I. Catalog Course Description

Practice, theory and research about group dynamics and groupwork in task groups, psychoeducational groups, support groups and therapeutic groups are analyzed and applied as part of learning the basics of group work in human services settings.

II. Course Overview

Groupwork has a long and honored past as a method of intervention in many social work settings. This course will integrate experiential aspects of involvement with groups within the class, as well as incorporate readings that allow students to critically evaluate application of theories of group intervention and group dynamics. Ability to differentially use the professional self in different group modalities (psychoeducational, support, traditional therapeutic, task-based, etc.) will be a focus of the course. This will be informed by an imperative to address the ethical and social justice implications of the ways group work is overused in settings where it is less effective, and underutilized where it may show efficacy.

III. Place of the course in the program

This elective is open to students who have successfully completed the first semester of Foundation Practice. Ideally, the student should have a field placement that allows exposure to group work.

IV. Course Objectives

Goal 1 Devlop an ethical, competent, and reflective approach to group work practice utilizing differential social work identity (CC2.1.1).

Goal 1 Objectives:
1. Incorporate NASW Code of Ethics core values (service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, competence- NASW Code of Ethics) within analysis and practice of group work in social service settings (CC 2.1.2; 2.1.5).

2. Develop professional interpersonal skills: the ethical, differential and conscious use of self, the ability to formulate groups to meet a specific purpose, to establish a working alliance and facilitate groups, and ability to utilize supervision and self reflection to promote critical thinking and self-correcting practice in work with group participants (CC 2.17; 2.1.9).
3. Demonstrate knowledge of inter- and multi-disciplinary theories of human and social behavior related to group dynamics and efficacy of group practice for varied cultural and ethnic populations, as well as populations experiencing specific problem sets. Demonstrate ability to integrate theoretical knowledge in assessment, intervention, and evaluation of practice (CC 2.1.3; 2.1.7)

4. Recognize the unique capacity of group work to inspire a sense of universality (Yalom) and promote a sense of connection to others, while allowing growth in self-acceptance and empowerment. Develop skills, founded upon values of cultural humility and awareness of issues of power and privilege, to enable group work with diverse populations who experience oppression, discrimination, and/or stigma (CC 2.1.4; 2.1.5).

5. Articulate the rationale for group work in varied settings and advocate for its use where effective, but discourage broad use where it is not as effective (CC 2.1.3; 2.1.8).

Goal 2- Integrate research and policy practice within group work practice.

Goal 2 Objectives:

1. Develop the conceptual and logical skills involved in problem analysis and planning of group interventions with client systems. Be able to utilize research to understand the difference among group modalities and effectiveness of interventions based on group type, population served, and group dynamics (CC 2.1.7; 2.1.6; 2.1.10d).

2. Advocate for policy and agency program practice that integrates awareness of the intersections among group modality, worker stance, population served and group purpose(CC 2.1.8).

3. Demonstrate the ability to engage in research–informed practice and practice-informed research to improve practice, particularly the ability to utilize feedback from the group process and dynamics, as well as direct feedback from group participants about their experience within the group (CC 2.1.6;2.1.10d).

V. Required Texts


Recommended:
VI. **Course Requirements**

Class sessions will include presentations of conceptual material, demonstrations, discussion, and group activities. Through lectures, readings, class discussion/activities and written papers, students will be expected to apply the concepts from small group theory to the analysis of group situations.

This is an experiential course designed to give you experience as a group observer, group leader, and group member. During the semester we will conduct self-study in small and large groups in class. Authentic self-evaluation and appropriate evaluation and feedback of others will be expected

*(Optional Section)*We are a learning community, therefore:

Students must read all assigned material and be fully prepared for discussion of the material as well as its application to their own group experiences. This course will be run in seminar style with full participation expected.

Class attendance and participation is **required.** Students are expected to arrive to class on time. Students are expected to notify the instructor PRIOR to any absence. Each unexcused absence over three (3) will lead to a reduction of one letter grade; for example, with 4 absences the highest grade possible is a B. Papers are to be completed by scheduled due dates. Late assignments will be accepted ONLY with prior approval.

