Course Description: Group work theories, interventions and techniques applied to persons with emotional, social and psychological problems. This course focuses on the theory and practice of community based social work in groups. Competence in this method of practice is an essential part of the social worker’s foundation of professional knowledge, skills and values. Groups are microcosmic reflections of our larger society and offer us opportunities for learning, growth and survival. We are born into a group and live our lives in a variety of groups, within and outside the social work profession. This course is designed to facilitate your ability to critically and effectively apply theory to practice in community based clinical social work with groups. Current social work practice is influenced by managed care mandates that require rapid assessments, time limited community-based services, clear documentation on service delivery and an emphasis on measuring treatment outcomes.

Course Objectives: By the end of the semester, you will be expected to be able to:

1. Clearly describe community based clinical practice with group including the following: an understanding of focal group process in agencies and other community settings; the function and role of the social worker in linking clients to resources and networks of service providers and other client groups; and advocacy with a focus on client empowerment, while demonstrating sensitivity to the intricacies involved in the reciprocal working relationship between agencies and the social worker.

2. Clearly describe and critique the community based clinical social worker’s purposeful use of self in the formation of viable social work groups designed to enhance, promote, maintain and restore social functioning.

3. Describe common and differentiating characteristics among various types of groups, e.g. those designed for mutual aid, for mutual treatment, and for training and education.

4. Describe and analyze the worker’s differential use of group processes throughout the phases of work to termination and evaluation.

5. Describe and analyze the workers differential use of group processes throughout the phases of the group’s development.

6. Clearly describe and critique the social worker’s purposeful use of group processes around issues of diversity and vulnerable populations e.g. race, ethnicity, age, gender, social class.

7. Clearly describe and critique your own growth and development as a leader and participant in the context of social work groups.

8. Demonstrate competent ability to apply group intervention knowledge and skills in clinical social work with groups. The emphasis will be placed on therapeutic and preventative
frameworks of practice including cognitive-behavioral, reality therapy, client-centered, rational therapy.

9. Describe the use of the strengths perspective as part of group process in the context of community based social work practice with diverse populations.

**Required Texts:**

**Reserved Reading:** A binder will be in the library with the required reserved readings. They will also be accessible through electronic reserve. Additional readings will be required per the fields of practice preferences of the students.

**Good Reference Materials:**

**Evaluation of Learning and Grading:** Achievement of learning objectives will be measured as follows:

1. **Classroom Group Lab Assignment [35 points]** - There will be two to three groups composed of an even number of members each lasting approximately 6 weeks. The groups will be held in the classroom functioning as psycho-educational groups (or focal groups), with an emphasis on learning about specific types of fields of clinical practice (i.e. use of groups with domestic violence survivors/batterers, use of groups with substance abusers; use of groups with cancer patients, etc) that utilize group-work as a clinical modality. In addition to this task function, process functions (i.e. building leadership skills, developing an understanding of group development and group process, identifying different member roles and patterns of communication) will also be explored. The groups will be approximately one hour of each class meeting. Each class member will be responsible to participate in one group. The roles of leader and co-leader will rotate weekly. Beginning in week seven, each group will give a presentation to the entire class that describes the use of group in the particular field of practice that they have chosen. Presentations are to include a 10-15 minute “group” role-play, handouts and bibliography.

2. **Assessment of Group Assignment (30 points)** Each week, students will be responsible for assessing their group lab experience in the areas of: 1) Tasks; 2) Process; 3) Roles; 4) Leadership; 5) Personal participation. These weekly “group assessments” will each be worth 5 points each.

3. **Designing Your Own Group (35 points)** – Students will be required to create and design their own six (6) session group covering the following areas: the target population; the structure including an outline; theories and techniques to be used; leadership skills; and a critical incident. A minimum of five (5) references other than the textbook must be used. These must be in APA format, and typed. Detailed guidelines will be distributed. Be sure to use the group planning forms that are posted on WebCT.

