

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS**  
**STEVE HICKS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

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<b>Semester:</b>	Fall 2023	<b>Office:</b>	n/a
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	2:30-5:30pm	<b>Office Hours:</b>	By appointment
	SSW 2.130		

**Theories and Methods of Group Intervention**

**I. STANDARDIZED 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 and II courses and Field Practicum I and II.

**II. STANDARDIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of this course, students 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.
2. Demonstrate an advanced clinical knowledge of group work intervention and leadership roles and skills as they relate to the strengths, the processes involved in human change, and the capacities and resources of children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly.
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.

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.
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.
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.
7. Implement and evaluate the effectiveness of group work interventions for children, adolescents, adults and the elderly.
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.
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.

### III. TEACHING METHODS

“A well-designed curriculum was not enough to create the space that the students needed, nor to overcome their learned belief that the enrichment of their minds was to be paid for by the suffering of their bodies and spirits, that, in other words, being 'successful' in university meant to drive the self into ill health. We needed to develop a compassionate pedagogy that would help students—and ourselves—to claim our right to be well”

~Dickson and Summerville

This course is taught using a Compassionate Pedagogy approach. From the Baylor University website, “Compassionate pedagogy is a collection of teaching practices designed to foster human connection, communication, and wellbeing. The approach revolves around listening to students' lived experiences and offering flexibility to accommodate their struggles.” <https://www.baylor.edu/atl/index.php?id=984876>

In light of this approach, I teach using a variety of teaching methods to foster a stimulating, creative and collaborative learning community. These methods intentionally draw on diverse pedagogical approaches to be inclusive of a variety of learning styles; activities include readings, writings, small group discussions, role-play, lectures, videos, in-class group activities, learning activities in the community and self-reflection. Experiential learning that builds upon your field instruction will be emphasized.

For a meaningful experience in this class, you are encouraged to actively participate, take risks, stretch your creativity, apply your critical thinking skills and attend class regularly. This course will highlight diverse perspectives of thought and will encourage you to engage in new ways of thinking that may be represented by speakers, the professor, and classmates from diverse backgrounds. You are encouraged to ask questions, raise issues, provide the instructor with feedback and meet with me individually as needed to enhance your learning.

In this course you will find a number of approaches to teaching that may be new to you, and I welcome conversation around these approaches. These are designed to support a community of compassion, a community of connection, and a community of lifelong learners.

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 class content will be used. 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 with feedback and meet with the instructor individually as needed to enhance their learning.

#### **IV. REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS**

Students are expected to review:

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

NASW Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence  
<http://www.socialworkers.org/practice/standards/PRA-BRO-253150-CC-Standards.pdf>

NASW Policy Statement on Professional Self Care

<http://www.compassionstrengths.com/uploads/NASW.ProfesionalSelf-Care.pdf>

AASWG Standards for Social Work Practice with Groups

[http://www.aaswg.org/files/AASWG Standards for Social Work Practice with Groups.pdf](http://www.aaswg.org/files/AASWG%20Standards%20for%20Social%20Work%20Practice%20with%20Groups.pdf)

All required readings listed on the class schedule that are not found in the required texts will be available on Canvas. If readings are added to the reading list after the beginning of the class semester, I will notify you.

## V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### **Introductory Assignment**

**Due date: 8/28**

This assignment is designed to assess current knowledge and experience with group work interventions, to identify goals for semester learning not limited to but including ethics, social justice, equity and inclusion, and to evaluate time management skills. The information collected from this assignment will guide small group compositions as well as larger classroom cohort learning goals.

### **Community-Based Group Observation**

**Due date:**

This assignment is designed to provide you with a community-based learning experience to increase your knowledge of therapeutic group process and leadership skills. You will attend a community support or task group and then participate in an in-class peer discussion and review of your experience. The small groups will review an analysis of your observations demonstrating your knowledge of group process, group leadership skills, actual or potential ethical dilemmas in groups and the important role of diverse communities or organizational context.

### **Group Role Play Video Presentation**

**Due dates:**

The purpose of this assignment is to further develop your research, critical thinking, and presentation skills while increasing your knowledge and skill in the creation of a group therapy session with diverse populations. You will also have the opportunity to develop effective task group membership and counseling skills. You will collaborate in a group project that culminates in a "professional staff development training" on a skill-based application of a group session for the class. Videos will be posted on Canvas discussion board. Each group will be assigned a video to watch. After watching the video, feedback will

be posted for the group to see.

### **Evaluation of Learning**

**Due date: 12/4**

This assignment is designed to evaluate learning goals set at the beginning of the semester. You will consolidate your learning, knowledge, and skills as you evaluate the effectiveness of your group experiences and identify your growth in demonstrating advanced knowledge of social work values, inclusion and equity and ethical decision-making processes as they relate to group work with children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly.

### **Small Group Facilitation**

Every other week, during the Learning Lab, two students will facilitate a small group experience. This assignment allows space for you to practice the skills from the readings and the content classes. Details for this assignment can be found in canvas.

