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

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TA:

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. In addition, students will know how to evaluate the effectiveness of group interventions.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

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)

III. TEACHING METHODS

This course is designed to include a variety of experiences intended to achieve the student educational outcome of mastering knowledge and skill in this area. Included will be lectures, readings, discussions, speakers, videos and experiential exercises. The professor will model group work principles and strategies and parallel processes will be illuminated. Tuesdays will be more content-oriented and Thursdays will be organized as an experiential skill laboratory, utilizing the small group context and role play for development of skill in leading treatment groups.

IV. REQUIRED READINGS

Required Texts (available at University bookstore)

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

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Contract of Expectations

[It is the students' responsibility to read the syllabus carefully for information]

1. Students are expected to attend class sessions promptly and regularly. The professor utilizes a "parallel process" model and will have expectations similar to those that you will experience when working as a social worker in the "real world." Therefore, lateness or other forms of inappropriate behavior will result in consequences to final grades. Members will participate in an interactive framework between collegiate students and professor. The cohesion and bonds of the class are critical and therefore, absence or lateness is disruptive, not only to your learning, but to your classmates.

2. Students are expected to **complete the readings prior to class**, and should be well prepared to participate in discussions and experiential learning assignments.
3. Failure to regularly attend the class and demonstrate through discussions that one has comprehended the readings will be considered in assigning the final grade. Students will be allowed no more than **two unexcused absences**.
4. In cases where a student missed more than the allotted two absences, the professor reserves the right to lower that student's final grade. In extenuating circumstances of absence, students are to notify the professor as soon as possible and discuss options and alternatives. Students are responsible for any material missed due to absences – do NOT ask the professor or TA for missed materials; you must get them from your classmates. Most materials will also be posted in Canvas.
5. Except in the case of extreme emergencies, and then only with the permission of the professor, **late assignments will not be accepted without penalty**. Students are expected to turn in all required assignments on the agreed upon due date **at the beginning of class**. Assignments turned in after class starts will be considered late. If accepted, late assignments will be assessed point penalties at the rate of **3 points each day late**.
6. Regardless of the reason, even if excused, students that miss taking a quiz on the scheduled date as outlined below in the course outline will take a make-up exam that will be essay in nature rather than multiple choice. The essay make-up exam will be taken by the student as soon as possible following the administration of the regularly scheduled quiz. The reason for this is that once the multiple-choice quiz has been administered to the class, the integrity of that quiz is then jeopardized.
7. Students are expected to both learn and demonstrate knowledge of groupwork intervention theories and skills. This requires searches of the literature in a defined area (as part of the researched group role play) in order to develop specialized knowledge concerning the use of groupwork as treatment of a specific problem area for a specific population. In addition, students will demonstrate their level of applied knowledge of groupwork interventions and skills on quizzes.
8. If students are concerned about their class performance, the professor is amenable to working with students to help them improve their course grades *prior to the end of the semester*. **FINAL GRADES ASSIGNED IN THE COURSE ARE NOT NEGOTIABLE.**
9. Small groups are expected to resolve challenges within their group context. The professor is willing to serve as a consultant if group members are unable to resolve their differences.
10. Group work can raise emotional issues. Student are encouraged to consider their disclosures carefully – it is wise to avoid bringing up “raw,” or unresolved issues in the course (note: Dr. Holleran Steiker encourages students use office hours and the UT Counseling & Mental Health Center (512) 471-3515 SSB 5th Floor if issues are getting in the way of their learning). The professor and students have the ethical responsibility to their colleagues to see that the class environment is maintained as a respectful and

confidential setting. Student feedback is welcome. All NASW Code of Ethics values will be upheld.

11. A mid-semester course evaluation will be conducted and input considered for course adjustments. Students are encouraged to provide feedback during office hours and by appointment if they desire.

Special Accommodations for Students with a Disability

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259; 471-4641 TTY. Please notify the professor of any special accommodations that you may need prior to the end of the second week of class.

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>).

Ethics and Leadership

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.

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 practice related to agency and/or community safety. Students should also notify instructors regarding any safety concerns.

Religious holy days

A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible, so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who is absent from a class or examination for the observance of a religious holy day may complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence, if proper notice has been given. Notice must be given

at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates the student will be absent. For religious holy days that fall within the first two weeks of the semester, notice should be given on the first day of the semester.

VI. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Class Attendance and Contribution

Due to the format and content of this course, both attendance and contribution are imperative. The other students in your small group are dependent on you for a quality learning experience; if too many students are absent in any one small group, that group suffers. Thus, students are expected to be in class, or in extenuating circumstances, to notify the professor and at least one other group member that they will be absent. Attendance and quality of contribution as demonstrated by student preparation level will determine grades. Students will be allowed **two (2) unexcused absences**. Role will be taken at the beginning of each class period. In cases where a student misses more than the allotted two absences, the professor reserves the right to lower that student's final grade by one point for each class missed beyond the two allotted.

