The purpose of this two-semester course is to provide you with an increased appreciation of, knowledge about, and skill in social work practice with groups. This includes both a group as system and practice with individual members of that system. The following areas constitute general topics for exploration:

I. **Historical Origins:** Roots of social work practice and direct work with groups including examination of the historical threads of case work and group work and how/where they have merged and diverged over the years as well as issues regarding role, purpose, and place of social group work in the profession today.

II. **Ethics, Values, & Knowledge:** Agency function as it relates to professional values and ethical stances of social work in general/group work specifically. Knowledge as it informs professional action; impact of cultural, institutional, and developmental factors on group life; ethical dilemmas in social work practice.

III. **Planning/Formation:** Characteristics of group-development stages from pre-group through termination, impact on membership and practice. Preparation of worker and orientation to service situations. Dynamics of “beginnings” on cognitive and affective levels for clients and worker. Influence of individual behavior on group norms and dynamics. Common issues and themes that arise; corresponding roles of the practitioner in each phase. Nature of leadership and its impact on process. Nature of mutual aid and mutual adjustment in group life.

IV. **Beginnings:**

V. **Middles:**

VI. **Endings/Transitions:**

VII. **Settings:** The look of practice with diverse populations in a variety of settings. Nature and impact of oppression, racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, and intergroup conflict on clients and on working with groups.

VIII. **Skills with Groups, Individuals, and in Context:** Skillful practice in work with people in groups, with individuals, and with the organization in which the group operates. Generic and specific aspects in work with different client populations in a variety of settings.

IX. **Theories, Models, Frameworks** Characteristics of general and specialized direct-practice theoretical approaches, frameworks, and models currently considered by the social work profession. Implications and strategies for application.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand and appreciate social work’s history and the place of group work in the profession, both historically and contemporaneously.

2. To examine and appreciate the complexities of decision making in group work practice that reflects the ethical commitments and values of social work as a profession.

3. To acquire the knowledge and both group-specific and generic skills that are necessary for effective pre-group planning, formation, and maintenance of groups as mutual-aid systems.

4. To understand the stages of group development and the issues that are typical of those stages for individual group members, for the group as a system, and for the practitioner.

5. To develop skill in using group process in order to effectively address the issues that are likely to arise over the life of any group, including skills for both whole-group and individually directed interventions.
6. To examine in detail important practice issues including approach-avoidance, conflict, roles, use of activity, problem solving, and the application of interventions that reflect group work rather than individual work in a group setting.

7. To increase knowledge of different theoretical approaches to work with groups and individuals, to understand the important distinctions among them, and to appreciate their differential impact on practice.

8. To identify the essence and salient characteristics of your preferred approach to practice with groups.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY**

Major assignments for Group Work I are:

1. **A LOG TO BE KEPT THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER.** This log is meant to serve as a continuous record of your work for the course. Its purpose is to encourage you to integrate class work with field and reading, to help you connect self, reading, and experience. It aims to help you explore and struggle with ideas, issues, and problems in group work that are of interest to you or about which you are uncertain. It is not a formal paper; there is no need for footnotes, although you will be expected to refer to points you encounter in reading. You will hand in the log periodically, dates to be announced in class.

2. **A FINAL PAPER ANALYZING A GROUP WITH WHICH YOU ARE WORKING.** Content and due dates to be announced in class.

3. **A TRANSITIONAL ASSIGNMENT** to be discussed in class and individually determined from the instructor’s feedback on the final paper.

Major assignments for Group Work II are:

1. **SPECIALIZED STUDY ON SELECTED AREAS OF CONTENT IDENTIFIED FROM FEEDBACK ON FINAL PAPER OF TERM I.** This assignment is carried in collaboration with your Field Instructor.

2. **RECORD OF SERVICE.** This assignment aims to enhance your skill in group work by asking you to thoroughly examine your practice over time around an issue in a group with which you work. You will complete two ROS during the second semester. Detailed instructions will be given in class.

3. **APPROACH TO PRACTICE.** At the end of the semester you will have an individual conference with your instructor in which you will identify the salient characteristics of your preferred approach to practice. An outline for this interview will be distributed in class.

You are expected to prepare for and participate in class discussion, both as a whole class and in small groups. You may also be asked to present course content or professional experiences, issues, themes, and/or problems that arise in your work to the class for discussion and analysis.

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**NOTE:**
Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The college is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.

**NOTE:**
In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical and/ or Learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY located in Room E1124 to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance please call (212- 772- 4857)/TTY (212- 650- 3230).