In alignment with the compassionate pedagogical approach to this course, I have adopted an [ungrading](#) practice to assessment. This means that individual assignments will not earn traditional points or letter grades. Instead, you will receive analytic feedback in the form of questions and comments to support your continued learning. You will receive rubrics and guidelines to help guide your work on each assignment. You will use these rubrics to indicate your own evaluation on learning for each assignment. At the end of the semester, you will assign yourself a letter grade based on your work and continued conversations around the feedback you have received throughout the semester. This letter grade will be supported by a short narrative statement. The goal of ungrading is to provide a learning space where you feel free to set your own intentions, to take risks, to reframe failure, to understand how you learn best, and to prioritize care. I trust you and your ability to learn.

## **VI. GRADES**

94.0 and Above	A
90.0 to 93.999	A-
87.0 to 89.999	B+
84.0 to 86.999	B
80.0 to 83.999	B-
77.0 to 79.999	C+
74.0 to 76.999	C

70.0 to 73.999	C-
67.0 to 69.999	D+
64.0 to 66.999	D
60.0 to 63.999	D-
Below 60.0	F

## **VII. CLASS POLICIES**

### **Attendance and Participation**

Full attendance and active participation are ideal for a comprehensive learning experience. Classroom exercises, discussions, role-plays, guest speakers and other class experiential exercises are essential for your professional learning and continued development of self-awareness. I realize that extenuating circumstances arise and that everyone is juggling several responsibilities. If you are unable to attend a class, please email me prior to that class. If it is a last-minute absence, please text me, so I don't worry. If circumstances make you miss more than three classes, you may be overextended, so be sure to reach out to me. If you must miss a class, please contact a peer to review what you missed. In addition, you can always schedule a time to meet with me to discuss the missed content in more detail.

There are numerous ways to demonstrate participation, depending on your learning style. We will be reviewing a participation rubric in class which will help you set individualized participation goals for the semester.

### **Assignments**

There is flexibility in how you submit most assignments. Whether you chose to submit a paper, a video, or a PowerPoint, the standards remain the same. I will be reviewing the content as well as the style in which it is presented. Think of the assignments as components of a professional portfolio and think about how you'd like to present your knowledge to potential employers. Be sure to cite your sources and references in a bibliography regardless of the type of submission, to abide by university plagiarism policies.

### **Time management**

The due dates on the syllabus and on canvas are designed to keep you on track throughout the semester. This steady flow of submissions allows for you to receive continuous feedback so you can incorporate changes and adjustments into your practice. There are no penalties for late assignments in this course. When you feel like you need additional time to complete the work, email me ahead of time and indicate a targeted date for submission.

This process allows you the flexibility to complete all work in a time frame that works with your schedule, while still acknowledging of the importance of timely feedback. If concerns arise about submissions, I will request a meeting with you to address the barriers to timely completion.

### **Use of computers/cell phones in the classroom**

Theories and Methods of Group Intervention is a practice course, and class participation is essential to successful learning. In today's world learning occurs both in the virtual space as well as in the real physical space. Please be respectful with your use of cell phones and personal messages during class time. This course has minimal handouts and relies heavily on the use of canvas during class. Be sure to bring a device with you to class. You are free to have your laptops open and available throughout class to take notes and to access materials.

### **Use of canvas in class**

In this class I use Canvas Web based course management system with password protected access at <http://canvas.utexas.edu> to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post evaluations, to submit assignments, and to give you online quizzes and surveys. You can find support in using Canvas at the ITS Help Desk. For more information go to <http://www.utexas.edu/its/helpdesk/>

### **Feedback**

You will be asked to provide feedback on your learning and the my teaching strategies in informal as well as formal ways. It is very important for me to know your reactions to what is taking place in class, ensuring that together we can create a dynamic and effective learning community. You are also encouraged to provide ongoing feedback to me during class and office visits.

## **VIII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**COVID-19 RELATED INFORMATION.** The University's policies and practices related to the pandemic may be accessed at: <https://protect.utexas.edu/>

**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.

**ACCESSIBLE/COMPLIANT STATEMENT:** If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Disability and Access (D&A). You may refer to D&A's website for contact and more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with D&A, please touch base with your instructor to discuss your Accommodation Letter as early as possible in the semester so your approved accommodations can be implemented.

**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 race, 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. This atmosphere includes working intentionally to recognize and dismantle racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism in the classroom. 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 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 (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and other forms of electronic communication (e.g. blogs) 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 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY.** Students who violate University rules on academic 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 academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct>.

**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.

**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.

**UNIVERSITY ELECTRONIC MAIL STUDENT NOTIFICATION.** Electronic mail (email), like postal mail, is a mechanism for official University communication to students. The University will exercise the right to send email communications to all students, and the University will expect that email communications will be received and read in a timely manner. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <https://it.utexas.edu/policies/university-electronic-mail-student-notification-policy>.

