

SOWK 6004B, SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH GROUPS *(Final draft, Jan. 11, 2014)*
Spring, 2014

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Mullis: Cell: (912) 293-1122 or E-Mail: lfmullis@valdosta.edu It is best to contact me through email as I check my account daily.

Fax: 229-245-4341

Office Hours: Please contact instructors directly for individual appointments.

Classroom: TBA, College of Education

Meeting Times: Saturday Afternoon, 1:30 -5:30 pm

Semester: Spring, 2014

Credits: 2 credit hours

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

A continuation of SOWK 6003 that introduces students to various types of groups and group dynamics.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course builds on SOWK 6003 content by focusing more on various types of groups social workers may encounter and continues developing student knowledge about group dynamics. The various types of groups and their dynamics will be addressed in relation to the group members, agency, community, and cultural contexts.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Develop a better understanding of the particular knowledge, skills and values as they relate to specific group types.
2. Develop a better understanding of group dynamics and how to use them to advantage for group members.
3. Develop a beginning understanding of the stages of group development and group dynamics.
4. Develop a beginning understanding of particular types and purposes of groups for meeting the needs of individuals, organizations, and communities.
5. Develop better the process to recognize the impact of socio-cultural forces and other aspects of diversity on the group, as well as on individual members and the facilitator.
6. Continue developing competence in terms of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as enhanced self-awareness, relative to group facilitation.
7. Develop a beginning understanding of how social work values and ethics apply to group practice
8. Identify the set of practice skills that are common to all types of social work practice and those skills that are unique to group practice, and develop a beginning ability to demonstrate these skills in simulated group situations.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Jacobs, E.E., Masson, R.L., Harvill, R.L., & Schimmel, C.J. (20). Group counseling:

Strategies and skills. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole/Cengage. There is also a DVD that accompanies this text, but it is not required.

Corey, G., Schneider-Corey, M., & Harnes, R. (2013). Groups in action: Evolution and

challenges. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole/Cengage. **You will need both the text and DVD that comes with it. These can be bought in bookstore as a package.**

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Yalom, I. (2005). *The theory and practice of group psychotherapy* (5th ed.). Basic Books: New York.

THE IMPORTANCE OF “PRESENCE” IN A HYBRID COURSE

Instructor’ Presence in Course. We will be present in the course frequently and consistently, and we will be monitoring what is being written, and will be actively involved in discussions and respond to questions. Even when we are not commenting, we will be checking in and being present, just as in an actual classroom.

Student Presence in Course and Minimal Participation. Because we will be present frequently and consistently, we expect all students to be “present” frequently and consistently. This is similar to the expectation in place for face-to-face students regarding class attendance. They must attend graduate classes! Since there are only five classes for hybrid students to physically attend, we still expect students to demonstrate their “presence” through their written communications such as posts to the Discussion Board, e-mail, comments, use of the Chat Room, timely completion of assignments, and their demonstration that they can work and interact with us and their peers. We need to know that students are “present” in the course, even if we cannot see them! Students’ level of involvement with peers will be linked to their grade. If students submit assignments, but rarely interact online with peers or with us, they will receive a lower grade than students who are actively involved in the course. All assignments will provide a clear definition of *minimal participation*.

How to Ask Questions about Course. Students always have questions about a course, what is expected of them, and often they need guidance on how to complete assignments. Sometimes the syllabus needs clarification or changes at the beginning of a course. We have created a special Learning Center Discussion Board where students can post their questions and concerns. This Discussion Board provides a place for the class to discuss issues that are important to the entire group, and peers sometimes can answer questions more quickly than instructors. We invite you to use this Learning Center Board for all types of course-related issues that can be discussed publically.

How do I Communicate with the Instructor about Private Concerns? Sometimes, students need privacy to discuss concerns such as personal emergencies or concerns about their performance, questions about a grade, etc., and BlazeVIEW email is to be used when privacy is needed. Be aware, however, that we will use BlazeVIEW only for personal concerns and not for course questions. If we receive a course-related question in BlazeVIEW, we will ask the student to post the question on the Learning Center Board so that the whole community can benefit from the question/response. We want to remain accessible to ALL students, and the most effective way to do this is to rely on a General Discussion Board as the hub of our Learning Community.

ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be divided up into two groups for Small Group Work which will occur during each web weekend. Students will remain in their assigned small group for the duration of the semester, and each will be led by one of the two faculty members. Additionally, the groups will be used for the online discussion assignments, and each group will have a separate Discussion Board to which members will post their discussion assignments. We will also create a General Discussion Board for the entire class in case students have general questions about the course or specific assignments. In this way, all students and instructors will be able to access the General Class Discussion board for information.

Quiz. One in-class, brief quiz will be given on Chapters 1-5 of Jacobs et al and Ch. 1 of, as well as relevant lecture content from first web weekend class. **50 possible points.**

Written Assignment on Specific Types of Groups: This assignment will be given in order to help students expand their knowledge of various types of groups (e.g., group treatment practices with Substance Abusers) or particular types of population groups (e.g., groups for those who are grieving). Part A - 70 points for 3-4 page research paper to be submitted to Dropbox by assigned due date. Part B – 30 points. Students will be assigned to research topic relating to either a specific type of group or group population. Using content from the research you complete for Part A, students will demonstrate their ability to plan a psychoeducational group for the specific type of group/group population. Part B will be submitted at a later date than Part A. **Instructions for Parts A and B will be provided on Course Content Page.** Assignments will be written in APA style, 12-point font, double-spaced, cover page, and headers. Both assignments will be submitted to the Dropbox by the assigned deadline, and a summary of each student's findings will be presented in class. **100 points total.**

Self-Reflection Assignments – Two self-reflection assignments. Content for these assignments will vary, and directions will be included in Syllabus and Rubrics Folder in the Content Section of BlazeVIEW. Assignments are to be written in “modified” APA style, 12 point font, double-spaced, name and headings. **25 points per Assignment for a total of 50 points.**

Discussion Board – Three discussions will be required. These discussion postings will cover student experiences in their small group after each web weekend. Students will be required to respond to discussion questions and then respond to the postings of at least two of their peers to received full credit for each discussion. These discussions will be scheduled after the first four web weekend classes. Instructions for each discussion will be posted by Sunday after each web weekend (see Syllabus for specific times and due dates). **Each discussion will be worth 10 points each for a total of 30 points.**

Corey and Corey Video Questions - Students will be required to work independently in responding to a set of selected questions from Corey, Corey and Haynes's *Group in Actions Workbook* that accompanies the DVD. These questions will be pre-selected by instructors, and students will have time to review the DVD and respond to the questions over a period of several weeks. Answers per question should be succinct, no more than one paragraph, but they must be sufficiently substantial to demonstrate that students are reviewing and processing the information presented in the videos and looking closely at the interactions and group process that is being demonstrated on the video. **Possible points: 150 total. (Points for each set of questions will vary: 50 points for Initial Stage of Group; 35 points for Transition Stage; 50 points for Working Stage; 15 points for Ending Stage of Groups).**

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS:

GRADING SCALE: 380 points**A = 342-380****B = 304-341****C = 266-303** ***(C's adversely affect the necessary 3.0 gpa)*****D = 228-265** ***(A "D" requires retaking the course)*****F = 227 and below** ***(An "F" can result in termination from the program!)*****COURSE OUTLINE****Class 1 Week of Jan. 13****READING: Chapter 1, pp. 1-33, *Introduction***

Jacobs, E., Masson, R., Harvill, R., & Schimmell, C., (2012). *Group Counseling: Strategies & Skills*, Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole/Cengage.
 [JMHS text]

Ch. 1, *Therapeutic Factors in Group Therapy*, pp. 3-18

Yalom, I. (2005). *The theory and practice of group psychotherapy* (3rd ed.), New York: Basic Books. (Chapter found in Content Section of Course).

