

## Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry: Pastoral Counseling

**STMC 554 Group Counseling Winter 2009**  
Mondays: 9:00AM-11:50AM Hunthausen 110

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### **Texts:**

Yalom, Irvin and Molyn Lescz. *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy* 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. New York: Basic Books, 2005.

Rutan, Scott, Walter Stone and Joseph Shay. *Psychodynamic Group Psychotherapy* 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. New York: The Guilford Press, 2007.

**Course Description:** This course will examine the basic theories, therapeutic principles and techniques associated with effective group counseling and psychotherapy. Class sessions have two sections: 1) presentation and discussion of theory, and 2) and experiential training group experience.

**Course Objectives and Goals:** Successful students will learn the basic theories behind the effectiveness of group therapy and how the different theories inform different group structure and function. They will learn practicalities of group formation and structure, typical group process, therapist and patient roles in effective groups.

### **Requirements:**

**Attendance:** Attendance at all sessions is essential for effective learning and is expected.

**Participation:** Students are expected to have read relevant material for each class session and come with questions and comments. A high level of engagement is expected.

**Group Observation:** Each student is required to observe and reflect upon one or more sessions of a therapeutic group in the community. Each student is to identify such a group, ask permission from the instructor to silently observe the group, debrief with the group leader after the group, and write a reflection on one or more vignettes of the group experience on what you think was healing in the interaction. Reflections are due at the beginning of the sixth session.

**Research & Reflection Paper:** *My Theory & Plan for My Therapy Group.*

In an 8-10 page (not including bibliography or footnotes) research paper, each student is to design the next (first?) therapy group that you will initiate, develop, and lead. Begin with your philosophy of group therapy: what do you think is healing about a group experience, cognitively, emotionally, behaviorally, spiritually, and why. You can include your own experience as well as research. This is the WHY of a group.

Then design the HOW of the group: formation, structure, process, expectations/roles of patients and of therapist, etc. What would be your hoped for outcomes for group members? The group can be open, topic focused, brief, long-term, etc.

Be prepared to present the paper to the class. Papers are due at the beginning of the sixth class.

**Experiential Training Group Experience:** Many persons who have taken a group therapy class state that the class group training experience was the most beneficial learning experience of the class. We have 14 people scheduled to be in this class, so we will have two groups of seven, with one member of each group acting as co-therapist each session. The second group will sit behind the first, have a brief opportunity to reflect after the first group concludes, and then the second group will move into their group experience observed by the first. The actual group experience will last for 30 minutes, to be modified as need be as we go along and learn together.

The role of the student in the experiential group is for learning rather than for healing, although emotional growth often occurs. Students are expected to express thoughts and feelings stimulated by your current experience, give and accept feedback to and from other class/group members regarding their expressions and behaviors. Students are to be honest, risking, congruent with self, respectful and compassionate to others and to self, including mindful of one's own boundaries of privacy and self care.

All students are expected to keep confidentiality.

Participation in the group will not be graded.

**Calendar:** (Each session will have approximately one hour of lecture/discussion and two hours of group experiential training).

Session One: Introduction: to each other, to the class, and to group therapy. Basic theories about how group therapy experiences heal. Behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual elements of group therapy. Similarities and differences with individual therapy.

Session Two: Group process, projection and engagement. Goals. What happens?

Session Three: Therapist's role(s), patients' role, preparation.

Session Four and Five: Group formation, structure, time, duration, patient selection, size.

Sessions Six through Nine: Topics TBA, sharing of reflections on observed groups, sharing of Research and Reflection papers.

Session Ten: Summary, evaluation, loose ends.

**Grading:** Grading will be according to SU's grade categories. Grades will be based on class participation (45%), observation group selections (15%), and Research and Reflection Paper (40%).

If you need special accommodations for a diagnosed learning disability or physical limitation, please follow the policies and procedures in the student handbook, and inform the instructor.

**Bibliography:** (In addition to required texts)

Corey, Gerald and Marianne Corey. *Groups: Process and Practice*. Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole Publishing Corp., 2005.