

**COU 634 - Group Processes  
Summer, 2016**

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**REQUIRED TEXT:**

**Corey, M.S., Corey, G., & Corey, C. (2014, 2010). *Groups Process and Practice* (9<sup>th</sup> edition). Belmont CA., Brook/Cole. ISBN 9781133945468 is correct for the NINTH Edition.**

***Research articles as assigned***

**Course Objectives**

Professional counselors and therapists must possess a thorough understanding of best practice standards and skills necessary for the effective treatment of individuals in group settings. The successful professional must possess knowledge related to group theory and research, the different types of groups, the developmental stages of groups, training and preparation standards for group leadership, and an ability to apply clinical skills effectively in a variety of group settings. Students will examine group theory and research, practice and method, and group processes as they occur in psychotherapy, counseling, psycho educational, task, and support groups. Students will become familiar with the basic skills necessary for successful participation in a group both as a leader/facilitator and participant. Leadership styles and skills, the therapeutic value of groups, and cultural and ethical issues will be examined.

Through classroom experiences, exams, presentations, discussions, role plays, videos, live observation, participation and analysis of a treatment, support, or growth group, and the development of a comprehensive group intervention plan the following competencies will be demonstrated:

- A. a thorough understanding of the principals of group dynamics including the components of group process, developmental stage theories, roles and behaviors of group members, and the therapeutic factors associated with group work
- B. a demonstrated ability to define and distinguish different types of groups, the goals associated with each, and the tasks and roles of the leader and members of each type of group.
- C. an ability to describe different leadership styles and approaches, skills and techniques appropriate for each stage of the group process, and the roles of leaders and members within each phase
- D. familiarity with theories of group counseling, including commonalities, distinguishing characteristics and research literature associated with its application in practice.
- E. a demonstrated ability to discuss different applications of group techniques related to setting and the developmental/life stage of the population being served
- F. demonstrated competency in discussing the legal and ethical issues associated with group counseling and familiarity with ASGW Best Practice Guidelines
- G. an ability to describe the implications of socio-cultural factors and dynamics when working with groups.
- H. a thorough understanding and demonstrated ability to apply best practice standards associated with planning, selection and screening, orientation, and evaluating the effectiveness of the group experience.
- I. competency in discussing and demonstrating group counseling methods and techniques, and in analyzing group leader orientation and behaviors.

- J. an ability to clearly describe how to apply theory in practice and implement groups in professional work settings.
- K. a demonstrated ability to learn through participation in a group experience.

### **Methods of Instruction**

This will be an interactive course which requires an elevated level of classroom participation utilizing brief lectures and presentations by the instructor and students, discussions of reading materials with an emphasis on application in practice, video demonstrations of group work, modeling and demonstrations of group work skills by the instructor and students, experiential learning through participation in a group and role plays, and a comprehensive final requiring the application of all learning objectives in the course and a self-assessment. Students will be required to integrate content, knowledge, and application in practice. Active participation is essential to your learning. **Due to the emphasis on experiential learning, absences cannot be made up. Written assignments are due on the date indicated in the course schedule. Students will lose 1 point for every day over the due date.**

### **Basis for Student Evaluation**

**A. Attendance and participation:** Each student will attend all classes and actively participate in all discussions and experiential learning opportunities. The course includes both didactic and experiential components with an emphasis on laying framework upon which to design and conduct groups as a professional in your field. Due to the emphasis on developing skills and application of theories your success depends upon active engagement in the classroom with your peers and the instructor. **At the conclusion of each class session the instructor will award up to four (4) points in this area .** Points will be awarded in the following manner: 2 points for being present throughout the entire class session, 1 point for being prepared, 1 point for participating. An absence, no matter what the reason will result in no (0) points earned for that session.

**Total possible points to be awarded in this area = 32**

**B. Group experience:** Students will be required to engage in learning through observation and participation in groups during class sessions and outside of the class sessions. These two distinct learning opportunities will provide the student with an awareness of the vast array of groups available in the community, an opportunity to observe and analyze group process, and experience with group process as a facilitator and group member.

