

**Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Graduate School of Education
Department of Educational Psychology**

**Fall 2014
Group Counseling: Theory and Practice
15:297:505
Wednesday 4:50-7:30pm**

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Hours: By prior appointment

Course Description:

The course provides an overview of theories of group counseling as well as group dynamics, group leadership, group procedures, and group counseling skills. Students will participate in counseling group experiences, providing them with insight into group process as both a leader and a participant.

Course objectives:

1. To introduce theories of group counseling.
2. To introduce the principles of group dynamics, group formation, and group leadership.
3. To introduce the stages of group growth and development and facilitate understanding of the therapeutic characteristics and critical problems in each stage.
4. To present ethical and legal issues in-group counseling (CACREP II.K.6.g).
5. To introduce issues affecting group counseling and dynamics in a diverse society.
6. To increase students' multicultural knowledge, awareness of self and others, and group counseling skills for working with diverse client populations.
7. To provide the student with experience in a small group setting as both participant and leader.
8. Identify the personal characteristics of group leaders that have an impact on group members.
9. Explain why classroom guidance and group counseling are integral components of comprehensive school counseling programs as well as clinical settings.
10. Identify appropriate counseling topics and interventions across the life span; including classroom guidance in a K-12 setting as well as counseling adult and elderly populations.

Student Learning Outcomes: Student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of appropriate group formation, including conceptualization of purpose of group and participant screening methods.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of group dynamics as well as the stages of group development as evidenced by participation in counseling and observation groups.
3. Compare and contrast different types of interactive groups and group leadership as evidenced by lecture, readings, class presentations, and counseling and observation groups.
4. Demonstrate an ability to identify roles that the group members are playing and describe how group leaders facilitate the progress of the group as evidenced by class discussion, counseling group participation, and group process papers and personal journals.
5. Demonstrate an ability to develop group goals as evidenced by participation in counseling group and class presentations.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of group development and the techniques necessary to facilitate group growth and development as demonstrated by class presentations, observation group discussions and group process papers and final group project.
7. Demonstrate an understanding of how human diversity affects the group process as evidenced by class discussion and presentations, Observation group discussions and papers, and participation in the counseling group.
8. Demonstrate an awareness of themselves as racial/cultural beings and how they relate and are perceived by others in a group through working in their counseling group and personal journals.
9. Design, participate in, and lead a counseling group as evidenced by counseling group experience, and group proposal/ presentation.

Class components:

Class sessions will include three components:

1. Lecture - Class Discussion of Content & Group Presentations (approximately 1 hour). A tentative schedule of discussion topics is provided below. You are expected to have completed all readings prior to the class meeting and actively participate through informed discussion.

2. The *counseling group* (co-facilitated by students). Every class session will (**10 hours total**) have a group experience. These groups will be led by class members and co-facilitated by the course instructor. First few groups will be led by this instructor so as to demonstrate leadership. Student leadership will rotate weekly among the counseling group participants. **The task of the counseling group is to discuss issues surrounding your professional development.**

Required Text:

Corey, M.S.; Corey, G.; Corey, C. (2014). *Groups: Process and Practice* (9th ed.). Brooks/Cole, Belmont, CA.

Recommended Texts:

*Greenberg, K. (2003). *Group counseling in K-12 schools: A handbook for school counselors*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. ***(Recommended for Students in School Counseling)**

*Yalom, I. & Leszcz, M. (2005). *The theory and practice of group psychotherapy* (5th ed.). Madison, WS: Basic Books. ***(Recommended for Students in Counseling Psychology)**

Required Readings:

American Counseling Association. (2005). *Code of ethics and standards of practice*. Retrieved December, 2008, from <http://www.counseling.org/Resources/CodeOfEthics/TP/Home/CT2.aspx>

Association for Specialists in Group Work. (2007). *ASGW best practice guidelines*. Retrieved December, 2008, from <http://www.asgw.org/>

Association for Specialists in Group Work (2000). *Professional Standards for the Training of Group Workers*. Retrieved December, 2008, from <http://www.asgw.org/>.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Attendance and Group Membership (10%): There can be no substitute for attendance in this class. Much of your learning will take place as a result of your membership and participation in the group. **Before beginning this class, you should make a commitment to be present, on time, and actively involved at each session.** Unexcused absence will result in lower your total grade by 5%. Three or more absences will result in an incomplete grade.

