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**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**Course Number:** SW 333      **Instructor:** D. W. Springer, PHD, LMSW-ACP, ACSW  
**Unique Number:** 60860      **E-mail:** dwspringer@mail.utexas.edu  
**Semester:** Fall 2000      **Phone:** 471-0512  
**Meeting Time:** Mon. & Wed. 9:30-11:00am      **Office Room:** 3.122D  
**Meeting Place:** SWB 2.122      **Office Hours:** Wednesday 1:30pm to 2:30pm  
Or by appointment

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**SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH GROUPS**

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course in the practice sequence focuses on developing group leaders who possess both an understanding of group dynamics and effective leadership skills. The course deals with both task and treatment groups from an interactional perspective and emphasizes issues that have application to a wide range of social work clients and situations. The historical and theoretical foundations of social group work are examined; however, the emphasis is placed on the development of social work skills. Throughout the course, special attention is given to factors affecting diverse population groups, including (but not limited to) groups distinguished by race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental ability, age, and national origin.

Prerequisites include admission to the social work major and PSY304, SW310, SW312, SW313, SW325, SW327 and previous or concurrent enrollment in SW322 (formerly 330K).

**II. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the historical and theoretical foundations of social group work.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of group processes, dynamics, and developmental stages.

3. Understand and apply basic concepts of task-oriented group work, including recruiting and selecting members, leadership, group decision-making and problem solving, running an effective meeting, and evaluation of task groups.
4. Understand and apply basic concepts of treatment groups, including group formation, facilitation, and termination (assessment, intervention, and evaluation).
5. Assess the appropriateness of the differential use of group modalities for diverse client populations, including (but not limited to) groups distinguished by race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental ability, age, and national origin.
6. Identify and assess individual characteristics of group members and leaders that may facilitate or impede the group process.
7. Demonstrate an understanding of the use of research both as a means for acquiring knowledge and for evaluating practice with groups.
8. Demonstrate an understanding of social group work values and their implications for social work practice with groups.

### **III. TEACHING METHODS**

This course is designed to include a variety of experiences intended to achieve the student educational outcome of mastering knowledge and skill in this area. Included will be lectures, readings, discussions, speakers, videos and experiential experiences. The professor will model group work principles and strategies. The class will be organized as a skill laboratory, utilizing the small group context and role play for development of skill in leading treatment groups.

### **IV. REQUIRED READINGS**

#### **Required Text (available at University Co-op)**

Toseland, R. W., & Rivas, R. F. (2001). An introduction to group work practice (4th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

#### **Required Readings**

A Course Packet of required readings (Springer) is available for purchase by enrolled students at Speedway Copy and Printing located in Dobie Mall, 2025 Guadalupe St., Phone # 478-3334.

## V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Students are expected to attend class sessions regularly and to participate in an interactive framework between collegiate students and professor. Students are expected to **complete the readings prior to class**, and should be well prepared to participate in discussions and experiential learning assignments. Failure to regularly attend the class and demonstrate through discussions that one has comprehended the readings will be considered in assigning the final grade. Students will be allowed **two unexcused absences (freebies)**. Role will be taken each class period. In cases where a student missed more than the allotted two freebies, the professor reserves the right to lower that student's final grade. In extenuating circumstances of absence, students are to notify the professor. Students are responsible for any material missed due to absences.
2. Except in the case of extreme emergencies, and then only with the permission of the professor, **late assignments will not be accepted without penalty**. Students are expected to turn in all required assignments on the agreed upon due date **at the beginning of class**. Assignments turned in after class starts will be considered late. If accepted, late assignments will be assessed point penalties at the rate of 3 points each day late. If the due date is a problem, then the student should see the professor and negotiate another due date well in advance.
3. Regardless of the reason, even if excused, students that miss taking a quiz on the scheduled date as outlined below in the course outline will take a make-up exam that will be essay in nature. The essay make-up exam will be taken by the student as soon as possible following the administration of the regularly scheduled quiz. The reason for this is that once the multiple-choice quiz has been administered to the class, the integrity of that quiz is then jeopardized.
4. Students are expected to both learn and demonstrate knowledge of groupwork intervention theories and skills. This requires a search of the literature in a defined area (as part of the researched group role play) in order to develop specialized knowledge concerning the use of groupwork as treatment of a specific problem area for a specific population. In addition, students will demonstrate their level of applied knowledge of groupwork interventions and skills on quizzes.
5. If students are concerned about their class performance, the professor is more than willing to work with students to help them improve their course grades prior to the end of the semester. **FINAL GRADES ASSIGNED IN THE COURSE ARE NOT NEGOTIABLE.**
6. Small groups are expected to resolve challenges within their group context. The professor is willing to serve as a consultant if group members are unable to resolve their differences.

