

STMC 554 Group Counseling Theory and Practice

Master of Arts in Pastoral Counseling (MAPC)
School of Theology & Ministry, Seattle University
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Seattle, WA 98122-1090

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TEXT & MATERIALS:

Required Text:

Yalom, I., and Leszcz, M (2005). *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy 5th Ed.* New York: Basic Books.

Recommended:

Rutan, S., Stone, W., & Shay, J. (2007). *Psychodynamic Group Psychotherapy 4th Ed.* New York: The Guilford Press.

Other optional and required readings may be assigned.

The organizing theme of Seattle University's graduate programs in Pastoral Counseling can be summarized by the following mission statement: "Preparing students for high quality work in multiple settings by providing solid theological, psychological, and clinical education/training." To this end, this course is designed to meet the core content, coursework equivalency requirement in the area of "counseling groups" in the mental health counselor education and licensing guidelines for Washington State. (WAC 246-809-221, last updated 7/8/09)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will examine the grounding theories and basic therapeutic principles and techniques associated with effective group counseling. The class sessions are divided into two parts: 1) the theory and clinical practice of group counseling and 2) an experiential training group experience. Topics included in this course are the most common types of therapeutic groups, client selection and screening for groups, the structure of groups, developmental aspects of therapeutic group formation, styles/techniques of group facilitation, and dealing with resistance/relapse in group counseling.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

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.

MAPC Students will:

- Demonstrate intention to approach group therapy with openness to the presence of diversity

- Demonstrate ability to assist and facilitate growth toward mental and/or spiritual, emotional, interpersonal, behavioral health and wholeness and/or maturity. Students will understand and reflect with group clients' spiritual/faith assumptions and practices.
- Demonstrate ability to produce written documentation and oral presentation for purpose of clinical practice. Students will develop group curriculum and orally present their work to others for guidance and professional development. Students will adhere to APA written guidelines.
- Students will consult the professional literature regarding best-practice of group therapy.
 - The PCT will learn the basic dynamics of group processes and be able to analyze/name the basic elements of all therapeutic groups.
 - Through readings, class discussions, and class exercises, the Pastoral Counselor in training (PCT) will learn the psychosocial theories supporting the different styles/methods of group counseling.
- Students will develop an intervention plan using group therapy.
 - The PCT will gain practical skills in group counseling techniques by being given the opportunity to function as the co-facilitator of the experiential training group.
 - By choosing a contemporary mental health issue and designing a therapeutic group model to address the problem, the PCT will gain practical skills in planning and structuring therapeutic groups.
- Students will reflect on self-as-a-group-therapist, committing to ongoing growth, implementing self-awareness, and use of self in clinical practice.
 - By observing an active therapeutic group and interviewing the group's facilitator, the PCT will experience examples of working counseling groups in the community.
 - By active participation in the experiential training group (50 minutes of each class period), the PCT will experience multiple dynamics associated with membership in a therapeutic group.
- Demonstrate in clinical group practice the capacity to draw on spiritual/theological and psychological/behavioral insights and principles.
- Make good use of lecture, supervision, and consultation regarding group therapy.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1.	Class interaction	45 points
2.	Group Experience	15 points
3.	Focal Group Project	<u>40 points</u>
	Total	100 points

Notice: A 5% deduction per day is assessed to late work. No work will be accepted after the last due date on the agenda. An incomplete grade will be assigned only in the case of a health emergency.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Attendance & Class Interaction (45 points)

Attendance and class interaction count for a substantial portion of the grade; I value your presence and your participation in the class activities! Students are expected to be on time for class and not to leave early.

Each person is expected to contribute to the class individually, and in large and small groupings. Contributions should show that the student has carefully prepared for the class by reading and thinking about relevant materials. You may be asked to present on your thoughts about reading or the group process. Please be prepared to share your intellect and spiritual self in class. Work shared in class does not

have to be “perfect”; rather you are graded on your willingness to share your thoughts and ideas. You will also be graded on your effort to offer others in the class constructive feedback regarding what they share.

For class sessions where there is assigned reading, students are expected to bring one question or discussion comment to class (preferably written on an index card) for contemplation in-group discussion. Comments/questions should be based on the readings or issues relevant to the issues being discussed.

Participation points will be awarded using the following rubric:

A/A-

Consistent and willing participation in class discussions and group work.
Clear evidence of reading *both* the text readings and other professional literature.
Bringing thought-provoking discussion question to class.

B+/B/B-

Willing participation in class discussions and group work.
Clear evidence of having engaged the professional literature through the text readings.
Bringing a question to class.
Missing one class or arriving late or leaving early to class.

C+/C/C-

Inconsistent participation in class and group projects.
Limited evidence of having read the required readings for class.
Missing more than one class or consistently arriving late or leaving early.

2. Group Experience (15 Points; Credit/No Credit)

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. Depending on enrollment, we will have one or two groups, with one member of each group acting as co-therapist each session (you will use group techniques along with some structured activities from the group project described below). If we have two groups, 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 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.

