

HUNTER COLLEGE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
City University of New York

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THE PURPOSEFUL USE OF ACTIVITIES IN SOCIAL WORK WITH GROUPS
(SSW-734)

COURSE OUTLINE

This 15-session three-credit course builds on the theoretical concepts and group work skills developed in one or more prior courses. Students will examine the application and relevance of program activities to social work goals and will gain a theoretical understanding of the particular ways in which activities are used to further social work purposes.

The course will provide a historical overview and a conceptual framework for the use of activities with different populations in relation to the needs of groups at different stages of development. Special attention will be given to group members from vulnerable and oppressed populations in the contemporary urban context. The ethical use of activities as well as the values embedded in their use will be examined.

Rather than aiming to develop specific skills (skill in music, skill in dance, skill in art, etc.), this course emphasizes the development of one skill -- skill in "the use" of activity with a group at any particular time.

Through presentation of didactic material, the use of experiential exercises, assigned readings, and the final assignment students will be exposed to the vast potential of activity to expand the quality of social work practice with groups.

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Develop a positive attitude and greater openness toward the use of activity with groups.
2. Understand the history, tradition, and use of activity as part of social work practice.
3. Learn the essential connection between group purpose and the use of activity.
4. Become familiar with the underlying dimensions that may be used to characterize any activity.

5. Learn how to select and evaluate activities in relation to the needs of a group at different stages of development.
6. Understand the ethical demands and develop an appreciation of the value and importance of activity with varied populations, including the vulnerable and oppressed.

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COURSE OUTCOMES

1. Participation in a wide variety of activities to learn the application of activities in relation to group purpose, needs, stage of group development, composition, and the available resources and physical setting (Epas 2.1.10a).
2. Demonstrated understanding of the ethical demands and appreciation for the value of activities in group work with varied populations, including the vulnerable and oppressed, in a broad range of settings as evidenced in the final assignment (Epas 2.1.10a & b).
3. Application of activities with groups through demonstrated willingness and ability to introduce activity to groups with populations and in settings where activity is not readily used as evidenced through class participation and in the final assignment (Epas 2.1.10c & d).
4. Demonstrated ability to select appropriate activities and modify them, as necessary, based on an assessment of a group's purpose, needs, stage of development, composition, available resources and physical setting (Epas 2.1.10b-d).
5. Demonstrated ability to assess the impact of an activity on individuals and the group-as-a-whole and to evaluate its effectiveness in meeting the intended goals (Epas 2.1.10c & d).
6. Demonstrated ability to conceptualize and evaluate activities according to their underlying dimensions, and in relation to the needs of a group at different stages of development as evidenced in classroom performance and in the final assignment (Epas 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

SSW-734 is a fast-paced, intensive methods class for which students are expected to have a solid foundation in group work theory and practice

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 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

Activity Selection. This assignment consists of two parts. First, you will review an article on practice that is listed on the Supplemental Bibliography and that addresses your client population or a particular activity of interest. Second, you will find an Activity Resource, select an activity from it that you believe would be appropriate for your group, and discuss what you need to consider prior to introducing that activity with your group (detailed instructions will be given in class).

Final Assignment. The purpose of this assignment is to help you look at your own use of activity in and with a group by providing you with an opportunity to conceptualize and analyze a successful activity that you planned and implemented and to compile a collection of purposeful activities that includes contributions by all members of the class and that will be made available for everyone at the conclusion of the course.

The ***Final Assignment Outline*** will be distributed; it offers guidelines for you to share an example of a favorite/successful activity from your group practice.

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.

Selective Reading. Reading will be assigned each week including articles and activity resources that students can select to meet their specific practice needs and interests. Each student will be expected to complete a final written assignment due on the 15th session of the course. A detailed outline for this assignment will be distributed during the third session and further reviewed in the fifth session. Individual written assignments will contribute to a final whole-class project.



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 on record as before.



CONTENT OUTLINE

Class 1

Content

Introduction, Group description/outline, "Beginnings" activities

Preparation for Classes 2 & 3 - Texts

Middleman, The non-verbal method (sections assigned)

Northen & Kurland, Ch.11

Middleman & Wood, Ch.10

Brandler & Roman, Ch. VI

Class 2

Content

Definition and overview of purposeful use of activity, More "Beginnings" activities, Group "contracting" activity

Preparation for Class 3

Review any article on SSW734 Supplemental Bibliography "**In Practice**" that relates to your population or activity interest.

Find an Activity Resource and select an activity that might be appropriate for your group. What do you need to consider prior to activity selection?

Class 3

Content

“Beginnings” activities continued (small-groups), Factors to consider in activity selection

Distribution and overview of final assignment

Preparation for Class 4 (See Master & Supplemental Bibs)

Gentry, Select an activity to implement with...

Middleman, The non-verbal method (sections assigned)

Vinter, Program activities: An analysis...

Whittaker, Program activities: Their selection and use...

Select an activity to implement with your group. What concerns do you have about introducing this activity?

Class 4

Content

Introduction to activity-setting dimensions (Vinter), Introduction to the analysis of activities using activity-setting dimensions, Introduction to “Middles” activities, with increased member leadership

Preparation for Class 5 (See Master & Supplemental Bibs)

Coyle, The art of program-making

Kurland & Salmon, Self-determination: Its use and misuse...

Middleman, The use of program: review and...

Redl & Wineman, Programming as a full-fledged therapeutic tool

Wilson & Ryland, Social group work practice

Class 5

Content

Historical overview of use of activity in group work, Consideration of issues and ethical demands related to needs of diverse populations, Overview of Group Work IV final assignment

Preparation for Class 6 (See Master & Supplemental Bibs)

Middleman, The non-verbal method (sections assigned)

Ross & Bernstein, A framework for the therapeutic use...

