# AUBURN UNIVERSITY SYLLABUS

**Course Number:** COUN 7340

**Course Title:** Group Counseling

**Credit Hours:** 3 Semester credit hours/Graded

**Class Meeting:** Thursdays 1:00pm-3:50pm, 4:00pm-6:50pm

**Class Location:** Haley Center 2454 (001), 3309 (002)

**Office Hours:** By Appointment

**Professor:** Hillary Ellerman, PhD, NCC

**Email:** hpe0002@auburn.edu

# Required Textbook:

Corey, G. (2012). *Theory and practice of group counseling* (9th ed.). Belmont: CA: Brooks/Cole.

# Additional Readings:

Anderson, D. (2007). Multicultural group work: A force for developing and healing. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 32*, 224-244. doi: 10.1080/01933920701431537

Burnes, T. R., & Ross, K. L. (2010). Applying social justice to oppression and marginalization in group process: Interventions and strategies for group counselors. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 35*, 169-176. doi: 10.1080/01933921003706014

Furr, S. R. (2000). Structuring the group experience: A format for designing psychoeducational groups. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 25*, 29-49. doi: 10.1080/01933920008411450

# Related Websites:

American Counseling Association: [http://www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org/) American Group Psychotherapy Association: [http://www.groupsinc.org](http://www.groupsinc.org/) American Psychological Association: [http://www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org/)

APA Division 49: Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy: <http://www.apa.org/about/division/div49.html>



Association for Specialists in Group Work: [http://www.asgw.org](http://www.asgw.org/)

# Course Description:

This course consists of a didactic (theoretical and empirical) and experiential introduction to group counseling. Topics include group dynamics, therapeutic factors of group counseling, developmental stages of groups, effective group leadership, ethics and diversity in group work, planning and implementation of groups, and evaluation of effectiveness.

# Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will demonstrate the following (consistent with CACREP 2016 standards):

* 1. Knowledge of the theoretical foundations of group counseling and group work (CACREP II.F.6.a)
  2. Understanding of the dynamics associated with group process and development (CACREP II.F.6.b)
  3. Awareness of therapeutic factors and how they contribute to group effectiveness (CACREP II.F.6.c)
  4. Ability to demonstrate the characteristics and functions of effective group leaders (CACREP II.F.6.d)
  5. Application of approaches to group formation, including recruiting, screening, and selecting members (CACREP II.F.6.e)
  6. Knowledge of types of groups and other considerations that affect conducting groups in varied settings (CACREP II.F.6.f)
  7. Awareness and application of ethical and culturally relevant strategies for designing and facilitating groups (CACREP II.F.6.g)

1. Accrual of 10+ clock hours of direct group experience in which students participate in a small group activity throughout the academic term (participation as co-leaders and members in mock groups, plus group debriefings). (CACREP II.F.6.h)
2. **Course Schedule:**

An overview of the course content and schedule is included below. This schedule may change based on the learning needs of the class or other unforeseen circumstances. Due dates for non-leadership assignments are included here. Due dates/times for assignments associated with group leadership are described under Course Requirements, as they differ according to leadership date.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| DATE | CLASS TOPIC | READINGS | ASSIGNMENTS DUE |
| **Week 1** 1/14/20  ZOOM | Course Overview  Overview of Group Counseling  Ethical & Professional Issues | Ch. 1  Ch. 3 |  |
| **Week 2**  1/21/20  ZOOM | Group Counseling Leadership  Discussion of Group Topic  Sign up for Group Leadership Dates | Ch. 2 | Quiz #1 Due in Canvas by the start of class  Self-Assessment of Group Leadership Due (Participation Points) |
| **Week 3**  1/28/20 | Early Stages in the Development of a Group  Mock Group Screening Activity | Ch. 4 | Quiz #2 Due in Canvas by the start of class  Client Persona Forms due by the start of class  **(also bring a hard copy to class)** |
| **Week 4**  2/4/20 | Later Stages in the Development of a Group  **Group 1 – Orientation and Exploration Stage** | Ch. 5 | Quiz #3 Due in Canvas by the start of class |
| **Week 5** 2/11/20 | Dealing with Difficult Behaviors in a Group – Video Examples  Challenges of Addressing Diversity Issues – Video Examples  **Group 2 – Orientation and Exploration Stage** | Canvas Reading (Corey)  Anderson (2007)  Burnes (2010) | Reflection Assignment 1 due in Canvas by the start of class |
| **Week 6**  2/18/20 | Psychoanalytic & Adlerian Groups  Discussion of Article Reflections  Discussion of Group Proposal Assignment  **Group 3 – Transition Stage** | Ch. 6  Ch. 7  Furr (2000) | Reflection Assignment 2 due in Canvas by the start of class  Diversity Article Review Due in Canvas by the start of class |
| **Week 7**  2/25/20 | **No Class Meeting** – Work Day for Group Proposal Assignment |  |  |