Short E-journal entries

In order to give you the opportunity to fully embrace the parallel process component of this course, each student will be expected to utilize Canvas to enter a mini-journal response within 24 hours of the Thursday experiential class (200-300 words only). Dr. Holleran Steiker will be reviewing these entries to give feedback. This is a non-graded but mandatory expectation which will be factored into your participation grade (i.e., you automatically lose 5-10 points of participation if you do not consistently do your entries).

Quests:

There will be either three or four quest, depending on professor's assessment of the value of the quest, for a cumulative worth of 25% of final grade. They will be based on readings, discussions, presentations, videos, experiential exercises, and lecture material. The quests will be objective in nature, and may consist of multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank or short essay questions. The reason they are called quests is that they are a cross between quiz and test and allow for you to elaborate in the margins if you think that a multiple choice answer does not aptly answer the question. Make-up exams will not be given unless there are unusual extenuating circumstances. The professor reserves the right of final approval of what an unusual extenuating circumstance might comprise.

Group Observation Summary:

Students will locate a service agency with group work services, psycho-educational group or support group. When the agency is chosen, permission must be given by an agency administrator or group leader for group observation. Be creative and start looking for opportunities early. Psycho-educational groups are more likely to be open to observers. A second option is to attend a 12-step program meetings and writing a paper about self-help groups (note: without a trained facilitator, you cannot critique the chairperson; part of your paper must

note what you would do if you were facilitating a clinical group with the participants you witness). More will be presented about these options. In any case, confidentiality must be insured. This 2-3 page reaction paper must include the following information:

- a) The purpose of the group
- b) Group composition and structure
- c) The facilitators leadership techniques and style
- d) Specific dynamics noted re: interactions between members
- e) The stage of group development
- f) An overall assessment of the strengths of the group and areas that you feel need improvement.
- g) Plan what you would do if you were facilitating this group

It is okay to write from a “first person” perspective. No references are required.

Researched Group Role Play

Students will be formed into small groups of no more than 6 members. Each group will role play a treatment group in front of class utilizing specific theoretical frameworks. Students will alternate in the leadership role to demonstrate their practice behaviors. The first facilitator will orchestrate the beginning of the group; successive facilitators will conduct program activities appropriate to the theoretical frame and population; and the final facilitator will conduct closure activities. Each group will reflect adherence to social work values and ethics, and application to a specific (child, adolescent, adult, elderly or family group) population. The groups should target a population which is diverse, at-risk, and/or disadvantaged. The session should demonstrate techniques appropriate to the “middle” group developmental stage and the developmental life cycle of the treatment population. This assignment will be worth 25% of the total course grade. Evaluation components will include:

- Evidence of preparation and creativity
- Theoretical coherence demonstrated
- Group’s individual and composite developmental stages represented appropriately
- Intervention modeling associated with the stages of group development demonstrated
- Social work perspective evident in context of role play
- Demonstration of client developmental level (life cycle) taken into account

Additionally, each group is hand out to the class a summary (couple of pages) of their role play and relevant research conducted that should include, but is not limited to:

- Type of group (brief description addressing purpose, location, number of sessions, open-ended versus closed-ended, etc.)
- Theoretical framework(s) being implemented
- Member characteristics (general description)
- Description for each group member’s character (student’s real name with corresponding name adopted for role play; age; ethnicity; individual goal for group; developmental stage in the life cycle; relevant life and environmental circumstances; role within the group, such as monopolizer, scapegoat, and so on; etc.)

A list of references that your group used to prepare the role play so that others interested have a starting list of resources *

Each group will also hand in a binder of materials, activity descriptions, relevant flyers, hand-outs, and resources and references. This will be a part of the group grade. Samples are available for review prior to compiling your binder.

VII. EXPLANATION OF ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

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. If you would like, the professor is happy to provide a list of the specific Educational Policies (EP) and *Practice Behaviors* (PB) that are assessed in this course. Please see professor if you would like to know which competencies are addressed by which course assignments. The complete EPAS can be optioned from your Student Handbook.

