & R Task Groups: Foundation Methods
3/28	Task Groups (Continued)	T & R Task Groups: Specialized Methods
4/2	Groups with Children	Blackboard reading
4/4	Groups with Adolescents Task Group Assignment Due	Blackboard reading
4/9	Groups with Adults – Special Populations	Blackboard reading

4/11	Groups with Adults – Special Populations	Blackboard reading
4/16	Groups with Adults – Special Populations	Blackboard reading
4/18	Groups with Older Adults	Blackboard reading
4/23	Exam #3	
4/25	Expressive Arts Therapies in Groups	Blackboard reading
4/30	Expressive Art Therapies in Groups (Continued) Small Group Experiential Written Analysis	Blackboard reading
5/2	Wisdom Circles and the Council Process Ending Celebration	Blackboard reading

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<http://www.evidencebasedgroupwork.com/401.html>
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Related Journals

Group Analysis: Journal of Group Analytic Psychotherapy
 Group Dynamics: Theory, Research and Practice
 Group Processes and Intergroup Relations
 Groupwork

International Journal of Group Psychotherapy
Journal of Groups in Addiction and Recovery
Journal for Specialists in Group Work
Small Group Research: An International Journal of Theory, Investigation and
Application
Social Work with Groups

Helpful Websites

www.agpa.org

American Group Psychotherapy Association

<http://www.asgpp.org/index.php>

American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama

<http://www.asgw.org/index.htm>

Association for Specialists in Group Work

www.austingroups.org

Austin Group Psychotherapy Association

<http://www.evidencebasedgroupwork.com/401.html>

Evidence Based Group Work.com

<http://www.iagp.com/>

International Association for the Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes

<http://www.aaswg.org>

International Association for Social Work with Groups

www.austinaa.org

Local AA site with meetings schedule

http://www.nmha.org/go/go/find_support_group

Mental Health America

<http://www.mhatexas.org/mhatexasMAIN/IRGuide4.03.pdf>

Mental Health Association of Texas

<http://www.apadivisions.org/division-49/index.aspx>

Society of Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy

www.cmhc.utexas.edu/g_schedule.html

UT Counseling and Mental Health Center