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| **Week 8**  3/4/20 | Psychodrama & Existential Groups  **Group 4 – Transition Stage** | Ch. 8  Ch. 9 | Reflection Assignment 3 due in Canvas by the start of class  Group Proposal Population/Topic Idea Due after class by 11:59pm |
| **Week 9**  3/11/20 | Person-centered, Gestalt, & Transactional Groups  **Group 5 – Working Stage** | Ch. 10  Ch. 11  Ch. 12 | Reflection Assignment 4 due in Canvas by the start of class |
| **Week 10**  3/18/20 | CBT, REBT Groups  **Group 6 – Working Stage** | Ch. 13  Ch. 14 | Reflection Assignment 5 due in Canvas by the start of class |
| **Week 11**  3/25/20 | Choice Theory/ Reality Therapy, SFBT Groups  **Group 7 – Termination Stage** | Ch. 15  Ch. 16 | Reflection Assignment 6 due in Canvas by the start of class  Group Proposal Literature Review Due by 11:59pm |
| **Week 12**  4/1/20 | **Wellness Day** |  |  |
| **Week 13**  4/8/20 | Comparison, Contrast, & Integration  Evolution of a Group  **Group 8 – Termination Stage** | Ch. 17  Ch. 18 | Reflection Assignment 7 due in Canvas by the start of class  Group Proposal Summary Page Due after class by 11:59pm |
| **Week 14**  4/15/20 | **No Class Meeting** – Work Day for Group Proposal Assignment due next week |  |  |
| **Week 15**  4/22/20 | Discuss Group Proposals  Class Wrap-Up |  | Group Proposals due by the start of class |

# Course Requirements/Evaluation:

Course Requirements:

1. *Preparation for Mock Process Group:* Portions of 8 class periods will be dedicated to a mock interpersonal process counseling group, each of which will be followed by a 30-40 minute group debriefing session facilitated by the professor. The group sessions will be facilitated by students (in rotating pairs). In sessions in which students are not leading, they will serve as mock clients of the group. Students are required to adopt a client persona for these group sessions, as the groups will not cover students’ real-life concerns. Prior to the start of the mock process group, students will complete the following requirement:
   1. *Client Persona Development (10 points):* Students will develop a client persona to act out during the mock group sessions. Students will type up a brief description of their client persona and submit to canvas (due Thursday, January 28th by the start of class). See the *Example Group Personas* form on Canvas for examples of the level of detail I’m looking for. You may choose one of these personas or write your own. Students must also bring a hard copy of this form to class on Thursday, January 28th.
2. *Mock Process Group Leadership:* Each student will co-lead one mock interpersonal process group session (as described in the requirement above) during class time. Dates for leadership will be selected by the third week of class. This leadership requirement includes 3 components:
   1. *Group Session Goals (20 points):* By 11:59pm on the Monday before co-leading, students (as a co-leadership team) are required to submit on Canvas a *Group Session Leadership Plan/Goals Form* (available on Canvas). This form helps you determine general goals for the group session, along with possible interventions or leadership strategies for making progress toward those goals. The goals and interventions should take into account the group’s developmental stage and recent events in the group. Because this is a process group, interventions/strategies should be broad and flexible rather than highly structured and time-consuming.
   2. *Group Session Co-Facilitation (20 points):* On the day of co-leadership, students will facilitate the 50-minute experiential group. All students will then engage in a debriefing session (approximately 30-40 minutes) led by the instructor immediately after the group.
   3. *Leadership Self-Reflection and Progress Note (20 points)*: By the start of class the week following co-leadership, students will submit (individually, on Canvas) a self-reflection of their leadership as well as a progress note of the group that was co-led (see Canvas for example). This self-reflection should be 1 to 1 ½ pages of content in length and include the following sections: 1) specific strengths and limitations of your leadership, including things you would do differently next time, 2) reflection on therapeutic factors present or absent from the session, and 3) reactions to leading the group that may be important as you develop as a therapist in general and a group therapist in particular.
3. *Diversity in Group Counseling Article Review (50 points):* Students will select and review a journal article (from a peer-reviewed journal) focused on working with a particular diverse population or diversity factor in group counseling. “Diversity” in one or more of the following areas is appropriate for this assignment: race, ethnicity, national origin, disability,

socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, and religion. The article can be empirical (analyzing quantitative or qualitative data) or based on a review of the available literature. The article must have been published between 2010-2020. Students may contact the instructor in advances if they want to ensure their selected article meets criteria. After reading the article, students will write a 1-2 page worth of content (single spaced) review of/reaction to the article. The reference citation for the article should be included at the top of the paper (in APA style).

