Group Counseling
Psychology 6420

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much”
-Hellen Keller

Instructor Information
Chris Chapman, Ph.D.
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435-797-1012

Course Information
Thursday 7:30-10:00 pm
Office Hours: By appointment

Teaching Assistants
Holly Horman
hollybgreer@gmail.com

Course Description
This course provides an introduction to the theories of group counseling as well as group dynamics, group leadership, group procedures, and group counseling skills. Students will engage in didactic and experiential learning related to the group counseling process with a special emphasis on the role of group counseling in K-12 school settings.

Course Objectives

1. Develop foundational knowledge related to the group counseling process
   1. Understand theories of group counseling, stages of group growth and development, and the purpose and function of didactic and process groups
   2. Awareness of ethical standards and issues related to group counseling
2. Demonstrate proficiency in group counseling skills
   1. Practice and display competency in motivational interviewing skills.
   2. Learn to conduct a group screen, begin a group, identify group dynamics, and successfully close a group.
3. Advance critical thinking and professional development
   2. Examine the research and develop a conceptualization related to therapeutic change and how it applies to group counseling
Course Objectives - Specific

*In this course you will be trained on specific competencies to help you develop your skills in multicultural counseling. These competencies have been outlined by CACREP as standard for school counselors. I have listed which competencies will be addressed in each class by number. Please refer to the list below to identify each competency. Keep in mind there is considerable overlap week by week, as many of these competencies apply to the different populations and issues we will be discussing throughout the course.

1. Theoretical foundations of group counseling and group work
2. Dynamics associated with group process and development
3. Therapeutic factors and how they contribute to group effectiveness
4. Characteristics and functions of effective group leaders
5. Approaches to group formation, including recruiting, screening, and selecting members
6. Types of groups and other considerations that affect conducting groups in varied settings
7. Ethical and culturally relevant strategies for designing and facilitating groups
8. Direct experiences in which students participate as group members in a small group activity, approved by the program, for a minimum of 10 clock hours over the course of one academic term

Required Readings

The readings for this course come from a variety of different sources to help diversify your training in group counseling. Instructions for weekly reading assignments are posted on Canvas.


Selected Readings from peer reviewed articles and other authoritative sources on group counseling will be posted on Canvas and noted on the reading schedule below.

Class Format

Class sessions will include two components:

1. Lecture - Class Discussion of Content (approximately 1 hour). A tentative schedule of discussion topics is provided below. You are expected to have completed all readings prior to the class meeting and actively participate through informed discussion.
2. Most class sessions will (12 hours total) have a group experience. Outside of the first two demonstration groups, these groups will be led and co-facilitated by class members. Student leadership will rotate weekly among the counseling group participants. The task of the counseling group is to discuss issues surrounding your professional development and to explore the process of change. The class will be broken up into quadrants of 8 persons each (A, B, C, D). These quadrants will function as the groups for the remainder of the semester. Students will be given opportunities to sign up for leadership and co-leadership opportunities during the first week of class.

Objectives of the counseling group experiences:

- To experience/observe the processes and issues pertinent to the establishment of a new growth group.
- To experience/observe the development of the group as a modality for achieving the goals of the group members.
- Become explicitly aware of the different aspects of group process and group dynamics.
- Provide a format for members to experiment with and understand new perspectives

Course Requirements

Group Personal Journal: Counseling group participants are required to keep an ongoing journal of their group experiences (1-2 pages each, 10 points each). Entries should include members’ personal reactions, their perceptions of the group’s process and group leadership through answering the following questions: (a) “what I am learning about myself”; (b) “what I am learning about others”; (c) “what I am learning about groups?” Among the 8 group experiences in which students are participants, students will write 6 personal journals and will submit them via Canvas by the Thursday following class.

Group Leadership Experience Journal: Students will be asked to lead one group and co-lead another during the semester. Along the general theme of professional and personal development, you and your co-leader will be asked to make an agenda for a 45-minute group session with your small group. In your journal you will include the basic notes for your group agenda, along with your own reactions to leading the group. Follow a similar format to the group personal journal- (a) “what I am learning about myself”; (b) “what I am learning about others”; (c) “what am I learning about leadership” and (d) “what I am learning about groups?” Along with your agenda notes, this should be 1-2 pages each, worth 10 points. You will complete 2 Group Leadership Experience Journals.

Reading Reaction Questions: Students will be asked to write 2 questions on the assigned readings for the week. Those questions may be posed to the class before lecture as a way to discuss the readings. If both a book chapter and an article are part of your reading assignment for the week, please write one question on each source for your 2 questions. These will be
worth 5 points each. Out of 13 possible Reading Reaction questions, you will be asked to complete 11.

**Group Proposal (75 points) and Presentation (25 points):** You will create a fictional group that you might run as a professional counselor. This presentation will serve as your final grade and should demonstrate the culmination of your learning. Choose the type of group that you would be likely to lead or co-lead in your actual or anticipated workplace. Guidelines and requirements for the proposal and presentation will be introduced during the second week of class. Students will select group members and topics during that class period as well.

