This course builds on the content presented in SW521 and the other foundation courses and focuses on the processes of intervention and individual change groups. Particular attention will be given to the recruitment and composition of group members, leadership structure of small groups, phases of group development, and such group processes as decision-making, tension reduction, conflict resolution, goal setting, contracting, and evaluation. Students will learn how to assess and address group problems such as scapegoating, member resistance, low morale, over-active deviance, etc. They will learn to employ a variety of intra-group strategies and techniques such as programs, structured activities, exercises, etc. Theories and methods consistent with the achievement of social justice through group work practice will be emphasized. The course will also consider how gender, ethnicity, race, social class, sexual orientation, and different abilities will impact on various aspects of group functioning such as purpose, composition, leadership, selection of intervention strategies, and group development.

2. Course Content

The course briefly reviews the history of social group work practice in the United States, and discusses the various kinds of task and individual change groups (e.g. teams, committees, consciousness raising, support, treatment, developmental, social action/social change, self-help, internet, etc.) found in contemporary social work practice. The course will also discuss how groups can be used to promote well-being, to prevent social problems, to treat existing problems, and to rehabilitate clients with severe conditions that are not amenable to more time limited interventions. The various factors associated with group effectiveness in both task and individual change groups will be presented, as well as those factors that have been designed to reduce the potentially negative and deleterious consequences of group interventions.

Various models of stages of group development in both task and individual change groups and in both open-ended and closed-ended groups will be presented. The implications for leadership styles, the kinds of group dynamics, and the kinds of group interventions in each stage will be discussed. Various structural properties of groups such as sociometry, communication, norms, roles, status, power, and geography will be presented as they relate to the stages of group development. Group processes such as decision making, task achievement, conflict resolution, tension reduction, and contracting will also be related to stages of group development.
All phases of the intervention process from recruitment and composition to assessment, goal formulation, evaluation, intervention and termination will be presented. Special consideration will be given to how these phases may be modified to account for the various diversity identities racial, class, gender, ethnic, sexual orientations, and abilities of clients. Evaluation procedures, designed to determine the effectiveness of various interventions, that can be incorporated into small groups will be presented. Course content will include ethical issues that relate to the practice of social work with groups, and those elements of the NASW code of ethics that especially impact on group practice.

3. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the differences between task, individual change, promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation groups and how these groups are employed in contemporary social work practice.

2. Assess the effectiveness of various kinds of groups and the various interventions that group leaders and facilitators utilize.

3. Critically apply in a practice setting a minimum of two empirically supported group work approaches.

4. Implement specific evaluation measures that can be integrated into monitoring and evaluation of group work.

5. Operationalize various models of group development in both open and closed groups and recognize how these various stages impact on group dynamics.

6. Identify common problems that emerge in group practice and intervene to resolve these problems.

7. Plan and carry out various structured activities and group interventions that take into account the phases of group development and the special needs of group members.

8. Describe the impact of the key diversity dimensions such as ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation on the dynamics of group structure and process in small groups.

9. Identify ways to match group intervention methods effectively and ethically with client problems, across diverse populations, cultural backgrounds, and sociopolitical contexts.
Draft—subject to revisions which will be clearly noted for final version. We may co-create some changes in class.

10. Operationalize ethical codes (i.e. the NASW Code of Ethics and other ethical codes such as the ASGW) as they apply to value dilemmas that arise in social group work practice.

11. Conduct an assessment of coping resources and strengths; biophysical, emotional, behavioral and cognitive functioning; intra-personal and environmental systems.

12. Identify the factors that influence group members’ motivation to pursue change.

13. Demonstrate their ability to form worker-group member alliances and collaborations, communicate empathically, and help enhance the motivation for change, cultivate hope, and address ambivalence and internal and external barriers to change.

14. Identify one’s own social and cultural identities and group memberships, and how these relate to working with diverse group members, colleagues, and other professionals.

**Relationship of Course to Four Curricular Themes**

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity:** The key diversity dimensions have an impact on membership and composition, which in turn, influence various aspects of group dynamics. Leadership, status, sociometry, norms, conflict resolution, and communication in groups are dramatically affected by issues of diversity and must be accounted for by social workers in planning and facilitating various kinds of groups.

- **Social Justice and Social Change:** The history of social group work emerges from that part of social work’s history concerned various reform movements in the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Though therapy groups have emerged as the primary venue in the last two decades, there are efforts to redirect group work to its more traditional roots. We will examine contemporary conceptions of social justice practice in groups and the diverse ways this may be addressed.

- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation:** Though methods courses tend to emphasize treatment models, this course will examine at least one promotion and prevention model of groups and at least one rehabilitation model of groups. This course will also describe the similarities and differences between these kinds of groups.

- **Behavioral and Social Science Research:** This course will rely on group dynamic theory and on empirical research on the effectiveness of various group interventions and models. A goal of competency is evidence-based group work practice is emphasized.

**Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values**

Social workers must understand when groups are contraindicated for particular clients and must be able to assertively intervene in group processes when group experiences are harming group
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members. Ethical issues such as client confidentiality, forced participation, and involuntary treatment are considered as they impact social work with groups.