WEB WEEKEND 1, January 18 – Introduction to Work with Groups

Introduction
 Syllabus and BlazeVIEW
 Self-Assessment Assignment
 Yalom Video (Outpatient Group)
 Small Group Work – final hour of class

Class 2 Week of Jan. 20

READINGS: JMHS, Ch. 2, Stages of Group, Group Process, and Therapeutic Forces, pp. 35-56; JMHS, Ch. 3, *The Purpose of Groups*

Corey, Corey, & Haynes, *Groups in Action*, Introduction, pp. 1-6

DISCUSSION #1: Discussion Posting To Specific Group Discussion Board.

Discuss the Yalom video that was shown in class which is an example of an outpatient therapy group operating with a "here and now" focus.

Discussion Questions for Discussion #1 will be posted by instructor at 5:00 pm on Sunday, Jan. 19, and will be due on Saturday, Jan. 22/25 on Group Discussion Board.

Class 3 Week of Jan. 27

READINGS: JMHS, Ch. 4, *Planning*; JMHS, Ch. 6, *Basic Skills for Group Leaders*, pp. 129-149.

WATCH DVD: Corey, Corey, & Haynes DVD. Review the "Evolution of a Group" DVD and watch "Forming the Group" and the "Initial Stage" of the video in its entirety without answering questions. We suggest that you take notes as you go and write down what you observe as well as your reactions to the group process that occurs. Do not attempt to answer questions in the workbook at this point!

Class 4 Week of Feb. 3

REVIEW: Ch. 1-5 and Yalom, Ch. 1 for Brief Quiz on the Second Web Weekend, Feb. 8.

READ: Chapter 5, JMHS text, *Getting Started: The Beginning Stages and Beginning Phase*; Groups in Action, Part VI: *Ethical Issues in the Practice of Group Counseling*, p. 59

ASSIGNMENT – Selected Questions #1: Begin responding to Corey et al. DVD using selected questions from Initial Stage of workbook (pp. 14-29) which will be found in Corey et al. Questions Folder in Content Browser of BlazeVIEW.

WEB WEEKEND 2, Feb.8

Brief Quiz – 40 minutes

Yalom Video (Inpatient Video: Agenda Setting)

Ethical Issues in Group Practice

Small Groups Work: Relationally-focused group processing members' agenda

Class 5 Week of Feb. 10

READ: Ch. 8, *Cutting Off and Drawing Out*

ASSIGNMENT: Continue working on Corey *et al.* questions which are due **Sunday, Feb. 16 at 11:00 pm.**

DISCUSSION #2: Discussion Posting To Specific Group Discussion Board. Discussion Questions for Discussion #2 will be posted by instructor at 5:00 pm on Sunday, Feb. 9 at 5:00 pm. Discussion #2 will be due on Feb. 12/15.

ASSIGNMENT: Begin working on Part A of your research paper.

Class 6 Week of Feb. 17

READ: Yalom Ch. 3: Group Cohesiveness, pp. 53-76 (Content Browser).

WATCH: Corey et al. DVD, Transition Stage of Group (pp. 30-41), and begin working on responses to selected questions in the workbook which will be due **Sunday, Feb. 23 at 11:00 pm in the Dropbox.** Questions will be posted in Content Browser.

ASSIGNMENT: Continue to work on Part A of Groups Assignment

Class 7 Week of Feb. 24

READ: JMHS, Ch. 12, pp. 274-294, *Leading the Middle Stage of a Group.*

WATCH: Corey *et al.*, *Working Stage of a Group* video in its entirety. We suggest that you write down comments, questions, or responses as you go.

Class 8 Week of March 3

READ: Yalom, Ch. 2, pp. 19-52, Interpersonal Learning (Content Browser).

ASSIGNMENT: Begin responding to Corey *et al.* selected questions from Working Stage of Group (p. 41-52) which will be found in Content Section of BlazeVIEW. **Questions are due in Dropbox on March 30 at 11:00 pm.**

WEB WEEKEND 3, March 8

Leading Groups with Adolescents Video
Small Group Work

Class 9 Week of Mar. 10

READ: JMHS, Ch. 10, pp 219-245, *Exercises*; JMHS, Ch. 11, pp. 246-272, *Introducing, Conducting and Processing Exercises*

ASSIGNMENT: Self-Reflection #1 on “Leading Groups with Adolescents” (which will be shown on Web Weekend 3) is **due March 16 at 11:00 pm to Dropbox.**

ASSIGNMENT: Continue working on Corey *et al.* selected questions from Working Stage of Group (pp. 41-52) which are found in Content Browser and **will be due March 30 at 11:00 pm.**

March 17 -21, SPRING BREAK**Class 10 Week of March 24**

READ: Yalom, Ch. 6, *The Therapist Working in the Here and Now*, Content Browser.

