

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
Masters in Counseling
Course: CO/PC 711: GROUP PROCESS
Summer 2010- May 17-21; 24-28.
Instructor: Pablo Polischuk Ph.D.

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:

1. Group process and dynamics. Distinctiveness of diverse groups
2. What group counseling is all about, and what it attempts to achieve
3. Group counseling techniques at various stages of the group process
4. Awareness of problems and issues facing group leaders
5. Establishment and conduction of groups in a congregation/clinical setting
6. Acquisition of knowledge and understanding of ethical considerations in counseling groups
7. Develop skills in evaluating the changes desired in the personal and interpersonal aspects of the lives of group participants
8. Awareness of cultural issues in the process of group counseling
9. Focal or specialized groups in the ministerial/human services field

TEXTBOOKS

Corey, M. S., Corey, G. & Corey, C. (2008). *Group process and practice*. Brooks-Cole.

Yalom, I. (2005). *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy*. (5th ed.). New York: Basic Books.

Recommended:

Arnold, J. (1992). *The big book on small groups*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Griffin, Em (1982). *Getting together: A guide for good groups*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
 Corey. G. (2007) *Theory and practice of group counseling*. (7th ed.). Brooks/Cole
 Jacobs, E., Masson, R. L. & Harvill, R. L. (2007). *Group counseling: Strategies and skills* (7th ed.) Brooks/Cole.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

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

2. Reading. Each student is expected to read/study the required text, plus the recommended works, handouts and any materials relevant to the course. The student will keep a **Reading Log** with entries for each reading (source, author, date, pages read). The range of pages to be read are from 1000 to 2000 (corresponding to grades of C's to A's) chosen from books or journal articles specifically related to groups or group dynamics. Audio tapes/videotapes may be noted as well, with equivalent times (i.e. one hour of listening/viewing = 25 pp.). The reading log is due on **Monday, June 28th, 2010**.

3. Final Exam: A final exam will be administered in class from 9:00-11:00am, on the last **Friday, May 28th, 2010**. The subject matter will be drawn from the textbooks and class presentations/ discussions.

4. Written Assignments:

a. Reflective Paper based upon a personally kept daily journal registering 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 which 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 **Monday June 7, 2010**.

b. Non-graded assignments: 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, May 28th, 2010**.

c. 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. Due: **Monday, June 28th, 2010.**

ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

The evaluation of the course work will be based upon (1) outline of 12 week group-counseling proposal/paper (30%); (2) experiential paper (30%) ; (3) final exam (30%); (4) reading log (10%).

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).

CO/PC 711 GROUP PROCESS
Summer 2010 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.
6. Group process: Decision-making. The use of power.
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.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Banks, R. (1980). *Paul's idea of community: The early house churches in their historical setting*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

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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