PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

The course CO/PC711 is designed around the competencies required for the basic training in the development, guidance, leadership and conduction of groups. Both theoretical and practical aspects are emphasized, with readings, discussion, and participation as to allow the gaining of knowledge about setting group experiences of a varied nature. Emphasis is given to group experiences within the life of a congregation, or specific groups of a functional nature in the context of parachurch organizations or clinical settings. Additional professional growth and training in group counseling is highly recommended, as this course is designed to serve as an introduction to the field.

COURSE CONTENT

The content of the course deals with the establishment of principles and the development of strategies in the conduction of therapeutic interventions as carried out in and through a group. The modality of the course is academic-clinical. Besides the academic stipulations of the course, the active participation in an ongoing experiential group by each class member is expected, as to optimize learning along several integrated events. Such concomitant experience is not intended to be a therapeutic endeavor, although tacit therapeutic aspects/processes may be present in any group process. Guidelines for such group experiences are provided as to ensure a safe, functional and integrated interpersonal learning.

Class participants are expected to gain knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- Group process and dynamics. Distinctiveness of diverse groups
- What group counseling is all about, and what it attempts to achieve
- Group counseling techniques at various stages of the group process
- Awareness of problems and issues facing group leaders
- Establishment and conduction of groups in a congregation/clinical setting
- counseling groups
• Develop skills in evaluating the changes desired in the personal and interpersonal aspects of the lives of group participants
• Awareness of cultural issues in the process of group counseling
• Focal or specialized groups in the ministerial/human services field

TEXTBOOKS


Recommended for Further Reading:


COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Class participation and attendance. Class meetings are mandatory and designed to provide academic and experiential learning.

Each student will be assigned to a group, facilitated by the rotating leadership of two co-leaders from among the participants. The leaders’ responsibility will be to facilitate the group dynamics during the duration of the term. The observer will present a progress report to the class at the beginning of each lecture period. There will be an opportunity for discussion with the professor concerning the dynamic development of the group. Students benefit from keeping a daily journal of their experiences as a member of the group sessions, which becomes a functional impression in the writing of an experiential, yet academically sound paper.

Non-graded assignment: As a final, departing contribution to the experiential group process, each group member will be expected to provide to every other member a summary paper in which a personal/reflective analysis of the contributions-positive and negative-which were made by each person in the group is offered as a "departure gift" and termination exercise. Assign a (non-grade) evaluation to each member based upon (1) participation with openness; (2) genuineness, empathy and regard for others; (3) fostering cohesiveness; (4) unique
contributions in terms of goals, tasks or maintenance aspects of the group process. Copies to
the instructor shall be provided. Limit yourself to one page per member. Due on **Friday, June 15th**.

1. **Exam.** A take home exam will be provided in a sealed envelope on the last **Friday, June 15th**. The subject matter will be drawn from the textbooks and class presentations/discussions. Mixed content: T/F, multiple choice, and short answers. After reviewing the course material, the student will respond to the exam’s questions *after opening the envelope*, having a limit of three hours from such time to finish it. The answers to the exam will be returned (via mail, post marked before or on **Monday, June 18th 2012**. This requirement accounts for 25% of the final grade.

2. **Reading/Critique of Textbooks.**

   **a. Reading.** Each student is expected to read/study the required texts, plus any recommended works, handouts and materials relevant to the course. The readings will be registered in a reading log, noting the dates, the sources and the number of pages per reading and a cumulative total at the end. The expected number of pages ranges from 1000 to 2000, with corresponding grades assigned (C’s to A’s).

   **b. Critique.** Completion of this requirement includes a critique of both textbooks (Corey & Corey and Yalom), highlighting the major themes, topics of special interest, pinpointing strengths and weaknesses as you perceive such, and how these apply to your own development as a therapist. The length of each critique/report is between 2-3 pages, double spaced. The combined reading log and critiques will account for 20 % of the final grade. **Due on Friday, July 22th, 2012.**

3. **Reflective/Experiential/Academic Paper based upon the group experience.** The student will keep a personal journal of the experience, noting both the diverse aspects of the content and the dynamic processes of the group. As a participant-observer aimed with experiential and academic gifts, the student will *describe* the interactions, the flow of thoughts, emotions, dynamic interactions, etc. which comprised the group process in terms of roles, changes, communication patterns/styles/effects, goals, expectations, and the development (or lack) of cohesiveness. Such experiential data will provide the basic material for analytical *musings* along the student’s understanding of group dynamics and processes (communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, leadership, etc.) along a theoretical framework/paradigm that might apply. A constructive critique is expected, plus any possible interventions that might have rendered the group an entity that in the student’s perception would have further reflected desirability, functionality or meaningfulness. Not to exceed 7 pp. double-spaced. **Due on Friday, June 22nd.** The assignment accounts for 25% of the final grade.
4. **A proposal for a therapeutic/growth group.** Based upon the course’s thrust and content, it will include the rationale for its existence, its formation, and development. The proposal will focus on suggested activities/processes applicable to a particular theme/problem/area of growth group within the context of a community of people affiliated on voluntary basis (church, congregation, organization). Not to exceed 10 pages. The value of such assignment is 30% of the final grade. **Due: July 22**th.

**ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE**

The evaluation of the course work will be based upon (1) exam (25%); (2) reading/book reports (20%); (3) participation in the group experience and the experiential paper (25%); and (4) the outline of a group-counseling proposal (30%).

**INSTRUCTOR’S CONTACT**

Dr. Polischuk’s can be contacted at Pablo@gordonconwell.edu; his office phone is (978) 646-4116. Due to the Summer compacted schedules, appointments can be arranged through the Counseling Office (Shiri) at smessina@gcts.edu or 978-646-4187.
CO/PC 711 GROUP PROCESS
Summer 2012 GCTS
DR. POLISCHUK

CLASS SCHEDULE

1. Introduction to group dynamics. Processes in group work. Overview of group counseling. Experiential learning.
   **Reading:** Corey et al. Chapters 1 & 2; Yalom Chapters 1 & 2.

2. Group leadership. Ethical, professional issues.
   **Reading:** Corey et al. Chapter 3; Yalom Chapter 14.

3. Formation of groups and initial stages. Group goals
   **Reading:** Corey et al. Chapter 4; Yalom Chapter 8 & 9.

4. Stages of group development. Group process continued
   **Reading:** Corey et al. Chapters 5 & 6

5. Group dynamics: Problems and conflicts within groups
   Conflicts of interests. Dealing with diversity.
   **Reading:** Corey et al. Chapters 7 & 8; Yalom 12 & 13.

   **Reading:** Yalom Chapter 5.

7. Theme groups: Specific focus
   **Reading:** Corey et al. Chapters 9 & 10; Yalom Chapter 15.

8. Theme groups: Specific problems
   **Reading:** Corey et al. Chapters 11 & 12.

9. Theme groups: Specific problems
   **Reading:** Yalom Chapter 15.

10. Growth groups; discipleship. Evaluating the efficacy of groups
    **Reading:** Yalom Chapter 16.


**Journals as sources of articles for a diversity of topics:**

*Group*  
*Journal for Specialists in Group Work*  
*Journal of Counseling Psychology*  
*International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*  
*The Counseling Psychologist*