

SOCIAL WORK 361: Groups and Families

3 credits

Fall 2023

**Mondays 6 PM to 8:50 PM and 2 hours of asynchronous content
North Hall 191**

Instructor: Kate Kipp, MSSW, APSW

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Course Pre-Requisites: Sociology 261, Sociology 101 and acceptance to the social work program.

Required Text:

Toseland, R. & Rivas, R. (2017). *An Introduction to Group Work Practice*, 8th Edition.
Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Web Site: NASW Code of Ethics

<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

Community (including Student) Rights & Responsibilities Website:

https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/2015_Aug_Community%20Rights%20and%20Responsibilities%20Web.pdf

I. Course Description

This course is designed to help students learn the basic issues and key concepts associated with the group process and how to apply these concepts as group facilitators working with a variety of group types. Basic theories of social work practice with groups will be explored, and students will learn to develop a group and prepare for all phases of group work practice. Throughout this course, emphasis will be placed on social work ethics and values, as well as how elements of diversity impact social work practice.

II. CSWE Core Competencies & Practice Behaviors Taught in this Course

The following table contains the competencies and practice behaviors developed by the Council of Social Work Education (CWSE). When we intentionally teach and employ the competencies and behaviors through lecture, discussion, independent and group projects, research, and practice; we are becoming ethical, skilled, and empowering social workers. The competence and behaviors we will address as a class are in the table below. The table below does NOT contain all CWSW practice behaviors, only those applicable to our coursework.

Competencies Addressed	Practice Behaviors Addressed	Content Area(s)
Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context; 	Weeks 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 Project:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations; • demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication; and • use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes. 	SGOP* GP** EGP
Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply an understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and • engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice. 	Week 3
Competency 3: Engage anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion in practice (ADEI).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and • demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences 	Project: TGOP GP EGP
Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research; • apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and • use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery. 	Week 9 Project: GP
Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services; • assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services; and • apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice. 	
Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and • use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies. 	Weeks 1, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12 Project: GP EGP
Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies; • apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies; and • select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies. 	Weeks 2, 6, 11, 13 Project: GP TGOP
Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies; • apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies; • use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes; and • negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; 	Weeks 2, 3, 7, 14 Project: TGOP GP EGP
Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes; 	Weeks 8, 9, 15

Groups, Organizations, and Communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes; • critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and • apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels 	Project: GP EGP
* Task Group Observation Project (SGOP) **Group Curriculum Project (GP) % Experiential Group Papers (EGP)		
Source: Council on Social Work Education https://www.cswe.org/getattachment/Accreditation/Accreditation-Process/2015-EPAS/2015EPAS_Web_FINAL.pdf.aspx		

III. Course Content

Class Format:

The course format will include lecture, class discussion and group facilitation exercised. Students will work in small groups to assess and critically analyze presented information. Students will be required to apply existing knowledge, integrate new concepts and to critically think.

Course Requirements:

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|----|-------------------------------|------------|
| 1. | Film Response Discussion | 25 points |
| 2. | Attendance and participation | 160 points |
| 3. | Task Group Observation Papers | 90 points |
| 4. | Experiential Group Papers | 100 points |
| 5. | Final Exam | 100 points |

Attendance & Participation:

Students are expected to attend all days the class is scheduled to meet. The instructor will also take attendance at the beginning of each class.

Excused absences are limited to documentable illnesses, personal or family emergency, or religious observation during class hours.

For any absence, a student is required to:

- Notify the instructor PRIOR to class. If this is impossible, a student must email the instructor as soon as possible to explain what happened.
- Read all readings and review the PowerPoint for the missed class.
- Students must take initiative to ask questions to understand class content for the missed class.

For any unexcused absence, a student will not receive attendance points (20 points) for the missed class. Students who arrive to class late will receive partial attendance points.