The final grade will be based on the final average attained by the student.
A = 95-100 (4.0)  C+ = 77-79 (2.25)  D- = 60-63 (0.75)
A- = 90-94 (3.75)  C = 74-76 (2.00)  F = 59 or less
B+ = 87-89 (3.25)  C- = 70-73 (1.75)  
B = 84-86 (3.00)  D+ = 67-69 (1.25)
B- = 80-83 (2.75)  D = 64-66 (1.00)

Teaching Methods:
The instructor will employ a learner-centered paradigm of teaching. Accordingly, students should come to class prepared to be actively involved in the learning process. The professor will utilize a number of teaching methods with sensitivity to the variant learning styles of participation. The course will include lecture, small group simulations, discussions, videos, guest speakers, and problem solving exercises that include the use of critical thinking.

1. **Class participation:** Social Work students are required to attend ALL class sessions. Professional functioning typically involves collegial sharing and peer support. By being present in class, students develop a commitment to, and a skill in, mutual problem solving. For this reason, class attendance is mandatory. Any absences should be discussed in advance, whenever possible, with the instructor and Skills Lab group.

2. **Academic Integrity:** Social workers must demonstrate high standards of integrity. Students are expected to do their own work on all materials submitted for a grade. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. School and University policies on academic integrity will be strictly enforced. Students found to have cheated or plagiarized will receive no credit for the exam or assignment and may also receive a failing grade for the course. Students who observe others violate this policy are expected to report this to the instructor. Please see your academic advisor if you have any questions or concerns about this policy.

3. **Incomplete Grade:** In exceptional circumstances, an incomplete grade may be given per School and University policies. Individual arrangements must be made with the instructor for completion of the course requirements.

4. **Special Accommodations:** Students with special needs requiring accommodation who are registered with UCF’s Office of Student Disability Services must see the instructor no later than the end of the first week of class. Failure to do so may result in accommodation(s) not being made.

Course Outline

**Introduction to Social Group Work**
**Week 1: August 23, 2004**

**Content:**
1. Orientation to the course
2. Introduction to Group Lab Experience/Assignment
3. History of social work groups
4. Group work and social work practice principles
5. Ethical group practice
6. Ethnic sensitive practice
7. Types of groups
8. Objectives of group work

**Readings:**
Reid Chapter 1. “Groups to Help People”, pp. 1-17

Classroom Lab Group: Select group members and select possible fields of practice (No More than 8 to a Group)

Week 2: August 30, 2004

Content:
1. Establishing group goals
2. Group norms/composition and screening
3. Group development
4. Life-span metaphor
5. Group Models; Psychotherapy Groups, Counseling Groups, Mutual/self-help groups, Developmental
6. Groups, Correctional/Remediation Groups, etc.
7. Structuring the group

Readings:
Reid: Chapter 4, “The Group Cauldron”, pp. 55-73
Chapter 9, “Establishing the Group”, pp. 167-187

Group Labs meet

Week 3-Labor Day!

Week 4: September 13, 2003

Stages of Group Development

Content:
1. Stages of Group Development--overview
2. Ground rules/norms
3. Culturally and racially diverse clients
4. Communication patterns
5. Managing conflict
6. Goal-oriented practice
7. Termination/evaluation
8. Johari window (see reserved reading)

Group Labs meet

Assessment of Group Assignment due

Readings:
Reid: Chapter 10, “The Beginning Phase of Group Work”, pp. 189-208
Chapter 12, “The Middle Phase of Group Work”, pp. 229-249
Chapter 13, “The Ending Phase of Group Work”, pp. 259-275
Johari Window (Reserve)

Therapeutic Factors in Groups

Week 5: September 20, 2004

Content:
1. Fears about joining a group
2. Therapeutic Factors of joining a Group
3. Member roles
4. Potential Critical Incidents and how to handle
5. Advantages of group work
6. Universalization
7. Self-disclosure/Johari Window
8. Activities and Techniques

**Group Lab**

**Assessment of Group Assignment due**

**Readings:**
Reid: Chapter 3, “Therapeutic Factors in Groups”, pp. 39-54
Chapter 5, “The Person as a Member”, pp. 75-94
Chapter 11, “Program Activities”, pp. 209-228
Smokowski, Rose, Todar, Reardon, “Post-group Casualty Status, Group Events and Leader’s Behavior: An Early Look Into the Dynamics of Damaging Group Experience,” pp. 555-573 (Reserve)

