

**University of North Carolina Wilmington
Department of Social Work**

**SWK 442 Social Work Practice with Groups
Service-Learning Course**

Fall 2009
TR 12:30-1:45am
Room: Leutze 108

Dr. Bob Blundo
Leutze Hall 216
962-3438 or 395-8386

Course Description

This is the third course in a sequence of four generalist social work practice courses. It integrates the basic working relationship orientation into social work practice at the mid or mezzo level of the generalist practice framework. Students are introduced to the basic structure, use, and processes of a typology of groups used in generalist practice, to include the broad categories of treatment and task groups. Issues of social justice, social policy, ethical and fiduciary responsibilities, empowerment, assessment, and recursive evaluation will be integrated into the mid/mezzo practice knowledge and skills.

Purpose

This course will prepare students to consider client systems in terms of mid/mezzo levels of intervention and to be able to engage client systems in terms of the knowledge and skills of the mid/mezzo level of generalist practice. Students will learn to think in terms of the contextual implications of the interface of the person-in-the-environment and apply this perspective toward understanding client systems and intervention. Students will engage in both didactic and practice learning of the typology of group structure, planning, group process (beginnings, working through, endings), group dynamics, decision-making, leadership, assessment and recursive evaluation. Students will integrate their learning of empowerment, strengths and solution perspectives into work at the mid/mezzo level. Students will continue to integrate knowledge and skills related to diversity and individual uniqueness, as well as ethical and fiduciary responsibilities. They will consider the implications of policy decisions from the agency to the national levels on the work they do at the mid/mezzo level, as well as learn to use groups and group process in addressing policy and social justice issues. Students will be prepared to record and engage in recursive evaluation of their practice.

Course Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the integration of group work into assessing client systems from a generalist social work perspective.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of various types of groups or typologies included in the terms “task” and “treatment” groups and their purpose.
3. Students will be able to recognize and to propose appropriate group structures for addressing client system, agency and community issues.
4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the significance for preliminary planning, and the initial stages or beginnings of group level practice.
5. Students will demonstrate a beginning understanding of group dynamics and leadership.
6. Students will be able to demonstrate a beginning level of skills in leading a group and working with group processes.
7. Students will be able to demonstrate a beginning knowledge and beginning level skills in the stages of group work (beginnings, recursive assessments, working phase, endings or transitions, and evaluation).
8. Students will recognize the utility of group structures and process to address the issues of social justice with diverse peoples to include the poor and oppressed.
9. Students will understand and demonstrate the use of empowerment/strengths focused practice and solution-focused approach to working with groups.
10. Students will understand and demonstrate an ability to engage in ongoing (recursive) evaluation of practice.
11. Students will demonstrate a continued recognition and integration of social work values, ethics and fiduciary responsibilities, and human uniqueness and diversity into generalist group practice.

Required Readings

A major task for the course is the assigned readings. The class will move at an appropriate pace to insure meaningful coverage of the material. The value of the class discussions, class exercises and your assignments will depend heavily upon your having read the assigned readings and reacting to them thoughtfully and creatively. Examinations will include all assigned readings as well as material presented in class as well as class exercises.

Required Text:

Sharry, J. (2003). *Solution-Focused Groupwork*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Miley, K.K., O'Melia, M. & DuBois, B.L. (2004). *Generalist Social Work Practice: An Empowering Approach. (4th or 3rd Edition)*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon

Readings in the Library:

Metcalf, L (1998) *Solution focused group therapy*. New York: Free Press. *Chapter 1, Changing directions in group therapy*.

Toseland, Ronald & Rivas, Robert (2005) (5th. Edition). *An introduction to group work practice*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. *Appendix D, E and F*

Office Hours

My office is located in Lakeside Hall, room 216. I will be available most of the time when I am not in class. I am usually in my office from 8:00am to 4:45pm, except for lunch and class times, Monday through Friday .If you know in advance that you would like to meet with me, it would be helpful if we could set up a convenient time for both of us. Please feel free to call me at home if you need to do so.