Grading Scale:

A	=	94-100	significantly above requirements
A-	=	91-93	
B+	=	88-90	
B	=	84-87	above basic requirements
B-	=	81-83	
C+	=	78-80	
C	=	74-77	meets basic requirements
C-	=	71-73	
D+	=	68-70	
D	=	60-67	below requirements
F	=	59 and below	No credit

Confidentiality:

We will respect the stories, concerns, comments and questions shared in the classroom by not taking them out of the classroom. We will maintain a professional standard of confidentiality in our classroom.

Ground Rules for Class Participation:

We will foster a learning atmosphere where each person is valued and is safe to communicate freely. We will communicate in a constructive and thoughtful manner which is free of harassment and threat. We will commit to work through conflicts should any occur, without blame or intimidation. We will set additional rules and expectations as a class.

IV. Course Policies**Support for Students Requiring ADA Accommodations**

UWSP and this instructor support a student's need to request academic accommodations due to disabilities. Please inform me during the first week of semester of any special accommodations a student believes will be needed for meeting class expectations. A copy of the Accommodation Request Form from the Disability Resource Center must be provided for needed accommodations to be made. Accommodations will not be made without a completed Accommodation Request Form. Additional information can be gathered from the Center:

<https://www.uwsp.edu/disability-resource-center/>

Attendance Policy

Again, this course is professional training for which the student has committed the student to attend. Students are expected to attend all days the class is scheduled to meet.

Excused absences are limited to documentable illnesses, personal or family emergency, or religious observation during class hours.

For any unexcused absence, a student will not receive attendance points for the missed class.

Assignment Policy for Late Papers and Incompletes:

Students are expected to complete course work by the date and time that it is due. The instructor will check the Dropbox to determine if work was submitted the required due date/time. The instructor will NOT grade late work that is submitted to Canvas unless an alternate due date has been negotiated. Students are responsible to contact the instructor to negotiate an alternate date. The instructor will determine if an alternate due date is appropriate. **Students who send an email seeking an extension for an assignment due the same day are unlikely to receive an extension.**

An incomplete may be given only when the student has been in full attendance, has demonstrated satisfactory work (C level work or better), and can furnish evidence to the instructor the work cannot be completed due to illness or other reasonable circumstances beyond the student's control.

Plagiarism:

It is a requirement that all work *not* original will be properly referenced. Students MUST CITE ANY AND ALL work which is not of a student's creation. Plagiarism will result in disciplinary action and will not be tolerated. Academic honesty is a foundation principle for personal and academic development. All University policies regarding academic honesty apply to this course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating or copying, plagiarism (claiming credit for the words or works of another from any type of source such as print, Internet or electronic database, or failing to cite the source), fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students.

Confidentiality:

We will respect the stories, concerns, comments and questions shared in the classroom by not taking them out of the classroom. We will maintain a professional standard of confidentiality in our classroom. Our classroom is a safe place for learning, inquiring, and expression.

Professional Communication

Students will utilize professional writing skills when communicating with the instructor by email. Professional communication via email includes: an email with a greeting and closing, spell check, and grammar review.

Students who send emails that are received between 8 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday, can expect a response by the close of the following business day. The instructor will not check emails after 4:30 PM on weekdays or during the weekend.

Course Values

In addition to the values of our great university: Community Engagement, Critical Thinking, Diversity & Inclusivity, Lifelong Learning, Professional Preparation, Research & Scholarly/Creative Activity, Student-Centered Environment, and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources,

and of our social work profession: Dignity & Worth of the Person, Service, Competence, Integrity, Social Justice, and Importance of Human Relationships,

our classroom will foster: Resourcefulness, Ownership, Growth mindset, and Curiosity.