ASSIGNMENT: Part I of Specific Population Group due on March 30 at 11:00 in Dropbox.

ASSIGNMENT: Continue working on Corey *et al.*, selected questions from Working Stage of Group (pp. 41-52). Assignment will be due March 30 at 11:00 pm.

Class 11 Week of March 31

READ: JMHS text, Ch. 13, *Using Counseling Theories in Groups*

VIEW: Corey *et al.* video Lectures on Theoretical Approaches to Groups, *Groups in Action Part II, Psychodynamic, Experiential, Cognitive Behavioral, Integrative Approaches*

ASSIGNMENT: **Begin to work on Part II of Specific Population Group Assignment which is due April**

Web Weekend #4, April 5

Yalom Video – Sessions 3 and 4
Small group work

Class 12 Week of April 7

JMHS text, Ch. 16, *Dealing with Problem Situations*

Yalom, Ch. 13, *Problem group members*

ASSIGNMENT: Continue to work on second part of Specific Population Groups Assignment

DISCUSSION #3: Discussion will be posted to Small Group Discussion Board. Discussion topic will relate the Theoretical Approaches shown on the in-class video and from Ch. 13. Discussion Questions will be posted by instructor at 5:00 pm on Sunday, April 6, and will be due by April 9/12.

Class 13 Week of April 14**VIEW:** Corey et al., Part II: *Challenges Facing Group Leaders***READ:** Corey et al., *Challenges Facing Group Leaders*, pp. 68-109.**ASSIGNMENT:** Continue to work on Part B of Specific Population Group Assignment which is due April 20 at 11:00 pm in Dropbox.**Class 14 Week of April 21****READ:** JMHS, Ch. 15, pp. 366-392, *Closing a Session*,**WATCH:** Corey et al. DVD, Evolution of a Group: *The Ending Stage*.**ASSIGNMENTS:** Complete Corey et al., selected questions from The Ending Stage (pp.53-58) which will be found in Content Section of BlazeVIEW. Assignment will be due April 27 at 11:00 pm.**Web Weekend 5 April 26****Brief in-class presentations per student of Specific Population****Groups Assignment** in order to explore range of groups used with specific populations.

Termination of Small Group Work

Class 15 Week of April 28**FINAL ASSIGNMENT: Self- Reflection #2 on overall experience during the semester is due in Dropbox on May 4 at 11:00 pm.****DIVISION OF SOCIAL WORK and UNIVERSITY POLICIES RELEVANT TO THIS COURSE**

The goal of the Division of Social Work is to prepare students for the professional practice of social work. The Division requires students to adhere to professional practices and standards in all classes and practicum. These practices and standards are outlined in the MSW Student Code of Conduct which can be found in the current *MSW Student Handbook*. The Code of Conduct must be signed by all beginning MSW students during Orientation.

THE FOLLOWING STANDARDS ARE NOT NEGOTIABLE: Students may depend on well-planned classes and knowledgeable instructors. Professors are committed to the facilitation of student success. Learning is a complex phenomenon for which BOTH instructors and students are responsible. Evaluation criteria are stated clearly in the syllabus. However, if students have questions about grading, it is the students' responsibility to discuss these matters with their instructors. The course syllabus represents a contract between students and the instructor. Professors reserve the right to modify syllabi, and students will be notified in writing when such changes are made. Likewise, students are responsible for reading and following instructions on the syllabi.