VII. COURSE GRADING CRITERIA

Student Performance Evaluation

Course Requirement	% of grade
Quizzes (3 @ 100 points each)	25%
Group Observation Summary	25%
Researched Group Role Play	25%
<u>Participation</u>	<u>25%</u>
TOTAL	100%

Grading Scale

100-94=A

93-90= A-

89-87=B+

86-84=B

83-80=B-

79-77=C+

76-74=C

73-70=C-

69-67=D+

66-64=D

63-60=D-

59 and below=F

Grading of all written assignments will take into account the quality of the writing as well as the content. The American Psychological Association (APA) – 4th edition format

should be used. Written material should be carefully proofread and errors (punctuation, typographical, spelling) corrected.

*Researched Group Role Play Citations must be recent (unless classic citation or only research conducted, utilize resources from 2000-present) and accurate. Research MUST include primarily journal articles, not books and web-based resources. Remember to be critical of web information and consider the source. Consult with the professor or TA if you have questions about this.

VIII. COURSE OUTLINE

This schedule is intended as a guide – the professor reserves the right to shift sessions based on the learning needs of the class. The students should complete the readings as they are outlined. This is especially important since the quizzes will cover the required readings for that period of time. The student is responsible for all readings whether the material is covered as lecture material or not. In fact, since this is an experiential course, the professor will assume that the readings are understood unless questions are raised.

SW333 Social Work Practice with Groups

Spring, 2015

Course Schedule

Date	Description	Text / Readings “read by date shown”
Aug. 26 W	Getting Acquainted and Overview of Course	Syllabus
Sept. 2 W	Introduction to Groupwork: Clinician critique and Historical and Theoretical Overview – handout	T & R – Ch. 1 – Introduction T & R – Ch. 2 – Historical Developments
Sept. 7 M	LABOR DAY	Recommended: Middleman, R. & Wood, G. (1990). Reviewing the past and present of group work and the challenges of the future. <u>Social Work with Groups</u> 13(3), 3-20.

Sept. 9 W	First experiential (Group Roles)	
Sept. 14 M	Group Dynamics, Values, Ethics and Stages of Development	T & R – Ch. 3 – Understanding Group Dynamics T & R – Appendix A Recommended: Northen, H. (1998). Ethical dilemmas in Social Work with Groups. <u>Social Work with Groups</u> , 21(1/2). Haworth Press, Inc.
Sept 16 W	Experiential with Noel Pompa	
Sept. 21	Group Leadership	T & R – Ch. 4 – Leadership T & R – Ch. 5 – Leadership and Diversity
Sept. 23 W	Group Work and Diversity	
Sept. 28 M	Quest 1: Chapters 1-5	
Sept. 30 W	Review of Leadership & Process Content Exercise	

Oct. 5 M	Group Leadership Planning and Composing Groups Beginning Groups	T & R – Ch. 6 – Planning the Group T & R – Ch. 7 – The Group Begins
Oct. 7 W	Experiential	
Oct. 12 M	Assessment & Evaluation	T & R – Ch. 8 – Assessment T & R – Ch. 13 – Evaluation
Oct. 14 W	The Advanced Treatment Group Experiential	T & R – Ch. 9 & 10 –Treatment Groups: Foundation and Specialized Methods Read one advanced group article (for example): Marsiglia, F.F., Cross, S., Mitchell-Enos, V. (1998). Culturally Grounded Group Work with Adolescent American Indian Students. <u>Social Work with Groups</u> , 21(1/2), 89-102.
Oct. 19 M	Quest 2 (covering Chapters 6-10 & 13)	
Oct. 21 W	Experiential Solidify groups for Researched Role Plays (one month notice)	
Oct. 26 M	Task Groups	T & R – Ch. 11 – Task Groups: Foundation Methods

Oct. 28 W	Corey Video – Advanced Techniques (Reflecting on emotional and cognitive responses to participants and facilitators)	
Nov. 2 M	Termination Hand in Group Observation Summary	Review T&R chapter 14 -- endings
Nov. 4 W	Experiential	
Nov. 9 M	Quest 3 (covering Chapters 11 & 14) Use extra time for researched role plays	
Nov. 11 W	Experiential	
Nov. 16 M	Researched Group Role Plays	Group handouts
Nov. 18 W	Researched Group Role Plays	Group handouts
Nov. 23 M	Researched Group Role Plays	Group handouts
Nov. 25 W	Researched Group Role Plays	Group handouts
Nov. 30 M	Researched Group Role Plays	Group handouts
Dec. 2 W	Final Experiential and course evals	

