

**Hunter College School of Social Work
City University of New York**

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ADVANCED SOCIAL GROUP WORK FOR MAJORS (SSW-733)

COURSE OUTLINE

This course builds on the knowledge and skills that students have learned in SSW-731 and SSW-732. The broad context for assessment, analysis, and the application of advanced skill is the use of professional self in organizational practice.

In recognition that contemporary social group work is often caught between traditional professional ideals and current agency demands, the course asks students to explore obstacles and opportunities related to their ability to apply “best practice” principles and to advance related skills in planning, development, and practice.

Implications for the worker’s use of self as change agent toward developing ethical and effective practice are explored as well as implications for practice in widely diverse practice settings and with widely diverse populations. Special attention will be given to the use of creative expression, non-verbal techniques, and individual style in the interventive process. The use of the creative self is encouraged through the reading of relevant literary classics.

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Greater understanding of the impact of environmental and organizational circumstances on the ability to plan and develop ethical and effective practice with groups.
2. Increased ability to plan, develop, and sustain group-work practice that is consonant with the values and ethics of the profession.
3. Heightened awareness of the potential for using the professional role as agent of organizational and environmental change.
4. Increased skill at securing new resources or promoting new methods of service delivery, including the use of emerging technologies.
5. Expanded ability to assess the need and potential for and implications of utilizing various social group work theories and models on contextual practice.

6. Sharpened/more well developed skills in using group process to address serious finite conditions, critical situations, and psychosocial identity concerns of group members that may encompass but are not restricted to such variables as race, culture, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ageism, ableism, and socioeconomic status.
7. Greater understanding of the utility and power of creative activities in addressing group issues.
8. Increased skill at selecting and implementing activities to meet diverse needs of diverse populations.
9. Advanced skill in participating, working, and collaborating in task-oriented groups.
10. Increased capacity to develop and complete creative programming activities utilizing verbal and non-verbal communication techniques.
11. Increased capacity to analyze the internal dynamics of task-oriented groups and advanced skill in shaping their decision-making and problem-solving processes.
12. Greater understanding of mutual-aid process as a reflection of anti-oppression social work and increased skill in catalyzing its dynamics as anti-oppressive practice.
13. Increased ability to be self observing in order to differentiate worker's needs from client's needs.
14. Ability to identify and develop a unique style of work.

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COURSE COMPETENCY OUTCOMES

At the end of this course students will demonstrate advanced skill in the following areas:

1. Assessing organizational and environmental resources and constraints for developing and/or implementing group-based services that are consonant with professional values and ethics (Epas 2.1.10a, b, d).
2. Assessing the need for, communicating about, and advocating on behalf of organizational change toward the delivery of ethical and effective group-based services (Epas 2.1.10a-d).
3. Balancing organizational expectations with advocacy for ethical and effective group-based services (Epas 2.1.10b-d).

4. Planning, developing, and sustaining ethical and effective group services within environmental and organizational context (Epas 2.1.10a-d).
5. The differential application of major social work theories, models, and/or approaches toward best practice in organizational context (Epas 2.1.10c & d).
6. Assessing, analyzing, intervening in, and evaluating group process as a psycho-social problem-solving medium with increased skill in the professional use of self (Epas 2.1.10a-d).
7. Securing organizational or environmental resources as well as identifying and promoting opportunities for innovation (Epas 2.1.10a-d).
8. Using activities creatively to help diverse populations meet diverse needs and goals through group membership (Epas 2.1.10b-d).
9. Working and collaborating in task-oriented groups and in completing creative-art programs featuring verbal and non-verbal communication techniques (Epas 2.1.10b-d).
10. Analyzing the internal processes of task-oriented groups and in offering solutions to obstacles in decision-making and problem-solving efforts (Epas 2.1.10c-d).
11. Catalyzing mutual aid from the beginning of a group to its end and sustaining it through such processes as individual problem solving and conflict (Epas 2.1.10b-d).
12. Ability to be self observing in order to differentiate worker's needs from client's needs (Epas 2.1.10a-d).
13. Ability to identify and develop a unique style of work (Epas 2.1.10a-d).

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Texts & Reading

Brandler, Sondra and Roman, Camille (1999). *Group work: Skills and strategies for effective interventions* (2nd ed.). Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press.

Garvin, Charles; Gutierrez, Lorraine; and Galinsky, Maeda (2004). *Handbook of social work with groups*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Middleman, Ruth and Goldberg Wood, Gale (1990). *Skills for direct practice in social work*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Northen, Helen and Kurland, Roselle (2001). *Social work with groups* (3rd ed.). New York: Columbia University Press.

