COURSE TITLE/SECTION: SOCW 7356 (17612) Social Work Practice with Groups in Clinical Settings

TIME: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 6:00pm – 9:00pm

FACULTY: Travis J. Courville, LCSW

OFFICE HOURS: by appointment

E-mail: tjcourville@comcast.net Phone: 281-814-8213 FAX: 281-437-2587

I. Course

A. Catalog Description
Theories and concepts of interventions with small groups emphasizing roles and skills of social workers in a variety of clinical settings.

B. Purpose
This is an elective course which focuses on theories and concepts of clinical social work practice with small groups. The course is designed to help students understand and practice group work within a multi-social-cultural perspective.

II. Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course students will be able to:

1. formulate a clinical assessment of the group and the group members’ biopsychosocial functioning by applying key concepts and principles of interpersonal dynamics and group processes;
2. formulate a diagnostic summary of group processes at different phases of the group’s development;
3. critically analyze the role of the group leader and its impact on power and power inequity in social work practice with groups;
4. identify the ongoing dynamics of groups from various theoretical frameworks (i.e. strengths-based, systems, behavioral, psychodynamic, etc.);
5. assess the professional-client relationship and its impact on the helping process in working with groups;
6. analyze the impact of class, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual preference and culture on the interactional processes within a group;
7. use critical thinking in formulating and evaluating appropriate strategies of evidence-based group intervention;
8. demonstrate understanding of such key group dynamic concepts as: contracting, confidentiality, cohesiveness, confrontation, conflict, scapegoating, group norms, catharsis, universality, transference-countertransference, alliances, group composition, size, duration, feedback, and termination.

III. Course Content

See attached topical course outline for specific content to be taught in this course.

IV. Course Structure

Class sessions will be a combination of lecture, discussion, student presentations, and experiential exercises. Lecture material is intended to supplement, not review, the assigned readings. Because the experiential component is a major source of learning, students are expected to attend and participate in all class activities. Guest speakers and audiovisual resources may be a part of the educational experience.

V. Textbooks

Required:


VI. Course Requirements

A. Reading Assignments
The attached course outline contains weekly topics with required reading assignments. Additional reading assignments may be given during the semester.

B. Written Assignments
(1) An oral PowerPoint presentation with a slide handout on a specific topic in group work. The slide handout (six slides per page) will include at least three salient points and an annotated bibliography of references of a topic agreed upon during the initial class. A copy of the handout for each person in class is expected. Due date will be the class time the topic is scheduled for discussion.
(2) An 8-10 page paper entitled, “Toward a personal philosophy of group work”. This paper is intended for the student to articulate the theoretical application of social work practice in groups with one’s style, principles, and philosophy of helping others. The paper will address at least assessment of group dynamics, strategies of interventions, professional-client relationships, and personal experience with groups. Do not consider bibliography or footnotes as part of the required 8-10 pages. The paper is due on the last day of class.

C. Exams

There will be one mid-semester exam and one quiz. Format of the exam will be multiple choices and open-ended questions about major topics covered in the classroom and textbook. The quiz will be multiple choices and essay. There will be no final exam.

D. Class Attendance

Class attendance and participation are expected and calculated into the course grade. Students can only use laptops for note taking. Any other use of laptop or smart phone during class will be considered nonparticipation.

VII. Evaluation and Grading

Grading will be based on class attendance and participation, including evidence of having read assignments (45%); written and oral assignment for class discussion (15%); term paper (25%); and one exam & one quiz (15%).

The following grading scale will be used:

- A = 96-100% of the points
- A- = 92-95.9%
- B+= 88-91.9%
- B  = 84-87.9%
- B- = 80-83.9%
- C+ = 76-79.9%
- C  = 72-75.9%
- C-  = 68-71.9%
- D  = 64-67.9%
- F   = Below 64%

Policy on grades of I (Incompletes): Students are responsible for following University of Houston’s policy regarding incomplete course work.

VIII. Consultation

I plan to be available before each class at 5:30 p.m. in the classroom. In addition, students can contact me by cell phone (281-814-8213) or email. You can also leave me a note in my GCSW mailbox for an appointment.
IX. Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

See course outline below for specific content and assignment schedule for this course.

X. Bibliography

The attached bibliography provides additional information on course content.

Addendum: Whenever possible, and in accordance with 504/ADA guidelines, the University of Houston will attempt to provide reasonable academic accommodations to students who request and require them. Please call 713-743-5400 for more assistance.

Please note that these instructions may be altered as needed.

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Course Outline
(Note: This outline may be revised during the semester as needed.)

Jun 04  Introductions and course overview; history of group interventions, mental health & social work; different theoretical orientations

Jun 05  Therapeutic factors; therapist - client relationship
         Yalom: 1, 2 & 4
         Garvin: 1

         Additional reading:
         AGPA Practice Guidelines for Group Psychotherapy, “Creating successful therapy groups”, page 7

Jun 06  Early stages of group therapy; goal setting; administration of groups
         Yalom: 5, 10 & 11

         Additional reading:
         AGPA Practice Guidelines for Group Psychotherapy, “Preparation and pre-group training”, page 25

Jun 11  Interpersonal learning approach; process vs. outcome
         Yalom: 3, 6
         Garvin: 2
Jun 12  **Specialized groups in different settings; co-therapy; TOPIC DISCUSSIONS**
Garvin: 11 & 13  

Additional reading:


Jun 13  **Inpatient group therapy; brief group therapy; TOPIC DISCUSSIONS**
Yalom: 15  
Garvin: 7

Jun 18  **MID-SEMESTER EXAM**

Jun 19  **Psychodrama; sexuality issues in group; class; cultural/ethnic issues:**
**TOPIC DISCUSSIONS**
Yalom: 12 & 13  
Garvin: 3 & 12

Additional reading:


Jun 20  **Research in group; TOPIC DISCUSSIONS**
Yalom: 14  
Garvin: 26 & 27

Additional readings:


Jun 25  **Training of group leaders; recent developments in group work; TOPIC DISCUSSIONS**
Yalom: 17 & Appendix

Jun 26  **Ethical considerations, TOPIC DISCUSSIONS**
Garvin: 5
Additional reading:

AGPA Practice Guidelines for Group Psychotherapy, “Reducing adverse outcomes and the ethical practice of group psychotherapy”, page 47


Jun 27 Termination and review of educational objectives; FINAL PAPER DUE

Additional reading:


Additional readings:

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Bibliography


Northen, H. (1998) Ethical dilemmas in social work with groups. Social Work with Groups, 21 (1/2), 5-17


Spitz, H (1996) Group Psychotherapy & Managed Mental Health Care, New York:


