



Course title:	Advanced Evidence-Informed Interpersonal Practice with Groups	
Course #/term:	SW605 Section 004, Fall 2021	
Time and place:	Virtual Fridays, 6p-9p	
Credit hours:	3	
Prerequisites:		
Instructor:	Mari Pitcher, LMSW	
Pronouns:	She/Her/Hers	
Contact info:	Email: pitcherm@med.umich.edu	Phone/text: 919-949-4376
	You may expect a response within 24 hours	
Office:	Via Zoom at your request	
Office hours:	Please text or e-mail me a request to meet and I will set something up within 24 hours.	

1. Course Statement

a. Course description

This advanced practice course builds on content from previous foundational courses and focuses on the processes of group interventions with diverse client populations, across various client concerns and in a variety of practice settings such as healthcare, mental health, and other community-based settings. The focus of this course is on the development and utilization of group skills and interventions.

Particular attention will be given to the recruitment and composition of group members, leadership structure of groups, phases of group development, and group processes such as decision-making, tension reduction, conflict resolution, goal setting, contracting, and evaluation. Students will learn how to assess and intervene with group problems

such as scapegoating, member resistance, low morale, over-active participation, etc. They will learn to employ a variety of intra-group strategies and techniques such as programs, structured activities, exercises, etc.

Interventions 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 various aspects of group functioning such as purpose, composition, leadership, selection of intervention strategies, and group development.

b. Course objectives and competencies

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

1. Develop and operationalize a working knowledge of the various types of groups (i.e. support, therapy, tasks, focus, prevention, rehabilitation, etc), the stages of the evolution/development and life cycle of groups and the impact of these factors on group dynamics and group functioning. (EPAS 6,7)
2. Develop and use knowledge of the types and stages of groups to identify group processes to determine and demonstrate appropriate, effective interventions. (EPAS 6, 7, 8)
3. Recognize multiple factors including, but not limited to, composition, screening, format, contraindications, interventions and process elements when considering the development and/or use of groups as a client/population intervention. (EPAS 2, 6, 7, 8)
4. Demonstrate knowledge of group roles, dynamics, norms and communication styles and patterns and identity/utilize appropriate interventions to promote effective group functioning and desired group outcomes. (EPAS 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9)
5. Analyze the impact of and apply various types of leadership styles in facilitating group processes . (EPAS 1, 7, 8)
6. Identify common problems that emerge in groups and utilize group conflict resolution interventions to address, utilize and resolve these problems. (EPAS 6, 7, 8)
7. Demonstrate ability to effectively and ethically consider, plan and carry out a range of evidence-based/evidence-informed structured activities and interventions across diverse populations, cultural backgrounds, and sociopolitical contexts to address client concerns/needs in a variety of practice settings. (EPAS 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8)
8. Demonstrate ability to form worker-group member alliances and collaborations, communicate empathically, and help enhance client-centered motivation for

change, cultivate hope, and address ambivalence and internal and external barriers to change. (EPAS 6,8)

9. Demonstrate sensitivity to interpersonal dynamics, voluntary or involuntary participation and social/cultural/contextual factors of both the group facilitator(s) and diverse group members which can both strengthen and potentially threaten therapeutic alliance and group functioning (EPAS 1,2,7)
10. Describe and effectively respond to the impact of key diversity dimensions for both the facilitator(s) and members of a group 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, and sexual orientation on the dynamics of group structure and group process. (EPAS 2,8)
11. Assess the effectiveness of various types of groups and various interventions utilizing specific evaluation measures that can be integrated into monitoring and evaluating group work. (EPAS 7,9)

c. Course design

This advanced practice course will focus on utilization of a flipped classroom approach in which students complete pre-work (readings, viewing videos, etc.) **with in-class time used for limited didactic lecture and a primary focus on students actively developing and practicing group intervention skills and techniques.**

Active engagement in a variety of group interventions, role plays, observation and critical analysis of various interventions, matching group interventions to various populations and client needs and mutual constructive feedback is critical to the skill development focus of this course.

d. Intensive focus on PODS

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

Group work is grounded in Social Work's historical involvement with various reform movements at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. This course will examine the contemporary relevance of social justice practice in group work practice and diverse ways this may be integrated into social work practice in a variety of settings. Key diversity dimensions have an impact on membership and composition, which in turn, influence various aspects of group dynamics. Attention will be given to considerations regarding 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, and sexual orientation on the dynamics of group structure and group process.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials:

No text required; all readings available on CANVAS.

Readings as assigned/posted on Canvas

- To fully engage in the course topic and become a competent and skilled social work practitioner, it is expected that students will complete all required readings.
- Assigned reading content will often be discussed in class and/or included in quiz material
- Readings will be posted on Canvas at least one week in advance

b. Class schedule

You will find detailed class schedules available on CANVAS. Readings, assignments, asynchronous learnings are all outlined in CANVAS modules. Please review the modules and assignments thoroughly, as they are not outlined in this syllabus.

c. Assignments: detailed assignment instructions and rubrics will be available in Canvas three weeks prior to due date

