COU545: Group Dynamics and Counseling  
Fall 2013  
Lectures: Mondays: 12:15pm to 1:50pm  
Experiential Groups: Mondays: 1:55pm to 2:55pm  
Mondays: 3:05pm to 4:05pm  

Instructor: Jonathan Rust  
Office: 302A JFT  
Office Phone: 257-2373  
E-mail: rustj@newpaltz.edu  
Office Hours: Wed: 12:30pm-2:30pm  
Thur: 12:15pm-2:15pm  
and by appointment  

Course Overview and Objectives  
This course is a conceptual and experiential introduction to group dynamics;  
group counseling theories; leadership styles and issues; and group facilitation  
skills. The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the theory, research, and  
practice of group counseling. Class meetings will include a presentation of  
didactic materials, as well as experiential exercises and leadership opportunities.  

This course is designed to assist the students in learning how to become  
competent and effective group counselors in accordance with the standards  
set forth by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related  
Educational Programs (CACREP). These CACREP standards include:  

- **Foundations:**  
  - A.2. Understands the ethical and legal considerations specifically  
    related to the practice of mental health counseling.  
  - A.4. Knows the professional organizations, preparation standards,  
    and credentials relevant to the practice of clinical mental  
    counseling.  
  - A.5. Understands a variety of models and theories related to clinical  
    mental health counseling, including the methods, models, and  
    principles of clinical supervision.  
  - B.1. Demonstrates the ability to apply and adhere to ethical and  
    legal standards in clinical mental health counseling.  

- **Counseling, Prevention, and Intervention:**  
  - C.3. Knows the models, methods, and principles of program  
    development and service delivery (e.g., support groups, peer  
    facilitation training, parent education, self-help).  
  - C.8. Recognizes the importance of family, social networks, and  
    community systems in the treatment of mental and emotional  
    disorders.
D.1. Uses the principles and practices of diagnosis, treatment, referral, and prevention of mental and emotional disorders to initiate, maintain, and terminate counseling.

D.2. Applies multicultural competencies to clinical mental health counseling involving case conceptualization, diagnosis, treatment, referral, and prevention of mental and emotional disorders.

D.3. Promotes optimal human development, wellness, and mental health through prevention, education, and advocacy activities.

D.5. Demonstrates appropriate use of culturally responsive individual, couple, family, group, and systems modalities for initiating, maintaining, and terminating counseling.

- **Diversity and Advocacy:**
  
  E.1. Understands how living in a multicultural society affects clients who are seeking clinical mental health counseling services.
  
  E.3. Understands current literature that outlines theories, approaches, strategies, and techniques shown to be effective when working with specific populations of clients with mental and emotional disorders.
  
  F.3. Demonstrates the ability to modify counseling systems, theories, techniques, and interventions to make them culturally appropriate for diverse populations.

- **Assessment:**
  
  G.1. Knows the principles and models of assessment, case conceptualization, theories of human development, and concepts of normalcy and psychopathology leading to diagnoses and appropriate counseling treatment plans.
  
  H.4. Applies the assessment of a client’s stage of dependence, change, or recovery to determine the appropriate treatment modality and placement criteria within the continuum of care.

- **Research and Evaluation:**
  
  I.1. Understands how to critically evaluate research relevant to the practice of clinical mental health counseling.
  
  I.3. Knows evidence-based treatments and basic strategies for evaluating counseling outcomes in clinical mental health counseling.
  
  J.1. Applies relevant research findings to inform the practice of clinical mental health counseling.

- **Diagnosis:**
  
  K.2. Understands the established diagnostic criteria for mental and emotional disorders, and describes treatment modalities and placement criteria within the continuum of care.
Required Texts


Additional Readings on Blackboard

Note: I wish to fully include persons with disabilities in this course. Please let me know if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments of this course to enable you to fully participate.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance: Since much of the learning, if not the most important learning, from this course will take place from the experiential nature of the class, attendance is of the utmost importance and is expected at all class meetings. Your will be graded on the percentage of classes you attend (if you make 12 out of the 14 classes you will receive a grade of 86% for attendance). Missing four or more classes, without sufficient reason, will result in failure of this course. I do understand that unforeseeable issues or circumstances may arise that might interfere with your attendance. Please inform me as soon as possible if you will be late or not in attendance for any class. You are responsible for obtaining any information on what you missed from your classmates.

2. Participation: This course will include didactic, observational, and experiential components. The first portion of class will be didactic, including lectures and discussions.

