

## **Counseling 528: Group Counseling Spring 2014**

**Instructor:** Steve Armstrong, Ph.D., LPC-S, RPT-S

**Office:** 201 Henderson

**E-Mail:** steve.armstrong@tamuc.edu

**Phone:** (214) 536-0860

**Office Hours:** MW 3:30-5:00 (Metro); TTH 3:30-5:00 (CHEC)

### **CATALOG DESCRIPTION OF COURSE**

528. *Introduction to Group Dynamics and Procedures*. Three Semester Hours.

A study of group development, dynamics, and theories in relation to group guidance, group counseling, and group therapy. Leadership styles, techniques and roles are explored, and ethical and legal issues related to group interventions are discussed. Prerequisite: COUN 510 or consent of instructor with concurrent enrollment in COUN 510.

### **PURPOSE OF THE COURSE**

This course will introduce the basic theories and procedures of group counseling. Lecture, class discussion, demonstration and videotaped material will be utilized. Upon course completion, class participants should be able to demonstrate an understanding of theories and procedures used in group settings.

Course Procedures: Involvement and learning in the course will be facilitated by means of:

- Lecture
- Experiential activities including the following: In class pairs and group exercises, Small group activities and discussion
- Assigned readings and class discussion

### **Required Texts:**

Carson, R. (2003). *Taming your gremlin: A surprisingly simple method for getting out of your own way*. New York: Collins.

Corey, M.S., Corey, G., & Corey, C. (2014). *Groups: Process and practice* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.

### **Supplemental Reading:**

Armstrong, S. A., & Berg, R. C. (2005). Demonstrating group process using 12 Angry Men. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 30(2), 135-144.

Shen, Y., & Armstrong, S. A. (2008). Impact of group sandtray therapy on the self-esteem of young adolescent girls. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 33, 118-137.

Yalom, I. D. & Leszcz, M. (2005). *The theory and practice of group psychotherapy* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Basic Books.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES include, but are not limited to, the following.**

The student will:

1. demonstrate understanding of principles of group dynamics, including group process components, developmental stage theories, group members' roles and behaviors, and therapeutic factors of group work;
2. demonstrate understanding of group leadership styles and approaches, including characteristics of various types of group leaders and leadership styles;
3. demonstrate understanding of theories of group counseling, including commonalities, distinguishing characteristics, and pertinent research and literature;

4. demonstrate understanding of group counseling methods, including group counselor orientations and behaviors, appropriate selection criteria and methods, and methods of evaluation of effectiveness;
5. demonstrate understanding of approaches used for other types of group work, including task groups, psychoeducational groups, and therapy groups;
6. demonstrate understanding of professional preparation standards for group leaders;
7. demonstrate understanding of ethical and legal considerations related to group work;
8. become more conscious of his/her personal growth through participation as a group member.

**CONTENT AREAS include, but are not limited to, the following:**

- I. Group dynamics
  - A. Group process components
  - B. Developmental stage theories
  - C. Group members' roles and behaviors
  - D. Therapeutic factors of group work
- II. Group leadership styles and approaches
  - A. Characteristics of various types of group leaders
  - B. Leadership styles
- III. Theories of group counseling
  - A. Commonalties
  - B. Distinguishing characteristics
  - C. Pertinent research and literature
- IV. Group counseling methods
  - A. Group counselor orientations and behaviors
- IV. Approaches used for other types of group work
  - A. Task groups
  - B. Psychoeducational groups
  - C. Therapy groups
- V. Professional preparation standards for group leaders
- VI. Ethical and legal considerations related to group work

**TEXES COMPETENCIES THAT RELATE TO THIS COURSE (*TEXES is the state examination required for school counselor certification.*)**

Competency 001 (Human Development)

The school counselor understands processes of human development and applies this knowledge to provide a developmental guidance program, including counseling services, that meets the needs of all students.

Competency 002 (Student Diversity)

The school counselor understands human diversity and applies this knowledge to ensure that the developmental guidance and counseling program is responsive to all students.

Competency 006 (Counseling)

The school counselor understands how to provide effective counseling services to individuals and small groups.

Competency 010 (Professionalism)

The school counselor understands and complies with ethical, legal, and professional standards relevant to the profession.

## **Class Requirements:**

1. **Class Participation** is expected of each student. You will be asked to participate in experiential activities in class. Some activities require self-disclosure, self-awareness and honesty. I will do my best to create a safe environment for you to self-disclose but it will be up to you to take small risks in these activities. Because the class is experiential, missing more than one class will negatively impact your grade (see Attendance Policy for more details).

2. **Laboratory Group Experience.** This activity involves participation in a **group** designed to help you grow personally/professionally and learn more about yourself as a group member. This group experience is consistent with the core training standards of the Association for Specialists in Group Work and CACREP requirements. The group will begin the fourth class. **The purpose of these groups is to teach you about: group dynamics, how you perceive others, how others perceive you, how the group process can inform your work in a variety of group settings, and for you to experience what it means to be a member of a group including your own resistance.** These group meetings represent another vehicle for you to learn about groups in action and to grow as a person. You are asked to be an active participant and to monitor your level of self-disclosure. The learning that comes from being a member of an on-going group can make a valuable contribution to your development as an effective group leader and effective group member. These groups will meet during the last part of class meetings. The group will be led by the instructor. There will be six group meetings. All participants in these groups will be bound by confidentiality. At the conclusion of these groups you will have the opportunity to provide written feedback to the group facilitator/instructor. You will **not** be formally evaluated in this group although attendance will be noted. If for some reason you do not feel that you can fully participate in the experiential group, you probably should not be enrolled in COUN 528 at this time. Please see me if you have concerns about your ability to participate, or if you need a referral to a professional counselor.

