

HUNTER COLLEGE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
City University of New York

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SOCIAL GROUP WORK ELECTIVE, BASIC (SSW-735)
COURSE OUTLINE

This elective offers an opportunity to understand and apply the central theories and concepts and basic practice principles and skills in social group work with diverse populations. Students gain an appreciation of the method as a professional service-delivery modality, learn strategies for initiating and developing groups in widely varied clinical and community contexts, develop a basic understanding of the values that underlie this method, develop basic skills in engaging, planning, forming, and developing groups as well as basic skill in ethical and effective intervention and evaluation. Concurrent group work practice is highly recommended but not required.

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To foster an appreciation of and ability in articulating the value of social group work as a service method and to increase skill in advocacy and mediation.
2. To increase the capacity to identify opportunities for initiating and forming groups and to identify the potential for innovation.
3. To enhance the capacity to apply to group-specific theories, concepts, and skills and the ability to note major commonalities with and differences from theories, concepts, and skills of other practice methods.
4. To develop a basic skill set for applying group-specific theories, concepts, and skills to varied group types and purposes and with cultural sensitivity.
5. To increase skill at intervening in group process according to a stage-based framework for practice including planning, problem solving, dealing with problematic roles, managing conflict, purposeful use of content/activity.
6. To develop a basic capacity to differentiate among the major models of social work practice with groups and their implications for practice.
7. To develop basic competence at culturally-sensitive planning, practice, advocacy, mediation, and innovation.

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COURSE OUTCOMES

1. Ability to locate contemporary group work in the profession and articulate its value as a social work method (Epas 2.1.10a-d).
2. Ability to identify fundamental connections and fundamental differences between group work and other methods (Epas 2.1.10b-d).
3. Basic capacity to apply theories, concepts, and skill sets of social group work (Epas 2.1.10b-d).
4. Basic ability to understand and use stages of group development as an overarching framework for practice (Epas b-d).
5. Basic skill in shaping/intervening in process including planning, problem solving, dealing with problematic roles, managing conflict, and using content/activity purposefully (Epas c & d).
6. Enhanced capacity to understand the conceptual difference between the practice of group work and the use of groups as a backdrop for individual work (Epas b-d).
7. Ability to differentiate among the major models of social work practice with groups and their implications for practice (Epas b & d).
8. Basic skill at culturally-sensitive planning, practice, advocacy, mediation, and innovation (2.1.10a-d).

** The notations in parentheses are intended to denote the latest Council on Social Work Education competencies for master's level social work practice. The four major categories are engagement (a); assessment (b); intervention (c); and evaluation (d). Many outcomes speak to all of these competencies in one way or other; however, notations to which each outcome speaks most directly is entered above.

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STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Expectations, Participation, Commitment

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.

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 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 on your grade for the course. Ultimately, course credit will be based on attendance, participation, completion of all assignments including Blackboard assignments, comprehension of subject matter as demonstrated through participation, and ability to apply skill as demonstrated through participation and assignments.

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

Initial Assignment. Review the following in preparation for class discussions. (Timing and order will be announced in class).

- AASWG (Association for the Advancement of Social Work with Groups, Inc.) web site (<http://www.aaswg.org>)
- *Standards for Social Work Practice with Groups* (AASWG)
- *Code of Ethics* as related to practice with groups (NASW)

Ongoing Assignment: Journal. You will keep a journal identifying at least three ideas covered in class that strike you as significant. As the journal progresses it will reflect your thinking about and growing understanding of social group work based on class discussion and assigned reading. You are expected to refer to the pertinent literature in your discussion (**use of quotes is not permitted**). You will submit the journal twice during the semester. An outline will be distributed in class; due date TBD.

Final Assignment: Journal Summation. Your Journal will culminate in a *5-6 page summation* that ties together the theoretical and practical conclusions you reached as a result of your conceptual growth and practical insights over the course. It will demonstrate a basic ability to identify group-specific theories, concepts, and skills along with a beginning skill in applying them to varied group types and purposes. An outline will be distributed in class; due date TBD.

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.

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ONLINE LEARNING AND REQUIREMENTS

This course requires one hour of Blackboard work each week. You will need to have access to the CUNY-Hunter College Blackboard site 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 n record as before.



CONTENT OUTLINE

UNIT 1 Orientation

Content

History, values, ethics, professional role

Preparation

On Line

AASWG, Inc., Standards for social work practice with groups

Texts

Northen & Kurland, 1

Steinberg, 1

Articles (see Master Bib)

Breton, On the meaning of empowerment...

Briar, Encyclopedia

Kurland & Salmon, Not just one of the gang...

Solomon, Black empowerment

Newstetter, What is social group work?

