Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary – Charlotte  
Masters of Arts in Christian Counseling Program  
CO/PC 718 – Group Dynamics  
Spring 2016  
  
Course Syllabus

Instructor: Christopher Cook, MA, MDiv  
Class Times: Fri, 6:30p-9:30p; Sat, 8:30a-4:30p  
Class Room: TBD  
Class Dates: Feb 5-6; Mar 4-5; April 8-9  
Office: Office 214  
Email: ccook2@gordonconwell.edu  
Phone: (704) 940-5835  
Office Hours: Upon Request

Course Description: This course is designed to provide a theoretical and practical understanding of group dynamics and group process. In addition to lecture, the course will primarily be experiential in nature, as each student will become part of an active process group in addition to learning about and employing various group therapy techniques in class. Prerequisite: CO 500

Gordon Conwell Mission:

Article 2: To maintain academic excellence in the highest tradition of Christian scholarship in the teaching of the biblical, historical and theological disciplines. Theological education, which is properly done within and for the Church, ought to function with rigor and academic integrity. The seminary, therefore, must provide an environment within which teaching and learning can best occur and encourage high levels of scholarly competence and research in its faculty.

Article 3: To train and encourage students, in cooperation with the Church, to become skilled in ministry. The Church and the seminary share the goal of seeing knowledge, skills and attitudes integrated in the person who ministers. Both in traditional degree programs and in continuing education, a combination of careful training and supervised experience in ministry are educational practices essential to achieving that goal.

MACC Department Mission: The aim of the Master of Arts in Christian Counseling Program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary-Charlotte is to advance Christ’s kingdom in various clinical, educational, and ministry settings by equipping counselors to think theologically, live biblically, and engage globally. Students who think theologically will develop a professional counselor identity that is grounded in orthodox Christian theology and sound clinical practice. Students who live biblically will demonstrate congruence between their faith and their actions in their personal and professional lives by maintaining a commitment to the process of ongoing spiritual formation. Students who engage globally will fulfill their call to serve others by being sensitive and responsive to the needs of diverse cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic populations.
Relation to the Curriculum: This course is required for student seeking LPC licensure. It meets core CACREP requirements and prepares students for group work in the mental health profession.

Objectives (Knowledge and Skills Outcomes):

CACREP Standards

GROUP WORK—studies that provide both theoretical and experiential understandings of group purpose, development, dynamics, theories, methods, skills, and other group approaches in a multicultural society, including all of the following:
G.6.a. principles of group dynamics, including group process components, developmental stage theories, group members’ roles and behaviors, and therapeutic factors of group work
G.6.b. group leadership or facilitation styles and approaches, including characteristics of various types of group leaders and leadership styles
G.6.c. theories of group counseling, including commonalities, distinguishing characteristics, and pertinent research and literature
G.6.d. group counseling methods, including group counselor orientations and behaviors, appropriate selection criteria and methods, and methods of evaluation of effectiveness
G.6.e. 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.

Course Content: Students will:

- Gain exposure to the various types of groups used in counseling and ministry settings.
- Understand fundamental group dynamic principles and identify counseling techniques at various stages of the group process.
- Increase self-awareness, interpersonal effectiveness, and leadership competence through participating in various group therapy exercises.
- Envision, prepare for, solicit attendance for, and lead a group.

Methods of Instruction: This course will utilize a variety of methods for instruction, including: lectures, presentations, assigned readings, assigned projects, experiential group process, dialogue and discussion, processing of experience, and in-class activities.

Required Text(s):


Course Requirements/Assignments:

1. Reading Reflection: After completing the required reading, each student should submit a 5-6 page summary and application of the three texts, written in APA style. The summary should be typed double-spaced and should highlight major themes and address how the themes and principles apply to the student’s development as a counselor and in interpersonal interactions. It is expected that students will display a good understanding and comprehension of the material in their writing on this assignment. This assignment should be submitted to Sakai before 11:59pm, April 7, 2016. CACREP G.6.a, G.6.c, G.6.d

2. Group Structure Reflection: Write a 3-4 page reflection of your own meaningful and positive experiences in groups, writing in APA style. Choose one experience from an unstructured group (e.g., family gathering, leisure occasions with friends, etc.) and one from a structured group (e.g., Bible study, academic course, group therapy, teaming ministry planning, etc.). Describe each of these two groups with regards to the purpose, content, formational issues, participants, dynamics that emerged, etc. What were the ingredients that made the group effective? What hindered the effectiveness of the group? What were the immediate and lasting impacts for you and others? How might these experiences influence how you would develop and conduct a group? Include other relevant details as it relates to information that you gained from this course. This assignment should be submitted to Sakai before 11:59pm, March 3, 2016. CACREP G.6.a, G.6.b

