Purpose of the Course:
This course will provide students with a foundational understanding of the knowledge and skills required to lead small groups.

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 mental health and school counseling 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. Students are also expected to be actively reading the course texts during the week of classes.

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 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.

   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 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 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. **Personal group experience presentation**: Each student will be given the opportunity to share his/her experiences of a group. This will be a 10 minute talk including (but not restricted to) the following:
   a. Your experience(s) leading and being in small groups of any kind.
   b. Strengths and/or weaknesses of these groups
   c. Your own relational tendency in groups. For this, see Yalom’s section on “problem patients,” or Chapter 8 in Gorman on “communication.” For example, is your tendency to monopolize? If so, do you have any sense of why this is, or what aspect of your own story informs this? Have you
received feedback from others about how this makes them feel?
d. Your hopes/fears for belonging to a process group during your first year in the MAC program.

3. **Role Play**: Each group will have the opportunity to choose a fun/educational role play exercise from
   the options below. In-class preparation time will be devoted to this. Using your imagination and any
   resources from readings and/or reading resource list, anticipate what a group like this might be like, what
   roadblocks might be in the way, what interventions/approaches might work, and/or what ways of resisting or
   undermining you might find. Options include:
   
a. Children's Play Therapy Group  
b. Teen Group  
c. Senior Adults Group  
d. Divorce Recovery Group  
e. Addiction Group  
f. Personality styles and “resistance” group  
g. Another proposed option…

4. **Chapter Reviews**: Your primary academic responsibility will be to write a 10-page paper reviewing at
   least 10 chapters of the assigned books. You may choose the chapters, but 7 must come from Yalom and
   3 must come from Gorman. The paper can be double-spaced, using APA formatting when referencing.
   **DUE**: Two weeks after class ends

**Evaluation of Student Learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Attendance/Group Leading</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Presentation</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Play</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Reviews</td>
<td>25</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**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 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
failing grade in the course.
**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.

**Acknowledgment:** The instructor would like to thank Dr. David Carson of Palm Beach Atlantic University. Much of this syllabus is taken from a previous version of his syllabus. However, the instructor takes full responsibility for the content of this syllabus.