

HUNTER COLLEGE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
City University of New York

Dr. Dominique Moyse Steinberg
Room 526, Office Hours By Appointment
www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/faculty/steinberg.htm

(212) 452-7041 or 874-7325
dsteinb@hunter.cuny.edu

GROUP WORK FOR MAJORS (SSW 731-732)
COURSE OUTLINE

Building on both cross-method and method-specific foundation content delivered in the Practice Lab, the purpose of this two-semester course is to provide you with an increased appreciation of, knowledge about, and skill in social work practice with groups. This includes practice with the group as a system, practice with individual members of that system, and practice with collateral systems including the organization in which the group operates. The following areas constitute general topics for exploration:

- I. Context for Practice.** Examination and analysis of social group work in relation to other approaches to work with groups. Analysis of relationship to social casework and how/where these two professional methods have merged and diverged over the years as well as issues regarding role, purpose, and place of social group work and group work practitioners in the profession today and in the future. Nature and impact of oppression, racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, other “isms,” and intra/inter-group conflict on clients and on implications for practice with diverse populations in varied settings.
- II. Ethics, Values, & Knowledge.** Exploration of professional values and ethical stances of social work in general and social work with groups, more specifically, within the context of agency practice in a multi-cultural socio-political environment. Knowledge as it informs professional action. Impact of cultural, institutional, and developmental factors on group life; ethical dilemmas in social work practice.
- III. Group Stage Theory as Framework for Practice.** Characteristics of group development and their implications for practice. Impact of stage theories on expectations of membership, group process, and practice. Preparation of worker; orientation to service situations. Stage-based characteristics, themes, and issues; corresponding roles of the practitioner. Nature of leadership and its impact on process. Influence of individual behavior on group norms, of mutual aid, and of mutual adjustment in group life.
- IV. Skills with Practice with Groups and Individuals in Context.** Skillful practice in work with groups, with individual members in and outside of the group, and with the organization in which the group operates. Differential use of skill in working with diverse populations, in varied settings, and with varying group types and purposes. Skill in shaping practice based on available knowledge and in evaluating service relevance.
- V. Theories, Models, Frameworks, Emerging Trends and Technologies.** General and specialized theoretical approaches, frameworks, and models currently considered by

the social work profession; critical analysis of their characteristics and their implications and strategies for application; emerging trends in treatment and service delivery including use of new technologies and implications for group goals, process, professional role, and practice.

- VI. Professional Approach to Practice.** Articulation and communication of approach to practice, including theoretical foundation, recognition of multi-level and multi-dimensional accountability through identification of various roles and implications for practice including the need for mediation and/or advocacy.

□ □

COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. Appreciation of the historical role of group work in the social work profession (Epas 2.1.10d) and an understanding of its current status and future potential (Epas 2.1.10a).
2. Conceptual understanding of the ethical commitments and values of social work (Epas 2.1.10a) as a profession and capacity to realize them through skill (Epas 2.1.10d).
3. Appreciation of complexities in decision making/problem solving in group work practice (Epas 2.1.10c & d).
4. Knowledge base and skills for effective social work practice with groups, including formation, facilitation, termination, and transitional services (Epas 2.1.10a-d).
5. Ability to conduct assessment of social, organizational, and individual client needs and goals toward contextually-relevant interventions (Epas 2.1.10b).
6. Conceptual understanding of group-stage theories, their characteristics, and their implications for group members, for the group as a system, for the practitioner (Epas 2.1.10a & b) and ability to shape stage-based interventions (Epas 2.1.10c & d).
7. Skill in the use of group process to effectively address issues likely to arise over the life of any group, including skill in whole-group intervention and in intervening with individual members (Epas 2.1.10c & d).
8. Opportunities to examine in detail important social work service/treatment issues and dynamics including approach-avoidance (Epas 2.1.10a & b); conflict (Epas 2.1.10c); roles (Epas 2.1.10b), considered selection of content (Epas 2.1.10c) and purposeful use of activity (Epas 2.1.10c); problem solving (Epas 2.1.10c); and application of interventions that reflect group work rather than individual work against a group backdrop (Epas 2.1.10c & d).

9. Ability to conceptually differentiate theoretical models for working with groups and with group members individually, to understand the important distinctions among them, and to appreciate their differential impact on practice (Epas 2.1.10a & d).
10. Skill in identifying and using current knowledge to shape ethical and effective social work practice with groups in varied contexts and with widely-diverse populations (Epas 2.1.10a-d).
11. Basic ability to adapt central social group work theories and values to practice with specialized-format groups (Epas 2.1.10c & d) and to collaborate with co-facilitators from both within and outside of the social work profession (Epas 2.1.10c & d).
12. Skill in evaluating the meaning, relevance, and impact of service on clients and on their immediate communities and larger systems (Epas 2.1.10d), in assessing the need for collateral intervention (Epas 2.1.10b & d), and in carrying out required intervention (Epas 2.1.10c).
13. Skill in strategic intra- and inter-organizational collaboration and intervention, including education and mediation (Epas 2.1.10c).
14. Skill in effecting organizational innovation in social work practice with groups (Epas 2.1.10a-d).
15. Skill in integrating and applying differential theories in approach to social work practice with groups, with individual group members, and with significant collateral systems (Epas 2.1.10c & 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). Thus, while almost every single objective as conceptualized for this course speaks to all four categories, Course Objective #14, for example, speaks most directly to intervention (c) and evaluation (d). You will see that these notations are repeated throughout the content outline that begins on Page 7 as well.