**Grading**

Final grades are based on individual performance. Students who accumulate 92.5% to 100% of the required 230 points will earn an A; 89.5-92.4% = A-; 86.5-89.4% = B+; 82.5-86.4% = B; 79.5-82.4% = B-; 76.5-79.4% = C+ and so forth.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Possible Points</th>
<th>Required</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group Personal Journal (8 possible; 6 required)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Leadership Experience Journal: (2 possible; 2 required)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Proposal</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Reaction Questions (12 possible; 10 required)</td>
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<td>50</td>
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**Total Possible Points** 260 230

**Assignment Make-Up Policy**

This course is designed to allow for flexibility in the expectable unexpected events that all of us experience over the course of our lives (e.g., partial credit, “skippable” papers). For this reason, I do not allow make-ups or extensions of assignments. If you are having a particularly difficult semester and cannot complete most assignments, please see me immediately to discuss a possible incomplete or withdrawal.
Classroom behavior

The Golden Rule can be described as an “ethic of reciprocity”. Students will be presenting to the class in informal and formal ways. Visualize yourself presenting to the class and consider how you would answer these:

- Where would you like students to be looking when you’re talking?
- How would you like cell phones set?
- How would you like computers to be present in the room?
- When would you like others to arrive and depart from class?

Whatever those answers are, they will also apply to how others will want you to behave when they are presenting. You can read more about the University’s Classroom Civility Policy which can be found on the web at: http://www.usu.edu/provost/faculty/student_conduct/classroom_civility.cfm (Links to an external site.)

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is maintained when students generate original work and acknowledge the sources of existing work (whether published or not) in their written or oral communication with others. Academic honesty allows us all the freedom to express our ideas with excitement and without fear. It is the foundation for trust between professionals. I expect students to engage academic honesty thoughtfully and deliberately. Because academic dishonesty shakes the foundation of trust, I consider it a very serious offense. If I understand a student is engaging in academic dishonest behavior, I will approach that student (see APA standard on informal resolutions to ethical violations) and discuss my concerns. Consequences can vary from a verbal reprimand to an “F” for the course grade. In extreme cases, I may report the incident for university-level disciplinary proceedings (see section VI-1 of the Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University: http://www.usu.edu/studentservices/pdf/StudentCode.pdf).

Accommodations

Students with documented disabilities who need accommodations in completing requirements or taking part in class in any manner should speak with me during the first week of class to arrange these accommodations. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) at Utah State University (a) evaluates requests for reasonable accommodation from University students to ensure adherence to the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act, (b) provide academic, personal, and career counseling to assist students in the development of personal and financial independence, and (c) provide supportive services to individuals with disabilities, including academic assistance, adaptive equipment, counseling, readers, transcribers, interpreters, and advocacy to ensure equal access to education, employment, and other University programs,
among many other things. Students who suspect they may have a disability, or who have a disability should contact the DRC for further information and support: (435) 797-2444.

**Course Outline**

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<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>GROUPS</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
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<tr>
<td>1/11/2018</td>
<td>Introduction to Class/Theoretical Foundations</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ethics, Multicultural Considerations &amp; Small Group Planning</td>
<td>6, 7</td>
<td>Chapters 9-11</td>
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<td>1/18/2018</td>
<td>Stages of Change; Group Dynamics and Therapeutic Factors 1, 2, 3, 6, 8</td>
<td><em>Chris leads (AB)</em></td>
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<td>1/25/2018</td>
<td>Group Approaches; Practical Transtheoretical Skills; Screening and Inclusion/Exclusion 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
<td><em>Chris leads (CD)</em></td>
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<td>2/1/2018</td>
<td>Characteristics of Good Group Leaders; Leading Groups in Opening Stages 2, 4, 6, 7, 8</td>
<td><em>A, B, C, D student led</em></td>
<td>Chapters 1-2</td>
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<td>2/8/2018</td>
<td>Common Problems: Working with Conflict and other Issues 2, 3, 4, 7, 8</td>
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<td>Chapter 6 &amp; Article #3</td>
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<td>2/22/2018</td>
<td>Group Counseling Skills with Elementary Groups and Young Children 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
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<td>Chapter 3 &amp; Article #4</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
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<td>No Class: Spring Break</td>
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<td>3/15/2018</td>
<td>Experiential Groups &amp; Middle School Groups 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
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<td>3/22/2018</td>
<td>Transition/Working Phase &amp; High School Groups 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
<td>A, B, C, D student led</td>
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<td>3/29/2018</td>
<td>Student Group Check-in; Strengthening Therapeutic Group Interactions; Assessment of Group Process and Outcome 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
<td>A, B, C, D student led</td>
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<td>4/05/2018</td>
<td>Multicultural Issues in Group Counseling 2, 7, 8</td>
<td>A, B, C, D student led</td>
<td>Chapter 7 &amp; Article #8</td>
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<td>4/12/2018</td>
<td>Self-Care Day 4, 8</td>
<td>A, B, C, D student led</td>
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<td>4/19/2018</td>
<td>Specific Populations: Strengths and Challenges 2, 7, 8</td>
<td>A, B, C, D student led</td>
<td>Chapter 8 &amp; Article #10</td>
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<td>4/26/2018</td>
<td>Final Phase/Closing Groups 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
<td>Article #11</td>
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