And as may be otherwise assigned by the instructor

UNIT 2 Pre-Group Planning

Content

Socio/political environment/implications for social group work practice; organizational assessment as context for practice; pre-group planning (model, implications for practice); pre-group contact/engagement; potential for innovation

Preparation

Texts

Northen & Kurland, 5-7

Steinberg, 2-4

Brown & Mistry, Group work with mixed membership...
Davis, Racial composition...
Sloane, How did we get here?...
And as may be otherwise assigned by the instructor

UNIT 3 Beginning-Stage Practice

Content

Stage theory as framework for practice in beginning stage of group development (characteristics, expectations, practice mandates, skills), group problem solving (model, implications for practice, skills), individual problem solving (model, skills, implications for practice, skills)

Preparation: Stage Theory (Beginnings)

Texts

Northen & Kurland, 12
Steinberg, 2-5

Articles (see Master Bib)

Garland, Jones, & Kolodny "A model..." (On Beginnings)
Middleman & Wood, *Skills for direct practice*, Part III
And as may be otherwise assigned by the instructor

Preparation: Problem Solving, Individual Problem Solving

Texts

Northen & Kurland, 8
Steinberg, 6

Articles (see Master Bib)

Kurland & Salmon, Groupwork vs. casework...
_____, Self determination: Its use and misuse...
And as may be otherwise assigned by the instructor

UNIT 4 Middle-Stage Practice

Content

Stage theory as framework for practice in "middle" stage of group development (characteristics, expectations, practice mandates, skills), emergence of roles (typology, implications for practice), dealing with group conflict (self assessment, types of conflict, model for intervening, diagnostic considerations, skills, implications for practice)

Preparation: Middle Stage and Emergence of Roles

Texts

Northen & Kurland, 10, 13, 14

Articles (see Master Bib)

Garland, Jones, & Kolodny, A model... (On Middles)
Shulman, Scapegoats, group workers, and...

Texts

Northen & Kurland, 9

Steinberg, 8

Middleman & Wood, *Skills...*, 12

Articles (see Master Bib)

Bernstein, Conflict and group work

Cowger, Conflict and conflict management...

Shulman, Scapegoats, group workers, and...

And as may be otherwise assigned by the instructor

UNIT 5 Ending-Stage/Transitional Practice

Content

Stage theory as framework for practice in ending/transitional stage of group development (characteristics, expectations, practice mandates, skills), transitional issues (characteristics, expectations, practice mandates, skills)

Preparation

Texts

Northen & Kurland, 15

Steinberg, 13

Articles (see Master Bib)

Garland, Jones, & Kolodny, A model... (On Endings)

Kurland & Salmon, Making joyful noise...

And as may be otherwise assigned by the instructor

UNIT 6 Purposeful Use of Content/Activity

Content

Selection of content in relation to group context, need, purpose, and composition; use of activity (differentiation of purposeful from haphazard use); model for designing and developing activity-based content; selection and use of activity with diverse populations

Preparation

Texts

Northen & Kurland, 11

Brandler & Roman, Group work: Skills and strategies... (chapters tbd)

Malekoff, Group work with adolescents... (chapters tbd)

Articles (see Master Bib)

Schnekenburger, "Waking the heart up..."

Wright, The use of purpose in ongoing activity groups

And as may be otherwise assigned by the instructor

UNIT 7 Theoretical Approaches/Models/Evaluation

Content

Models of social work with groups (Boston, Social Goals, Remedial, Reciprocal, relational) and implications for planning, intervention, and professional role; method evaluation

Preparation

Cohen & Mullender, The personal and the political...
Falck, Central characteristics of social work with groups - a sociocultural analysis
Glassman & Kates Group work: A humanistic approach (chapters tbd)
Lee, The empowerment approach to social work practice
McGowan, A guide to evidence-based group work... (chapters tbd)
Rose, Group therapy... A cognitive-behavioral interactive approach
_____ & Feldman, Research in social group work...
Schiller, Rethinking stages of development...
Tolman & Molitor, A decade of social group work research...
And as may be otherwise assigned by the instructor

UNIT 8 Recapitulation, Future Trends, Evaluation, Termination

Content

Social work practice, the role of mutual aid, and implications for practice and professional role; information systems/emerging technologies and implications for practice/innovation; course evaluations; course termination/transition

Preparation

Kaslyn, Telephone group work: Challenges for practice
Nicholas, Participant perceptions of online group work with fathers of...
Regan, Building bridges over troubled waters: A bridging model for teleconferencing...
Schopler et al., Creating community...
Smith et al., Telephone support groups...
Weinberg et al., Computer-mediated support groups
Wilson & Ryland, Social group work practice: the creative use of the social process
And as may be otherwise assigned by the instructor

Pacing of content will depend on needs and characteristics of the class

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Reading

Required

Middleman, Ruth & Wood, Gale Goldberg (1990). Skills for direct practice in social work. NY: Columbia University Press.

Northern, Helen & Kurland, Roselle (2001). Social work with groups (3rd ed.). NY: Columbia University Press.

Steinberg, Dominique Moyse (2004). The mutual-aid approach to working with groups: Helping people help one another (2nd ed.). Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

Standards for social work practice with groups, 2nd ed. (2005). Ethical standards for social work practice with groups, produced/published by The Association for the Advancement of Social Work with Groups, Inc. (AASWG) (www.aaswg.org/Standards/standards.htm)

Literature will also be assigned from the Social Group Work Master Bibliography and from other bodies of literature as designated by the instructor.

Students who wish to deepen their skill in this method are invited to register for SSW-736 (Social Group Work Practice Elective, Advanced). Those who receive course credit considered the equivalent of the letter grade “A” or better for SSW-736 will receive a frame-able *Certificate of Accomplishment* signed by the instructor and sequence chair.

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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.