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken at each class period. Students are expected to make every effort to attend classes. This is particularly important with respect to the class exercises and group experiences we will be involved in during class periods. In addition, test materials will be taken from class discussions and exercises.

Student Evaluation

When assigning the final grades, **attendance and class participation** will be considered at the instructor's discretion.

Exams on your readings for the class will be given during the semester, **PLUS YOUR FINAL CASE RECORD AND GROUP PROPOSAL ASSIGNMENTS.**

Case record will include the following assignments:

Exercises assigned during class period will be written up in your case record. Instructions as to what to include will be given at the time of the exercise.

Each **Treatment Type Group** session held as part of the class, as well as each of the **Task Type Group** sessions in which you will participate will be recorded in your case

record. You will need to keep them separated into their own respective sections of your case record.

TREATMENT GROUP project: experiences will be a time limited “Support Group.” This will take place in the classroom and the focus will be stress in school.

You will complete group forms thoughtfully. You will *describe your own experience with each of the basic solution-focused group work skills. How was it helpful or not helpful and in what specific way was it helpful or not .Both the forms and the description will be turned in for the grade.*

Your description should demonstrate an understanding of groups as you integrate your knowledge and skills over the course of the semester (this does not mean “the group went well” or “the group was worse or better this time” **BUT what do you mean went well or not so well in terms of the structure, purpose, and effectiveness of the group process and skills utilized**...what contributed to the group functioning well or what contributed to its not functioning well.

TASK GROUP project. The work for this group will be conducted for the most part during class. As stated above, **record and critique the task group process** in your **Case Record**. The specific nature of the task group experiences will be created by the class and the instructor during the course. Each member of a task group will prepare their own progress recording and critique of the task group’s functioning and outcome or performance. You should include **how decisions were made, leadership, involvement and commitment to the task issues, developing plans, implementing plans, dealing with conflict, and so on**. The guide that will be handed out in class should provide the outline for this work. *Each person’s grade will be based on hers or his own contribution to the group product and their own process recordings/critique of the group and demonstrated mastery of course content.*

GROUP PROPOSALS for the implementation of **both a task group and a treatment group for their agency**. You will be graded on the appropriateness of your choice and your understanding client and agency needs and options. Further directions given in class.

The Case Recording for Treatment and Task Groups will be worth 200 points.
Your Case Record will be turned in at different times over the semester to be graded. These times will be decided during class.

The Written Proposals will be worth 50 points each

Total points for the course will be 400 to 600 points depending on the number of examinations given.

Grading policy

All tests and assignments will be graded according to the following criteria:

1. Clarity and flow of discussion, presentation and *demonstrated mastery of course content*.

2. Answering questions **completely and thoughtfully (using concepts and terminology)**.
3. Obvious effort and attention to the material required in the assignment.
4. Writing (e.g., grammar, punctuation, spelling, content).

Honor Code

From the University of North Carolina at Wilmington academic honor code:

“No form of dishonesty among faculty or students will be tolerated... Academic dishonesty takes many forms, from blatant cheating, stealing, or similar misdeeds to more subtle forms of plagiarism...” *UNCW University Catalog and Student Handbook and Code of Student Life*.

NOTE:

I would like for us to be as active as possible during this course. Acknowledging the time constraints on you with course work, field, and your own job/responsibilities, let's see what we can do to make this course as involved and active as possible. We have three major activities we can engage in as learning opportunities during the course. The first is a chance to be in a support group in class. The second is a tradition for our class to put on the Annual Hunger Banquet for the University as part of World Hunger Week at the University. This also includes doing a similar activity in a community setting for kids. Thirdly, we can create any additional ideas or projects that would help in our learning. All of these are doable but it will take considerable focus on all of our parts. We need to use our time judiciously and to plan how we might use all of these to learn the content of the course. Basically these are Service-learning opportunities. That is ways to serve and learn at the same time. We will discuss in the class and try to find ways for us to have an exciting and helpful class.