The observational component of the course will take place as you and your classmates research a particular group theoretical orientation and then lead a group experience based on the particular orientation (see “Theoretical Orientation Class Presentation” section below).

For the experiential component, you will participate in one of two experiential groups facilitated by a counseling faculty member. These experiential groups will address a major theme of this course, which is the experiencing and gaining awareness of cognitive and affective processes related to group dynamics. You are encouraged to take chances, to stretch your comfort level, to be open to the experience, and to observe, as openly and non-judgmentally as possible, your and others’ reactions, and to learn from those reactions. The more you strive to be honest with yourself, the more you may discover about yourself specifically and about group dynamics in general. At times, this may bring up some uncomfortable thoughts, attitudes, and affect for you. You are
encouraged to process this as part of your group experience, either verbally in the group, through your journal entries, or with the group facilitator and/or course instructor. On the other hand, you are never obligated to disclose personal information that you do not want to. You have a right to privacy, and are expected to display appropriate personal and professional boundaries. Allow yourself the space to self-monitor potential emotions and thoughts that you feel are better shared outside of the classroom setting. Remember, this is a group counseling course and not a counseling group.

In terms of evaluation for the didactic portion of class, you are expected to complete all readings assignments and to be prepared for class discussions.

In terms of the experiential group portion of class, you will be evaluated on your openness to the experience; level of self-exploration; demonstrated understanding of group dynamics; and understanding of your roles in groups and impact on others in this particular group (See section 6 “Professional and Personal Development” below for clarification). This may be demonstrated by your verbal participation in the group. However, it can also be demonstrated through your journal entries; your blackboard postings; and/or private debriefings/discussions with the group facilitator and/or the course instructor.

For each week’s readings, forums will be posted on the Discussion Board on Blackboard for which you are to respond. This will be an additional component of your participation grade, and your responses will be used as the basis of our discussion during the didactic portion of class. Be prepared to share the main ideas of your postings in class. You are required to visit the Discussion Board on Blackboard and to share your questions, criticisms, thoughts, and/or issues regarding the forum postings and the readings, in general. Feel free to respond to each other’s questions/thoughts, etc., and to start new threads of discussion. You are expected to have at least two postings per week: one original posting of your own (i.e., thought/question), and then to respond to a posting of another student.

3. **Self-Reflective Journal.** You are responsible to submit weekly journals reflecting on your thoughts, feelings, reactions, and experiences related to the experiential component of the group. You are encouraged to reflect on your insights, successes/failures, reactions, how you understand the dynamics present in the experiential group, how you relate your experience to your understanding of theory gained from the readings, as well as the impact your experiences will have on your development as a group counselor. The overall goal of this journal is for you to gain insight into your behaviors, the behaviors of group members and the facilitator, and to learn ways to use these experiences as tools in understanding group dynamics in the future. Journal entries should be about two typed
double spaced pages. Journal entries that are significantly shorter than this or that do not adequately demonstrate exploration of the content or process of issues may lead to a decrease in your journal grade.

4. **Theoretical Orientation Class Presentation.** There are many theoretical orientations or approaches to group work. You and one other student from your experiential group will read a chapter(s) and/or article(s) on a specific theoretical orientation applied to group counseling/therapy and then summarize the approach for the rest of the class. Next you and your partner will lead a group experience with members of the other experiential group based on that particular theoretical orientation. The members of your experiential group will observe the experience. You will be graded on how you present the information to the class, including content, organization, and creativity. You will not be graded on how well you run the group as you are not expected to have reached a level of mastery of the material or theoretical orientation. However, you will be expected to demonstrate that you are attempting to run the group from that particular theoretical orientation.

Your presentation shall include:
- A 20 minute oral summary (during didactic portion of class),
- A one to two page summary handout,
- A group experience that you co-lead for the class based on the theoretical orientation you presented on (30 minutes) [during didactic portion of class],
- Processing of Experience (10 minutes).

5. **Group Development Project.** Each student is to choose a topic or issue and a group member population that is of particular interest. You will review the literature (including empirical research on group work with this topic and population) and create a comprehensive proposal for a particular type of group that you might lead. Your detailed proposal will include the following sections:
- A professional disclosure statement (See ASGW: Best Practices-section A.6.)
- A rationale for the group (why a group would work for this topic/issues and population)
- Goals and Objectives
- Practical considerations (e.g., group type, format, size, duration, setting member recruitment and screening, [co-] leader preparation)
- Procedures (e.g., group structure, process, activities, assignments)
- Means of evaluation (e.g., assessing individual and group outcomes, member follow up, assessment tools)

You will turn in rough drafts of each section at different points during the semester. I will give you feedback on these drafts to consider. By the end of the semester, you will turn in a final revised version of your proposal. All
draft and final copies will be turned in through the “Assignments” tab on Blackboard.