Selected reading from the Social Group Work Master Bibliography and SSW-733 Supplemental Bibliography as well as poetry and prose from other areas of literature (such as psychology, philosophy, etc.) as assigned by the instructor at each class.

Assigned reading may vary over the semester as finally determined by the instructor

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STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Expectations, Participation, Commitment

SSW-733 is an intensive advanced method class. You are expected to prepare for and participate in class discussion. This includes attending class, being on time, and alerting the instructor immediately in case of unavoidable absence. Absence may require an extra assignment.

Participation also includes fulfilling the reading assignments so that you can contribute meaningfully to class process and being prepared to participate in and contribute to small-group process as you work to fulfill the requirements of the course.

As with SSW731 and SSW732 each class carries an enormous amount of content so that missing one class may mean missing an entire piece of content that cannot be recaptured experientially.

Therefore, given the above along with the fact that content is cumulative and the fact that your presence in class makes a difference to the entire class, you cannot have more than one absence without permission. More than one absence can be grounds for non-continuation and a grade of No Credit.

Although the HC norm is one absence per credit, attendance is a requirement of the program (SSW 08-09 Handbook); and each instructor has the right to set attendance requirements and to consider attendance in calculating final grades (HC Catalogue, pp. 71-72).

You are expected to advise the instructor of absence beforehand and if not possible, as soon thereafter as possible; you should also clarify with the instructor any potential impact of absence/s on your grade for the course. Ultimately, course credit will be based on attendance, classroom participation, participation in Blackboard assignments, reading as demonstrated through your participation, and successful completion of other assignments.

Students are expected to read required selections, complete all assignments, and to make their best effort to actively participate in classroom discussions and activities.

The grading system for this course is Credit, No Credit, and Honors for the equivalent of “A+” work. If you wish to receive a grade in lieu of this system contact the professor in writing by the third class session.

Assignments

Students who have an area of specialization should shape their assignments accordingly in collaboration with the instructor

Group Prospectus. Building on the learning process of SSW-731 and SSW-732, this collaborative assignment focuses on identifying and assessing unmet needs in the organization and on designing a group-based intervention with special focus on the integration of contextual variables with the need to differentially apply planning skills based on special characteristics and psychosocial needs of varied client types. Implications for group development and practice are compared and contrasted, and the potential for innovation in service delivery through existing or emerging technologies is considered.

An outline for carrying out the assignment will be handed out in class; due date TBA.

Critical Incident Analysis. Building on the Records of Service in SSW-732, this assignment increases the capacity for analysis of practice and self supervision. Two critical incidents are selected as the basis for identifying and analyzing obstacles that may have compromised the capacity for effective use of professional self and for identifying potential alternative interventions. The incidents are then brought to the classroom for collective review and analysis. Role play is used to examine various practice theories, models, and personal styles. The impact and implications of these respective practice principles and intervention strategies are then explored in terms of effectiveness.

An outline for carrying out the assignment including presentations will be handed out in class; due date TBA.

Final Assignment. This final assignment consists of participating in small task groups, each of which develops a piece of programmatic activity to mark class termination. Throughout their collaborative efforts to select, develop, and produce an activity, task-group members reflect on their process noting in particular issues of leadership, problem solving, decision making, and conflict resolution. Each task group engages the class in its selected activity, followed by collective analysis of method, content, phase appropriateness, and meaning.

The assignment concludes with a fishbowl discussion by each task group of its internal work processes including the impact of their dynamics on the activity’s effectiveness.

Blackboard (Bb). Weekly Bb assignments will be determined throughout the course for each of which you are expected to (1) prepare as requested by the instructor (such as preparatory reading), (2) post an initial piece of work on the course’s Bb site as directed by the instructor,

and (3) engage in ongoing interaction as required to fulfill the assignment. Bb work is expected to take one hour's worth of work per week throughout the semester. A guideline that identifies the range of potential assignments will be distributed in class. All Bb assignments must be successfully fulfilled in order to receive credit for the course.



ONLINE LEARNING AND REQUIREMENTS

You need access to CUNY-HC Blackboard in order to fulfill all the requirements of this course.