7. Group work can raise emotional issues. The professor and students have the ethical responsibility to their colleagues to see that the class environment is maintained as a respectful and confidential setting.

### **Special Accommodations for Students with a Disability**

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259; 471-4641 TTY. Please notify the professor of any special accommodations that you may need prior to the end of the second week of class.

### **Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty**

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs>).

### **Safety**

As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practice related to agency and/or community safety. Students should also notify instructors regarding any safety concerns.

## **VI. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

### **I. Class Attendance and Contribution**

Due to the format and content of this course, both attendance and contribution are imperative. The other students in your small group are dependent on you for a quality learning experience; if too many students are absent in any one small group, that group suffers. Thus, students are expected to be in class, or in extenuating circumstances, to notify the professor and at least one other group member that they will be absent. Attendance and quality of contribution as demonstrated by student preparation level will determine grades. Students will be allowed **two (2) unexcused absences (freebies)**. Role will be taken at the beginning of each class period. In cases where a student misses more than the allotted two freebies, the professor reserves the right to lower that student's final grade by one point for each class missed beyond the two freebies.

## **II. Quizzes**

Quizzes will be given approximately every two or three weeks (typically on a Monday at beginning of class). There will be five (5) quizzes. Each quiz will be worth 15 points (for a cumulative worth of 75% of final grade). The quizzes will be based on readings, discussions, presentations, videos, experiential exercises, and lecture material. The quizzes will be objective in nature, and may consist of multiple choice, exact choice, true/false, fill in the blank, or short essay questions. Make up exams will not be given unless there are unusual extenuating circumstances. The professor reserves the right of final approval of what an unusual extenuating circumstance might comprise.

## **III. Researched Group Role Play**

Students will be assigned to small groups of no more than 7 members. Students will alternate in task and treatment leadership roles. Each group will role play 1 treatment session in front of class utilizing a specific theoretical framework(s). Each group will reflect adherence to social work values and ethics, and application to a specific (child, adolescent, adult, elderly or family group) context. The groups should target a population which is diverse, at-risk, or disadvantaged. The session should demonstrate techniques appropriate to the “middle” group developmental stage and the developmental life cycle of the treatment population. This assignment will be worth 25% of the total course grade. Evaluation components will include:

- Evidence of preparation
- Theoretical coherence demonstrated
- Group developmental stage (“middle”) represented appropriately
- Intervention modeling associated with “middle” stage of group development demonstrated
- Social work perspective evident in context of role play
- Demonstration of client developmental level (life cycle) taken into account

Additionally, each group is to prepare for dissemination to the class a summary (couple of pages) of their role play and relevant research conducted that should include, but is not limited to:

- Type of group (brief description addressing purpose, location, number of sessions, open-ended versus closed-ended, etc.)
- Theoretical framework(s) being implemented
- Member characteristics (general description)
- Description for each group member’s character (student’s real name with corresponding name adopted for role play; age; ethnicity; individual goal for group; developmental stage in the life cycle; relevant life and environmental circumstances; role within the group, such as monopolizer, scapegoat, and so on; etc.)
- A list of references that your group used to prepare the role play so that others interested have a starting list of resources

## **VII. COURSE GRADING CRITERIA**

### **Student Performance Evaluation**

<b>Course Requirement</b>	<b>% of grade</b>	<b><u>Grading Scale</u></b>
Quizzes (5 @ 15 points each)	75%	A= 100 – 90 B = 89 - 80
<u>Researched Group Role Play</u>	<u>25%</u>	C = 79 - 70 D = 69 - 60
TOTAL	100%	F = 59 and below

Grading of all written assignments will take into account the quality of the writing as well as the content. The American Psychological Association (APA) – 4<sup>th</sup> edition format should be used. Written material should be carefully proofread and errors (punctuation, typographical, spelling) corrected.

## **VIII. COURSE OUTLINE**

This schedule is intended as a guide. The students should aim to complete the readings as they are outlined, in order to space them evenly throughout the semester. This is especially important since the quizzes will cover the required readings for that period of time. The student is responsible for all readings whether the material is covered as lecture material or not.

