

## **GROUP COUNSELING**

EDP 381  
Mondays 4:30- 7:30

Fall, 2015  
SZB-268

Instructor: David Drum, Ph.D., ABPP  
Office: SZB-262-E  
Phone: 471-0367 (Office)  
773-1804 (cell)  
E-mail: [ddrum@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ddrum@austin.utexas.edu)  
Office Hours: Mondays and Tuesdays 3:30-4:30p.m.  
Or by appointment

## **COURSE SYLLABUS**

### **Overview**

This graduate-level course has as its purpose the exploration and understanding of a wide range of group therapy and treatment interventions. It is a "survey" course in the sense that it will address two major categories of group counseling interventions and their associated principles, therapeutic factors, design considerations, and leadership issues.

### **Course Methodology**

Our primary course methodologies will be a combination of experiential learning, lecture, discussion of assigned reading and leadership skills practice.

### **Rationale for Course**

As a professional counselor or psychologist, you will be called upon to help people cope with and resolve a wide range of problems and dilemmas. For some of these difficulties, group counseling will be the treatment of choice, meaning that it is the treatment modality with the greatest chance of providing effective and lasting assistance. Through this course, it is hoped that you will become more resourceful and effective in applying the appropriate group treatment to the needs of people who utilize your services.

### **Course Aims and Objectives**

To help you acquire the foundational knowledge essential to effective group counseling  
To provide the experiences that will enable you to acquire the functional competencies associated with successful group leadership  
To deepen understanding of group functioning through your participation in an in-class or alternate experiential growth group  
To help you acquire the basic skills essential to develop and lead each of the two categories of groups covered in this course  
To cover the unique ethical dilemmas group leaders encounter  
To address special cultural and diversity considerations essential to attuned practice and other best practice guidelines

Behavior elements required for satisfactory learning in this course  
Include:

Timely reading of assignments  
Collaborative participation in creation and maintenance of a learning environment within the class  
Evidence of integration of foundational knowledge with functional competencies

### **Beliefs that Influence how I teach**

My role as the instructor is primarily as a course organizer, knowledge and skills consultant, and facilitator to the learning process.

Problem-based learning helps us understand abstract ideas and conceptual models more clearly than an approach that is based strictly on lectures.

Collaborative learning, as compared to competitive and isolated learning, produces superior results in terms of both process and acquired skill and knowledge.

Trust and respect are central ingredients to a healthy classroom environment in which ideas can be freely exchanged, confusion clarified, and beliefs examined.

### **Class Requirements**

Attendance is Essential

Since much of what we learn in this course will occur in class, it is vital that you attend and be mentally present in class. In the course, I plan to use a variety of instructional methodologies, including discussion of assigned readings, lectures, team presentations, and skill building activities. Due to the experiential nature of this course and the variety of methodologies utilized, it will be difficult to "make up" missed opportunities and your absence will interfere with the development of an inclusive, cohesive classroom and group environment.

## **Experiential Group**

As part of this course, you will have the opportunity, not obligation, to participate in an in-class experiential group designed to provide you with personal insights into group process and the experience of being a group member. Should you choose not to participate in the in-class group, please initiate a discussion with me to work out an acceptable alternative group experience. If you choose to participate in the in-class experiential group, it is important to note that it will be “growth centered” and focus on issues important to your development as a person and an emerging professional therapist. Of course, you will establish your own personal goals. I, therefore, recommend that each of you begin the group experience with a self-selected interpersonal goal that is related to your development as a professional and can be addressed within the group format. Examples of goals might include:

- To become more self accepting and/or more accepting of others
- To explore trust issues that could interfere with your professional work
- To increase comfort in exploring aspects of yourself in the presence of others
- To become more self aware through shared group experience
- To become more comfortable with giving feedback and disclosing feelings

Your in-class group experience will be consistent with the professional training guidelines, objectives and ethical standards of the American Counseling Association and the American Psychological Association. During the first class, you will be asked to review a statement about your rights and responsibilities before deciding to participate in the in-class or an alternate group experience.

## **Learner Evaluation and Grading**

Due to the nature of this course, students will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. Assignments of grades will be based on satisfactory performance in each of three areas: a) commitment to the work of the course; b) journal entries; and c) your team project. To receive credit, you must demonstrate satisfactory performance in all three areas. While your participation in the in-class experiential group or an alternative group experience is important to your development as a

group leader, the nature of your participation will NOT be considered in the assignment of grades.