- **Simulated Group Proposal and Character Development**

- Your team will work together to develop a proposal for the group that you plan to simulate. Additionally, you will develop brief group member outlines that describe the characteristics of each group member.
- **Simulated Group Sessions:**
Students will work in two, or three, person sub-teams to interview potential group members and to facilitate two group session simulations, integrating group work rationale/goals/desired outcome for the chosen activity and your evaluation of lessons learned from the experience.
 1. The core pedagogy for this class will be the development and implementation of simulated groups.
 2. Class members will be simulated clients in groups we create in class
 3. Teams will be comprised of 6-7 students, who will share the active facilitation of the group sessions.
 4. The simulations will be done during our Zoom class sessions.
 5. At the end of each simulated session, your larger team will provide feedback and reflections on the group session experience. Each session facilitator will turn in a written reflection, which incorporates the feedback/reflection from the larger team, one week after the simulated group session he/she/they facilitate. (This means that each student will turn in two written reflections, one for each session they facilitate).

d. Attendance and class participation:

The nature of this course makes it crucial for all of us to attend the synchronous portions of class. Role play and practice are core learning strategies for this course. We will often feel uncomfortable when practicing/role playing in front of others. As such, I encourage each of us to embrace this 'uncomfortable feeling,' creating a safe environment in which we all can develop our skills through practice, mutual support and thoughtful feedback.

Much of your learning and growth depends upon your active participation as a member of our class. **Developing and practicing group intervention skills and techniques requires active participation to be successful.**

If you are unable to attend class, please send me a text or e-mail a minimum of 12 hours in advance. If you miss more than two classes (with prior arrangement or emergent medical reason), it will be difficult for you to successfully fulfill the requirements of the course.

Class participation and effort will be a factor in your final grade. If you miss more than two classes, it will be difficult for you to successfully pass the class.

<https://ssw.umich.edu/msw-student-guide/section/1.08.00/17/policy-on-class-attendance>

e. Grading

In an effort to encourage each of you to learn and grow in an environment that celebrates the uniqueness of each individual, I will be adopting a credit/no credit grading approach to each assignment. My focus will be on providing you with extensive feedback on your work that aids in your self-reflection, knowledge acquisition and skill development. Additionally, each of you bring a wealth of knowledge and experience into the classroom. To leverage that knowledge, peer review and feedback are key features of the course.

Simulation grades will not be based on your skill level as a group facilitator, but rather on your integration and use of core course concepts in the development and execution of your simulation.

Hence, if you complete all of your assignments, demonstrate scholarly effort at a graduate level, and commit to enhance your social work knowledge and skills, you will receive an A for the course. Incomplete/missing assignments, excessive class absences or lack of graduate level effort will result in a failing grade.

If you disagree with my evaluation of your work, please contact me within a week of receiving your evaluation and I will meet with you, via Zoom, to discuss your concerns. My goal is to assist you in assimilating the course content and practicing its application in a simulated environment.

<https://ssw.umich.edu/msw-student-guide/chapter/1.18/student-grievances>

<https://ssw.umich.edu/msw-student-guide/chapter/1.08/grades-in-academic-courses-and-in-field-instruction>

<https://ssw.umich.edu/msw-student-guide/section/1.07.01/15/grades-for-special-circumstances>

f. Class Recording

Audio and video recording of in-class lectures and discussions is prohibited without the advance written permission of the instructor. Students with an approved accommodation from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities permitting the

recording of class meetings must present documentation to the instructor in advance of any recording being done. The instructor reserves the right to disallow recording for a portion of any class time where privacy is a special concern. If the instructor chooses to record a class, they will decide which classes, if any, are recorded, what portion of each class is recorded, and whether a recording is made available on the course management website. On days when classes are recorded, students will be notified a recording is occurring. Class recordings and course materials may not be reproduced, sold, published or distributed to others, in whole or in part, without the written consent of the instructor.

g. COVID-19 Statement

COVID-19 Statement

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been put in place for our protection. Your participation in this course is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including [properly wearing a face covering in class](#) and compliance with the [University COVID-19 Vaccination Policy](#). Other applicable and additional safety measures may be described in the [Campus Maize & Blueprint](#). Your ability to participate in this course may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the [Office for Institutional Equity](#) and those seeking an exemption related to the vaccination requirement should submit an exemption request through [WolverineAccess](#). I also encourage you to review the [Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) and the [COVID-related Addendum to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

h. Health-Related Class Absences

Please evaluate your own health status regularly and refrain from attending class and coming to campus if you are ill. You are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention for treatment. School of Social Work students who miss class due to illness of any kind will be given opportunities to access course materials online or provided with alternative learning opportunities. Please notify me by email about your absence as soon as practical, so that I can make accommodations. Please note that documentation (a doctor's note) for medical excuses is not required.

i. Accommodations for students with disabilities

If you need an accommodation for a disability please let me know as soon as possible. Many aspects of this course, the assignments, the in class activities, and teaching methods can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress throughout the semester. I will make every effort to use the resources available to us, such as the services for Students with Disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Computing Site, and the like. If you chose to disclose your disability, I will (to the extent permitted by law) treat that information as private and confidential. For more information and resources, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities office at G664 Haven Hall, (734) 7633000 or go to <http://www.umich.edu/~sswd/> Note: I am committed to moving towards universal design for learning (UDL). If you have suggestions for how I can improve our classroom space, activities, and/or assignments to be more accessible now or in the future, please do not hesitate to let me know! Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: <https://sww.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*