3. Focal Group Project (40 Points)

Each student will identify a mental health issue or risk issue/problem of interest and design a counseling group focused on therapeutic interventions specific to the identified issue or problem. The project plan will be organized and efficiently/effectively written in a style that will clearly communicate to the instructor (and possible future administrators) the beneficial elements of the proposed group:

In your written proposal you will include (you can use narrative and bulleted points):

- The mental health issue or problem that will be addressed by the group (approx two pages);
 - The pastoral, spiritual, or theological elements of the issue/problem and how these dynamics will be included in or addressed by the group;

- Current research on the issue/problem as found in professional journals (minimum 2 peer-reviewed articles cited), academic texts, or personal interviews with experts;
- The rationale for the selection and screening of clients for the group;
- The optimal size, session time, duration, and cost/fee of the proposed group;
- The psychological theory and/or group method that will be used predominately in the group (e.g., psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, 12 Step, psychodrama, art/music/play, etc.);
- The participation of medical professionals and/or the necessity of psychotropic drugs for membership in the group;
- The structure of the group (e.g., closed/open, co-therapist or not, stated agenda, starting and ending the group, group process of the meeting, attendance expectations, homework or not, activities requiring special rooms or equipment, etc.);
- The ground rules of the group;
- The concepts, therapeutic goals, and skills on which the group is based;
- In general, the interventions that will be most helpful for meeting the goals of this type of group;
- The method for measuring/assessing when and if the group goals/skills are reached;
- Hard copies (added in an appendix) of any homework handouts, posters, assessment instruments, or other printed materials needed for the successful facilitation of the group;
- Post-group referral or follow-up procedures if warranted;
- A reference list (APA) of sources that were used in researching and designing the group.

The following rubric will be used to grade the assignment (see next page):

Final Paper Rubric—Please attach to your paper

	A-range	B-range	C-range
Introduction to Problem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritual Dimensions • Research Dimensions 			
The rationale for the selection and screening of clients for the group;			
The optimal size, session time, duration, and cost/fee of the proposed group;			
The psychological theory and/or group method that will be used predominately in the group (e.g., psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, 12 Step, psychodrama, art/music/play, etc.);			
The participation of medical professionals and/or the necessity of psychotropic drugs for membership in the group;			
The structure of the group (e.g., closed/open, co-therapist or not, stated agenda, starting and ending the group, group process of the meeting, attendance expectations, homework or not, activities requiring special rooms or equipment, etc.);			
The ground rules of the group;			
The concepts, therapeutic goals, and skills on which the group is based;			
In general, the interventions that will be most helpful for meeting the goals of this type of group;			
The method for measuring/assessing when and if the group goals/skills are reached;			
Hard copies (added in an appendix) of any homework handouts, posters, assessment instruments, or other printed materials needed for the successful facilitation of the group;			
Post-group referral/follow-up			
APA style, grammar, spelling, etc			

Comments:

Course Outline

Date	Topic	Reading/DUE	Group Co-Leader
1 1/4	Syllabus review Introduction to group counseling Ethics and professional issues related to group counseling		
2 1/11	Setting up a group: The formation process	Yalom, 1-4 (bring comment for all reading)	
3 1/18	Group leadership skills: basic skills	Yalom, 5-7 Be working on Focal Group Project	
4 1/25	STAGE 1: Initial Process	Yalom, 8-10	
5 2/1	STAGE 2: Transition	Yalom, 11 Be working on Focal Group Project	
6 2/8	STAGE 3: Working Group leadership skills: Advanced techniques	Yalom, 12	
7 2/12* Note Friday meet day per SU	STAGE 3: Working (Part II)	Yalom, 13	
8 2/22	STAGE 4: Ending a Group	Focal Group Project DUE-please attach rubric and hand in hard copy to Christie	
9 3/1	Group leadership skills: Advanced (practice)	Yalom, 14-17	
10 3/8	Reflection & Wrap-up		

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The School of Theology and Ministry strictly adheres to the Academic Policy concerning Academic Honesty as published in the Seattle University Student Handbook.

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES:

If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an “invisible disability” such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to discuss your needs and arrange support services and/or accommodations through Disabilities Services staff in the Learning Center, Loyola 100, 206-296-5740.

RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY:

In order to thrive and excel, a culture must honor the rights, safety, dignity, and well being of all members no matter their race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, national origin, religious beliefs, or physical and cognitive ability. The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect in understanding that each individual is unique. To the extent possible and appropriate, this course will explore these differences in a safe, positive, and supportive environment.

Recommended Readings:

Corey, G. (2008). *Theory and Practice of Group Counseling* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Corey, M.S., & Corey, G. (2006). *Groups: Process and practice* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Crain, W. (2005). *Theories of development: Concepts and applications* (5th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Day, S. X. (1998). *Groups in practice*. Boston: Lahaska Press, a Houghton Mifflin Company.

Elliot, S. (1994). *Group activities for counselors*. Torrance, CA: Innerchoice Publishing.

Egan, G. (2007). *Exercises in Helping Skills* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education.

Foster, E. S. (1989). *Energizers and icebreakers for all ages and stages*. Minneapolis, MN: Educational Media.

Forester-Miller, H., & Kottler, J. A. (1997). *Issues and challenges for group practitioners*. Denver, CO: Love.

Jacobs, E. (1992). *Creative counseling techniques: An illustrated guide*. Odessa, Fl: Psychological Assessment Resources.

Jacobs, E., Harvill, R., & Masson, R. (2002). *Group counseling: Strategies and skills* (4th ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Wadsworth.

West, E. (1996). *201 icebreakers*. New York: McGraw-Hill.