

Group Counseling Syllabus

Christian University Course Delivered in Traditional Format

James H. Dalton, MS, LAC

(931) 210-0562

jameshdalton@gmail.com

Scheduled Class Time

This course is scheduled to meet weekly from 6:00-9:00pm each Thursday. This time will be supplemented with a 1 hour group experience each week in September, October, and November.

Course Description

A study of the principles of group counseling dynamics, theory and techniques. Students participate in experiential groups. Emphasis is on developing competencies in self-intervention and growth as well as competence in processes of small group phenomena.

Course Objectives

1. The student will understand basic group theory.
2. The student will have experienced being a group member.
3. The student will be able to develop an organizational plan for a counseling group.
4. The student will begin to formulate a personal philosophy about group work.
5. The student will demonstrate knowledge of group counseling theories.

Critical Competencies

1. Learn principles of group dynamics, including group process components, developmental stage theories, group members' roles and behaviors, and therapeutic factors of group work (CACREP II. G. 6. a.).

Demonstrated through quizzes over assigned reading, community group observation and reflection, personal reflection paper, group plan project, and group plan presentation.

2. Identify group leadership or facilitation styles and approaches, including characteristics of various types of group leaders and leadership styles (CACREP II. G. 6. b.).

Demonstrated by community group observation and reflection, quizzes over assigned readings, personal reflection paper, and group plan project.

3. Understand different theories of group counseling, including commonalities, distinguishing characteristics, and pertinent research and literature (CACREP II. G. 6. c.).

Demonstrated by quizzes over assigned readings, research paper about a theory of group counseling, group plan project, and group plan presentation.

4. Demonstrate an understanding of group counseling methods, including group counselor orientations and behaviors, appropriate selection criteria and methods, and methods of evaluation of effectiveness (CACREP II. G. 6. d.).

Demonstrated by community group observation and reflection, quizzes over assigned readings, group plan project, and group plan presentation.

5. 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 (CACREP II. G. 6. e.).

Fulfilled by experiential group participation.

Method of Evaluation

Students will be evaluated over the course of the semester by the assignments listed below. All assignments should be e-mailed to the instructor in Microsoft Word® (.docx or .doc) or Adobe Acrobat® (.pdf) formats by the beginning of class on the dates listed within this section. Any assignment turned in late (more than 15 minutes after the beginning of the class on the date the assignment is due) will receive a 5% reduction in grade for each day they are late.



1. **Experiential Group** – 25% of the overall grade

- a. Each student will be required to participate in a group experience throughout the course of the semester. Participation must be completed by December 15 (week of Final Exams). Additionally, no more than 1 session/hour may be counted from any calendar week.
- b. Possible Group Experiences
 - i. *Self-Growth/Awareness Group A* – This group will meet 4:30-5:30pm each Thursday from September 1 – November 17. This group will be led by a doctoral counseling intern student from a neighboring university. The focus within the group will be to assist students in growing in self-awareness and achieving goals decided upon by the members. Note: There will be a maximum of 8 members allowed in this group on a first come, first serve basis.
 - ii. *Self-Growth/Awareness Group B* – This group will meet 9:00-10:00pm each Thursday from September 1 – November 17. This group will be led by a doctoral counseling intern student from a neighboring university. The focus within the group will be to assist students in growing in self-awareness and achieving goals decided upon by the members. Note: There will be a maximum of 8 members allowed in this group on a first come, first serve basis.
 - iii. *Psychoeducational Group* – This group will meet 9:00-10:00pm each Thursday from September 1 – November 17. This group will be led by a doctoral counseling intern student from a neighboring university. This group will focus on skills necessary for high academic achievement. Note: There will be a maximum of 8 members allowed in this group on a first come, first serve basis.