6. **Exams:** There will be a midterm and a final exam based on the course readings. The format of the exams is to be determined.

7. **Professional and Personal Development:** Professional, personal, and academic development are essential to counselor training. Counseling training requires that trainees be self-reflective, open to new and challenging ideas, willing to examine their own assumptions, able to receive feedback, and generally willing to engage in personal growth. Thus, to pass this class, students must not only excel academically, but must also (a) adhere to the professional and ethical standards of the profession, (b) demonstrate adequate counseling skills and competencies, and (c) attend to their personal development as it impacts their ability to work effectively and ethically as counselors.

Students in this course will be evaluated on the following twelve areas as part of their in-class performance:

1. Openness to new ideas
2. Flexibility
3. Cooperativeness with others
4. Willingness to accept and use feedback
5. Awareness of own impact on others
6. Ability to deal with conflict
7. Ability to accept personal responsibility
8. Ability to express feelings effectively and appropriately
9. Attention to ethical and legal considerations
10. Initiative and motivation
11. Development of Professional Skills and Competencies
12. Psychological Functioning and Self-Management

These aspects of professional and personal development will be an integral part of your evaluation and will be incorporated as part of your grade for each assignment. A large part of this assessment will be determined through your experiential group participation, journal entries, blackboard posts, and/or private discussions/debriefings with the group facilitator and/or course instructor among other things (see Section 1 “Class Participation”, Subsection “Participation” above).
Course Evaluation & Grading
 Course projects and assignments will be evaluated on a total points system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Board</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Reflective Journal</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theoretical Orientation Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Development Project</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm and Final Exam (15% each)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The grading scale used to determine your final grade will be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numerical Score</th>
<th>Grade Equivalent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-86</td>
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<td>77-79</td>
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<td>63-66</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
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Class Policies & Campus Resources

Class Expectation:
- Be active. Come to class and participate in discussions and activities.
- Complete assigned readings before class.
- Let us know of any questions, concerns, issues (problems) you are experiencing as they arise during semester so that they may be addressed. Do not wait until the end of the semester when it may be harder to address them.

Respect Personal and Professional Boundaries:
- A significant amount of personal and interpersonal issues can be expected to be brought up, especially as part of the experiential component of the class. Issues of privacy and confidentiality are paramount to ensuring a safe learning environment for you to develop as a group counselor. Issues that arise in the experiential component of the class that involve disclosure of any type of personal (identifiable) information are not to be discussed with others outside of the group; and are best processed within the group.
- Common Courtesy and respect are also expected in class. This includes issues such as not talking socially with each other in class, working on other things during class, turning off of cell phones before class begins, as well as creating and maintaining a class environment that encourages everybody's participation.
E-mail account: We will be sending out group e-mail messages to your newpaltz.edu e-mail account, so check it regularly.

All assignments are to be neatly typed.

Late Assignments: The due dates for assignments may deviate slightly from the dates on the syllabus, but will be announced in class. You are responsible for being aware of these changes, even if you are absent when they are announced. We strongly recommend that you exchange phone numbers and e-mail addresses with other people in class in case you need to be absent. Late Policy: If you find that you cannot make the assigned due dates for class papers and projects, please talk with me in advance, not the day the assignment is due. Any unexcused late papers will be graded on 90% of the available points. The papers will lose an additional 5 points for every day after that it is late. The only exceptions made for late assignments without penalty will require appropriate, clear documentation of a true emergency.

Your responsibility for absences: If you must miss class for an emergency, please let us know in advance (call and leave a message or send me an e-mail). If you do miss class, it is solely your responsibility to obtain copies of class notes, handouts, and any other oral or written information from classmates. If you still have questions after you get all material from classmates, then you certainly may feel free to discuss them with us.

Academic Integrity:
- Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Any instance of suspected cheating or plagiarism will be noted by the instructors, and the incident may be pursued according to the procedures outlined in the Advising Handbook. http://www.newpaltz.edu/advising/handbook04-05.pfd
- Unless specially noted otherwise, ALL assignments are to be completed individually, NOT in collaboration with others.

