THEORY AND METHODS OF GROUP INTERVENTION

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION
The course will cover current group intervention approaches used with children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly across a variety of settings. Students will develop a working understanding of children, adolescents, adults and the elderly from diverse backgrounds, affirming and respecting their strengths and differences in group settings. The course is grounded in the identification, analysis, and implementation of empirically-based intervention strategies for group work with children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly. This course will focus on using multiple perspectives in the advanced application of theories, models, and skills utilized in short- and longer-term group interventions. The framework of the course is based on social work values and the ethical decision-making process, as illuminated by the NASW Code of Ethics. This is a required course for MSSW students in the Clinical Concentration. It is a specialized group methods course which builds on the Practice I & II courses and Field Practicum I & II.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES: Upon completion of this course, student will be able to:

1. Integrate theories and empirical research knowledge in selecting and using group work approaches with children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly (CL/APB 6 and 10c)

2. Demonstrate an advanced clinical knowledge of group work intervention and leadership roles and skills as they relates to the strengths, the processes involved in human change, and the capacities and resources of children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly (CL/APB 4 and 10a)

3. Adapt group work intervention models, programs, and activities for use with children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly to reflect an understanding of persons from diverse backgrounds, including (but not limited to) race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion/spiritual, physical or mental ability, developmental level, age, and national origin (CL/APB 4 and 8)

4. Evaluate, select, and design group work programs, methods, and activities for children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly based upon their empirical base, practice utility, potential, range of applicability and limitations (CL/APB 6 and 10c)

5. Select and design group work programs, methods, and activities, and to then critically evaluate and analyze these group work approaches as to their effectiveness in given situations. This includes: (a) the adequacy of the research and knowledge base; (b) the range of applicability; (c) the value and ethical issues, including the student’s own value system; and (d) the policy implications involved in delivery of group work services to children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly (CL/APB 2, 6 and 8)
6. Integrate and apply core and advanced group work skills and processes, including, but not limited to, creation and maintenance of the group, resolving conflict, dealing with challenging clients, working in the here-and-now, and fostering the therapeutic factors of group work (CL/APB 10a)

7. Implement and evaluate the effectiveness of group work interventions for children, adolescents, adults and the elderly (CL/APB 10c)

8. Demonstrate the ability to tailor group work interventions for children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly based on the context in which they are delivered (CL/APB 10c)

9. Demonstrate advanced knowledge of social work values and ethical decision-making processes as they relate to ethical dilemmas in group work with children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly (CL/APB2)

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 descriptions can be optioned from your Student Handbook.

**EP2.1.2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.**

**CL/APB2** Refine ability to manage value differences and ethical dilemmas

Objectives 5, 9

Assignment: Class discussion, assigned reading, take home exam, weekly learning reflection, community learning assignment, small group assignment

**EP2.1.4. Engage diversity and difference in practice.**

**CL/APB4** Utilize needs, values, and strengths in applying appropriate interventions for diverse client systems

Objectives 2, 3, 8

Assignment: Take home exam, classroom experiential exercises, class discussion, assigned reading

**EP2.1.6. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.**

**CL/APB6** Apply empirically supported evidence to practice

Objectives 1, 4, 5,

Assignment: Take home exam, class experiential exercises, class discussion

**EP2.1.8. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.**

**CL/APB8** Identify and evaluate agency programs and/or practices in relation to client needs

Objectives 3, 5, 8

Assignment: Class discussion, assigned reading, take home exam, weekly learning reflection

**EP2.1.10a. Engagement.**

**CL/APB10a** Integrate theory-based relational skills in all areas of client engagement

Objectives 2, 6
Assignment: Class discussion, experiential class exercises, take home exam, weekly learning reflection

EP2.1.10c. Intervention
CL/APB10c Critically apply interventions to design, implement and evaluate effective practice
Objectives 1, 4, 7
Assignment: Class discussion, experiential class exercises, take home exam

III. 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 to 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 professor feedback and meet with the professor individually as needed to enhance their learning.

IV. Required and Recommended Texts and Materials

Students are expected to review:


Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners Code of Conduct http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/socialwork/sw_conduct.shtm


Additional required weekly readings will be posted on Blackboard.
V. Course Requirements

Students will be required to complete the assignments listed below. Detailed assignment learning objectives and instructions, including expected demonstration of content mastery and skill development will be provided. All assignments will be discussed in detail in class and students are encouraged to meet with the professor should they have any questions about the assignments. Grading sheets with point allocation will be provided with the assignment guidelines. All assignments are 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.