- iv. *Alternative Group* – Alternative groups may be acceptable, but require prior approval by the instructor. Those attending an approved alternative group must turn in a log of attendance to a minimum of 10 hours of group sessions between August 25 and December 8 at the final class session on December 8.
- c. Students will be required to notify the instructor of which group they will attend by the beginning of the second class period.
- d. Group leaders of the groups above will take attendance at the beginning of each session. Attendance logs will be given to the instructor of the course, but no other information will be shared with the instructor by the group counseling leaders.
- e. Grading for this assignment: 100 pts will be granted for attendance at 10 sessions/hours of an approved group counseling experience. A passing grade in this course **REQUIRES** attendance at a minimum of 10 hours of group experience (Assignment 1 above, CACREP II. G. 6. e.). Failure to do so **WILL RESULT IN A GRADE OF F BEING ASSIGNED FOR THE COURSE**.



2. **Community Group Observation and Reflection**

- a. 6.25% of the overall grade – Due October 27
- b. Students are required to attend a group session in the community such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, other 12 step program meeting, grief group, or other open counseling or psychoeducational group.
- c. Students must obtain approval from the instructor for their planned observation by September 15.
- d. After observing the community group in action, students will write a 2-3 page single spaced reflection paper. Possible topics to be discussed within the reflection include:
 - i. Leadership style(s) observed within the group
 - ii. Perception of the group members, problem members/behaviors
 - iii. Discussion of group techniques and process
 - iv. What did you learn
 - v. What could you implement from your observation in future groups
 - vi. Other relevant applications from your observation to what has been learned in the course thus far
- e. Grading for this project: 8 pts appropriate length, appropriate use of grammar, and compliance with APA manual; 5 pts demonstrates understanding of group process and applies concepts from the course; 12 pts demonstration of personal reflection upon material and observations.



3. **Quizzes Over Assigned Readings**

- a. 2.5% of the overall grade each, 25% of the overall grade combined
- b. There will be a quiz at the beginning of class in the months of September, October, and November.
- c. Quizzes will consist of primarily multiple choice questions, but also will include matching, short answer, or essay questions at times.
- d. The quizzes will test students over their comprehension of the assigned reading material for that particular week.

- e. Each person will be allowed to drop their lowest 2 grades on the quizzes. Note that being absent or coming to class more than 15 minutes late on the date in which a quiz is given will count as a 0 on that particular quiz.
- f. These quizzes will stand in place of a traditional midterm exam for this course.



4. **Group Plan Project**

- a. 25% of the overall grade
- b. The group plan project is an opportunity for the student to demonstrate understanding of group counseling competencies required of counselors, and to bring all of the information covered throughout the semester together into one usable plan.
- c. This project consists of **three parts**. First, a prospectus explaining the basic group the student plans to develop the group plan project for. Second, a research paper about a student selected group counseling theory. Third, an organized plan of how this theory could be implemented in a specific group.
- d. The first part of the group plan is a group plan prospectus, due October 13.
 - i. The student must select a specific target population for whom a counseling group could be organized.
 - ii. The student must also develop a specific purpose for the group, and select a theory of group counseling which will be the foundation for facilitation of the group.
 - iii. These basic plans should be turned in on a single page, following the format shown within the example in the course materials.
- e. The second part of the group plan project requires a research paper about a theory of group counseling, due November 10, consisting of the following components:
 - i. The student will select a specific theory of group counseling to research and discuss. Note: while an integrative/eclectic approach may be utilized, students for the purpose of this assignment must select one main theory to be the primary foundation of the group. This theory will be the same theory which the organized plan that is the second part of this project will be based upon.
 - ii. The student will discuss the foundational beliefs/values/principles of the selected theory.
 - iii. The student will provide examples of how the theory has been utilized in past research or practice.
 - iv. The student will explain differences between the selected theory and other theories of group counseling.
 - v. The research paper should be 8-12 pages in length (not including the title page) and be in APA format with at least 8 scholarly references (not including the assigned textbook).

