Purpose of the Course:
This course will provide students with a foundational understanding of the knowledge and skills required to lead small groups by incorporating spiritual, cognitive, and experiential learning techniques.

Course Description/Overview:
Theories, principles and practices in group counseling are designed to help prepare students to work with children, youth, and adults in various settings, with an emphasis on conducting counseling groups and the effective use of psychotherapy skills and procedures. Group processes are covered through interactive discussions, group activities, role plays, and other observational and participatory experiences.

Prerequisites:
An understanding that you are in the process of becoming a counselor or leader in ministry, and that you will be involved in the welfare of those who come to you for professional help and entrust their lives to you.

This Course is Intended For:
Enter-level graduate students in counseling and ministry oriented programs, and others who will be leading small groups in a variety of settings. These are students who may be encountering and examining group counseling procedures for the first time. This course may also include students who have been previously exposed to coursework in group counseling theories and counseling techniques.

Course Objectives:
On completion of this course, students will:

1. Identify principles of group dynamics, including components of group process, developmental stages of a group, and individual and group goal-setting. (CACREP, K6a).

2. Examine group members' roles and behaviors, and therapeutic factors of group work. (CACREP, K6a).

3. Understand group leadership styles and approaches, including characteristics of various types of group leaders and the relationship between leadership styles and group functioning. (CACREP, K6b).

4. Differentiate theories of group counseling, including commonalities, distinguishing characteristics, and pertinent research and literature. (CACREP, K6c).

5. Compare and contrast different group counseling methods, including group counselor orientations and behaviors, appropriate selection criteria and methods, group structuring and facilitation skills, and methods for evaluation of group growth and effectiveness. (CACREP, K6d).

6. Determine when and how to use different types of groups, including task groups, psycho-educational groups, support groups, and counseling/therapy groups. (CACREP, K6e).

7. Know and be able to apply professional preparation standards for group leaders. (CACREP, K6f).

8. Be able to identify and use the ethical and legal principles unique to group work, with an awareness of the ethical responsibility to demonstrate sensitivity to group member diversity with regard to race, ethnicity, gender, spirituality, sexual orientation, and disabilities. (CACREP, K6g).
9. Experience being a member of a group, both as a participant and a leader, and receive feedback from peers and supervision from the instructor. (CACREP, K6a,b,d,g).

10. The ability to integrate group counseling theory and practice with their own theological belief systems.

Class Format:
Group work is an interesting, challenging, dynamic, and rewarding part of the counseling and psychology fields. This class will use an interactive approach to learning and will include lecture and discussion, role playing, and group practice exercises. There will be regular assignments with specific due dates. Therefore, active class participation is expected. Students are expected to contribute to class discussions, participate in class activities, ask questions, and contribute their ideas about assignments and the material presented in class. They are also expected to complete all reading assignments prior to the class date for which they are assigned.

Required Texts:


Ethics and Confidentiality:
In this course you are entering an experience that involves a fair amount of role-playing and practice interviewing. Others in the class will no doubt share things that are personal and confidential. It is your responsibility to maintain confidentiality, just as you would do with clients. Written assignments should also disguise the identity of any individual whom you may have interviewed or counseled. If and when you are videotaping a session with a role-playing or real client, be sure that you have permission on tape for that interview to proceed. In sum, you are expected to abide by the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics (available on ACA website).

Course Requirements:

1. **Class Attendance/Participation, Including Leading or Co-Leading at Least One In-Class Group Session:** Preparation and active participation in class discussions and activities are central to the purpose of this class and are therefore expected. Group teaching, learning, and mentoring are major elements of the course. Students are expected to be on time for class each week and present for the entire duration of the class. Absences will likely result in a lower final grade. Anticipated absences should be discussed with the instructor prior to that class period. Students are responsible for any material missed that week.

   **Assignment:** Students will lead at least one in-class small group wherein student-selected topics will be discussed (processed as a group) as well as personally examined in light on one=s training and work as a counselor. These group activities might involve discussing and dealing with *some of your own personal issues that can get in the way of your professional competency* (especially those that might become present in your work with various types of issues and groups). Students may also be asked to participate in some experiential group exercises and role plays throughout the duration of the course. It is important to remember that students will never be forced to talk in group or share more about themselves than they feel comfortable with or feel ready for. Students will be evaluated on the basis of their leading/facilitating a group in class; however, their involvement as a group participant will also be noted.

2. **Mid Semester and End of Semester Journal (Log) of Classroom Learning and Experiences:** Students will be expected to keep a weekly written log (journal) wherein they reflect upon their observations, experiences, and learning from each class session (i.e., what impacted me the most and in what way?). This log will be submitted by email (via an attachment on Microsoft Word) at the middle and end of the semester. It is expected that students will write between one-half and one page per week (double-spaced) in their journal; however, they are not limited to this. No credit will be given if these
journals are turned in late. Students are reminded to date each class period and put their name on the front page of their log. Students should be specific with regard to the class activities, experiences, or material discussed to which they are referring, as well as their reactions to people and events in the class, etc.