3. New Group Analysis: Attend one meeting each at three new groups. Obtain permission before attending, if necessary, and attend at least two session of each group. Ensure that all three groups represent a different type of group. For example, if you could attend one self-help group, one support group, and one psychoeducational group. Examples of appropriate groups would be a 12-step group, a support group for cancer patients, a grief group, an experiential therapy group, a church Boundaries group, etc. Write about these groups in a maximum of 5 pages. Describe the groups attended, discuss observed dynamics in each group, and provide examples of observed dynamics. Critique each of the groups regarding the stage of group functioning, style and effectiveness of the leader, and the effectiveness of the group relative to its stated purpose. This assignment should be submitted to Sakai before 11:59pm, April 7, 2016. CACREP G.6.a, G.6.b

4. Process Group Analysis: Students will meet in process groups of not more than 8 students per group during the semester. They will meet a total of eight times, and each student will co-facilitate the group at least twice during the semester. At the end of the process group, each student will write a 7-8 page reflective paper regarding the group experience. The student is encouraged to keep a personal journal of his or her experience to refer to when writing the paper. The journal will not be collected. In the paper, the student will reflect on both the content and the dynamic processes of the group. The student will describe the interactions, thoughts, emotions, dynamic interactions, etc. which comprised the group process in terms of roles, changes, communication patterns, goals, expectations, and the
degree of cohesion. Analysis of this experimental data will include observations regarding such phenomena as communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, and leadership. The student should evaluate himself or herself and the group members in regards to the level of participation, genuineness, risk-taking, openness, empathy, fostering cohesion, and other specific contributions. The student should elaborate upon how his or her experience in the group facilitated self-awareness in general and conflict management styles in particular. Since this is a reflection paper, it should be written in the first person. Do not refer to group members by name, when they are addressed in the paper. Identify the group members in an anonymous way.

This assignment should be submitted before **11:59pm, May 2, 2016.**
CACREP G.6.a, G.6.b, G.6.e

5. Group Creation and Facilitation:
   a. Group Proposal: Based upon the course’s content, you will envision a type of group to create and implement. Proposals should be submitted to Sakai before **11:59pm, February 1, 2016.** Feedback will be given before groups are formed. Proposals should include the following information:
      i. Group type
      ii. Need for the group
      iii. Rational for the group’s existence
      iv. Intended population
      v. How members will be solicited (include advertising material)
      vi. Issue and problems that are likely to be encountered and how they will be addressed
      vii. Expected group formation and development
      viii. Goals and potential outcomes
   b. Create, execute, lead and evaluate the group: The group should meet at least four times, with the first two meetings occurring between **February 7 and March 3.** Methods of analysis will be discussed in class.
      Your analysis should be submitted to Sakai before **11:59pm, May 2, 2016.**

6. Class Participation: Classes will meet on Fridays from 6:30pm to 9:30pm, and on Saturdays from 8:30am to 4:30pm. **Attendance at all classes is mandatory,** except in extreme and rare cases.

**Grading:** Final letter grades will be assigned based on the following distribution:

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>94-97</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<td>B</td>
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**Evaluation:**
Reading Reflection 15 pts.
Group Structure Reflection 15 pts.
New Group Analysis 15 pts.
Process Group Analysis 25 pts.
Group Proposal and Creation 30 pts.

### Syllabus Addendum

#### Academic Standards

Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one’s writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

#### ADA Policy

The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated guidelines in the Student Handbook.

#### Cancellation of Class

In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancelation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding make-up. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.

#### Extension Policy

Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the “last day to submit written work”, as noted on the seminary’s Academic Calendar, are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required at this time. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams.
However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized calendar due date, must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the “last day to submit written work.” Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.

**Grades**

Grades are posted on line within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. Students are expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades. Those individuals who need an official grade report issued to a third party should put their request in writing to the Registration Office. Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade.

**Returned Work**

Work submitted through Sakai will be returned via Sakai since no hard copies will be turned in. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope with any hard copy work submitted if you wish to have it returned.

**Virtual Writing Center**

Free assistance in writing papers is available to students through the Virtual Writing Center at Gordon Conwell. The Virtual Writing Center is staffed by Gordon Conwell graduates, or writing tutors with specialized knowledge in writing and/or ESL. Generally, this service is available to students who have completed or are currently enrolled in one of the following three classes:

- CT500 (Introduction to Theological Research)
- CO501 (Introduction to Counseling Research)
- IS502 (Theological Research and Writing)

If you enrolled in GCTS before Fall 2008, you were not required to take one of the three prerequisites above, and you may request access to the Virtual Writing Center. Also, ESL writing tutors are available to ESL students even if they are not currently enrolled in a degree program. If you do not meet one of these qualifications, but feel you would benefit from using the Virtual Writing Center, contact us and we will evaluate your status.

Email writingcenter@gordonconwell.edu for more information.