

Doane College COU 634
Group Theory and Processes
Course Syllabus
Winter Term, 2006
January 9, 2006 – March 11, 2006

Professional counselors must possess the ability to apply social science theory in the assessment and treatment of an individual within the context of their environment and their social system, and possess a thorough understanding of the clinical issues associated with treatment of individuals in group therapy and group settings. Successful group intervention requires a thorough understanding of theory and research, adequate training and preparation, and an ability to apply clinical skills in a group setting.

Course Description:

This is a three credit hour course that examines group theories and research, practice and methods, and group processes as they occur in intervention counseling groups (therapy, psycho-educational, support), in group treatment settings, and in professional work groups (treatment and case management teams, committees, and work teams). The course is designed to increase students' awareness and develop the knowledge and skills necessary for successful participation in and leadership of groups. In addition, the student will develop a comprehensive understanding of how individuals are affected by their identification with and membership in primary and secondary groups.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the term each student should understand the diversity, nature, and value of groups. Students will also understand how roles, norms, and stages of development affect group structure and how the aspects of power, conflict, decision-making, and leadership pertain to group success. This course also seeks to acquaint students with a fundamental knowledge of group theory, the dynamics of group counseling, and the basic skills needed for effective group work, both as a leader and as a participant. Leadership styles, the therapeutic value of group therapy, group counseling methods, and ethical considerations will be examined. The students will have opportunities for practical application of group theory throughout the course to allow for experience in applying skills and concepts. This will include classroom experiences and discussions, videos, live observation and analysis of a treatment or support/growth group, and the development of a comprehensive group intervention plan.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

Evaluation will be based on attendance and classroom participation, successful application of the course information, and a final examination. The course grade will be calculated as follows:
32% Attendance and classroom participation
35% Weekly quizzes (15%) and completion of group participation requirement and journal (20%)
33% Final exam

Group Process Syllabus, Winter Term 2006
page 1 of 2

Feedback:

Students may request feedback at any time during the course. Formal evaluation and feedback will follow the routine format for the college.

Textbooks:

Required: Forsyth, Donelson R. (2005) Group Dynamics. Fourth Edition. Wadsworth Publishing

Methods of Instruction:

This will be an interactive course that includes completion of reading assignments, student presentations and discussions, lecture and instruction, and participation in cooperative learning opportunities. Class schedule, reading assignments, quizzes, group participation, journaling, and final exam format will be discussed during the first class session.

Weekly Assignments:

Students will be responsible for reading the assigned chapters according to the class schedule, demonstrate an ability to discuss theory and research using critical thinking and professional standards, and demonstrate mastery of the material through weekly quizzes. Students will be responsible for participating in a group learning experience in lieu of 8 hours of instruction time during the quarter. This is for the purpose of facilitating experiential learning of the concepts. The requirements for this will be discussed in the first class.

Final Exam:

The content of the final exam will come from the classroom lectures and discussion, classroom and group learning experiences, and the text used in the course. The proposed format will be a take home exam, which will be due at the end of the last class. The exam is designed to allow the student an opportunity to write a comprehensive plan for group therapy.

Schedule:

The schedule for course will be established prior to and during the first class session. The first class session is scheduled for Tuesday, January 10th from 6pm – 9:30pm. There will be a total of 8 hours of course work required outside of the classroom. This course work will be in the form of participation in and analysis of a formal group.

Students should read the first two chapters in Group Dynamics and review the table of contents in the textbook prior to the first class session.