- f. The final part of the group plan project is a group organization plan, due December 1. The group organization plan will consist of the following components:
- i. Statement of the purpose, setting, and specific target population, including why this population is appropriate for group counseling. All other components must be appropriate based upon this stated purpose, setting and target population.
 - ii. Brief explanation (1 paragraph) of the theory of group counseling to be implemented in this group, and why this theory is appropriate for this group. Note: while an integrative/eclectic approach may be utilized, students for the purpose of this assignment must select one main theory to be the primary foundation of the group. This theory will be the same theory which was written about in the first part of this assignment.
 - iii. How members will be selected for the group.
 - iv. Specific leader skills which would be necessary for this group.
 - v. Session plans. The plan should include 8-12 sessions. Each session should have an objective which is relevant to the purpose and population of the group. Each session should also have a basic agenda. At least 3 sessions should include a group activity, which must be linked to the objective of the session.
 - vi. Explanation of check-in and check-out plan to be utilized within sessions.
 - vii. Explanation of a final activity or means of bringing closure to the group process.
 - viii. The means by which the group will be evaluated by the facilitator, organization, and/or members.
 - ix. Written informed consent form for the group.
 - x. The organizational plan component of this project should follow the template provided within the example available as part of the course materials. Students cannot use individuals with a mood disorder as the intended population since the example uses this population.
 - xi. A list of any references for non-original ideas utilized within the group organizational plan.
 - xii. As other assignments, this assignment must be e-mailed to the instructor by the Monday following the class period in Word or PDF format. The group organizational plans will be distributed to all students in the course by December 8.
- g. This project will stand in place of a traditional final exam for this course.
- h. Grading for this assignment: 5 pts for appropriate completion of prospectus, 10 pts appropriate length, appropriate use of grammar, and compliance with APA manual; 15 pts research paper appropriately presents the principles of the theory; 10 pts paper provides examples of the theory in research/practice; 10 pts research paper compares the theory to other theories of group counseling; 15 pts group organization plan bases all aspects upon the selected theory, population, purpose, and setting; 25 pts organization plan includes all of the required components; 10 pts overall cohesion, practicality, and applicability of organization plan.



5. Group Plan Presentation

- a. 12.5% of the overall grade – December 1 or 8
- b. Students will present their group plan project to the class during one of the last two class periods of the semester.
- c. Presentations should be 10-12 minutes in length. Demonstrations and/or the use of media are required to assist in the presentation (i.e. PowerPoint®, *original* video, artwork, *original* audio recordings).
- d. The presentation should include the following components:
 - i. Explanation of the target population of their group plan project, the purpose of the group, and the setting for the group.
 - ii. A *brief* explanation of the theory utilized, and why it was selected.
 - iii. Explanation of the basic plans for the group. This should be the main part of the presentation, and as such should be given the bulk of the presentation time. Students will be allowed presentation liberty to explain what is most important for this section of the presentation. Students may present objectives of sessions, activities to be used, how members will be selected, specific problems that may be encountered with this group, check-in and check-out plans, how the group will be evaluated, etc.
- e. Grading for this project: 5 pts appropriate length, appropriate use of grammar, and compliance with APA manual; 8 pts *concise* explanation of theory; 12 pts appropriate use of media and/or examples within the presentation; 25 pts presentation communicated the group plan project adequately to fellow students.



6. Personal Reflection Paper

- a. 6.25% of the overall grade – Due December 8
- b. Students will end the semester by writing a personal reflection paper covering what they have learned throughout the semester.
- c. This paper should be 2-3 pages, single spaced.
- d. Possible topics to be discussed within the reflection include:
 - i. Leadership style(s) you intend to implement as a future group leader
 - ii. Perceptions of the member role you filled within the experiential group
 - iii. What did you learn about yourself from this process
 - iv. Your reflection on the CACREP requirements to participate in an experiential group
 - v. Development of your personal theory of group counseling
 - vi. Other relevant personal applications and reflections upon the material covered within the course
 - vii. Overall feeling towards the group process – positive and negative
- e. Students are not required to divulge any information from the experiential group process, and must ensure that if they do discuss specific occurrences from the group process, individuals are not identifiable.
- f. Grading for this project: 8 pts appropriate length, appropriate use of grammar, and compliance with APA manual; 5 pts demonstrates understanding of group process and applies concepts from the course; 12 pts demonstration of personal reflection upon material and/or experiences.