Grading Structure:

- **Class Contribution**: 30 points
  - Attendance (15 points)
  - Participation (15 points)

- **Weekly Written Learning Reflection**: 40 points
  (8 @ 5 points)

- **Community Learning Assignment**: 50 points
  - Support Group Observations
  - Practitioner Interviews

- **Take Home Exam**: 230 points
  400 points

Grading Scale:

- 376-400 = A
- 360-375 = A-
- 348-359 = B+
- 336-347 = B
- 320-335 = B-
- 308-319 = C+
- 296-307 = C
- 280-295 = C-
- 268-279 = D+
- 256-267 = D
- 240-25 = D-
- 239 or below = F

VI. Class Policies

1. Students are expected to attend class weekly and on time as discussed above. Students who are absent after the break will be considered absent for the entire class, unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor.

2. Except under extremely unusual circumstances, assignments must be completed on the due date and turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. Late assignments will result in a deduction of 5 points for each day that the assignment is late. No assignment will be accepted beyond one week late.

3. If students are concerned about their class performance, the professor is more than willing to work with students to help them improve either their understanding of group theory, use of
self in understanding group process, or becoming more comfortable in group interaction. The professor can meet with students privately either before or after class, or by appointment.

4. Small groups are expected to resolve challenges within their group context. The instructor is willing to serve as a consultant if groups have worked diligently to resolve their differences but have been unsuccessful.

5. 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 the 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 professor during class and office visits.

VII. **Course Schedule** (Subject to revision.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Due:</th>
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</table>
| 9/10  | Class 1 | Course Overview  
Group as a Microcosm  
Classroom as a Learning Lab | Syllabus                                      |                                            |
| 9/17  | Class 2 | Therapeutic Factors  
Interpersonal Learning  
Group Cohesion | Yalom: Chapters 1-4                            |                                            |
| 9/24  | Class 3 | Group Leadership & Co-leadership  
Essential Skills & Tasks  
Professional Training & Supervision  
Ethical Guidelines for Group Work Practice  
In-class small group meetings | Yalom: Chapters 5-6                            |                                            |
| 10/1  | Class 4 | Group Composition  
Member Selection & Preparation  
Logistical & Practical Considerations  
Cultural Competence in Group Work | Yalom: Chapters 8-10 & Appendix  
Readings on Blackboard  
**Due: Weekly Learning Reflection** |                                            |
| 10/8  | Class 5 | Stages of Group Development  
Group & Leader Tasks | Yalom: Chapters 11-12  
Readings on Blackboard  
**Due: Weekly Learning Reflection** |                                            |
| 10/15 | Class 6 | Group Dynamics & Group Process Assessment & Intervention | Yalom: Chapters 7 & 13  
**Due: Weekly Learning Reflection** |                                            |
| 10/22 | Class 7 | Therapeutically Working with Conflict | Readings on Blackboard  
**Due: Weekly Learning Reflection** |                                            |
| 10/29 | Class 8 | Termination & Practice Evaluation in Groups | Readings on Blackboard  
**Due: Weekly Learning Reflection** |                                            |
<p>| 11/5  | Class 9 | Groups with Children &amp; Adolescents | Readings on Blackboard |                                            |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Groups with Adults &amp; Special Populations</td>
<td>Readings on Blackboard Due: Weekly Learning Reflection</td>
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<td><strong>Hand out Take Home Exam</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Groups with the Elderly</td>
<td>Readings on Blackboard Due: Weekly Learning Reflection</td>
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<td><strong>Due: Community Learning Assignment 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Expressive Arts Therapies in Groups</td>
<td>Readings on Blackboard Due: Community Learning Assignment 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Readings on Blackboard Due: Take Home Exam</td>
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</table>

VIII. General 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 in Class**

The professor expects students to act like 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. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment we should be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometime we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the professor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism.

As part of professional courtesy in class, cell phones, laptops (unless otherwise indicated due to a learning disability), text-messaging, etc. will not be allowed during class hours, other than at the designated break time.

**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/).

**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/sss/.

**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, 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.

**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 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 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’re given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

**Helpful Websites**

American Group Psychotherapy Association [www.agpa.org](http://www.agpa.org)

Austin Group Psychotherapy Association [www.austingroups.orgs](http://www.austingroups.orgs)

Association for the Advancement of Social Work with Groups [http://www.aaswg.org](http://www.aaswg.org)

Mental Health Association of Texas [http://www.mhatexas.org/mhatexasMAIN/IRGuide4.03.pdf](http://www.mhatexas.org/mhatexasMAIN/IRGuide4.03.pdf)

Mental Health America [http://www.nmha.org/go/go/find_support_group](http://www.nmha.org/go/go/find_support_group)

Local AA site with meetings schedule [www.austinaa.org](http://www.austinaa.org)

UT Counseling and Mental Health Center [www.cmhc.utexas.edu/g_schedule.html](http://www.cmhc.utexas.edu/g_schedule.html)