□ □

COURSE OUTCOMES

At the end of this two-part course in social work practice with groups, you will be able to identify and to articulate the essence and salient characteristics of your approach to practice as it stands at that time along the following dimensions:

- Value Premises
- Methodology of Practice
- Relevant Theories

- Interventions, Applicability, and Context
- Differential Use of Content
- Professional Self Image
- Style, Skills, Techniques
- Evidence, Evaluation, Accountability

□ □

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. SSW731 and SSW732 (and SSW733; see website) are your major method classes.

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/s 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 SSW731

Log. This is a continuous record of your work for the course to help you to integrate class with field and reading and to connect self, reading, and experience. Thus, each log has several entries. Submitted twice during the semester, the log offers you ongoing opportunities to explore and grapple with ideas, issues, and problems in group work either of particular interest or

about which you are uncertain and wish to receive feedback from your instructor. There is no need to footnote, but references related to any points you encounter in/wish to make about the reading are expected.

Targeted Self-Directed Study. This is your final assignment for SSW731. It is a 12-page paper in which you analyze in depth three major areas of particular interest or concern that you either identified in your two logs or that were brought to your attention by instructor feedback in those logs and around which identify implications for practice utilizing related literature. This assignment begins the process of formulating the values, concepts, and principles that underlie your developing approach to practice with group systems, with members as individuals and significant others, and with agency practice as context for social work in general and social group work in particular. References to the literature as it helps you in your analysis are expected, but quotations are limited to three total. An outline will be distributed in class; due date will also be announced in class.

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.

Selected Reading. Each week in addition to assigned reading you will select one article, chapter, or other form of literature that speaks to your particular internship setting. These may be related to method (e.g., curriculum-based groups), to setting (e.g., social work in schools), to population (e.g., elderly), or to problem area/focus for work (e.g., practice related to alcoholism). The intent of this assignment is to provide you with knowledge toward development of skill in your particular context and thus, supplements the reading assigned to all students.

Assignments SSW732

Record of Service. This assignment consists of a systematic examination of your skill in working with groups and is formulated around a particular issue of interest that you select for analysis. Two Records of Service are expected during the semester. Detailed instructions will be reviewed in class, and due dates will be announced in class. In order for this assignment to be fulfilled, you will have had to process your practice the previous semester in script rather than narrative form.

Approach to Practice Conference. An individual conference with your instructor will be scheduled for the end of the semester. In this conference you will identify the salient characteristics of your approach to practice as it stands at that time. The outline for your presentation will be distributed and reviewed in class; conferences will be scheduled with your instructor individually toward the end of the term.

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.

Selected Reading. Each week in addition to assigned reading you will select one article, chapter, or other form of literature that speaks to your particular internship setting. These may be related to method (e.g., curriculum-based groups), to setting (e.g., social work in schools), to population (e.g., elderly), or to problem area/focus for work (e.g., practice related to alcoholism). The intent of this assignment is to provide you with knowledge toward development of skill in your particular context and thus, supplements the reading assigned to all students.

□ □

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

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

SSW 731

UNIT 1-1 Orientation to Method & Practice Role (2.1.10a)

Class Content

Course purpose, content, method, assignments, expectations; professional role and authority, ethics, values, expectations, implications for organizational practice

Preparation

TBA

UNIT 1-2 Planning for Practice in Context (2.1.10a-c)

Class Content

Socio-political, organization, and psychosocial assessments as context for practice; pre-group planning: macro, meso, and micro variables; group purpose: role, meaning, development, articulation; engagement into treatment/service

Preparation

TBA

UNIT 1-3 Stage Based Practice (2.1.10a-d)

Class Content (A) (2.1.10c & d)

Stages of group development: theory, characteristics, roles, interventions

Preparation

TBA

Class Content (B) (2.1.10c & d)

Problem solving process: model, skills; individual problem solving process: model, skills

Preparation

TBA

Class Content (C) (2.1.10a)

Preparing for conflict: personal reaction, professional response, self assessment

Preparation

TBA

□ □

SSW 732

UNIT 2-4 Dealing with Conflict (2.1.10b-d)

Class Content

Types of conflict, diagnostic considerations, model for intervening, skills

Preparation

TBA

UNIT 2-5 Selection of Content, Purposeful Use of Activity (2.1.10b-d)

Class Content

Selection of content: psychosocial and organizational context, purpose, expectations, decentralization of authority, capacity/role of group members; purposeful use of activity: use of activity as content, organizational context, stage-based considerations, purpose, goals, expectations, group capacity/psychosocial assessment, use with varied client populations, use to address diversity/bridge differences

Preparation

TBA

UNIT 2-6 Specialized Formats (2.1.10c & d)

Class Content (A)

Practice with specialized-format groups: open-ended, short term, single session, very large, curriculum based/driven; co-leadership: models, implications for practice

Preparation

TBA

Class Content (B) (2.1.10c & d)

Co-leadership: models, implications for practice

Preparation

TBA

UNIT 2-7 Introduction to/Overview of Models & Approaches (2.1.10a-d)

Class Content

Models for social work practice with groups (e.g., social goals, remedial, reciprocal, Boston, relational): central precepts, presumptions, and characteristics, models, goals, professional role, implications for practice, skills

Preparation

TBA

UNIT 2-8 Recapitulation, Overview of Emerging Trends & Technologies, Evidence-Based Group Work and Research (2.1.10a-d)

Class Content

Information systems, emerging trends and technologies in social work practice with groups: models, utilization, implications for professional role and for approach to practice, for application of skill, and for innovation

Preparation

TBA

INDIVIDUALLY-SCHEDULED ORAL CONFERENCES WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

□ □

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.