

# REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY ORLANDO

## 2PSY571: Group Theories and Practice

*Winter 2011*

### ***INSTRUCTOR:***

**James L Coffield, Ph.D.**

Office Hours: Email for appointment

E-mail: [jcoffield@rts.edu](mailto:jcoffield@rts.edu)

Phone: 407-366-9493

Campus Office: 3-218

Dates: 1/24-1/28

### ***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 weeks of classes. Some limited self exposure will be required as a part of the class experience.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

1) Irvin Yalom, The Theory and Practice of Group Psychology (3<sup>rd</sup> or latter edition) (1985). Basic Books; 4th edition (January 15, 1995) ISBN-10: 0465084486 ISBN-13: 978-0465084487 (Used 5<sup>th</sup> ed --\$39.97/ 4<sup>th</sup> ed-- \$1.77/ 3<sup>rd</sup> ed-- \$.18 on Amazon)

2) Jean Vanier, Community and Growth Community and Growth (Paperback) , Paulist Press; 2nd Revised edition (January 1, 1989) ISBN-10: 0809131358 ISBN-13: 978-0809131358 (Used from \$7.45 on Amazon)

**Optional...**

Corey, M.S. & Corey, G. (2006). Groups Process and Practice (7th edition). Thomson/Brooks Cole.

Gorman, J. (2002). Community That Is Christian: A Handbook on Small Groups. Baker Books.

Crabb, Larry (1997) Connecting, World Books

**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. Reading, class and group reflection papers.**

Students will be expected to write two reflective papers. One due on January 25, 2011 and one week after the class is completed (February 4, 2011). The first paper should reflect upon their observations, experiences, and learning from their own group process group – “what have you learned about group and yourself in the process group?” 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 second paper should reflect upon their observations, experiences, and learning from the reading and class content.

**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.). You will be required to write a brief (2-3 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 January 25, 2011

**5. *"To be told" in class group:*** As we consider possible applications of group theories and techniques to the context of the Church, the students will have the opportunity to participate in a "to be told group" in class with classmates and instructor. Open participation is expected.

**6. *Lead or co-lead an on-going group:*** As student interns in the Oviedo Counseling Center each student will be expected to accumulate at least 150 group hours. Students will be asked to lead/co-lead an existing group or create a new therapeutic group as part of the requirements for this class. The plan for a group must be turned in by the last day of class and the group must start by March 1, 2011.

## **EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING**

Class Attendance & Participation	20 %
Reflective papers	20%
Role Play	10 %
Outside Group Experience	15 %
To be told group	15 %
Leading (or co-leading) on-going group	20%

### **ACADEMIC POLICIES :**

1. Computers are a welcome educational tool and your use of a lap top computer during our class time is encouraged. However, please do not distract yourself or others by using wireless internet to check e-mail or surf the net during our class time. Do not play games on personal computers during class time.
2. Please retain a personal copy of all of your work.
3. Use APA Style in all of your written assignments.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT:** The instructor would like to thank Dr. Chuck DeGroat of RTS/O, Dr. David Carson of Palm Beach Atlantic University and Dr. Vitaliy Voytenko -- Some of the material in this syllabus and in the class is taken from their previous versions of the class.