Recording of any kind: Audiotaping, videotaping, photographing, or any other method of recording lectures or classroom discussions of any kind shall be done only with the prior express permission of the instructors. Recording and other material distributed by the instructors shall be restricted to the personal use of the students enrolled in the course.

Help with study and writing skills: Please note that the Center for Academic Development and Learning has programs to help you sharpen your writing and studying skills. Please stop by and visit them in HAB 705, or call 257-3265.

General life/school/emotional concerns: Everyone gets stressed out sometimes, and many people find that they could use some support to get through tough times. Please be aware that SUNY New Paltz students are entitled to free, confidential counseling services through the university’s Psychological
Counseling Center (257-2920). The instructors can also provide referrals to counselors in the community, if necessary.
Course Schedule

Readings: Corey, Chapter 1; Yalom, Chapters 16 and 17.

9/2: Labor Day: No Class

Week 2 (9/9): Ethical Issues and Guidelines for Group Work.
Corey, Chapter 3; Gazda, Ginter, & Horne (2001), Chapter 6.

Week 3 (9/16): Culture, Race, Ethnicity, Religion, SES, Gender, Sexual Orientation and group process.
Readings: ASGW (1998); Bernardez (1996); Brabender, Fallon, and Smolar (2004); Gazda, Ginter, & Horne (2001), Chapter 4; Hopper (2003); Reed, & Garvin (1996); Rivera, Garrett, & Crutfield (2004); Sue, Arrendondo, & McDavis (1992).

Week 4 (9/23): Therapeutic Factors.
Readings: Yalom, chapters 1, 2, 3, 4.
Due: RD of Professional Disclosure Statement

Week 5 (9/30): Therapist’s Roles/Tasks; Overview of Group Counseling Theories.
Readings: Corey, Chapter 2; Yalom, Chapters 5, 6; Brabender, Fallon, & Smolar (2004)-Chapter 2; Lonergan (1994).

Week 6 (10/7): Therapist’s Roles/Tasks (cont.), Class Presentations: Group-as-a-Whole/Systems Theory
Readings: Yalom, Chapters 6, 7; Agazarian (2006); Green & Molenkemp; Rioch; Skolnick; Wells.

10/14: Columbus Day: No Class

Week 7 (10/21): Process of Forming the Group. Class Presentation: Psychoanalytic/Psychodynamic Group
Readings: Corey, Chapter 4, 6; Yalom, Chapters 8, 10; Rutan (1999).
Due: RD of Rationale, Goals and Objectives

Week 8 (10/28): Process of Forming the Group (cont.), Class Presentation: Person-Centered Group
Readings: Corey, Chapters 10; Gazda, Ginter, & Horne (2001), Chapter 7.
Midterm Exam Due

Readings: Corey, Chapters 13, 14; Yalom, Chapters 9, 11; Gazda, Ginter, & Horne (2001), Chapter 9; Rose (1999).
**Readings:** Corey, Chapters 5, 9; Yalom, Chapters 11, 12 (Except Termination Section); Gadza, Ginter, & Horne (2001)-Chapter 7  
**Due:** RD of Practical Considerations

Week 11 (11/18): Special Issues/Concerns, Class Presentation: Gestalt  
**Readings:** Corey, Chapter 11; Yalom, Chapter 13; Gadza, Ginter, & Horne (2001), Chapter 7.

Week 12 (11/25): Special Issues/Concerns (cont.), Class Presentation: Psychodrama  
**Readings:** Corey, Chapter 8; Jacobs, Masson, & Harvill (2006)-Chapter 16.  
**Due:** RD of Procedures

Week 13 (12/2):  
**Due:** RD of Means of Evaluation

Week 14 (12/9): Evaluation and Termination of Group Therapy. Class Presentation: Transactional Analysis  
**Readings:** Corey, Chapter 12; Yalom, Chapter 12 (Termination Section); O’Hearn (1999)

**Final Examination:** Monday, December 16th 12:30pm to 2:30pm  
**Due:** Final Group Development Project

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Blackboard Reading List
Ethics


Diversity-Multiculturalism


**Overview of General Group Theories**


**Group-As-A-Whole/Group Systems Theory**


Rioch, M. J. The work of Wilfred Bion on groups.

Skolnick, M. R. The role of the therapist from a social systems perspective.

Wells, L. The group-as-a-whole perspective and its theoretical roots.

**Psychoanalytic/dynamic Group Theory**


**Person Centered, Existential, and Gestalt Group Theory**


**Cognitive Behavioral Group Theory**


**Psychodrama**

Transactional Analysis


Special Issues/Concerns