COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course builds on students' generalist practice knowledge by teaching the conceptual base and practice skills of social group work. Emphasizing social work with groups as integrative practice, this course encompasses the continuum from treatment to task oriented groups. Course content highlights the strengths oriented values of social group work and its potential for mutual aid and empowerment. Group dynamics and development will be assessed, with attention to agency, community, and cultural contexts. Emphasis on diversity and the use of groups with oppressed client populations is a unifying course theme.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To familiarize students with the theoretical underpinnings of contemporary group work practice in relation to a range of group approaches including therapy groups, mutual aid groups, activity groups, social action groups, and administrative groups.

2. To deepen student understanding of such concepts as organizational context, group structure and culture and to help students to incorporate these dynamics in their group assessment and facilitation.

3. To familiarize students with the stages of group development and the worker's tasks in promoting the growth of the group.

4. To build student skills in facilitating group process, promoting mutual aid and mediating between the individual in the group and the group as a whole.

5. To enable students to apply group facilitation skills to practice with members of oppressed populations and to prepare them for work with groups characterized by oppressed and diverse membership.
EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES:

At the completion of this course, students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Discuss theoretical underpinnings and practice applications of contemporary group approaches.

2. Understand and incorporate into assessment and intervention, systemic variables including: organizational context, group structure and group culture.

3. Use their knowledge of group dynamics and development to enhance their practice across a range of group models.

4. Utilize practice skills to facilitate group process, promote mutual aid, and mediate between the individual and the group.

5. Apply their understanding of group work theory and practice to different group populations, incorporating an appreciation of the dimensions of oppression and human diversity.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Student and faculty participation in this course will be governed by standards in the NASW Code of Ethics relating to confidentiality in sharing information from their placement sites and practice experiences.

Students should be aware that personal information they choose to share in class, class assignments or conversations with faculty does not have the status of privileged information.

FORMAT:

Course sessions will include mini-lectures, class discussions, group discussions, group presentations, experiential exercises, role plays, and videotapes.

REQUIRED TEXTS


ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE:

I. Group Project

The class will be divided into educational task groups early in the semester. Each group will be responsible for presenting material to the class on one of the following group approaches: therapy groups, support groups, activity groups, and task groups. The course bibliography is organized to be helpful for this assignment. Each presentation will be approximately 45 minutes in length and will include content on facilitation skills associated with each group approach. Group presentations will be evaluated on their skills teaching, use of experiential presentation methods, and creativity. **Task groups will also be responsible for identifying and assigning two readings for the class to read during the week prior to their presentation.** Student task groups will meet throughout the semester to work on this project. Some class time will be set aside for this purpose and the instructor will be available to provide consultation. The presentations are scheduled for April 12 and 19 and will count toward 40% of the course grade.

II. Individual Log

Beginning with the class in which the student task groups are formed, students will observe, analyze, and record the group dynamics that emerge within their groups. These observations should be recorded on a *weekly* basis, incorporating course content on group process and development. While the instructor will provide specific questions to be addressed each week, students are encouraged to add additional material from their reading and practice experiences. These weekly log entries will vary in length, but will generally range from (approximately) one to three pages. The course reading and other relevant literature should be incorporated and discussed.

Log entries should be typed, double-spaced, and *proofread*. APA reference format should be used whenever the literature is cited. It is not necessary to prepare a separate list of references for each separate log entry, provided that a complete set of references is included in the final, completed log. Weekly log entries will be turned in for feedback, on March 1. Completed logs, including all previous entries and APA style references, will be turned in for feedback and grades the week following the group presentation. This assignment will count toward 40% of the course grade. Please make prior arrangements with the instructor if you anticipate any problems with the final due date.

III. Class participation will count toward 20% of the course grade, reflecting the importance of experiential learning of the skills of group work practice. Students will be expected to participate actively in experiential exercises throughout the semester and to bring live group material into the class room for discussion and/or role play. **Students are particularly encouraged to enact the role of group facilitator in role plays.**
IV. Optional extra credit assignment

Students are encouraged to write a short vignette of their group practice using solution focused techniques, either alone or in combination with a mutual aid approach. Students completing this assignment may have their course grades raised by half a letter point (i.e. B+ to A-).