1. Sessions will be conducted primarily on a discussion basis, which incorporates readings. Small and large group work is integral to the learning objectives - both from the level of participation and the level of analysis.

2. Students will be expected to share incidents from their professional and/or fieldwork experience, as well as from their current experience within the class groups. This requires respectful reflection and integration of the NASW Code of Ethics in regards especially to cultural competence, confidentiality and respect for the dignity and worth of all.

3. Students will be expected to **participate in class / small group exercises and presentations. Confidentiality: As social workers, one of our major ethical responsibilities is to confidentiality. Due to the nature of this course, each student is asked to maintain confidentiality concerning any personal material discussed in class.**

4. **A class presentation** will be assigned.

Presentation format: Groups of 3-5 students will select a topic from the syllabus and develop a presentation for that class session. At least one of the assigned readings for that session must be used/presented, and application to at least one experience of the small or large group process must be included. It is strongly recommended that a
group exercise or intervention be planned as part of the presentation. Group members may delegate responsibilities as they please, but each group member will rate themselves and the other members of the group after the presentation (see attached rating sheet). A brief outline of the planned presentation must be given to the instructor the class prior to the presentation (this should include references to any additional resources the group will use in preparing their presentation/ intervention/ exercise). Grades for this assignment will have two parts, one grade applied to all group members that grades the outline and presentation itself and a second grade for each individual member of the group that reflects their participation and their group’s assessment of their participation.

5. A **term paper** of 10-15 pages, double-spaced with bibliography (**at least 3 journal references in addition to readings from the course**) is the final assignment. The paper should be an integration of your learning from all sources, i.e. experiential, observational, didactic, readings, etc. and should focus on:

1) your perceptions and analysis of the class groups’ (small and large) process, growth, development, progress, and problems;
2) your perception and analysis of your own role/s and membership in the groups on the above mentioned dimensions; differentiate your use of self/ roles within the different group constellations.
3) your perception and analysis of other members of the groups on the above mentioned dimensions (including the teaching leadership as well).
4) your assessment of the feedback you provided to others in your small group as well as the feedback you received; accuracy, tact, ability to generate new growth and learning.

This paper **IS NOT** a personal reaction but an educated assessment/evaluation of group process. Please cite appropriate references (minimum of 5 using APA style) from class readings and additional sources to support your paper. Be sure to demonstrate your understanding of the theory we have read and/or discussed.

Appropriate citation and grammar are expected. Professional social workers keep case records, write treatment reports for referral sources and managed care companies, correspond with judges and other professionals, develop policy, and advocate for their clients. All of these tasks require excellent writing skills. Therefore, proper grammar, syntax, spelling, and appropriate referencing (APA style) are expected for all assignments. Substantial credit will be deducted from a paper’s grade for repeated writing, spelling, and referencing errors. Writing assistance is available. Contact the instructor for details.

**Details of assignments:**
1. **Process Log (see optional form):** It is suggested that a continuous log be written after each class session, detailing the student’s assessment of the group experience, with the goal of increasing the student’s observational and analytic skills. This log should be written as soon after the session as is feasible. Include any reference to the readings about the process which you observed. This log will provide you with data for the final paper to allow you to trace the group process and your roles/ perceptions and analysis
over time, while also enabling you to remember the readings and the way you associated them with your analysis. It is not necessary that this be fully formulated- it can be impressionistic. What is important is your ability to trace the unfolding dynamics of both large and small group interactions. This log should be attached as an appendix to your final paper. **The log is done from a group participant perspective.**

2. **Small Group Presentation:** Students will be assigned to small groups to develop a small group project for class presentation. The presentation can take any form, e.g. role play, film clips, experiential activity, and should emphasize topics related to the specific readings of the week. The presentation should last approximately 30 minutes, and the instructor should be notified of plans in advance (The outline is due the week prior to the presentation.). The assessment of oneself and each group members’ participation is due the week following the presentation. A suggested format is found at the end of the syllabus. **This assignment is from a group facilitator perspective.**