Week of Introduction to Group Work in Generalist Practice

20

August

Class discussion of course and assignments.
Group Typology Introduced

Weeks of Introduction to Practice Values/Ethics/Fiduciary Responsibilities and Treatment Group Typology in Generalist Practice

25 Aug.

&

27 Aug.

Typology Material reviewed in Class

Reading:

Library: Toseland & Rivas Text: Appendix A1 & A2 pp.485-490
(Guidelines for Ethics)

During the first weeks we will have training in Group Exercises/Ice-breakers/recreation

Week of Empowerment and Strengths in Group Work:

1 Sept.

3 Sept.

Reading:

Material Presented in Class Handout Material From Instructor (Work of Toseland & Rivas; Shulman, Schwartz, & Yalom

Miley, O'Melia & DuBois Text: pp.;79-96;

Video: Women's Cancer Support Group

Library:

Metcalf Text: Chapter 1/Changing Directions in Group Therapy

Week of **Planning the Treatment Group**

Reading:
8 Sept. Sharry Text. Chapter 1: Group Work and Solution-Focused
10 Sept

Sharry Text: Chapter 4: Getting Groups Started: Design, Preparation and Motivation.

Start planning for Hunger Banquet

Weeks of **The Group Begins/ Working with Solutions and Strengths**

Fall break occurs on Monday and Tuesday, Oct 6-8

Reading:
15 Sept. Sharry Text: Chapter 2: Principles of Solution-Focused Groupwork
17 Sept. And Chapter 3: The Dynamics of Solution-Focused Group

Miley, O'Melia & DuBois Text: Pages 331-338 (Forming groups and creating alliances).

Participation in Group Session Starts

Week of **Stages of Groupwork**

Reading:
22 Sept. Sharry Text: Chapter 5: The Stages of Solution-focused
24 Sept. Groupwork.

Participation in Group Session

Week of **Task Groups in Process**

29 Sept. *Material Presented in Class*
1 Oct. **Reading:** Miley, et al.: pp. 367-375
Participation in Group Session

Fall Vacation Monday and Tuesday October 5-6

Week of **Evaluating Groups and Managing Process**

8 Oct
Readings:
Sharry Text: Chapter 6: Evaluating Groups
Chapter 7: Managing Difficult Groups

Participation in Group Session

Week of **Service-Learning Task Groups**
13 Oct.
15 Oct. **Reading:** *Handout from instructor*

Participation in Group Sessions

Week of **Creative Exercises to Enhance Group Process**
20 Oct.

Reading:
22 Oct. **Sharry Text:** Chapter 8, Creative Exercises

Week of **Task Group Exercise**
27 Oct.
29 Oct. *Hand Out Material from Instructor*

Week of **Hunger Banquet Preparation**
3 Nov
5 Nov
10 Nov **Wednesday November 11 HUNGER BANQUET**

Thanksgiving Wednesday-Friday Nov. 18-20

Nov 24 **Review of Course Material and Feedback**
Dec. 1 .

Last Day of Class Wednesday, December 2

All Assignments due by December 8 at latest .

Recommended Readings for further understanding and use in assignments during the course:

- Chen, M., & Rybak, C. J. (2004). *Group Leadership Skills*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Garvin, C. D., Gutierrez, L. M. & Galinsky (Eds.). (2004). *Handbook of Social Work with Groups*. New York: Guilford.
- Glassman, U., & Kates, L. (1990). *Group Work: A Humanistic Approach*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Greif, G.L., & Ephross, P.H. (1997). *Group Work with Populations at Risk*. New York: Oxford press.
- Lee, J.A.B. (Ed.). (1989). *Group Work with the Poor and Oppressed*. New York: The Haworth Press.
- Metcalf, L. (1998). *Solution Focused Group Therapy*. New York: Fee Press.
- Shulman, L. (1992). *The Skills of Helping Individuals, Families, and Groups* (3rd Edition). Itasca, ILL: F.E.Peacock Publishers.
- Yalom, I.D. (1975). *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy* (3rd Edition). New York: Basic