EXPECTATIONS FOR WEB-HYBRID INSTRUCTORS

BLAZEVIEW E-MAIL: Students can expect regular and prompt e-mail feedback from instructors. We will respond to questions and concerns within 24 hours, and generally, in a shorter period of time. To facilitate student contact with using case of emergencies, we have posted my cell phone numbers in the syllabus. As we stated in class, this number is for personal emergencies (e.g., personal and family accidents and illness, broken computers, and unexpected crises that impede assignment completion), not for routine questions that can be placed on the Learning Center Board.

GRADING TURN AROUND TIME: ONE WEEK. We will grade assignments and return them within one week of the submission date unless the assignment is unusually lengthy. In most cases we will grade papers online and return the papers electronically. If there should be a delay in our returning papers, we will notify students and provide an alternative completion date.

EXPECTED TIME IN COURSE: We expect students to go into the course shell and check out announcements at least two to three times a week. Students should be working on course-related assignments, watching DVDs and completing readings for a minimum of **4-6 hours per week**. Some weeks will require more time than others. The bottom line is that students are expected to be regular course shell “attenders” in a way that behaviorally confirms their participation as a class member (i.e., posts, chats, comments, submissions, etc.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF IN-CLASS GROUP WORK: Because this course will have simulated practice groups over the course of the semester, there is a need to “bind” students by the expectation of professional confidentiality for any content that emerges in their interactions with other students in their practice skills groups. In other words, what happens SPECIFICALLY in group STAYS IN GROUP! Sometimes, it is difficult to separate content that peers generate in role play from students’ personal issues that are painful for them. We will practice confidentiality just as in practice, and we will hold students to standards of the **NASW Code of Ethics and the MSW Student Code of Conduct** in relation to expectations of professional comportment according to professional standards. Students who breach confidentiality in such ways as talking to their non-group peers about another student’s issue or talking in the hall and being overheard by others talking about what happened to someone in group will be held accountable for their actions. This means that students will not be able to reveal specific interactions involving a peer in groups except in discussions with their instructors. If students are concerned by an incident that emerges in group, they must first talk with their course instructors.

CLASS ATTENDANCE: Because the MSW Program is a professional program, **web weekend class attendance is MANDATORY**. The Attendance Policy is extremely important and can be found in the current *MSW Student Handbook* and defines consequences for missed classes. Students are expected to be on time for class and to return from breaks in a timely manner. Likewise, students are expected to participate in class discussions and activities.

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES: All assignments must be submitted ON TIME and IN THE MANNER directed by the faculty (sent to the Assignment Drop Box, submitted to the Discussion Board, etc.). Deadlines are extremely important for professional social workers. Because SOWK 6004 is a basic practice course, students are expected to model professional behavior in the classroom including timeliness, attention to professional responsibilities, and adherence to the *NASW Code of Ethics*. Lateness and failure to submit assignments are unacceptable. Students will lose points for late papers unless they have a medical excuse or family emergency. Please submit papers early enough to determine whether there are submission problems in BlazeVIEW so that you can request help, if needed. **In summary, the timely submission of papers is required for this course! “LATE SUBMISSIONS” ARE DEFINED BY THE INSTRUCTOR AS ANY**

ASSIGNMENT THAT IS TURNED IN AFTER THE ASSIGNED DEADLINE, and will result in the loss of 10% of the total points. Lateness of one minute, five minutes, or 48 hours will be penalized! Please monitor your time management so that you submit early enough so that computer glitches are caught before the deadline. Having “extra” time to submit assignments is not fair to students who meet all assigned deadlines. For each 24 hour period during which the assignment is not turned in, you will lose 10% of the total points. If you encounter a personal crisis or emergency and choose to submit the assignment late, please contact your instructors.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are not acceptable in a professional social work program. Students who engage in this type behavior risk failure on specific assignments, in the course, and possible dismissal from the MSW Program. Academic dishonesty is prohibited by the university as well as the Division of Social Work. The following link outlines [VSU's Academic Honesty Policies](#). The Academic Dishonesty Policy for the Division of Social Work is found in the *MSW Student Handbook* found as a link off the [Division web site](#). Anti-plagiarism is built into BlazeVIEW and will be used in written assignments for the semester.