(A) Come to class having read the text assignment and prepared to discuss the reading. You will be evaluated on your participation in the discussions of the information on group counseling.

(B) Come to class prepared to fully engage in the experiential group segment of the class. Attempt to self-disclose as much as you can, and offer feedback to others in your group.

2. Counseling Group's Personal Journal (20%): Counseling group participants are required to keep an ongoing journal of their group experiences. Entries should include members' personal reactions, their perceptions of the group's process and group leadership through answering the following questions: (a) "what I am learning about myself"; (b) "what I am learning about others"; and (c) "what I am learning about

groups?" You will write **10 personal journals and will be electronically submitted by Friday midnight of each week.**

3. Leadership Style Exploration (20%)

A reflect on your personal characteristics and preferences that may affect your group leadership style and prepare a self-exploration presentation. Briefly discuss the following questions: (a) personal values you hold that might affect your work as a group leader, (b) theoretical approaches to group intervention that fit best for you, (c) the aspects of group leadership that might be most challenging for you, (d) the types of co-leader with whom you might work best, (e) your observations about your own session- what has worked well and what has not. **The paper will be 6 double-space, typed pages by December 17th.**

4. Topic Research Proposal (5%) and Paper (20%):

You will select a group counseling topic of interest to you and write a paper outlining what research indicates about this topic area. Some topic ideas include, but are not limited to: grief counseling, divorce group, military family, ESL students' support group, group counseling theory (CBT, solution-focused brief theory, etc.), impact of various aspects of diversity on group counseling, etc. You must incorporate at least six journal articles (written within the last 10 years) that address your topic. Discuss research findings to date, limitations of existing research, and implications for future research and practice in adequately addressing this group counseling issue. **The research paper proposal will be due on October 1st, and the paper due will be on October 29th. It must be written in APA style and should be no more than 10 pages in length, including title page and references.**

5. Group Proposal (10%) and Presentation (15%): You will create a fictional group that you might run as a professional counselor. This presentation will serve as your final grade and should demonstrate the culmination of your learning. Choose the type of group that you would be likely to lead or co-lead in your actual or anticipated work place. Research your idea and include at least 5 references (*Note that all references should be properly cited in the body of the proposal as well as in a reference list according to APA guidelines*). **Proposals are to be no more than 6 typed, double-spaced, 12-font pages (not including reference list or appendices). Guidelines for the various sections of the proposal are provided. The proposal due will be on December 3rd.**

You also will be responsible for presenting a structured activity from your proposal to the class.

Plan a **30 minute activity** to include the following:

- (a) Short explanation of the activity and its purpose
- (b) The actual experience of the activity
- (c) Processing by the class

You are also responsible for a 1-page summary of the activity. Make enough copies for each member of the class and the instructor.

Performance Evaluation Criteria and Procedures

Evaluation:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Attendance	10%
Personal Journal	20%
Topic Research Proposal & Paper	25%
Group Proposal	10%
Group Presentation	15%
Leadership Style Exploration	20%

Grading Formula:

A letter grade consistent with the student's performance on written assignments, class presentation, self-assessment, autobiography, class attendance, participation, conduct and other class activities will be awarded upon completion of the requirements for this course. Grades will be determined based on the accumulation of points as listed above. Class attendance, participation and conduct will also be factored into this point system with 10 points reduction for each unexcused absence. Grades based upon the point system will be as follows: A: 91-100 B+: 87-90 B: 80-86 C+: 75-79 C: 70-74 F: 69 or less

Further narrative associated with grading for student evaluation is as follows:

A Mastery of material, content, and concept. Superior demonstration of counseling skills at the masters' level. The student had completed all assignments on-time. The student had perfect attendance, participated in role play and class activities.

B+ / B Satisfactory understanding of material, content, and concept at the masters' level. The student consistently demonstrated counseling skills at the masters' level. The student's assignments were submitted to the instructor no more than one day after the due date. The student had no more than one absence, participated in role play and class activities.