1) Each student will be **required to attend 6 consecutive sessions of an existing OPEN psycho educational, or support group in the community. This must be the same group for all six sessions.** Students will be strongly encouraged to explore groups that are related to their areas of interest or areas in which they have limited experience. Reviewing local papers or doing an internet search might be helpful in contacting a group for attendance. Prior approval of the group you will be attending will be required. Groups available in the community will be discussed in the first class session as well as guidelines for selection and attendance.

A process journal will be required. In this journal you will focus on your observation of the group process including developmental stages, leadership style, norms and roles, curative factors observed, individual roles, and analysis of communication patterns and sources of influence. Additionally you will be asked to discuss your own experience in the group and how it related to group process and becoming a group facilitator. **Do not include any names of group members.** The journal is not intended to be a report of group content but an opportunity to experience and analyze group processes. An outline for journal entries will be provided during the first class session. **This journal will be due the 8<sup>th</sup> week of the term.** You will be asked to give a brief presentation in class related to the group and your learning experience. The journal will be graded using the following criteria in equal weights: group selection and attendance, use of course

information and theory, demonstrated ability to apply information and engage in critical thinking, and form and structure of written work.

**Total possible points to be awarded in this area = 20**

**(2) Students will be expected to observe videos of groups, role play scenarios and participate in discussion of the group process observed using the Checklist of Group Leadership Skills.** Videos and will be determined by the instructor. Topics for role plays/scenarios will be determined by the instructor and students jointly. The topics for student led groups will be determined by the student leader. These are skills training experiences. Group members will be expected to come prepared to discuss leadership skills and prepared to participate as a leader and as a member of the groups.

**Points for this are included in classroom participation**

**C. Mastery of skills and theory: Students will be given an opportunity to facilitate a group in class.** The student leader will be assigned a specific group theory and will use this theory to prepare for and facilitate a group experience for their peers. The student will become the “expert” on the particular group theory and techniques. Each student will be assigned a date to conduct a group using the assigned theory. They will assume the role of a group facilitator. Using the main aspects of the theoretical orientation as their base, the task of the leader will be to clearly communicate with group members \*how they will work, \*what their role is as a leader, \*what the members’ roles are, \*what the members might expect to experience (techniques of the theory) , \*what they might expect to gain (goal) and \*what will not happen in this particular group. Following this **brief** orientation, the facilitator will be required to conduct a group using the theory and selected techniques. **The group will have, as its focus, personal exploration, growth, and enrichment** and should be approximately 45 minutes in duration. **Full participation in the group is required for all students; however students will not be graded on their level of disclosure.**

The purpose of the group related experiences is to practice and demonstrate basic group leadership skills including:

- Stating a clear purpose
- Setting norms
- Linking members
- Monitoring the group
- Reflecting content, feelings and meaning
- Holding the focus
- Direct teaching on specific points
- Blocking members
- Drawing out members
- Using rounds
- Encouraging appropriate expression of differences
- Giving feedback
- Balancing participation in the group
- Clarifying goals (group and member)
- Providing structure (beginning, working focus, processing and closure)

A written summary of the theory and a summary of findings from 3 literature reviews related to the use of this approach in group settings should be prepared prior to the class and copies for each student and the instructor should be available at the time of the presentation.

**Total points awarded based upon the Presentation Evaluation Form= 10**

**D. Synthesis of course content:**

**1) Quizzes:** There will be weekly quizzes covering the assigned reading material. Quizzes will be multiple choice and worth 4 points each. Each student will be allowed to take scores from the top 2 quizzes.