Note: T & R refers to the Toseland & Rivas text

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Topics, Readings and Assignments</u></b>
<b>Week 1 (8/30)</b>	<b><u>Topics</u></b> Introductions Class Overview and Review Syllabus
<b>Week 2 (9/4 &amp; 9/6)</b>	<b>SEPT. 4<sup>TH</sup> - LABOR DAY HOLIDAY</b> <b><u>Topics</u></b> Introduction to Groupwork Historical and Theoretical Overview <b><u>Readings</u></b> T & R – Ch. 1 – Introduction T & R – Ch. 2 – Historical Developments

**Week 3**  
**(9/11 & 9/13)**

**Topics**

Group Dynamics and Stages of Development  
Social Group Work Values and Ethics

**Readings**

T & R – Ch. 3 – Understanding Group Dynamics  
T & R – Appendix A

**Week 4**  
**(9/18 & 9/20)**

**Topics**

Group Leadership

**Readings**

T & R – Ch. 4 – Leadership

**SEPT 18 - QUIZ 1 (Over material covered from 8/30 to 9/13)**

**Week 5**  
**(9/25 & 9/27)**

**Topics**

Group Leadership  
Group Work and Diversity

**Readings**

T & R – Ch. 5 – Leadership and Diversity  
Bilides, D. G. (1991). Race, color, ethnicity, and class: Issues of biculturalism in school-based adolescent counseling groups. Social Work with Groups, 13(4), 43-58.

**Week 6**  
**(10/2 & 10/4)**

**Topics**

Planning and Composing Groups

**Readings**

T & R – Ch. 6 – Planning the Group

**Week 7**  
**(10/9 & 10/11)**

**Topics**

Beginning Groups and Assessment

**Readings**

T & R – Ch. 7 – The Group Begins  
T & R – Ch. 8 – Assessment

**OCT 11 – QUIZ 2 (Over material covered from 9/18 to 10/9)**

**Week 8**  
**(10/16 & 10/18)**

**Topics**

The Advanced Treatment Group  
Dealing with Difficult Clients

**Readings**

T & R – Ch. 9 – Treatment Groups: Foundation Methods

**Week 9**  
**(10/23 & 10/25)**

**Topics**

The Advanced Treatment Group  
Dealing with Difficult Clients

**Readings**

T & R – Ch. 10 – Treatment Groups: Specialized Methods

**OCT. 23 – QUIZ 3 (Over material covered from 10/11 to 10/18)**

**Week 10**  
**(10/30 & 11/1)**

**Topics**

Group Work with Families

**Readings**

Springer, D. W., & Orsbon, S. H. (in press). Families helping families. How to implement a multi-family therapy group with substance abusing adolescents. Submitted to Health and Social Work: Practice Forum.

**Week 11**  
**(11/6 & 11/8)**

**Topics**

Group Work - Specific Populations and Settings

**Readings**

Springer, D. W., Pomeroy, E. C., & Johnson, T. (1999). A group intervention for children of incarcerated parents: Initial blunders and subsequent solutions. Groupwork, 11(1), 198-212.

Hopps, J. G., & Pinderhughes, E. (1999). Women's and children's groups: Vignette Group work with overwhelmed clients (pp. 91-124). New York: The Free Press.

**Week 12**  
**(11/13 & 11/15)**

**Topics**

Group Work - Specific Populations and Settings

**Readings**

Irizarry, C., & Appel, Y. H. (1994). In double jeopardy: Preadolescents in the inner city. In A. Gitterman & L. Shulman (Eds.), Mutual aid groups, vulnerable populations, and the life cycle (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 119-149).

**NOV. 13 – QUIZ 4 (Over material covered from 10/23 to 11/8)**

**Week 13**  
**(11/20 & 11/22)**

**Topics**

Task Groups

**Readings**

T & R – Ch. 11 – Task Groups: Foundation Methods

**Week 14**  
**(11/27 & 11/29)**

**Topics**

Evaluating Progress: Were we Successful or Not?!

**Readings**

T & R – Ch. 13 – Evaluation

**Week 15**  
**(12/4 & 12/6)**

**Topics**

Termination

Developing Your Own Style of Leading Groups

**Readings**

T & R – Ch. 14 – Ending the Group's Work

**DEC 4 – QUIZ 5 (Over material covered from 11/13 to 11/29)**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

The following list of supplemental readings is **REQUIRED**. Copies are available for purchase as a **Coursepacket at Speedway Copy and Printing in Dobie Mall**.

Bilides, D. G. (1991). Race, color, ethnicity, and class: Issues of biculturalism in school-based adolescent counseling groups. Social Work with Groups, 13(4), 43-58.

Hopps, J. G., & Pinderhughes, E. (1999). Women's and children's groups: Vignettes. Group work with overwhelmed clients (pp. 91-124). New York: The Free Press.

Irizarry, C., & Appel, Y. H. (1994). In double jeopardy: Preadolescents in the inner city. In A. Gitterman & L. Shulman (Eds.), Mutual aid groups, vulnerable populations, and the lifecycle (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 119-149). New York: Columbia University Press.

Springer, D. W., Pomeroy, E. C., & Johnson, T. (1999). A group intervention for children of incarcerated parents: Initial pitfalls and subsequent solutions. Groupwork, 11(1), 54-70.

Springer, D. W., & Orsbon, S. H. (in press). Families helping families. How to implement a multi-family therapy group with substance abusing adolescents. Submitted to Health and Social Work: Practice Forum.