Information for Students	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You will need a CUNY Portal account to access Blackboard. See our instructions for creating a portal account. Once you have a CUNY Portal account, access Blackboard by logging in to the CUNY Portal. When you log into Blackboard, you may not see links for all Hunter courses for which you are registered because course sites are created in 'unavailable' state. Please ask your instructor if he/she will be using Blackboard. Blackboard Help Documents For further assistance contact the Student Help Desk at (212) 650-3624 or studenthelpdesk@hunter.cuny.edu ICIT's Technology Resource Center offers workshops for students (mostly on basic applications like Word, Excel, or Powerpoint). No registration needed. 	
Register at the CUNY portal How to get a Portal account	Spring '09 Courses (Bb8) alternate Bb8 access

- If you experience problems with access to Bb8 at all or extreme slow response please contact us and [provide detailed information](#).
- Also, it is always worthwhile to quickly check if the system has been restored, even when we report that Bb is not available. We have seen quite a bit of "on again, off again" operation lately.
- When Bb is available, keep periods of entering text into Bb8 short and save your work frequently, e.g., by using "copy-and-paste" and (for faculty) attaching files to "items" rather than entering longer text directly via the Bb text editor, to avoid any loss of work.

[What to do if you can't log in or the Bb pages display slowly](#) (updated 4/24)

[Portal Password Reset](#)

If you have forgotten your CUNY Portal / Blackboard Username or password, [click here](#). As of Jan 14, 2009, you can reset your user name and/or password using your confidential information -- or you can have a new preliminary password mailed to your e-mail address on record as before.

PLEASE TURN OFF RING/MUSIC CHIME ON MOBILE PHONES DURING CLASS

TOPICAL OUTLINE

Orientation to the Course

Introductions, Overview

Unit 3-9* Environmental and Professional Context for Practice-Advanced (2.1.10a)

How does the social scene influence the nature and use of group work? What is the range of groups used currently in social work? How do crisis situations, identity concerns, and finite conditions form a basis for group-service development? How should group work be understood during a period of threat to basic standards of social and economic justice?

(* SSW Units build from those of SSW732, which ends with Unit 2-8)

Unit 3-10 Organizational Context-Advanced (2.1.10a-c)

What are the organizational constraints on the social work role, on developing groups, and on using group-based services that are consonant with social work values and ethics? What organizational resources exist in support of ethical and effective group-work practice?

Unit 3-11 Advanced Service Planning (2.1.10a, & b)

Advanced differential application of pre-group planning paradigm: contextual analysis (needs, stakeholders, resources, obstacles, etc.), practice principles, implications, skills; use of self/professional role

Unit 3-12 Differential Application of Models/Approaches/Trends (2.1.10a & b)

Mutual aid, structured/task groups, cognitive behavioral therapy groups, open-ended groups, multi-family groups, curriculum based/driven groups, emerging technologies (e.g., telephone groups, web/internet-based groups such as chat rooms, etc.): application and implications for practice with diverse populations

Unit 3-13 Selective Practice Issues: Analysis, Implications for Practice (2.1.10a, b, c)

Controversy/contradictions, nonverbal communication, latent content, co-leadership, counter/transference, boundary concerns, separation, loss

Unit 3-14 Expression and Artistry in Practice (2.1.10c)

Use of creative expression, non-verbal techniques, and individual style in the interventive process; termination

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING POLICIES CAREFULLY

Hunter College regards acts of **academic dishonesty** (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The college is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.

In compliance with the **American Disability Act of 1990** (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical and/ or Learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY located in Room E1124 to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance please call (212- 772-4857)/TTY (212- 650- 3230).

Education Law Section 224-a, stating the rights and privileges of students unable to attend classes on certain days because of **religious beliefs**, appears below, as mandated by State law:

- No person shall be expelled from or refused admission as a student for the reason that he/she is unable, because of religious beliefs, to attend classes or participate in any examination, study or work requirements on a particular day or days.
- Any student who is unable, because of his/her religious beliefs, to attend classes on a particular day or days shall, because of such absence, be excused from any examination or any study or work requirements.
- It shall be the responsibility of the faculty and the administrative officials to make available to each student who is absent from school, because of his./her religious beliefs, an equivalent opportunity to make up any examination, study or work requirement which may have been missed because of such absence on any particular day or days. No fees of any kind shall be charged for making available to the said student such equivalent opportunity.

In effectuating the provisions of this section, it shall be the duty of the faculty and of the administrative officials to exercise the fullest measure of good faith. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student who avails himself/herself of the provisions of this section.

Students who are aggrieved by the alleged failure of any faculty or administration officials to comply in good faith with the provisions of this section shall be entitled to maintain an action or proceeding in the supreme court of the county in which the institution is located for the enforcement of their rights under this section.

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ADVANCED GROUP WORK FOR MAJORS (SSW-733)

SUPPLEMENTAL BIBLIOGRAPHY TO
Social Group Work Master Bibliography

General Practice

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