3. **Paper:** This paper should be a substantive 10-15 page paper (double-spaced, using 12-point type). Analysis of the group dynamics from the beginning through the middle and ending phases of work should be incorporated with attention paid to how the small groups were similar or different from the large group. See #5 above for guidelines. **This assignment is from a group analysis perspective.**

VII. **Grading**

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small Group Participation and Group Presentation</td>
<td>25% for outline and presentation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>25% for participation assessments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
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VIII. **Course Evaluation**

Rutgers University issues a survey that evaluates both the course and instructor. This survey is completed by students toward the end of the semester, and all answers are confidential and anonymous. The instructor may also choose to conduct a mid-point evaluation.
IX. Course Outline

Class One & Two - Introductions: Group Process: An Overview


Corey et al P&P- Ch 1, 2

Yalom Ch. 1

Classes Three - Five
The Formation and Initial Stages of a Group: The Working Stages of a Group: Cultural Issues: Group Cohesion and Development

Corey et al. P & P Ch 4, 5, 6, 7

Yalom Ch. 3, 5, 6, 10, 11


Classes Six- Eight Types of Groups
Overview:

Corey et. Al. P&P Ch 9-12

Yalom Ch 14, 15
Internet-based Support Groups

Psycho-educational Groups

Toseland & Rivas Ch 9, Ch 15- A (if used)


Therapeutic Groups

Yalom Ch. 2, 7, 12


Self-Help Support Groups

Yalom Ch 15 review


Class Nine
Historical Issues in Group Work : Groupthink/ Organizational Groups

Toseland & Rivas Ch. 2

Yalom Preface, Ch 16

Class Ten
Special Practice Issues Conflict/ Problems in groups

Yalom Ch. 13


**Classes Eleven- Fourteen**  
**Group Change, Termination and Evaluation**

Corey et al P&P Ch 8


***Papers due.***

**Class Fifteen**  
Review and Wrap Up Session
X. **Academic Integrity**

All work submitted in a graduate course must be your own.

It is unethical and a violation of the University’s Academic Integrity Policy to present the ideas or words of another without clearly and fully identifying the source. Inadequate citations will be construed as an attempt to misrepresent the cited material as your own. Use the citation style preferred by the discipline.

Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgement is required when material from another source is stored in print, electronic, or other medium and is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one’s own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: “to paraphrase Plato’s comment…” and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge, such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one’s general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some cases, be a subtle issue. Any question about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member.

XI. **Disability Accommodation**

Please Note: Any student who believes that s/he may need an accommodation in this class due to a disability should contact the designated Coordinator for the Concerns of Students with Disabilities at the School of Social Work, Assistant Dean Arlene Hunter (tel.: 732-932-7126; email: amhunter@rci.rutgers.edu), for a letter of accommodation. Students must have a letter of accommodation from the Coordinator in order to receive accommodations. Any student who has already received a letter of accommodation, should contact the instructor privately to discuss implementation of his/her accommodations immediately. Failure to discuss implementation of accommodations with the instructor promptly may result in denial of your accommodations.
XII.  Bibliography

Balmer, D H; Gikundi, Elias; Nasio, James; Kihuho, Francis; Plummer, Francis A. A (1998). Clinical Trial of Group Counselling for Changing High-Risk Sexual Behavior in Men, *Counselling Psychology Quarterly, 111, Mar, 33-43*


Updated: January 13, 2005
GROUP DYNAMICS PROCESS NOTES/ Log

Name:  Date & Number of Session:

Topic:  Date Written:

Try to note observations about verbal and nonverbal communication, environmental set-up, leadership, roles of other members, your roles, and whatever else strikes you as important.

What were the most important things you learned today?

How did you feel about the session? What worked or didn’t work for you? Why?

Comment on the large vs. and small group process.

Any thoughts about the readings that you want to comment on?

How do you plan to use this knowledge “back home” in your practice and/or personal life?