Along with reactions to your weekly learning experiences, your endof-semester journal should address each of the following areas: (1) Your overall impressions of the class; (2) Your learning experiences and insights as a group member and leader; (3) How well you think you were able to link your experiences and readings in this class to your knowledge and skills as a counselor and group leader; (4) How your thinking about group work has changed as a result of taking this class; (5) Areas of specialization you would be most and least likely to focus on as a group leader/therapist in the future, including those you may not be sure about currently; and (6) Your perceived strengths and weaknesses as a group leader/therapist (as well as you know yourself presently). Please be open and honest, and yet professional, in your responses.

Some questions that may help you reflect upon the thought and growth process of being in this class and taking part in various group exercises (adapted from Corey et al., 1992) are listed as follows. You need not address any or all of these to complete this assignment. They are intended to only serve as guides.

How did you initially view the group (class) as a whole?
What were your reactions to the group?
How did initial reactions to certain members of the class change over time?
To what extent did you take responsibility for the group’s progress?
How did you feel in leading one or more groups?
What turning points did you see in the group as a whole?
What factors do you see as having contributed to the success of the group?
What effective group techniques did you use (and/or see others use) and what were the outcomes?
What did you recognize as key events of the class sessions?
What were some of the more outstanding (evident) relationship dynamics within this group of class members?

3. One Interview of a Group Leader Outside of Class: Each student will interview a group leader who works in the field of counseling or ministry (or something related) in an area that is of interest to you. You will summarize your findings and impressions in a short paper (2-3 pages double-spaced) and be prepared to share briefly with the class (5 minutes maximum) what you learned from the interview. Some questions you may want to ask the group leader include: (a) his or her major theoretical perspective(s); (b) effective group practices (i.e., what works for this person?); (c) accountability practices and any evaluation methods utilized (e.g., pre/post assessment); and (d) other pertinent issues and concerns.

4. Brief Small Group Class Presentation, and Leader or Co-Leader Demonstration Role Play:
[Based on Chapters 15-19 in Gladding / A portion on one chapter per group]

A 20-minute presentation overview of the assigned chapter topic (i.e., main points of this theory/approach to group work) in the Gladding book, followed by a 30-minute demonstration role play that is co-lead by two group members and involves other assigned group members and/or class members as role play clients. This assignment will include: (1) An introduction to your topic and chapter content (Note: This should be an interesting and active presentation adapted to your own style of delivery and not simply quoted from the book); and (2) A role play in which at least one major concept/principle (e.g., a focus on rational thinking in REBT or on here-and-now phenomenological experience in Gestalt) and one intervention (e.g., can include a particular technique, or an activity or exercise) is demonstrated which illustrates something about each group’s particular theory/approach to group work; and (3) A 10-minute feedback and processing time facilitated with the entire class by group members. Total time per group = 1 hour. All group members must participate (i.e., share some information) in the 20-minute class presentation.
5. **Research-Based Paper (Individual or Group Written):** For this paper you will select a mental health or ministry-related issue or topic that is of particular interest to you (involving children, adolescents, or adults of any age). This paper will give you the opportunity to investigate your chosen issue/topic as related to group work, to identify the themes that emerge as a result of your search and readings, and to discuss the counseling implications for group work. You do not need to create a group treatment plan. Your paper should be **between 6 and 10 pages in length, not including references**, and you should have **at least 5-10 different references (citations)** within and at the end of your paper. Your references may include books, articles, periodicals, and on-line information, etc., and may come from both the research and clinical literature on your topic. Each student will submit a brief written proposal (1 or 2 paragraphs submitted on hard copy or through email) by the end of the 5th week of class which informs the instructor about one’s topic and plan for the paper.

**Note:** Students with similar interests can select the same topic and submit their research paper as a group (no more than 3 students per group) if they so choose. However, the same grade will be issued to all students in the group who decide to do this. Students are also free to work on and submit their paper individually.

**Evaluation Criteria for this Assignment Include:**

* Factual information identifying research-based themes and ideas regarding your topic for group work. Cite pertinent theories as well as empirical studies and actively communicate the different perspectives and research limitations to the reader. (40 points)
* Synthesis and integration of research-based material as related to group work, plus your own personal assessment of the themes appropriate for group work. (40 points)
* Accurate, appropriate use of APA style (latest edition). (10 points)
* Clarity of expression, organization of material, and graduate-level writing. (10 points)

**Evaluation of Student Learning:**

1. Class Attendance/Participation, Including Leading or Co-Leading At Least One In-Class Group Session (5 points per class period) (Note: A total of 12 class periods from which students can choose to lead a group) 60 points