V. Course Outline

Week 1 09/05/2023	<u>No in person class this week due to Labor Day Holiday (3 hr)</u>
Asynchronous portion of Week 1	<u>Recorded Content (2 hr):</u> Introduction to the course Review syllabus & review class expectations Introduction to Group Work <u>Readings:</u> Chapter 1 & Chapter 2
Week 2 09/11/2023	<u>We will explore: (3 hr)</u> Understanding Group Dynamics Create groups for group facilitation work Experiential Group Exercise (0:6 or 7) <u>Readings:</u> Chapter 3
Asynchronous portion of Week 2	<u>Recorded Content: (2 hr)</u> Understanding Group Dynamics <i>About Men: A Portrait of a Men's Support Group graded discussion on 09/18/23</i> <u>Readings</u> Chapter 3
Week 3 09/18/2022	<u>We will explore: (3 hr)</u> Leadership Experiential Group (1:6 or 7) About Men: Facilitated Discussion (graded) <u>Readings:</u> Chapter 4
Asynchronous portion of Week 3	<u>Recorded Content: (2 hr)</u> Leadership and Inclusivity <u>Readings:</u> Chapter 5
Week 4 09/25/2023	<u>We will explore: (3 hr)</u> Planning the group Experiential Group Exercises (2:6 or 7) <u>Readings:</u> Chapter 6

Asynchronous portion of Week 3	<u>Recorded Content: (2 hr)</u> The group begins <u>Readings:</u> Chapter 7
Week 5 10/02/2023	<u>We will explore: (3 hr)</u> The group begins Experiential Group Exercises (3:6 or 7) <u>Readings:</u> Chapter 8
Asynchronous portion of Week 5	<u>Recorded Content: (2 hr)</u> Assessment Treatment Group: Foundation Methods <u>Readings:</u> Chapter 9
Week 6 10/09/2023	<u>We will explore: (3 hr)</u> Assessment Treatment Groups: Foundation Methods Experiential Group Exercises (4:6 or 7) <u>Readings:</u> Chapter 10
Asynchronous portion of Week 6	<u>Recorded Content: (2 hr)</u> Treatment Groups: Specialized Methods <u>Readings:</u> Chapter 11
Week 7 10/16/2023	<u>We will explore: (3 hr)</u> Ending the group's work Experiential Group Exercises (5:6 or 7) <u>Readings:</u> Chapter 12
Asynchronous portion of Week 7	<u>Recorded Content: (2 hr)</u> Task Group: Foundation Methods <u>Readings:</u> Chapter 13

Week 8 10/23/2023	<p>We will explore: (3 hr) Experiential Group Exercises (6:6 or 7), groups with 7 (7:6 or 7)</p> <p>Experiential Group Exercise Papers due:</p>
Asynchronous portion of Week 8	<p><u>Recorded Content: (2 hr)</u> Evaluation Wrap up course content</p> <p><u>Readings:</u> Chapter 14</p>
Final Exam	Exam will open Friday, October 27, 2023 by 8 AM and close on Monday, October 30, 2023 at 11:59 PM.

VII. Course Projects

A: Film Response Discussion (25 points)

To ensure we all have a basic understanding of the function and process of groups, you will be required to watch a documentary and write a response/reflection paper on the content of the film. Please watch the following documentary: *About Men: A Portrait of a Men's Support Group* by Maja Bugge (2013).

You will need to receive access to the documentary by finding our university. You are not required to set up an account, you may skip the account set up and watch the film. The film is seventy-one minutes long. The link to Kanopy is:

<https://uwsp.kanopy.com/>

After watching the film, write two discussions questions. Questions to consider include:

- What did you like/not like about the leadership of the group?
- Level of formality/style of relating to group members
- Interventions/approaches observed
- Boundary or ethical concerns
- Level of inclusivity

On September 18, 2023 you will be placed in a group. Each person in the group will take a turn to ask their questions and facilitate a short group discussion based on the questions. You will complete a **self** and **group** assessment of your discussion. The assessment will be GRADED (25 points).

The goal of this assignment is **to understand and reflect on your current level** of group skills.