INCOMPLETES: Incomplete grades are given **only** in cases of extreme emergency with proper documentation and are granted **only with the prior approval of the instructor**. Policies governing Incompletes are found in the *MSW Student Handbook*.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: Students are expected to maintain a 3.00 grade point average in the MSW Program. A discussion of all academic expectations and grading can be found in the *MSW Student Handbook*, including the Division's policy of Academic Deficiency Points given for grades lower than C.

CANCELLATION OF CLASSES: The University President may cancel classes under specific emergency conditions. The most frequent cause of cancellation is inclement weather. Please check the main page of the VSU web site if you have concerns about inclement weather or an emergency situation: <http://www.valdosta.edu>. If you have questions, it is best to call the Division of Social Work main number or contact your instructor.

USE OF LAPTOPS AND CELL PHONES IN CLASS: The use of computer/iPad devices for in-class note taking must be approved by the instructor unless mandated by the VSU Access Office as an approved accommodation. Students who choose to “surf the web” post on Facebook during class will receive a grade deduction of **10 points per class when this occurs**. **Students who choose to text under the desk during class and who use their phones inappropriately in class also will lose 10 points per class**. This penalty is based on a number of complaints from students in the MSW Program. Students indicate that use of these devices in class distracts those who can hear or see these activities. Students are expected to advise the instructor if they are “on call”, put phones on vibrate, and sit near the door to take calls. Phone calls during class, just as phone calls during client interviews, are unacceptable professional behavior. These inappropriate student behaviors are identified in the *MSW Student Code of Conduct*.

ADA ACCOMMODATIONS: The Access Office for Students with Disabilities (Access Office) serves students with documented disabilities that have met the VSU admission criteria and are otherwise qualified. *The Access Office is the centralized agency for receiving disability related documentation and approving requested accommodations*. Students voluntarily register with the Access Office and provide documentation to support requested accommodations. Documentation review involves the assessment of the individual's disability with respect to documentation presented and accommodations requested. Documentation provided must meet Board of Regents' criteria. Types of disabilities served include

learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, visual, hearing, mobility, psychiatric, and other health impairments. Services provided include test proctoring, classroom modifications, adaptive technology, sign language interpreting, note-taking, faculty notification, and assistance with campus accessibility. Students may contact the Access Office at www.valdosta.edu/access or 229-245-2498.

Technology Assistance: Students having technology problems may contact the [Help Desk](#) (phone 229-245-4357) or e-mail a question at helpdesk@valdosta.edu. The VSU Help Desk is located on the 2nd floor of the Odum Library. Contact numbers for the 24 hour Helpline provided by the University System of Georgia are posted on the Course Homepage and includes e-mail access and telephone access. **Please note that BlazeVIEW goes down for routine maintenance on Friday night, and specific maintenance hours are provided on the BlazeVIEW website. When BlazeVIEW goes down, you will be alerted and you will be informed when it goes back up.**

STUDENTS EXPERIENCING ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES: Students with academic concerns are strongly encouraged to contact the staff of the [Student Success Center](#) or call them at 229-333-7570. The Student Success Center is located on first floor of Langdale Hall on the main VSU campus. Services provided by the Success Center include tutoring, writing assistance, and help with time management. Students are encouraged to make appointments with Center Staff through the web link or by telephone. The Center is available to all VSU students, and evening appointments are available.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES: The [Counseling Center](#) (phone 229-333-5940; e-mail piraynor@valdosta.edu). Services are free of charge to students with emotional/mental, social, substance abuse and other problems. The [Farber Health Services](#) provides physical health services (phone 229-333-5886).

EMERGENCIES: Campus Police Contact Number is **229-259-5555**. The Campus Police Division is located in Oak Street Parking Deck, Second Floor with main entry near the Brookwood Avenue end of the building (south end). Because social work classes are held on weekends and evenings, students should remain alert and be aware of the availability of emergency phones with blue lights. Most students park in the Oak Street Deck or near the Fine Arts building, but students are encouraged to walk in groups and to help one another be safe. **Students are strongly encouraged to program the campus emergency number (259-5555), 911 (for local police) and *447 (GA State Highway Patrol) into their cell phone.**