The review should include a) a very brief summary of the article, b) an evaluation of how the article relates to other class material, c) a summary of implications for group counselors, and d) your reactions to the thought of working with the particular diversity factor(s) in group counseling. This reflection paper must be turned in to Canvas no later than the start of class (1:00pm) on February 18th. Students should be prepared to discuss their articles and the implications for working with diverse populations in class that day.

1. *Psychoeducational Group Proposal (200 points total):* Students will write a detailed proposal for the development of an 8-session psychoeducational group in their preferred setting with a specific client population. The purpose of this assignment is to give you the opportunity to think through the various theoretical and practical issues involved in starting and conducting a short-term therapy group that is psychoeducational in nature. Although you may find group programs that are similar to what you want to develop, you are required to develop your own unique group; any exercises adapted from other sources must be given proper credit. The Furr (2000) article read for class will be a helpful guide in developing your plan. You are also encouraged to discuss your proposal with your instructor, especially if you are uncertain about particular requirements. You will submit this course requirement in four waves:
   1. *Idea for Population/Presenting Issue (10 points):* No later than 11:59pm on Thursday, March 4th, students will submit (on Canvas) a brief description of the population/ presenting issue for which they intend to develop their group proposal. Students are highly encouraged to submit their idea prior to the due date to allow for more time to complete later assignment requirements, and students who submit this assignment early will be given feedback within a few days of the submission to be able to begin the next stages of this assignment.
   2. *Literature Review (40 points):* After approval of their Idea, students will write a literature review (2.5-4 pages double spaced) on the selected population/presenting issue. This literature review is designed to provide a rationale for the need for your group. This literature review should include an overview of the population/presenting concern of interest that shows the scope of the problem (i.e., shows why your group is needed) and provides a basis for inclusion/exclusion criteria, a description of the theoretical orientation(s) that will inform your group (including a rationale for why this theory is appropriate), and a rationale for group-based treatment. This literature review is due on Canvas by 11:59pm on Thursday, March 25th.
   3. *Draft of Group Proposal Summary Page (15 points):* Using knowledge gained from the Literature Review, students will complete a *Group Proposal Summary Page*

(available on Canvas). Refer to the Furr (2000) article for helpful information. The Summary Page is due on Canvas no later than 11:59pm on Thursday, April 8th. The instructor will then provide feedback on your form via Canvas by the end of the day Wednesday, April 14th, including any suggestions or requirements for modifying your proposal.

* 1. *Final Group Proposal (135 points)*: The Group Proposal is to be written in APA style and includes the following sections: 1) summary page, 2) literature review (revised as needed/requested by instructor after draft), 3) group overview, 4) recruitment and screening plan, 5) session outlines, 6) ethical, cultural, and therapeutic factor considerations, 7) evaluation plan, 8) references, and 9) appendices (if any). The completed Group Proposal is to be submitted on Canvas before class starts on Thursday, April 22nd. We will have an informal discussion of your proposal during class that day.

1. *Reading Comprehension Checks* (10 x 15 points = 150 points): Throughout the semester, there will be a mixture of reading quizzes (3) and brief short answer reflection homework assignments (7). The quizzes and short answer reflection assignments will focus on the reading content covered in each lecture to test that the material has been read prior to class. Each quiz/assignment is due by the start of class on Canvas prior to the start of class on dates indicated on the syllabus. Each quiz/assignment will be worth 15 points. Quizzes/assignments not submitted by the start of class will result in a 0.
2. *Class Participation* (30 points*):* You are expected to be in class every week and to be prepared. Active, cooperative, and collaborative learning are strongly emphasized in this class both in class and via distance education. Skill- based learning occurs best when students are open to self-exploration and reflection, as well as a willingness to learn about diverse perspectives. Thus, open and active participation is expected from students. Points are earned with consistently active participation in class or in discussion posts.
   1. **If meeting via Zoom, students must have video feed throughout the entire class session and must participate in class discussion in order to receive class participation points.**

**Course Evaluation:**

Grading rubrics for each course requirement are posted on Canvas. Students are highly encouraged to review these grading rubrics prior to assignment completion in order to ensure they meet expectations for each assignment.