C+ / C The student demonstrated a lack of counseling skills and knowledge expected at the masters' level. This student may have had the competency to complete the assignments, but have not demonstrated commitment to the class (3 or more absences), lacking punctuality and preparation for class. Further supervision and work is needed to perform appropriately at the masters' level.

COURSE READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS & ACTIVITIES

Course Schedule Outline: The course schedule, requirements and procedures provide a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary once the course is underway. Students will be informed of any changes during regular class meetings. It will be each student's responsibility to stay informed of any changes.

Date	Readings	Topics	Activities & Assignments
Sep. 3		Introductions	ASGW
Sep. 10	Ch. 1 & 2	Leadership skills and Group theory	
Sep. 17	Ch. 3& 4	Group Ethics and Process Multicultural Issues in Group	
Sep. 24	Ch. 5	Group Stages: Forming a Group	<i>Counseling Session</i>
Oct. 1	Ch. 6	Group Stages: Initial	<i>Counseling Session</i> Research Paper Proposal Due
Oct. 8	Ch. 7	Group Stages: Transition	<i>Counseling Session</i>
Oct. 15	Ch. 8	Group Stages: Working	<i>Counseling Session</i>
Oct. 22	Ch. 9	Group Stages: Termination	<i>Counseling Session</i>
Oct. 29		Yalom's Therapeutic Factors	<i>Counseling Session</i> Research Paper Due
Nov. 5		Corey's Video: Challenges Facing Group Leaders	<i>Counseling Session</i> Group Proposal Outline Due
Nov. 12	Ch. 10	Types of Groups: Children and Adolescents	<i>Counseling Session</i>
Nov. 19	Ch. 11	Types of Groups: Young Adults and Adults	<i>Counseling Session</i>
Nov. 26		Thanksgiving	
Dec. 3		Group Presentation	<i>Counseling Session</i> Group Proposal Due
Dec. 10		Group Presentation	
Dec. 17			Leadership Style Exploration Due

****Course Confidentiality Requirements****

Due to the experiential nature of this course, you are expected to keep confidential all conversations taking place in your group. Any "malicious" breach of confidentiality will result in your failing the course.

You are also asked not to process with other group members outside of the group sessions those issues that need to be worked through within the group. What we are attempting to avoid is the resolution of in-group disputes outside the group, and the forming of coalitions which can disrupt our group process.

DESIRED GROUP PARTICIPANT BEHAVIORS:

The expectation for your class participation will be that you are fully involved and contributing to the group process during the time that your body is present. Some hints as to how this can be done will follow:

1. At the start of the group session, take three deep breaths and focus on being in the room. This means that you should try to either leave your preoccupations at the door, or talk about them in the group if they continue to distract your focus during the group session.
2. Self-disclose as much as you can. This does not mean that you are expected to bring all your concerns to the group. It does mean, however, that you should attempt to say what's on your mind during the group.
3. Give useful feedback to other group members and invite feedback for yourself. It is rare that you have the opportunity to have relationships with others that are not masked by a superficial social ritual and decorum. Giving and receiving honest feedback can be a very liberating experience, so long as it is done with the intent to be helpful.
4. "Metatalk" the group process. Say what you think may be going on when the dynamics of the group become stagnant or confusing. Recap the interactions you have witnessed and ask for explanations from the group members. This is most effective when it is immediate.
5. Behaviors to be avoided include: Bombarding others with questions, Gossiping, Storytelling, Invasion of Privacy, Monopolizing, Diagnosing, Refraining From Contributing, and any other behaviors that demean group members or thwart the process of the group.

Carefully read this page, sign, and return to the instructor:

INFORMED PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

I understand that in order to complete this course I am required to be a member of a group in which I am asked to be honest and authentic. The group emphasis will be on self-disclosure and on honest feedback to others in the group as to how their behavior affects me. I also understand that while there will be a strong norm established with personal openness as the group goal, my grade will not depend on how well I fulfill this demand. I pledge to keep confidential all conversations that take place within the group session, and to not gossip with other group members outside of class. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to withdraw from this course and take it with another instructor or at another institution, and that doing so will not affect my standing in my program. Please read the above statements carefully before signing.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____