Course Schedule

	Class Date	Class Discussion Topics for the Week and Assignments for this Class Session
1	Aug 25	Discussion: Syllabus review, Introduction to Group Work, Training the Leader
2	Sep 1	Discussion: Ethics In Group Work and Multicultural Issues in Group Counseling Quiz: Corey Ch 3 – Ethical & Professional Issues Group Experience Begins
3	Sep 8	Discussion: Norms and Rules in the Group Quiz: Yalom Ch 5 – Therapist Basic Tasks
4	Sep 15	Discussion: Preparing for a Group Quiz: Yalom Ch 10 – Creation Of The Group, Burlingame et al. (2011) Assignment: Scheduled Community Group Observation
5	Sep 22	Discussion: Early Stages of the Group Quiz: Corey Ch 4 – Early Stages; Yalom Ch 11 – In The Beginning
6	Sep 29	Discussion: Later Stages in the Group, Concluding the Group Quiz: Corey Ch 5 – Later Stages; Yalom Ch 12 – The Advanced Group
7	Oct 6	Discussion: Cognitive Behavioral Theory to Group Counseling Quiz: Corey Ch 13 – Cognitive Behavioral
8	Oct 13	Discussion: Solution Focused Brief Therapy in Group Counseling Quiz: Corey Ch 16 – SFBT Assignment: Group Plan Project Prospectus Due
9	Oct 20	Discussion: Existential Group Counseling Concepts Quiz: Yalom Ch 1 – Therapeutic Factors; Yalom Ch 6 – Here And Now
10	Oct 27	Discussion: Difficulties in Group Work – Problem Members, Conflicts in Sessions, Etc. Quiz: Yalom Ch 13 – Problem Group Members Assignment: Community Group Observation Reflection Due
11	Nov 3	Discussion: Enhancements or Drawbacks to Group Process Quiz: Yalom Ch 14 – Specialized Formats & Procedural Aids
12	Nov 10	Discussion: Different Types of Groups, Traditions in Group Counseling, AA Quiz: Yalom Ch 15 – Specialized Therapy Groups Assignment: Group Plan Theory Paper Due
13	Nov 17	Discussion: Techniques within Group Work, Developing Your Own Style Quiz: Corey – Ch 17 – Comparisons, Contrasts, Integration; Corey – Ch 18 – Integrative Perspective; Cornish & Wade (2010)
14	Nov 24	Thanksgiving Week – Give Thanks ☺
15	Dec 1	Assignment: Group Plan Project Due Group Plan Presentations
16	Dec 8	Assignment: Personal Reflection Paper Due Group Plan Presentations

Course Grading



100 pts.	Experiential Group Participation - a minimum of 10 hours/sessions
25 pts.	Community Group Observation
100 pts.	Quizzes Over Assigned Readings - 10 Quizzes at 10 points each
100 pts.	Group Plan Project
50 pts.	Group Plan Presentation
<u>25 pts.</u>	<u>Personal Reaction Paper</u>
400 pts.	Total

376 points or above	A
328-375 points	B
290-327 points	C
260-289 points	D
259 points or less	F

NOTE: A passing grade in this course REQUIRES attendance at a minimum of 10 hours of group experience (Assignment 1 above, CACREP II. G. 6. e.). Failure to do so WILL RESULT IN A GRADE OF F BEING ASSIGNED.

Attendance is a mandatory part of every course, as expressed in the academic handbook, which states, "Excessive absences, regardless of the reason, will result in grade reductions or failure in the class." Any absences beyond the first two must be excused in writing by the instructor or director of the counseling program. Any unexcused absences beyond the first two will result in the reduction of the student's grade by one letter grade.



Required Texts and Resources

Corey, G. (2007). *Theory and practice of group counseling* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson, Brooks/Cole.

Yalom, Irvin D. (2005). *The theory and practice of group psychotherapy* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Basic Books.



Assigned Articles Available in Course Materials

Burlingame, G. M., Cox, J. C., Davies, D. R., Layne, C. M., & Gleave, R. (2011). The Group Selection Questionnaire: Further refinements in group member selection. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 15(1), 60-74. doi:[10.1037/a0020220](https://doi.org/10.1037/a0020220)

Cornish, M. A., & Wade, N. G. (2010). Spirituality and religion in group counseling: A literature review with practice guidelines. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 41(5), 398-404. doi:[10.1037/a0020179](https://doi.org/10.1037/a0020179)