**Leadership and Foundation Skills**

**Week 6: September 27, 2004 & Week 7: October 4, 2004**

**Content:**
1. Effective Group Leadership
2. Leader Skills
3. Opening and Closing group sessions
4. Leader interventions and techniques
5. Transference/countertransference
6. Fears and anxieties associated with group leadership
7. Foundation skills
8. Co-Leadership

**Groups labs**

**Assessment of Group Assignment due**

**Readings:**
Reid: Chapter 6, “Worker in the Group”, pp. 97-114
Chapter 7, “Foundation Skills,” pp. 115-138
Chapter 8, “Worker Interventions,” pp. 139-164
Gilbert, B.M. “The Social Worker’s Role In a Interdisciplinary Spinal Cord Educational Group,” pp. 109-111 (Reserve)

**Week 8: October 11, 2004**

**Group Lab**

*Assessment of Group Assignment due*

**Client-Centered Therapy**

**Week 9: October 18, 2004**

**Content:**
1. Explanation of theory
2. Key concepts
3. Therapists roles and techniques
4. Applicability to practice
5. Critical Incident in the initial stage of group
6. Critical Incident I: Group Silence
Last session of Group Lab
Assessment of Group Assignment due
Readings:
Donigian/Killacky: Chapter 1: “Client-Centered Therapy”, pp. 7-18 and “Critical Incidents” 1-6: “Client-Centered Therapy” with related “Theoretical Practitioners Congruence with Their Theory.”
Chapter 13: “The Initial Session”, p. 121

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy
Week 10: October 25, 2004
Content:
1. Explanation of theory
2. Key concepts
3. Therapist roles and techniques
4. Applicability to practice
5. Critical Incident in Power/Control stage
6. Critical Incident II: Group Attack on the Leader
Readings:
Chapter 14: “Group Attack of the Therapist”, p. 156
Brennan, J. “A Short-Term Psychoeducational Multiple-Family Group for Bipolar Patients and their Families,” pp. 737-742 (Reserve)
Pomeroy, Kiam, & Abel, “The Effectiveness of a Psychoeducational Group for HIV-Infected/Affected/Incarcerated Women,” pp. 171-187 (Reserve)

Rational-Emotive-Behavioral Therapy

Week 11: November 1, 2004
Content:
1. Explanation of theory
2. Key concepts
3. Therapist roles and techniques
4. Applicability to practice
5. Critical Incident in Intimacy Stage of Development
6. Critical Incident III: Mass Group Denial
Readings:
Chapter 15: “Mass Group Denial”, p. 189

Week 12: November 8, 2004  No Class – Veteran’s Day
Reality Therapy
Week 13: November 15, 2004

Content:
1. Explanation of theory
2. Key concepts
3. Therapist roles and techniques
4. Applicability to practice
5. Critical Incident in Working or Interdependent Stage of Development
6. Critical Incident IV: Member chooses to leave the group

Readings:
Donigian/Killacky: Chapter 9: “Reality Therapy”, pp. 78-84 and 76 and “Critical Incidents” 1-6: “Reality Therapy” with related “Theoretical Practitioners Congruence with Their Theory.”
Chapter 16: “A Member Chooses to Leave”, p. 235

Solution-Focused Therapy

Week 14: November 22, 2004

Content:
1. Explanation of theory
2. Key concepts
3. Therapist roles and techniques
4. Applicability to practice
5. Critical Incident in Closing/Termination Stage
6. Critical Incident V: A deep disclosure near the end of a session termination

Readings:
Chapter 17: “A Deep Disclosure Near Session Termination”, p. 278

Final Papers due---November 22, 2003

Overview of Theoretical Frameworks

Week 15: November 29, 2004

Content:
1. Summary of Theoretical Frameworks
2. Termination in Groups
3. Evaluation
4. Follow-up

Readings:
Donigian/Killacky: Chapter 18: “A Member Maintains Distance”, pp. 300-334

Bibliography


Wells, L. (1990). The group as a whole: A systemic socioanalytic perspective on interpersonal and group relations. In J. Gillette & McCollom (Eds.), *Groups in context: A new*