**Recommended Course Texts:** You do not need to buy these.


**SESSION OUTLINE**

**Session 1- May 12**

**Introduction**

**Group Work History**

**Dynamics**

**Development**

**Session 2-May 19**

**Group Leadership; Planning; Composition**

Toseland and Rivas (2009) Leadership, Chapter 4, 92-127.


Draft—subject to revisions which will be clearly noted for final version. We may co-create some changes in class.


Session 3—May 26
First Sessions/Ethics


Session 4—June 2
Group Work Models


Session 5—June 9
First Group Simulations
Draft—subject to revisions which will be clearly noted for final version. We may co-create some changes in class.

Session 6- June 16
Groups for Children and Adolescents


Session 7- June 23
Later stages of groups/Problem Behavior in Groups

Corey & Corey, Ch. 7 Working Stage


Session 8-June 30
2nd Simulation sessions

Session 9- July 7
Foregrounding social justice

Draft—subject to revisions which will be clearly noted for final version. We may co-create some changes in class.


**Session 10- July 14—**
**Ending the Group—Termination phase**

Corey & Corey, Ch. 8


**Session 11—July 21—Presentations+Celebrations**
**Completing previous material; Reflections; Student Presentations-final rituals, wrap-ups**

Hallas, V. (2006). You don’t always have to pick up your mess right away: How being messy can be really neat! Social Work with Groups, 29 (2/3), 175-194.

**Assignments**
*See CANVAS for Due Dates, as they may shift and this will avoid confusion*

1. **Simulated Group Proposal. 20 Points**

This will be a group assignment with your facilitation team. Write a proposal that describes the simulated group you will facilitate in class. Include the following elements. You can add more or modify as needed:

1. Describe the purpose for the proposed group.
2. What agency is sponsoring the group. Specify here the “imagined” context of the group.
3. What model(s) will be used to conduct the group?
4. What is the evidence-base for the group model/techniques/processes you propose? *This should be a rigorous search of the literature and include 5-10 references.*
5. What resources does the agency have available for the group?
6. Who will be the members of the group?
7. What methods will be used to recruit?
Draft—subject to revisions which will be clearly noted for final version. We may co-create some changes in class.

8. What criteria will be used to include or exclude members?
9. What composition issues need to be addressed?
10. Will the group be open or closed? Structured or unstructured? How many sessions will the group meet, for how long, and at what interval?
11. Give a description of the types of activities planned for the group.
12. Include a detailed agenda for the first group session.

The following four assignments will be completed based on the simulated group sessions. More detail will be given when we know more about the use of technology for this assignment.

2. **Group Worker Reflection 1:** 20 points

3. **Member/Observer Reflection 1:** 10 points

4. **Group Worker Reflection 2:** 20 points

5. **Member/Observer Reflection:** 10 points

6. **Contribution to Class:** 10 points
   With your own learning goals in mind, create a contribution to learning for the whole class. This can take the form of a blog, a video, demonstration, presentation or performance. Creativity is encouraged.

7. **Participation Reflection:** 10 Points
   To inform evaluation of your engagement and participation in class answer the following.
   a. Sessions attended
   b. Participation in class sessions (see guidelines for active participation on syllabus and at the bottom of this assignment)
   c. Participation between classes (e.g. video work, team meetings, reactions to other students learning contributions, any additional relevant work)

**Active Engagement**  Class attendance is required. If you are unable to come to class on a specific day, please contact me (via email or c-tool message to create a written record) with the reason for the absence. If you miss more than one class session, we will need to meet to discuss a plan for making up missed class material to adequately complete the course. Generally this will take the form of an extra paper that covers material from that class. **Active participation** in class is expected. Active participation can be demonstrated in several ways, some examples are: participation in discussion, volunteering for in-class exercises, bringing experiences or problems from real life groups to class discussion, sharing group activities or techniques with class members, thoughtfully processing classroom experiences, taking risks in sustaining dialogue on difficult issues that arise in class, giving feedback to your colleagues on their videos and learning contributions, postings and reflections.
Draft—subject to revisions which will be clearly noted for final version. We may co-create some changes in class.

**Note on use of technology in the classroom:** Laptops are to be used only for taking notes, or for specific other uses as directed in class. Personal use of laptops, phones and other technology is not allowed during class.

You will reflect on your attendance and participation in your final reflection paper and that will provide a basis for evaluating and crediting your class participation.

**Notes on Grading**
All assignments earn points, which total to 100. The final grading scale is:

- A+ = 998-100, A = 93-97, A- = 91-92, B+ = 89-90, B = 84-88, B-= 82-83, C+ = 80-81, C = 73-79, C-= 70-73,

not passing = <70

I strive to give substantive feedback on each assignment, and to use my comments as a way to continue to have a dialogue about what you are learning in the class. I may not give specific feedback about why an assignment didn’t get a perfect scores, say a 19 (~an A) instead of 20 (an A+). A paper needn’t have any major flaws to earn an A-. But if you ever have any questions or concerns about the grading, please contact me to talk more about it.

I want to do what I can to make the class a good learning environment for every student. If you believe that you may need an accommodation for any sort of disability or learning issue, please feel free to make an appointment to see me to discuss that.