3. **Group Process Journal (Due at the beginning of each class once group begins)** Each group participant (student of the class) will write a 2-3 page personal process summary of their group experience after each group meeting. This is intended to be solely about the individual's personal process in the group meetings. The notebook will be "looked at" by the instructor to validate completion.

### **Journal:**

After each group session you will turn in a 2-3 page journal on the previous week's class. The journal will consist of a section for *each* of the following headings:

#### **Description of the group as a whole:** identifying

- a) The mood (e.g., what changes, if any, did you notice?)
- b) Topic of greatest interest to the group, and
- c) Activity level (e.g., what changes did you notice?)

#### **Self-appraisal:** identifying

- a) Your mood (e.g., what changes, if any, did you notice?)
- b) Topic of greatest interest to you, and
- c) Your activity level (e.g., what changes did you notice?)

#### **Description of one member**

Something you admire or something you noticed as a characteristic (this is *not* a behavioral description) **Relation of group session to outside experience**

How you might use something we did in class in your *future position as counselor*

4. **Group Proposal.** For your final written assignment you will prepare a proposal, This proposal will be approximately 10-12 pages of text. **Please follow APA style** (6<sup>th</sup> edition) and use Times Roman 12-point font. Select a setting in which you want to implement a group program (i.e., groups designed for children, adolescents, college students, older adults). Please select one of the specialization areas (i.e., task, psychoeducation, counseling or therapy). 10-12-page typed and double-spaced paper using APA style. The paper will include

references from at least 7 journal articles and/or texts. You may use no more than one (1) website as a reference. The purpose of the paper is to propose a group the student is likely to conduct. In addition to including information from the related literature, the student should specify the form and content of each group session, stating an objective for each group meeting. The paper should also include selection and screening techniques. The topic of the paper must be approved by the instructor. The paper must address the following:

1) Literature Review:

Does it describe the scope of the problem at hand?

Does it identify and describe the most important issues faced by group members?

Does it identify possible solutions discovered by past research and practice?

Does it review and integrate the information from the cited references

2) Group Logistics

Is the duration sufficient to cover topic and allow for change?

What specific changes will occur as a result of a member's participation?

Is the time sufficient for number of members?

What potential barriers to scheduling exist

3) Screening

When deciding whom to exclude, what are the criteria?

When deciding who to include, which of the following are taken into account: gender, cognitive ability, maturity, duration of issue, frequency of issue, intensity of issue, acceptance and/or completion of issue.

4) Individualized Goals

How do you intend to facilitate change for individuals and the group as a whole (i.e. coaching, role play, support for and opportunity to transfer learning to real life)?

5) Does it conform to the 6th edition of the APA style guide?

*Something to consider:* It would be practical to identify a group you might actually lead in your practicum or internship setting. Do not choose a suicide prevention group for your first group attempt. Also, it might be advantageous to choose a group that is not overly "challenging" for your first group experience (Ex. Bipolar children, bpd group, eating disorders).

*Some examples of topics for group papers:* Loss-bereavement, children of divorce, building social skills, stepfamily issues, families of alcoholics, test-taking anxiety

**5. Course Final Exam**-Multiple-choice exam. The exam will cover material discussed over the course of the term.

**Grading:**

Attendance/class participation 40 pts.

Group process journals 60 pts.

Group proposal 100 pts.

Exam 100 pts.

A 90% 270 points

B 80% 240 points

C 70% 210 points

**Attendance:** A large part of what we do in class is experiential; therefore, class attendance is considered to be crucial. **More than one absence will result in the final grade being lowered one grade level.** Being repeatedly **late** for class will affect your attendance grade. Any late assignment will result in a deduction of 10 points per week for that assignment. **Missing more than one small group meeting is inappropriate and will result in the final grade being lowered one grade level.**

**Digital devices:** It is inappropriate to text, email, check email or texts, use a laptop or go online during this course. I expect your full attention and participation. Confine your use of digital devices to breaks.

**Students with Disabilities:**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Gee Library Rm 132  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu)

"All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment." (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct)

**UNIVERSITY CLOSING DUE TO WEATHER**

Check <http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/> regarding class cancellations. Also, KETR radio on 88.9 FM and television channels 4, 5, and 8 (channel 7 for Tyler & Longview Area).

## Flexible Calendar

- July 8 Syllabus, Course Overview/Expectations, Person of group therapist Group activity, **Read Corey Text Ch. 1-4 prior to next class**
- July 10 Humanistic/existential and cognitive group therapy, twisted thinking Ethical and Legal Considerations, Diversity, Types of groups, Group activity, **Read Corey Text Ch. 5-7 prior to next class**
- July 15 Forming a Group, History of Group Work, Yalom's Therapeutic Factors Part I
- July 17 Yalom's Therapeutic Factors Part II **Small group and Journal writing begin**
- July 22 **Read Corey Text Ch. 6 & 7 prior to next class prior to next class**
- July 24 Group Stages Part I & II **Read Corey Text Ch. 8 & 9 prior to next class prior to next class- Start bringing journals to class, Read Taming Your Gremlin prior to next class**
- July 29 Berg group demonstration video, School-based groups
- July 31 Yalom Inpatient Psychotherapy Group video, Community agency groups, Specialty groups,
- Aug 5 Open, Exam review
- Aug 7 Final Exam  
**Group Proposals and Journals Due**