References

- Brandler, S., & Roman, C. P. (1991). Glossary of group games and exercises. *Groupwork: Skills and strategies for effective interventions* (pp. 221-233). New York: Haworth Press.
- Carey, L.A. (1998). Illuminating the process of a rape survivors' support group. *Social Work with Groups*, 21(1/2), 103-116.
- Corey, G. (1995). Ethical and professional issues in group practice. *Theory and practice of group counseling* (4th ed.) (pp. 26-52). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Hopps, J. G., & Pinderhughes, E. (1999). Women's and children's groups: Vignettes. *Group work with overwhelmed clients* (pp. 91-124). New York: The Free Press.
- Keyser, J. L., Seelaus, K., Kahn, G. B. (2000). Children of trauma and loss: Their treatment in group psychotherapy. In R. H. Klein & V. L. Schermer (Eds.), *Group psychotherapy for psychological trauma* (pp. 209-238). New York: Guilford Press.
- Lewis, E. (1992). Regaining promise: Feminist perspectives for social group work practice. *Social Work with Groups*, 15(2/3), 271-284.
- Lomonaco, S., Scheidlinger, S., & Aronson, S. (2000). Five decades of children's group treatment – an overview. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Group Therapy*, 10(2), 77-96.
- Lonergan, E. C. (1990). *Group intervention: How to begin and maintain groups in medical and psychiatric settings*. Riverside, NJ: Jason Aronson.
- Lowy, L. (1992). Social group work with elders: Linkages and intergenerational relationships. *Social Work with Groups*, 15(2/3), 109-127.
- Magen, R. H., & Glajchen, M. (1999). Cancer support groups: Client outcome and the context of group process. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 9(5), 541-554.
- Marsiglia, F.F., Cross, S., and Mitchell-Enos, V. (1998). Culturally grounded group work with adolescent American Indian students. *Social Work with Groups*, 21(1/2), 89-102.
- MacMaster, S.A. & Holleran, L. K. (2005) Incorporating 12-Step Group Attendance in Addictions Courses: A Cross-Cultural Experience. *Journal of Teaching in the Addictions*, 4(2), 79-91.
- Middleman, R. & Wood, G. (1990). Reviewing the past and present of group work and the challenges of the future: From social groupwork to social work with groups. *Social Work with Groups* 13(3), 3-20.

- Northen, H. (1998). Ethical Dilemmas in Social Work with Groups. *Social Work with Groups*, 21(1/2), 5-17.
- Pollio, D. E. (2002). The Evidence-Based Group Worker. *Social Work with Groups*, 25(4), 57-70.
- Pomeroy, E.C., Holleran, L.K., & Kiam, R. (2004). Postmodern feminism: A theoretical framework for a field unit with women in jail. *Social Work Education*, 23(1), 39-49.
- Reddy, L. A., Spencer P., Hall, T. M., & Rubel, E. (2001). Use of developmentally appropriate games in a child group training program for young children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. In A. A. Drewes, L. J. Carey, & C. E. Schafer (Eds.), *School-based play therapy* (pp. 256-274). John Wiley.
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- Springer, D. W., Pomeroy, E. C., & Johnson, T. (1999). A group intervention for children of incarcerated parents: Initial pitfalls and subsequent solutions. *Groupwork*, 11(1), 54-70.
- Shaffer, J., & Galinsky, M. (1989). *Models of group therapy* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Shulman, L. (1992). *A casebook of social work with groups: The mediating model*. Washington, DC: Council on Social Work Education.
- Shulman, L. (1999). *Skills of helping individuals, families and groups* (4th ed.). Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock.
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- Zastrow, C. (2001). *Social work with groups* (5th ed.). Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall.

Some Relevant Journals and Newsletters

- Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal* – Chicago, IL: Kluwer Academic/Human Sciences Press [Bimonthly.]
- Groupwork* – London: Whiting and Birch Ltd. [Tri-annual.]
- International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*.
- Journal for Specialists in Group Work* – Alexandria, VA: Association for Specialists in Group

Work, a division of the American Association for Counseling and Development. [Quarterly.]
Journal of Child and Adolescent Group Therapy – New York: Human Science Press.
[Quarterly.]
Research on Social Work Practice – Newbury Park, CA: Sage. [Quarterly.]
Small Group Behavior.
Small Group Research: An International Journal of Theory, Investigation, and Application
(Incorporating *Small Group Behavior* and the *International Journal of Small Group*
Research) - Newbury Park, CA: Sage. [Quarterly.]
Social Work with Groups: A Journal of Community and Clinical Practice (Vol. 1, No. 1., Spring
1978) – Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press. [Quarterly.]
Social Work with Groups Newsletter – Association for the Advancement of Social
Work with Groups, Inc., Akron, OH: c/o The School of Social Work, University of Akron.
[Tri-annual.]
Tell-A-Group Hotline Newsletter – Ann Arbor, MI: School of Social Work, Univ. of Michigan.
Youth and Society – Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
Youth Today: The Newspaper on Youth Work – Washington, DC: American Youth Work
Center. [Bimonthly.] Free.