B: Group Observation & Analysis Papers **30 points each/90 points for all three papers**

You will attend three different meetings/groups over the course of the semester. You will focus on a different aspect of the group for each meeting you attend. Before you attend a meeting, make sure it is appropriate for you to attend. If you are uncertain, call/email ahead to confirm new members/visitors are welcome. When you call, present yourself professionally. Indicate this is for a class assignment. Indicate you will be writing a paper about the group process and NOT about the specific information shared in the group.

Inform the group of your purpose for being there, if needed. Again, disclose that you will write a paper on the process of the group and NOT about the specific information shared in the group. Feel free to participate if appropriate.

Meetings cannot include meetings you facilitate or attend as a current participant. **Meetings may be in person or online. Meetings MUST be synchronous (live and not previously recorded).**

Write a two to three paper about each observation. **You are required to include each of the meeting's agendas with your paper.**

Paper I: Attend a meeting and focus on assessing the **leadership** of the group.

Your paper should contain:

- Your preparation for the task group
- A description of the group, including:
 - purpose and type of the group
- A discussion of the leadership of the group, including:
 - level of formality/style of relating to group members
 - interventions/approaches observed
 - your assessment of the leader's skill in using the interventions/approaches
- A response to each of the following questions:
 - How did you feel as an attendee at the meeting?
 - What aspects of the leadership of the meeting did you like?
 - What impact did your presence have on the group?

Paper II: Attend a meeting and focus on assessing the **group dynamics**.

Your paper should contain:

- Your preparation for the task group
- A description of the group, including:
 - purpose and type of the group
- A discussion of the group dynamics observed, and how the dynamics impacted the group's work
 - Please review the text and notes from class. Group dynamics to assess include communication and interaction patterns, cohesion, social integration and influence and group culture.

- A discussion of the leadership of the group, including:
 - how did leadership drive group culture and/or group culture impact leadership
- A response to each of the following questions:
 - How did you feel as an attendee at the meeting?
 - What aspects of the meeting did you like?
 - What suggestions for improvement would you make?

Paper III: Attend a meeting and focus on the **structure and completion/progress of the group's work.**

Your paper should contain:

- A description of the group, including:
 - purpose and type of the group
- Review the agenda prior to the meeting, and during the meeting note the time and attention given to each agenda item.
 - How did the leader or group members move from agenda item to agenda item?
 - How was each agenda item discussed and completed?
 - How was consent achieved?
 - How would you assess the inclusion of different voices in the work?
- A response to each of the following questions:
 - How did you feel as an attendee at the meeting?
 - What aspects of the meeting did you like?

C. Experiential Group Exercise Papers: 50 points each

Beginning in Week I, you will be placed in a group with six other students. You and your group mates will practice utilizing your group facilitation skills over the course of seven weeks. You will be assigned one week to facilitate, and you will be a participant in the remaining six weeks. **I will provide the curriculum for the group. You will receive the content one week prior to your facilitation week.**

Facilitation Paper (50 points)

After you facilitate your week, you will then write an Experiential Group Exercise Paper. Your paper should be three to four pages and should answer the following questions:

- Pre-group planning: How did you prepare for the facilitation?
 - Think about your facilitation for the Film Response Discussion—what skills have you developed since then? What improved? What is still challenging?
- What group skills and techniques (listening, linking, etc.) did you use successfully and/or unsuccessfully.
- Describe your leadership style and how it did (or did not) work with the group dynamics.
- Discuss focus, time management, and significance in facilitation.
- Discuss your management of potential conflict or difficult members.
- Reflect on the overall experience—what was harder than you anticipated? What was easier? What did you encounter that you were not expecting?

Participation Paper (50 points)

Reflect on the weeks you were a group participant. Write a two to three page paper answering the following questions:

- How did you contribute to the group's work?
- What made it easy or difficult to participate?
- What group dynamics impacted your participation in the group.
- How did the facilitator's leadership style impact the group?
- What can you take from this experience to be a better facilitator? Or help clients prepare for a group experience?