As described above, course requirements total to **500 points**. Letter grades will be assigned on the following scale according to percentage of total points earned (proportions of a percentage will be rounded to the nearest whole percentage):

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | 90% or greater | D | 60-69% |
| B | 80-89% | F | 59% or lower |
| C | 70-79% |  |  |

# Class Policy Statements:

Late Work Policy: It is expected that you have completed all assignments by the due date and time. All late assignments will receive a 10% grade reduction per day (a “day” constitutes each 24-hour period starting at the date and time the assignment was due). Assignments that are not submitted within one week of the due date and time (not including any university breaks) will not be accepted and will thus receive a score of 0. **No assignments will be accepted after Sunday, April 26th under any circumstances.** I reserve the right to make exceptions to my late work policy, for example, in the event of an emergency.

Attendance and Participation: You are expected to be in class every week and to be prepared. Active, cooperative, and collaborative learning are strongly emphasized in this class. Skill- based learning occurs best when students are open to self-exploration and reflection, as well as a willingness to learn about diverse perspectives. Thus, open and active participation is expected from students.

Students are granted excused absences for the following reasons: illness of the student or serious illness of a member of the student’s immediate family, death of a member of the student’s immediate family, trips for student organizations sponsored by an academic unit, trips for university classes, trips for participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoena for a court appearance, and religious holidays. Students who wish to have excused absences from class for any other reason must contact the instructor in advance of the absence to request permission. The instructor will weigh the merits of the request and render a decision. When feasible, the student must notify the instructor prior to the occurrence of any absences. Appropriate documentation for excused absences may be required. Please see the *Student Policy eHandbook* at [www.auburn.edu/studentpolicies](http://www.auburn.edu/studentpolicies) for more information on excused absences.

You are responsible for any and all material missed during your absence. You should first contact peers for missed information, then follow up with the instructor as needed. Because assignments are submitted on Canvas, deadlines do not change as a result of absence.

Respect: This course will require students to practice new skills. During class discussions and experiential activities, students are expected to be respectful of one another. Any feedback provided should be done in a way that communicates respect, facilitates your peers’ learning, and conveys your interest in learning from your peers. Cell phones are to be turned off or set to silent. Please do not engage in texting or other messaging during class. In addition, laptops and other devices should only be used for note-taking. Late arrivals and early departures are disruptive, so please plan your schedule to arrive on time and stay until the end of class

Students with Disabilities Statement Disability Accommodations: Students who need accommodations are asked to electronically submit their approved

accommodations through AU Access and to arrange a meeting during office hours the first week of classes, or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. If you have a conflict with my office hours an alternative time can be arranged. To set up this meeting, please contact me by e-mail. If you have not established accommodations through the Office of Accessibility, but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Office of Accessibility, 1228 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT).

Honesty Code: All portions of the Auburn University student academic honesty code (Title

1. found in the Student Policy eHa[ndbook: http://www.auburn.edu/student\_info/](http://www.auburn.edu/student_info/) student\_policies/ will apply to this class. All academic honesty violations or alleged violations of the SGA Code of Laws will be reported to the Office of the Provost, which will then refer the case to the Academic Honesty Committee. Academic dishonesty may result in failure of an assignment and/or the course.

Professionalism: As faculty, staff, and students interact in professional settings, they are expected to demonstrate professional behaviors as defined in the College’s conceptual framework. These professional commitments or dispositions are listed below:

* + Engage in responsible and ethical professional practices
  + Contribute to collaborative learning communities
  + Demonstrate a commitment to diversity
  + Model and nurture intellectual vitality

Office Hours: Rather than having an established office hour, I will meet with students by appointment. I encourage you to make an appointment with me if you have any questions or concerns about the course or your performance in it. In this class, I frequently meet with students about co-leadership planning and group proposal development, so please do not hesitate to schedule a meeting for these or other reasons.

Course Contingency: If normal class activities are disrupted due to serious illness, emergency, or crisis situation, the syllabus and other course plans and assignments may be modified to allow completion of the course. If this occurs, an addendum to your syllabus and/or course assignments will replace the original materials.

# Justification for Graduate Credit:

This course includes advanced content in graduate counselor education and counseling psychology and is designed to partially meet standards for accreditation by American Psychological Association (APA) and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). This includes rigorous evaluation standards of students completing the student learning outcomes specified in this syllabus. As a course designed to teach group counseling skills to future counseling professionals, only students enrolled in approved counseling-related masters or doctoral programs are eligible to take this course.