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: Entry-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 be able to:

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

2. Examine group member’s roles and behaviors, and therapeutic factors of group work.

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

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

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.

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

7. Know and be able to apply professional preparation standards for group leaders.
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.

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.

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 Text:

Additional Readings (Optional: On Reserve):


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. In sum, you are expected to abide by the American Psychological Association Code of Ethics (available on APA website).

Course Requirements:

1. **Leading or Co-Leading at Least One In-Class Process Group Session, and Active Participation in Small Group Interactions and Activities**

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, as are the practice and demonstration of group leadership skills in an in-class group process format.* Students are expected to be on time for class each day and present for the entire duration of the class. Unexcused absences will 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 co-lead and/or solo lead at least one in class small group during the course, wherein student-selected topics will be discussed (processed as a group) as well as personally examined in light of 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 co-leading or solo leading the group that day of class will select a relevant topic in advance and
then make this topic clearly known to group participants at the beginning of the group experience (Note: Some examples of possible topics will be discussed in class the first day).

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 taken into consideration each week.

2. **End of Each Day Journal of Student’s Process Group Experiences and Classroom Learning**

Students will be expected to keep a daily written journal (*five total entries*) wherein they reflect upon their observations, experiences, and learning from each class session (i.e., what impacted me the most and in what way?) -- most importantly with regard to their small process group experiences. This journal will be submitted by email (via an attachment on Microsoft Word) by the next morning of class. It is expected that students will write about 1-2 pages per day 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 journal. Students are expected to be self-analytical with regard to their process group experiences. They should also feel free to comment on any class activities, experiences, or material which impacted them personally or professionally.

Along with reactions to your weekly learning experiences, *your end-of-week journal (i.e., your last journal entry) should also 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.

3. **One Brief “Interview Paper” Based on an In-Class Interview of a Therapist Group Leader or Panel of Counseling/Ministry Professionals:** Students will collectively interview a group leader or small panel of professionals who work in the field of counseling and ministry (invited to class by Dr. Carson). Each student will summarize her/his findings and impressions in a short paper (2-3 pages double-spaced). Some “starter” questions you may want to ask the group leader(s) include: (a) his or her major theoretical perspective(s); (b) effective group practices (i.e., what works for this person?); (c) what do they like and dislike about leading or facilitating a group? (d) what kinds of groups are most challenging for them? (e) accountability practices and any evaluation methods utilized (e.g., pre/post assessment); and (f) any other pertinent issues and concerns. Students should come prepared to ask some in-depth questions during this “interview”. They will then each write a paper summarizing what they learned, and what impacted them the most.

4. **One Small Group Demonstration Role Play:**

A 50-60 minute role play demonstration that is lead by one selected group member (from your process group) and that involves other group members as role play clients, followed by 15 minutes of class interaction and discussion with group participants. This assignment will include: (1) A very brief and informal introduction to your topic and your group role play “clients” and situation; (2) A role play in which at least one major group counseling concept or principle, and one major intervention (e.g., can include a particular technique, or an activity or exercise) are demonstrated which illustrate something about each group=s approach to working with this particular age group and their presenting issues; and (3) A 15-minute feedback and processing time facilitated with the entire class by group members. **Total time per group = 75 minutes.** 

**NOTE:** Extra time will be given during the morning small group process time for
group members to plan for their role play on Friday. However, the afternoon small group time is reserved only for “real issue” group processing.

Evaluation of Student Learning:

1. Classroom and Process Group Participation, Including Leading or Co-Leading One In-Class Group Session (10 points per class period X 5 days) 50 points
2. Daily Journal (20 points per day X 5 days) 100 points
3. One Paper Based on In-Class Interview of a Professional Group Leader(s) 50 points
4. Small Group Class Role Play Demonstration 100 points

300 points

Grading Criteria:

270 - 300 points (90% - 100%) A
240 - 269 points (80% - 89%) B
Below 240 points (70% - 79%) C

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. Therefore, class participation each day is essential.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Due Dates For Assignments</th>
<th>In Class Activities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7/31</td>
<td>Introduction to the course. Random assignment of students to group process and role play groups. Instructions for class assignments.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Investigating students’ interests in groups; The Biblical basis of group work</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7/31</td>
<td>Introduction to group work.</td>
<td>Corey Ch. 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Small Group Process #1 (a.m.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/31</td>
<td>The group counselor. Forming a group.</td>
<td>Corey Ch. 2, Corey Ch. 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Small Group Process #2 (p.m.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/31</td>
<td>Initial stage of a group. Transition stage of a group.</td>
<td>Corey Ch. 5, Corey Ch. 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/1</td>
<td>Working stage of a group.</td>
<td>Corey Ch. 7</td>
<td>Journal Entry #1 (a.m.)</td>
<td>Small Group Process #3 (a.m.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/1</td>
<td>Final stage of a group.</td>
<td>Corey Ch. 8</td>
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<td>Small Group Process #4 (p.m.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/1</td>
<td>Ethical and legal issues in group work.</td>
<td>Corey Ch. 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/2</td>
<td>Exercises in groups I.</td>
<td>Jacobs Chs. 10-11</td>
<td>Journal Entry #2 (a.m.)</td>
<td>Small Group Process #5 (a.m.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/2</td>
<td>Exercises in groups II.</td>
<td>Jacobs Chs. 10-11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Interview (In Class) of Group Leader or Panel (p.m.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/3</td>
<td>Groups for children</td>
<td>Corey Ch. 9</td>
<td>Journal Entry #3 (a.m.)</td>
<td>Small Group Process #6 (a.m.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/3</td>
<td>Groups for adolescents.</td>
<td>Corey Ch. 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/3</td>
<td>Groups for adults</td>
<td>Corey Ch. 11</td>
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**COURSE OUTLINE**

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<tr>
<td>8/3</td>
<td>Groups for the Elderly</td>
<td>Corey Ch. 12</td>
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<td>Small Group Process #7 (p.m.)</td>
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<td>8/4</td>
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<td>Journal Entry #4 (a.m.)</td>
<td>Small Group Process #8 (a.m.)</td>
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<td>8/4</td>
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<td>Groups 1 – 4 Role Plays</td>
<td>Group Role Plays (6 hours total)</td>
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<td>Small Group Process #9 (p.m.: Closure)</td>
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<td>8/4 (Friday)</td>
<td>Interview Paper</td>
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<td>(a.m.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/7 (Monday)</td>
<td>Journal Entry #5</td>
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<td>(submit to Professor by email)</td>
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<td>(12:00 noon)</td>
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** This schedule is tentative and may be change depending on the progression of the class. **
Some Additional Resources and Suggested Readings


Web Sites Related to Group Work

Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW):  www.asgw.org
American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA):  www.apga.org
American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama (ASGPP):  www.asgpp.org
Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy, Division 49 of APA:  www.apa.org

Note. The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus if necessary. Any changes will be discussed with students in class and/or via email.