

Doane College COU 634
Group Theory and Processes
Autumn 2008
Course Syllabus

Instructor: Donald P. Belau, Ph.D., LIMHP, NASP
Phone: (402) 759-4574, (402) 759-0573 cell
Email: donbelau@hotmail.com,
donald.belau@doane.edu

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).

This course is designed to increase student's 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.

The student will also be given the opportunity to lead or co-lead psychoeducational groups in class. The student is expected to read the text and interpret the material. Study groups are encouraged, but not required.

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 & classroom participation including group facilitation skills

35% Weekly quizzes (15%)

Completion of group observation requirement and journal (20%) minimum of 6 group observations

33% Final exam

Evaluation Process:

Grades will be calculated based upon the percent of points earned out of the total possible points. The following percentages will apply. A+=100-98 B+=89-87 C+=79-77

A =97-94 B = 86-84 C = 76-74

A-=93-90 B-= 83-80 C-=73-70

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. (2006) Group Dynamics, Fourth Edition, Wadsworth Publishing.

Methods of Instruction:

This will be an interactive course that includes completion of reading assignments, student interaction 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 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 new concepts. The requirements will be discussed in the first class.

Journaling:

The journal may be reviewed on weekly basis by the instructor at the student's request. The final journal to be submitted should be in the 20 to 30 page range.

The journal needs to be APA style that has each entry identifying each session observed (journal entry #), references to text material and integration of text material, diagrams of verbal interactions, attendance log, along with the following questions being addressed in the discussion of each session:

- 1) Where did you find your group?
- 2) What are the characteristics of the people in the group?
 - a. Name
 - b. Number of participants
 - c. Date
 - d. Time arrived
 - e. Time departed
- 3) How were the people arranged in the physical environment?
- 4) What are the characteristics of the group?
 - a. Interaction: How do the group members interact with one another?
 - b. Structure: What do the group's norms appear to be? What roles are evident? What communication patterns did you observe? An what status hierarchy was evident?
 - c. Cohesiveness: Did the group seem unified? How would you describe the level of cohesion and why?
 - d. Identity: Do the members share a sense of identity with one another? Explain.
 - e. Goals: What is the group's purpose or goal?
- 5) Was this aggregate of individuals and group according to the definition contained in the text? Was it high in entitativity? Explain using the characteristics and definitions that describe entitativity.
- 6) Critique your study of this group from a measurement standpoint. How might you increase the scientific accuracy of your observations?
- 7) Did anything about the group puzzle or surprise you? Did your observation raise any questions that might be answered by further observation or research?

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 course. The proposed format will likely be a take home exam, which will be due at the end of the last class (10:00 pm). The exam is designed to allow the student an opportunity to write a comprehensive plan for group therapy. It is to be a paper that is in an APA format with a minimum length of 10-12 pages. The final exam expectations will be distributed in Week #8.

Schedule:

The final schedule for course will be established prior to and during the first class session. 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.