**Total points to be awarded using the top 2 quiz scores = 8**

2) **Final Exam:** The final exam represents a comprehensive evaluation of mastery related to the course objectives. Each student will be required to write a 15-20 page proposal for a group including the demographics of the target population, the setting, the type of group, the theory and techniques selected, decisions related to planning and the group environment, decisions related to member selection including referral, screening, and orientation, leadership role, style and skills, the developmental stages of the group including the task, member experiences, events/interactions/behavior, group content, and the role tasks and style of the leader as it is related to each stage. Additionally the paper will discuss post group issues including evaluation and follow-up, significant curative factors related to the group, elements necessary for the success of a group, possible negative side effects of the group experience, and major ethical and cultural issues relevant to the practice of group counseling.

**Total points awarded = 30**

**E. Professional Development**

Students will be required to complete a self-assessment upon completion of the course. The outline for this will be provided and the assessment will be due with the final exam. **The final will be considered incomplete without the self assessment and subject to loss of point for lateness.** It is important that you approach this in a self-reflective and thoughtful manner. One sentence answers to the questions posed will result in the self-assessment being returned and loss of points for lateness.

**There are a total of 100 points possible in this course.**

**The following table represents the points required for grading assignment:**

Points earned	Percentage of total	Grade earned
98-100	98-100%	A+
91-97	91-97 %	A
90	90%	A-
88-89	88-89%	B+
81-87	81-87%	B
80	80%	B-
78-79	78-79%	C+
71-77	71-77%	C
70	70%	C-

**\*\*\*\* All required written work is due on time. Students will lose 1 point for every day late. Papers may be e-mailed; however it is the student’s responsibility to verify that the paper was successfully retrieved by the instructor.**

**Student Responsibilities**

In addition to 32 hours of classroom time, students should expect to spend a **minimum of 80** hours outside of the classroom reading, attending groups, reviewing research, and preparing for in class group work. It is expected that:

- students read course assignments and research articles assigned prior to the class session and be prepared to apply the concepts during discussions and the experiential portion of the class.
- students be integrative learners. They are expected to present questions and discussion related to the class readings and scholarly reviews or research. Not all readings will be discussed in detail, which requires students to use the readings as a guide for learning, and be prepared to interact with the readings as a background for their interaction.
- students be active learners. This means that students should arrive on time, **have cell phones and computers off and out of sight during class**, and remain in class throughout the duration of the session.
- students expect to experience some discomfort as they work to gain skills.

- students be respectful, open to feedback and willing to provide feedback, willing to role play clients or assume leadership roles, and be open to both personal and professional change.
- students engage in open and respectful dialogue related to ethical dilemmas and their interactions with peers and base their comments on professional standards vs personal reactions.
- students will abide by all ethical standards governing confidentiality and professionalism.
- students will use resources in addition to the text to enhance learning and complete academic tasks.

**Professional Practice Expectations:**

- Actively listen to others and demonstrate a desire to understand other points of view
- Respond in a self-reflective and self-critical manner to feedback.
- Show motivation to master new material, examine and challenge current beliefs and practices, and increase competency in areas related to professional practice.
- Demonstrate sensitivity, awareness and acceptance of others.
- Demonstrate tolerance for the ambiguity inherent in the counseling profession and the ethical standards governing the profession.
- Assume the role of professional consultant when discussing cases and issues and discuss issues using best practice and Professional Ethical Standards.
- Demonstrate an awareness of personal values and beliefs as they pertain to and affect decision making in the counseling profession and in your interactions with others.

**Instructor Responsibilities:**

- ACA Code of Ethics pertaining to counselor educators requires that educators address limitations by engaging in ongoing evaluation and appraisal and address areas of concern that may affect the achievement of counseling competencies
  - In this process the instructor is bound by a responsibility:
    1. to inform the student of the concerns
    2. to seek professional consultation when necessary
    3. to engage the student in a problem solving process to attempt remediation
- The instructor will abide by the ACA ethical codes for counselor educators.
- CACREP: Requires assessment of a student's academic, professional, and personal development throughout the program consistent with ACA Code of Ethics.