**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 period after the absence. A reasonable accommodation does not include substantial modification to academic standards, or adjustments of requirements essential to any program of instruction. Students and instructors who have questions or concerns about academic accommodations for religious observance or religious beliefs may contact the [Office for Inclusion and Equity](#). The University does not maintain a list of religious holy days.

**TITLE IX DISCLOSURE.** Beginning January 1, 2020, Texas Education Code, Section 51.252 (formerly known as Senate Bill 212) requires all employees of Texas universities, including faculty, to report to the [Title IX Office](#) any information regarding incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive information about incidents of this type (including, but not limited to, written forms, applications, one-on-one conversations, class assignments, class discussions, or third-party reports) must report it to the Title IX Coordinator. Before talking with me, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX-related incident, please remember that I will be required to report this information.

Faculty, staff, graduate assistants, teaching assistants, and graduate research assistants are [mandatory reporters](#) under federal Title IX regulations and are required to report [a wide range of behaviors we refer to as sexual misconduct](#), including the types of misconduct covered under Texas Education Code, Section 51.252. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex – including pregnancy and parental status – in educational programs and activities. The Title IX Office has developed supportive ways and compiled campus resources to support all impacted by a Title IX matter.

If you would like to speak with a case manager, who can provide support, resources, or academic accommodations, in the Title IX Office, please email: [supportandresources@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:supportandresources@austin.utexas.edu). Case managers can also provide support, resources, and accommodations for pregnant, nursing, and parenting students.

For more information about reporting options and resources, please visit: <https://titleix.utexas.edu>, contact the Title IX Office via email at: [titleix@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:titleix@austin.utexas.edu), or call 512-471-0419.

**CAMPUS CARRY POLICY.** The University's policy on campus carry may be found here: <https://campuscarry.utexas.edu>.

**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 and COVID-19 ADVICE LINE (BCCAL).** If students have concerns about their behavioral health, or if they are concerned about the behavioral health of someone else, students may use the Behavior Concerns and COVID-19 Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns. 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 or visit <https://safety.utexas.edu/behavior-concerns-advice-line>. The Behavior Concerns and COVID-19 Advice Line has been expanded to support The University of Texas at Austin community during the COVID-19 pandemic. By calling 512-232-5050 - Option 2 for COVID-19, students, faculty and staff can be assisted in English and Spanish with COVID-19 support.

**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.

## IX. COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Assignment Due	Readings
8/21	<b>No class: Complete chapter one for the first week. Share video introductions</b>	Video Introductions-Post on Canvas discussion board	What is Group Therapy- Cherry (Verywell Mind)
8/28	Introduction activity Syllabus review Initial Stage of a Group		Ch.1 Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy- Yalom

<b>9/4</b>	Labor Day: No class		
<b>9/11</b>	<p>Applying Critical Race Theory to Group Practice: Case scenarios</p> <p>Learning Lab (Preparation stage only): First time meeting with small groups in class</p>	Introductory Goals	<p>The Racist Beginnings of Standardized Testing-Rosales and Walker (NEA)</p> <p>Teaching Multicultural Groups-Bemak &amp; Chung</p>
<b>9/18</b>	<p>Regulation activity</p> <p>Learning Lab #1 (initial group): Planning, Practice, Process, Task Group (small groups the entire class)</p>	Post reflections	Dr. Bruce Perry video
<b>9/25</b>	<p>Ethical and Legal Issues in Group Counseling: Case scenarios</p> <p>Learning #2 (second group): Choose ethical issue</p>	Post reflections	<p>Virginia Satir-Psychology Today</p> <p>Short videos of Virginia Satir</p>
<b>10/2</b>	<p>Regulation Activity</p> <p>LGBTQ+IA case scenarios</p> <p>Learning Lab #3: Identity and self-expression. Entire Class</p>		Culturally Responsive Therapist-LA Times

10/9	<p>Task Group</p> <p><b>Guest speaker: Sergio Perez-Making a Comprehensive Food Plan for Austin and Travis County</b></p> <p>Family Roles in groups</p>		<p>Food Plan website-scroll through</p> <p>Family Role worksheet on Canvas</p>
10/16	<p>Regulation activity</p> <p>Learning Lab #4: Internal family systems. Entire class</p>	Post reflections	IFS powerpoint
10/23	<p>Small group process: group observations</p> <p>Managing group conflict, different participation styles, and behavioral issues</p> <p>Case scenarios</p>	Community observation papers	Drama triangle article-Karpman
10/30	<p>Regulation Activity</p> <p>Learning Lab #5: Group conflict. Entire class</p>	Post reflections	
11/6	<p>Working with children and adolescents in groups</p>	Post videos on discussion board	Teens social media use-NPR

11/13	Regulation Activity Learning Lab # 6: Termination	Video group role play feedback due  Post reflections	
11/20	Thanksgiving: No class		
11/27	Older adult myths and stigmas Working with older adults in groups Case scenarios		Ageism-American Psychological Association
12/4	Final Class closing activity	Evaluation of Learning and final grade summary	

\*syllabus subject to change and will be updated accordingly

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