## **Major Performance Elements**

In lieu of any exams, your performance will be evaluated on the following performance elements:

### ***Class participation***

Your score on this performance measure will reflect the quantity and quality of your in-class participation, your preparedness, attendance, and contribution to developing a productive classroom environment in which respect and trust abound.

### ***Journal Entries***

A commitment to making thoughtful deliberative entries on a weekly basis in your journal is an important learning activity for the class. While each journal entry should be important to your development, the primary purposes of the journal are:

To reflect on what you are learning about the intricacies and complexities of group counseling,

To record your thoughts and feelings about the ethical, legal and personal issues involved in the type(s) of interventions under discussion, and

To help consolidate and integrate what you are learning.

### ***Team Projects***

During the semester you will team up with three or four other class members to develop a leader's manual for a theme group. A portion of three class periods have been reserved so that each team has an opportunity to make a presentation to the class describing the group's purpose, goals, and change strategy, as well as to lead the class through several key experiential activities.

## **Course Texts**

**Schein, Edgar H. (2013). *Humble Inquiry: The Gentle Art of Asking Instead of Telling*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.**

**Yalom, I. D. & Leszcz, M (2005). *The theory and practice of group psychotherapy*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Basic Books.**

## **Course Schedule**

The schedule and tasks elucidated in this syllabus may be revised as required by either judgment or circumstances. Changes will be announced in class. It is your responsibility to make note of all changes.

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Topic</b>   | <b>Assignments</b>   |
|-------------|--|--|
| 08/31/15    | Course overview, format and experiential group participation. Differences between theme and interpersonal groups | No assignment  |
| 09/07/15    | Labor Day  | no class   |
| .           | <b>Module 1: Theme Groups</b>  |  |
| 09/14/15    | Theme groups: design and change strategies   | Read the Drum and Knott article<br>Schein: Introduction and Chapters 1, 2, & 3 |
| .           |  |  |
| 9/21/15     | Selecting and planning your Theme group project  | Schein: Chapters 4 & 5<br>Read Body Acceptance Group Manual                    |
| .           |  |  |
| 9/28/15     | Theme group planning time  | Schein: Chapters 6 & 7<br>Yalom: Chapter 1, 2, & 3                             |
| .           |  |  |
| .           | <b>Module 2: Interpersonal Psychotherapy Groups</b>  |  |
| 10/05/15    | Therapeutic Factors at the heart of the Change Process   | Yalom: Chapters 4, 5, & 6  |
| 10/12/15    | Guiding the Interpersonal process in groups: what the leader must "do" and "be"                                  | Yalom: Chapters 7, 8, & 9  |
|             | Module 3: Theme Group Leadership   |  |

|          |  |                                 |
|----------|--|---------------------------------|
| 10/19/15 | practice<br>Lead Theme Group Session-1 | Yalom: Chapters 8 & 9           |
| 10/26/15 | Lead Theme Group Session-2             | Yalom: Chapters 11 & 12         |
| 11/02/15 | Lead Theme Group Session -3            | Yalom: Chapter 13               |
| 11/09/15 | Lead Theme Group Session-4             |                                 |
| 11/16/15 | Student Theme Group Presentations      | Group 1 presents                |
| 11/23/15 | Student Theme Group Presentations      | Group 2 presents                |
| 11/30/15 | Student Theme Group Presentations      | Group 3 presents                |
| 12/07/15 | Student Theme Group presentation       | Student Theme Group manuals due |

## Important Statements

### The University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

### **University Electronic Mail Notification Policy (Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students)**

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address.

Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at

<http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

In this course e-mail will be used as a means of communication with students. You will be responsible for checking your e-mail regularly for class work and announcements. Note: If you are an employee of the University, your e-mail address in Blackboard is your employee address.

### **Accommodations for students with disabilities**

In compliance with the UT Austin policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for student with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations. Students who require special accommodations need to get a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6259- voice or 471-4641 – TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). This letter should be presented to the instructor in each course at the beginning of the semester and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time. Five business days before an exam the student should remind the instructor of any testing accommodations that will be needed. See Web site below for more information:

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/providing.php>

### Religious Holidays

Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. If you miss an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time **after** the absence. It is the policy of The University of Texas at Austin that **you must notify each of your instructors at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent** to observe a religious holy day.