Whittaker, Differential use of program activities in child treatment...

What concerns/obstacles are you facing with regard to implementing an activity in your group?

Class 6

Content

Activity selection according to stages of group development, Sampling and analysis of “Middles” activities (i.e., activities to promote communication), “Obstacles” to activity use and “worst fears” in activity leadership

Preparation for Class 7 (See Master & Supplemental Bibs)

Middleman, The non-verbal method, Ch. 7

Wright, The use of purpose in on-going activity groups

Class 7

“Middles” needs/themes, and consideration of activities to address these (e.g., to promote group decision-making)

HCCSW mid-term evaluations

Preparation for Class 8 (See Master & Supplemental Bibs)

Gerber, Winning isn't everything

Middleman, The non-verbal method (sections assigned)

“Try on” final assignment – bring your questions for clarification

Class 8

Content

Assignment progress/check in

“Middles” continued, with purposeful activities sampled and analyzed by class (i.e., activities to promote group problem-solving)

Analysis of activity successes and “failures”

Preparation for Class 9 (See Master & Supplemental Bibs)

Brandler & Roman, Group work... (sections assigned)

Canfield & Wells, 100 ways to enhance self-concept...

Kreidler, Creative conflict resolution

Northen & Kurland, Ch. 9

Class 9

Content

“Middles” activities to release/diffuse anger, to begin to address conflict, to encourage expression of feelings, Debriefing/ processing the experience

Preparation for Class 10 (See Master & Supplemental Bibs)

Leahy, How and why movement works with...

Malekoff, Group work with adolescents...

_____, Remembering with and without awareness through...

Tilly & Caye, Using writing and poetry to achieve focus and depth...

Class 10

Content

“Middles” activities to deepen emotional sharing, to promote discussion of difficult issues.

Preparation for Class 11 (See Master & Supplemental Bibs)

Kaplan, A new look at balance of task and process

Middleman, The non-verbal method (sections assigned)

Wilder, Maybe we should just shut up...

Class 11

Content

Process vs. Product: How to balance, Continuation of “Middles” – activities to address roles in group and/or other issues of concern,

***** Final Assignment Due *****

Preparation for Class 12 (See Master & Supplemental Bibs)

Northen & Kurland, Ch. 15

Shulman, The skills of helping... (pp. 200-232, 595-618)

Yalom, Ch. 12

Class 12

Content

Sampling and analysis of “Endings” activities (e.g., exploration of free writing)

Preparation for Class 13

Plan an activity for your group’s “Endings”

Class 13

Content

Activity swap – share in by class with suggestions for “Endings” activities

Preparation for Class 14

Reflect on your use of activity this year in your group(s): What are your lingering concerns about implementing purposeful activities in your professional group work practice?

Class 14

Wrap up, “Loose Ends,”

HCSSW final evaluations

Preparation for Class 15

Reflect on Group Work IV

Think about highlights and “low lights”

Remember to bring 25 copies of your final assignment next week
COLLATE but DO NOT STAPLE! [3-hole punch if you can]

Class 15

Whole-class termination project

“Creative assembly”

“Highlights with punctuation”

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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.

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SSW-734: The Purposeful Use of Activities in Group Work Practice

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SUPPLEMENTAL BIBLIOGRAPHY TO
Group Work Master Bibliography

I. Conceptual Framework

Brandler, S. & Roman, C. (1991). Group work: Skills and strategies for effective interventions, Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press, Ch. VI: The use of programming in groups.

Dromi, Paula G. and Kramph, Z. (1986). Programming revisited: The Mifitan experience, Social work with groups, 9(1), 91-105.

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II. In Practice

Barsky, M. & Mozenter, G. (1976). The use of creative drama in a children's group, International journal of group psychotherapy, 26(1), 105-114.

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Gentry, M. (1984). Developments in activity analysis: Recreations group work revisited, Social work with groups, 7(1), 35-44.

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Baird, B. (1965). The art of the puppet. NY: MacMillan.

Batchelder, M. & Comer, V. (1956). Puppets and plays: A creative approach. NY: Harper.

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Carrell, S. (2000). Group exercises for adolescents. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

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*Gass, M. (1995). Book of metaphors, Volume II. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing.

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*Hammett, C. & Horrocks, C. (1987). Creative crafts for camps, schools, and groups. Martinsville, IN: American Camping Association.

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*Orlick, T. (1978). The cooperative sports and games book: Challenge without competition. NY: Pantheon Books.

*_____ (1982). The second cooperative games book. NY: Pantheon Books.

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Spolin, V. (1985). Theater games for rehearsal: Director's handbook. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

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*Weinstein, M. & Goodman, J. (1980). Play fair. San Luis Obispo, CA: Impact Publishers.

*Williamson, B. (1993). Playful activities for powerful presentations. Duluth, MN: Whole Person Associates.

*Yaconelli, M. & Rice, W. (1986). Creative socials and special events. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

*These titles are available from the American Camping Association Bookstore, American Camping Association/ Bradford Woods, 5000 State Road 67 North, Martinsville, Indiana 46151-7902. Call toll free: (1-800-428-CAMP. Web site www.ACAcamps.org (Access link to Amazon.com through ACA to support ACA).

IV. Web Sites for Activity Resources

(Please share any others you come across)

<http://www.activistnet.org/Categories/Experie/>

<http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/safespace/index.htm#tips>
(Creating Safe Space for GLBTQ Youth: A Toolkit with Life Skills Exercises)

<http://www.aee.org/>

<http://www.pa.org/>

<http://www.recreationtherapy.com/>

<http://www.tonisant.com/aitg>
(Applied and interactive theater guide)