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

Information regarding school cancellation can be obtained by calling the University’s Cancellation Bulletin Board, 797-7688 ext. 2211. The University bases its school cancellation decisions on weather conditions in and around the Biddeford and Portland areas. Students must make their own decisions whether or not to attempt to drive to school in bad weather. No one will be penalized for failure to attend class under circumstances deemed potentially dangerous. Students are encouraged to consult with classmates regarding notes from missed classes and to inform the instructor if driving conditions prevent them from attending class.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

I encourage students with disabilities, visible or hidden, to discuss with me appropriate accommodations that might be helpful to them. The UNE Office for Students with Disabilities is a resource for students needing academic accommodations or access. Susan Church, the Coordinator for the Office of Student Disabilities, can be reached by phone at 797-7688 ext. 2815.
WEEKLY COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

NOTES: * Asterisked readings are required and students are encouraged to raise points for class discussion from this material. ** Double asterisked readings are required and will be directly related to class discussion. Readings indicated with a smiley face ☺☺ ☺☺ are not required but have specialized content, likely to be of interest to some students and student task groups. Please note that the journal articles are available online, with very few exceptions. The journal *Social Work with Groups* starting with Volume 22 (1999) can be found in the ejournal data base, under the journal’s title. Most other journals can be accessed through Proquest, exceptions are noted.

UNIT I. INTRODUCTION. HISTORICAL ROOTS AND VALUES. OVERVIEW OF GROUP PRACTICE MODELS AND APPROACHES

January 18  Course introduction and overview. The continuum of social work groups.

experiential exercises

January 25  Group work history and philosophy. The interactionist approach and the mutual aid model of group work

experiential exercise

Reading


February 1  Some contemporary models of group therapy: Solution Focused and Narrative Groups.

formation of student task groups

Reading

** Metcalf, Linda. Chapter 1, “Changing Directions in Group Therapy,” pp. 1-34

UNIT II. ASSESSMENT IN GROUP WORK PRACTICE

February 8 Understanding group development for assessment and intervention in task and treatment groups

experiential exercise – group sculptures

Reading


** Schiller, Linda Y. (2003)," prepublished version from Marcia B. Cohen and Audrey Mullender (editors), Gender and Groupwork, London: Routledge, pp. 16-40 (to be emailed).

* Steinberg, Chapter 5, “Mutual Aid, ‘Time and Place,’ and the Role of the Worker,” pp. 93-123


February 15  **Assessing group dynamics**

  vignette/role play

  **Reading**

  ** Steinberg, Chapter 4, “Early Group Goals and Norms,” pp. 77-90.


UNIT III.  **INTERVENTIVE SKILLS IN SOLUTION FOCUSED AND MUTUAL-AID GROUP PRACTICE. WORKING WITH ISSUES OF OPPRESSION AND DIVERSITY**

February 22  **Practice skills in facilitating treatment groups.**

  student generated role plays

  **Readings**


  ** Steinberg, Chapter 6, “Individual Problem Solving from a Mutual-Aid Viewpoint,” pp. 125-144

March 1  **Group work and diversity**

Logs handed in for feedback, role plays
Readings

* Metcalf, Chapter 4, “The Survivor’s Club,” pp.86-106


UNIT IV. INTERVENTIVE SKILLS IN MACRO GROUP WORK PRACTICE

March 8 Overview of Task Groups: Interdisciplinary Teams and Social Action Groups

Readings


March 22 ** Application of group dynamics in a task group

Movie: Twelve Angry Men and discussion

Reading

* Steinberg, Chapter 12, pp. 235-246

* Lucas, Jeffrey (1999). “Behavioral and emotional outcomes of leadership in
March 29  **Peer Support Recovery Groups**

Guest Presentation on Mental Health Recovery Groups (tentative)

**Reading**


April 5  **Skills in the ending phase of group work practice. Evaluating group practice.**

*video clip on the ending stage of group practice*

**Reading**


**task groups,” Social Forces, 78(2) pp. 747-778**
UNIT V. GROUPS ACROSS THE PRACTICE CONTINUUM

NOTE: Each task group is responsible for identifying two readings for the class, for the week prior to its presentation. Readings should be made available or be easily accessible to students. Completed logs are due the week following your group presentations.

April 12 Therapy groups and Support groups

Student Task Group Presentations

Reading: To be identified by the therapy task group and the support task group

April 19 Activity groups and Task Groups

Student Task Group Presentations

Completed logs due for therapy and support groups

Reading: To be identified by the activity task group and the task task group

April 26 Evaluation and Ending

Completed logs due for the activity and task groups

Course evaluations and ending activity planned by the class as a group

International Group Work Web Site: Association of the Advancement for Social Work With Groups

AASWG.ORG
BIBLIOGRAPHY

GENERAL


**THERAPY GROUPS**


**SUPPORT GROUPS**


**ACTIVITY AND SKILL BUILDING GROUPS**


**TASK ORIENTED GROUPS: ADMINISTRATIVE AND SOCIAL ACTION GROUPS**


**TIME LIMITED GROUPS**


Partially Revised 12/23/05