

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY / ORLANDO
2PSY571: Group Theories and Practice

*Mon to Fri 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM, January 26 - January 30
Winter 2009*

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PURPOSE OF THE COURSE:

This course will provide students with a foundational understanding of the knowledge and skills required to lead therapeutic groups.

COURSE DESCRIPTION/OVERVIEW:

This course is designed to help prepare students to work with children, youth, and adults in various settings, with an emphasis on conducting therapeutic 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. The intended audience for this course is Masters-level graduate students in mental health counseling programs.

LEARNING 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. Begin to integrate group counseling theory and practice with the student's own theological beliefs.

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. Students are also expected to be actively reading the course texts both prior to and during the week of classes.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- 1) Corey, M.S. & Corey, G. (2006). *Groups Process and Practice (7th edition)*. Thomson/Brooks Cole.
- 2) Gorman, J. (2002). *Community That Is Christian: A Handbook on Small Groups*. Baker Books.
- 3) West, J. & Sterne, A. (2007). *A Guide to Your Summit Connect Group*. Summit Church.
NOTE: this booklet will be distributed by the instructor free of charge during the first day of class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Class Attendance and Active Participation:** Adequate 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 and present for the entire duration of the class. Unexcused absences or excessive tardiness 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 class material missed.

2. **Daily Journal of Classroom Learning, Reading Progress, and Process Group Application:** Students will be expected to keep a daily written journal (*five entries total*) wherein they reflect upon their observations, experiences, and learning from each class session (i.e., what impacted me the most and in what way, etc.). Each journal entry must contain a reading report (i.e., a clear statement on whether or not you have done all of the assigned reading for the day), as well as a brief summary (2-3 paragraphs) of the assigned readings. Finally, it must incorporate a thoughtful reflection on how the material discussed during the day applies to your experience in your ongoing process group, including specific ways in which your process group could be improved, “go deeper”, etc. For the sake of privacy of your colleagues and the overall confidentiality of your process groups, please do not use other group members’ real names or other identifying information. The journal entries should be submitted to the instructor by email as a Microsoft Word attachment by the next morning of class. It is expected that students will write at least 2 pages (double-spaced) per day in their journal. No credit will be given for late journal entries. Students are reminded to date each class period and include their last name in the file name for each journal entry (Example: SMITH – Day 1.doc). 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.

In addition, your last journal entry should address each of the following two areas: (1) How your thinking about group work has changed as a result of taking this class and (2) 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. **Role Play:** Each existing process group will have the opportunity to choose a fun educational role-play exercise from the options below. You will be given some in-class preparation time for this assignment. Using your imagination and any resources from the assigned readings and/or resource list (below), your goal is to anticipate what your chosen type of group might be like, what roadblocks you are likely to encounter, what interventions/approaches could work, and what types of group resistance you might

experience. Here are a few different group type options:

- a. Children's Play Therapy Group
- b. Teen Group
- c. Senior Adults Group
- d. Divorce Recovery Group
- e. Addiction Group
- f. Personality disorder group
- g. Another proposed option... (must be approved by the instructor)

Each role-play should take about 15-20 minutes followed by 15-20 minutes of class debrief/discussion. We will plan to have one role-play per class day over the last three days of the class.

4. Outside Group Experience and Reflection: Each student is required to attend at least one session of a therapeutic/support group outside of RTS (e.g. AA, divorce recovery, self-esteem group, etc.). A list of options will be provided during the first day of class. All additional options must be approved by the instructor. You will be required to write a brief (3-4 pages, double-spaced) reflection paper about your experience in the group. Make sure to draw connections between the experience and the material you will have learned in class (e.g., the leader's use of group therapy skills, participant/group member types, etc.). Once again, it will be important to protect the confidentiality of the group by altering the members' identifying information in your reflection. This paper will be due four weeks after the end of the class.

5. Small Group Manual Critique: As we consider possible applications of group theories and techniques to the context of the Church, the students will have the opportunity to critique a small group manual developed by a local non-denominational congregation (Summit Church). Each student will be required to write a thorough (5-10 pages, double spaces) critique paper on the booklet, including all of its individual chapters. Your work will be put to service of the church, as your papers (minus your names) will be forwarded to the small group director at Summit. The critique is due two weeks after the end of the class.

NOTE: Please make sure to use APA Style in all of your written assignments

EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING

Class Attendance & Participation	20 Points
Daily Journal	25 Points (4 Points x 5 Entries)
Role Play	10 Points
Outside Group Experience	20 Points
Small Group Manual Critique	25 Points

Total Possible = 100 Points

GRADING CRITERIA

A (97-100), A- (94-96), B+ (91-93), B (88-90), B- (86-87), C+ (83-85), C (80-82), C- (78-79), D+ (75-77), D (72-74), D- (70-71), F (below 70)

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

Plagiarism Statement

academic integrity at all times.

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.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS: to be distributed via email two weeks before class

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND RECOMMENDED READING

Brigman, G., & Early, B. (2001). *Group counseling for school counselors: A practical guide*. Portland, ME: J. Weston Walch.

Chen, M.W., & Rybak, C.J. (2003). *Group leadership skills: Interpersonal process in group counseling and therapy*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Pub.

Cohen, E.D., & Cohen, G.G. (1990). *Couples group psychotherapy: A clinical practice model*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.

Corey, M.S., & Corey, G. (2002). *Groups: Process and practice* (6th ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks.Cole.

DeLucia-Waack, J.L., Riva, M., Gerrity, D.A., & Kalodner, C.R. (Eds.) (2003). *Handbook of group counseling and psychotherapy*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Pub.

Donaldson, M.A., & Cordes-Green, S. (1994). *Group treatment of adult incest survivors*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Pub.

Fehr, S.S. (2003). *Introduction to group therapy: A practical guide*. New York: Haworth Press.

Flores, P.J. (1996). *Group psychotherapy with addicted populations: An integration of 1step and Psychodynamic theory* (2nd ed.). Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

Gazda, G.M., Ginter, E.J., & Horne, A.M. (2001). *Group counseling and group psychotherapy: Theory and application*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Leben, N. (1998). *Directive group play therapy: 60 structured games for the treatment of ADHD, low self-esteem, and traumatized children*. Pflugerville, TX: Morning Glory Treatment Center for Children.

Simon, S.F. (1999). *Introduction to group therapy*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

Yalom, I.D. (1995). *The theory and practice of group psychotherapy* (4th ed.). New York: Basic Books.

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

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