2. Mid-Semester and End-of-Semester Journal (80 points each) 160 points

3. One Interview of a Group Leader in the Counseling (or Related) Field 80 points

4. Small Group Class Presentation and Class Role Play Demonstration 100 points

5. Research-Based Paper 100 points

_________ 500 points

**Grading Criteria:**

- 450 - 500 points (90% - 100%) A
- 400 - 449 points (80% - 89%) B
- 350 - 399 points (70% - 79%) C
- 300 - 349 points (60% - 69%) D
- Below 300 points F
Grading and Academic Policies:

Late, make-up work
In order for students to make up an in-class exercise or assignment, they must notify the instructor before class of their absence, or produce a legitimate and verifiable written excuse for their absence. Moreover, the instructor reserves the right to deduct a decisive number of points per day (Monday through Friday) that student assignments are turned in late or give no credit for late assignments.

Academic Integrity
Students are expected to do their own work and maintain academic integrity at all times.

Plagiarism Statement
Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Students are expected to do their own work and all of the work produced is expected to be completed in its entirety by the students who turned them in. Any acts of plagiarism will result in an immediate failing grade in the course.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Due Dates For In Class Assignments</th>
<th>In Class Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>8/30</td>
<td>Introduction to the course. Random assignment of students to class presentation groups. Instructions for class assignments.</td>
<td>Gladding Chp. 1 Jacobs Chp. 1</td>
<td>Investigating students’ interests in groups; the Biblical basis of group work</td>
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<td>9/6</td>
<td>Types of group work. Purpose of groups. Group dynamics. Stages of groups, group process, and therapeutic forces.</td>
<td>Gladding Chp. 2 Jacobs Chp. 3 Gladding Chp. 3 Jacobs Chp. 2</td>
<td>Small Group Process #1</td>
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<td>9/13</td>
<td>Effective group leadership. Basic skills for group leaders. Beginning a group. Planning, getting started (beginning phase).</td>
<td>Gladding Chp. 4 Jacobs Chp. 5 Jacobs Chps. 4-5</td>
<td>Small Group Process #2</td>
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<td>9/20</td>
<td>The transition phase in a group: Norming and storming. Focus; cutting off and drawing out; rounds and dyads.</td>
<td>Gladding Chp. 6 Jacobs Chps. 7-9</td>
<td>Small Group Process #3</td>
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<td>9/27</td>
<td>The working stage in a group: Performing. Leading the middle stage of a group; counseling and therapy in groups; dealing with problem situations.</td>
<td>Gladding Chp. 7 Jacobs Chps. 12-13, 15</td>
<td>Small Group Process #4 Proposal for Research Paper Due (1 paragraph)</td>
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<td>10/4</td>
<td>Exercises in groups. Termination of a group; closing a session/group.</td>
<td>Jacobs Chps. 10-11 Gladding Chp. 8 Jacobs Chp. 14</td>
<td>Small Group Process #5</td>
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<td>10/18</td>
<td>Group work with culturally diverse populations and other types of diversity. Ethical and legal aspects of group work.</td>
<td>Gladding Chp. 9 Jacobs Appendix B Gladding Chp. 10 Jacobs Chp. 17</td>
<td>Small Group Process #6 Mid-Semester Journal Due</td>
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<td>10/25</td>
<td>Group work with special populations throughout the life span: children, adolescents, adults, and seniors.</td>
<td>Gladding Chps. 11-14</td>
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<td>Jacobs Chp. 16</td>
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<td>Interview of Group Leader Paper Due</td>
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<td>11/1</td>
<td>Psychoanalytic groups</td>
<td>Gladding Chp. 15</td>
<td>Group 1 Presentation</td>
<td>Present/Role Play</td>
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<td>Person-centered groups</td>
<td>Gladding Chp. 16</td>
<td>Group 2 Presentation</td>
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<td>11/8</td>
<td>Existential groups</td>
<td>Gladding Chp 16</td>
<td>Group 3 Presentation</td>
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<td>Adlerian groups</td>
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<td>Group 4 Presentation</td>
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<td>Small Group Process #9</td>
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<td>11/15</td>
<td>Reality Therapy groups</td>
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<td>Group 5 Presentation</td>
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<td>Gestalt groups</td>
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<td>Group 6 Presentation</td>
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<td>Small Group Process # 10</td>
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<td>11/22</td>
<td>Psychodrama groups.</td>
<td>Gladding Chp. 18</td>
<td>Group 7 Presentation</td>
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<td>Rational-Emotive Behavioral Therapy Groups</td>
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<td>Research Paper Due</td>
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<td>11/29</td>
<td>Recapitulation</td>
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<td>End-of-Semester Journal Due</td>
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<td>Sharing Research Topics (Optional)</td>
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Some Additional Resources and Suggested Readings


Note. This syllabus may be modified at the discretion of the instructor. Changes will be discussed in class and/or via email.