# Course Statement

## a. Course description

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.
b. 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.

c. Course objectives and competencies
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. (Practice Behavior 10.c.IP)
2. Assess the effectiveness of various kinds of groups and the various interventions that group leaders and facilitators utilize. (Practice Behavior 3.IP)
3. Critically apply in a practice setting a minimum of two empirically supported group work approaches. (Practice Behaviors 3.IP, 6.IP)
4. Implement specific evaluation measures that can be integrated into monitoring and evaluation of group work. (Practice Behavior 10.d.IP)
5. Operationalize various models of group development in both open and closed groups and recognize how these various stages impact on group dynamics. (Practice Behavior 3.IP)

6. Identify common problems that emerge in group practice and intervene to resolve these problems. (Practice Behaviors 1.IP, 10.c.IP)

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. (Practice Behavior 10.c.IP)

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. (Practice Behaviors 2.IP, 4.IP)

9. Identify ways to match group intervention methods effectively and ethically with client problems, across diverse populations, cultural backgrounds, and sociopolitical contexts. (Practice Behaviors 5.IP, 10.c.IP)

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. (Practice Behavior 2.IP)

11. Conduct an assessment of coping resources and strengths; biophysical, emotional, behavioral and cognitive functioning; intra-personal and environmental systems. (Practice Behavior 10.b.IP)

12. Identify the factors that influence group members' motivation to pursue change. (Practice Behaviors 9.IP, 10.a.IP)

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. (Practice Behaviors 1.IP, 10.a.IP)

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. (Practice Behaviors 1.IP, 4.IP)

d. Course design

- The format is lecture, with questions and discussion, as well as organized class discussion, with the latter frequently focusing on the analysis of actual cases. The core pedagogy for this class will be the development and implementation of simulated groups.
e. Curricular themes
   a. Multiculturalism and Diversity
      i. 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.
   b. Theme Relation to Social Justice
      i. 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.
   c. Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation
      i. 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.
   d. Theme Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research
      i. 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.
   f. Relationship 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 members. Ethical issues such as client confidentiality, forced participation, and involuntary treatment are considered as they impact social work with groups.
2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials

Readings will be posted on Canvas at least one week before the assigned class date. Almost all readings are already posted prior to the start of the semester.

b. Class schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Development**

**Ethics**

| Week 3 | Group Leadership & Composition | Toseland and Rivas (2017) Leadership, Chapter 4.


| Week 5  
| Week 6  
| Week 7  
| Week 8  
Feb 28 | Group Simulations | |
<p>|          | Winter Break – relax and enjoy | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 9</th>
<th>Later stages of groups/Problem Behavior in Groups</th>
<th>Corey &amp; Corey, Ch. 7 Working Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Simulated Group Sessions 2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 14</td>
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Theater of the Oppressed notes—see canvas.

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<tr>
<th>Week 12</th>
<th>Week 13</th>
<th>Week 14</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 28</td>
<td>Ending the Group—Termination phase, presentations</td>
<td>April 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulated Group Session 3</td>
<td>Corey &amp; Corey, Ch. 8</td>
<td>April 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hallas, V. (2006). You don't always have to pick up your mess right away: How being messy can be really neat! <em>Social Work with Groups</em>, 29 (2/3), 175-194.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### c. Assignments

**See CANVAS for Due Dates.**

**Simulation Pedagogy—**

- The core pedagogy for this class will be the development and implementation of simulated groups.
- Class members will be simulated clients in groups we create in class.
- Facilitation teams will be comprised of approx. 4-5 students, who will share the active facilitation of the group sessions.
- Each group will meet for three sessions of approximately 1 hour in length. The members will be consistent across the three sessions.
- Sessions will be video recorded. Annotation of these videos form the core assignments for the class. Technology for accomplishing this will be further discussed in class.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1. **Simulated Group Portfolio** | 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 research and clinical literature and include at least 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?  
  8. What criteria will be used to include or exclude members?  
  9. What composition issues need to 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.  
  13. Detail your plan for taking and recording notes for the group sessions. What would go in the client member files? | 15 pts.      |

The following six individual assignments will be completed based on the simulated group sessions. You will need to plan work time to review and annotate your videos in a relatively narrow window of time. Generally, observer annotations will be due one week after the facilitators complete their annotations, in time for them to review feedback prior to their next session. Grading will NOT be based on your performance in the videos but rather on the quality of your annotation and reflection.
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<tr>
<td>2. Group Worker Session 1 Annotation and Reflection</td>
<td>A detailed rubric will be distributed and posted for the completion of this reflection. On the video of your group, you will label and reflect on your facilitation. You will also give feedback to your co-facilitators and note issues of group dynamics and development. You will also write a personal reflection on the session.</td>
<td>15 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Observer Reflection 1</td>
<td>A more detailed rubric will be distributed. On the video of one other class group, you will give feedback to the facilitators. You will observe the same group for all three sessions.</td>
<td>5 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Group Worker Session 2 Annotation and Reflection</td>
<td>A detailed rubric will be distributed and posted for the completion of this reflection. On the video of your group, you will label and reflect on your facilitation. You will also give feedback to your co-facilitators and note issues of group dynamics and development. You will also post a brief personal reflection on the session.</td>
<td>15 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Observer Reflection 2</td>
<td>A more detailed rubric will be distributed. On the video of one other class group, you will give feedback to the facilitators. You will observe the same group for all three sessions.</td>
<td>5 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Group Worker Session 3 Annotation and Reflection</td>
<td>A detailed rubric will be distributed and posted for the completion of this reflection. On the video of your group, you will label and reflect on your facilitation. You will also give feedback to your co-facilitators and note issues of group dynamics and development. You will also post a brief personal reflection on the session.</td>
<td>15 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Observer Reflection 3</td>
<td>A more detailed rubric will be distributed. On the video of one other class group, you will give feedback to the facilitators.</td>
<td>5 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Contribution to Class</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>10 pts.</td>
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</table>
d. Attendance and class participation

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.

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 thoughtful feedback to your colleagues on their videos and learning contributions.

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.

e. Grading

In the spirit of a professional development experience that encourages you to stretch and grow, grading will be mainly on a credit/no credit basis for each assignment. If you make a strong and timely effort on each assignment, you will do well in this class in terms of grading. I will give feedback on each assignment that focuses on improving your knowledge and skills. If you complete the assignment at an acceptable graduate level, you will get the points allotted for that assignment. Students can lose points by not doing acceptable work and not participating at an acceptable level. I will give you specific feedback about what needs to be improved to make an assignment acceptable.

- Points for all assignments total to 95. Remaining 5 points reserved for exceptional performance. I will occasionally award a bonus point for assignments that are exceptionally well-done and for exceptional class participation and contributions.
- You will lose 1 point for the 1st assignment that I judge as unacceptable. You may then resubmit the assignment in acceptable form for credit. If not resubmitted with revisions, you will get no credit for the assignment. You will lose 2 points for the 2nd unacceptable assignment and 3 points for the 3rd unacceptable assignment and so on.
- You will lose 1 point for a late assignment. An additional point reduction will be made when an assignment is more than one week late. Longer than that, no credit will be earned for the assignment.
- Lose 1 point for a missed class, without prior arrangement or medical reason. Upon the 3rd absence, there will be 5-point deduction for each absence. You can be excused from a class if you contact me in advance and get authorization, or if you are physically unable to attend due to illness. But in no case can you miss more than two class sessions without point deductions. You will need to do make-up work for the missed class regardless of the reason.
- Unauthorized use of phones or laptops deduction of 1 point per occurrence.
- Being late to class or back from a break, lose 1 point for each two occurrences.

I try to provide clear, thoughtful feedback that helps you to deepen your awareness of professional social work practice as well as your writing and communication skills. *If I write or say something that confuses or upsets you, please make an appointment so we can discuss it!* If I help you deepen your understanding of something, that is helpful for me to know too.

**Grading Scale:**

- 98-100 = A+; 93-97 = A; 92= A-
- 91 = B+; 88-90 = B, 86-87 = B-
- 86= C+; 83-85= C; 80-82= C-
- Below 80; not passing

**3. Resources**

Accommodations
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. the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office can help to determine appropriate academic accommodations.

For more information, contact:
Services for Students with Disabilities
G-664 Haven Hall | 505 South State St.
(734) 763-3000 | ssdoffice@umich.edu
a. Self-Care
Professional social work education is demanding and may stress coping resources and abilities. Focusing on family social work can be particularly stressful as it often requires focus on one’s own family experiences. I hope that we can create a class environment that is supportive in exploring your own family experiences in regards to your professional practice. I encourage you to use resources available if you find the need for more support for any reason. I am willing to talk about things that come up for you during the semester and assist in accessing resources as needed.

The Office of Student Services’s Health and Wellness Program provides supportive services to MSW students which promote wellness, self-care, and maintenance of a healthy academic and mental health balance, as well as to increase disability awareness. Students may experience situations or circumstances that impede educational success and/or quality of life. Students may contact the Health and Wellness Advocates regarding any health, mental health or wellness issue(s). This could include need for advocacy and/or referral to School, university, or community resources, financial resources, or counseling centers. All meetings with students are strictly confidential and can take place in the School, over coffee, or locations where the student feels comfortable and non threatened. Contact the Health and Wellness Program via ssw.wellness@umich.edu.

Please consult the SSW website for additional resources: https://ssw.umich.edu/student-life/health-safety.

b. Safety & Emergency Preparedness
In the event of an emergency, dial 9-1-1 from any cell phone or campus phone.

All University of Michigan students, faculty and staff are required to familiarize themselves with emergency procedures and protocols for both inside and outside of the classroom. In the event of possible building closure (i.e. severe weather conditions, public health notices, etc.) you may contact (734)764-SSWB (7793) for up-to-date School closure information.

Be Prepared. Familiarize yourself with the emergency card posted next to the phone in every classroom/meeting room. Review the information on the emergency evacuation sign (located nearest the door) and locate at least (2) emergency exits nearest the classroom.
If you are concerned about your ability to exit the building in the case of an emergency, contact the Office of Student Services and/or email ssw-ADAcompliance@umich.edu. Office of Student Services
School of Social Work | Room
1748
734-936-0961

For more information, view the annual Campus Safety Statement at http://www.dpss.umich.edu/.

Register for UM Emergency Alerts at http://www.dpss.umich.edu/emergency-management/alert/.

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources. They include:

- Safety and emergency preparedness
- Mental health and well-being
- Teaching evaluations
- Proper use of names and pronouns
- Accommodations for students with disabilities
- Religious/spiritual observances
- Military deployment
- Writing skills and expectations
- Academic integrity and plagiarism