

**UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON**

**School of Social Work**

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| **Semester/Year:** Spring, 2015  **Course Title:** Group Dynamics and Social Work Practice  **Course Prefix/Number/Section:** SOCW 6312-001  **Instructor Name:** Bruce L. Bower, MSW, LCSW  **Office Number:** SWCA 201A  **Email Address:** [bower@uta.edu](mailto:bower@uta.edu)  **Office Hours:** Tues. 2:00 to 5:00 PM; Weds. 9:00 AM to noon  **Day and Time (if applicable):** Thursday 7:00 to 9:50 PM  **Location (Building/Classroom Number):** SWCA 316  **Equipment: A laptop computer with wireless capability or equivalent is required for all SSW classes.**  **Blackboard:** [**https://elearn.uta.edu/webapps/login/**](https://elearn.uta.edu/webapps/login/) |

**A. Catalog Course Description/Special Requirements (Prerequisites/Out of Class Meetings):**

Examines contemporary social-psychological concepts and small group research, with a view to testing their applicability to practice propositions and operational principles, in work with both task and personality satisfaction groups. Prerequisite: SOCW 6325; SOCW 6326 or concurrent enrollment; or SOCW 6336 or concurrent enrollment.

**B. Measurable Student Learning Outcomes - CORE/Advanced Practice Behaviors:**

**EPAS core competencies and related advanced practice behaviors addressed in this course:**

**Educational Policy 2.1.1**—**Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.**

1. Advanced social workers in DPMH practice active self -reflection and continue to address personal bias and stereotypes to build knowledge and dispel myths regarding mental health and mental illness.
2. Advanced social workers in DPMH develop an action plan for continued growth including use of continuing education, supervision, and consultation.

E**ducational Policy 2.1.2**—**Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.**

1. Advanced social workers in DPMH implement an effective decision-making strategy for deciphering ethical dilemmas in mental health treatment.

**Educational Policy 2.1.3**—**Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.**

1. Advanced social workers in DPMH evaluate, select and implement appropriate assessment and treatment approaches to the unique characteristics and needs of diverse clients.

**Educational Policy 2.1.4**—**Engage diversity and difference in practice.**

1. Advanced social workers in DPMH understand and can apply the relevant cultural, class, gender, race, age, disability, and other diversity issues that influence the prognosis and treatment of persons with severe and persistent mental illness and substance use disorders, persons with other mental health issues, and persons with psychiatric disabilities, and their families and communities. They can relate social work perspectives, the evidence base, and related theories to practice with these groups.

**Educational Policy 2.1.6**—**Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.**

1. Advanced social workers in DPMH use advanced strategies to search, appraise, and select for application the most up to date evidence and evolving practice guidelines in the assessment and intervention with influence persons with severe and persistent mental illness and substance use disorders, persons with other mental health issues, and persons with psychiatric disabilities, and their families and communities.

**Educational Policy 2.1.10(a)–(d)**—**Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.**

**Educational Policy 2.1.10(a)**—**Engagement**

1. Advanced social workers in CAP utilize basic social work skills in working with organizations and communities that foster collaborations.
2. Advanced social workers in DPMHSA use strategies to establish a sense of safety for a collaborative therapeutic relationship.
3. They know how mental health concerns and mental illness influence the development of the helping relationship.
4. Advanced social workers in Children and Families effectively use interpersonal skills to engage children and families in a collaborative therapeutic relationship.

**Educational Policy 2.1.10(b)**—**Assessment**

1. Advanced in CAP use existing or develop community assessments in choosing or developing appropriate intervention strategies.
2. Advanced social workers in DPMHSA will be able to describe the structure of the DSM IV and conduct an assessment using the DSM criteria and structure.
3. Advanced social workers in Children and Families use multidimensional bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment tools.
4. They assess clients’ readiness for change and coping strategies.

**Educational Policy 2.1.10(c)**—**Intervention**

1. Advanced social workers in CAP implement community intervention strategies to achieve organizational goals, enhance client capacities, resolve problems, and advocate for clients.
2. Advanced social workers in DPMHSA describe causes (empirically validated and theoretical), advanced assessment methods, and the most effective treatments for a variety of disorders: Mood, anxiety, cognitive, substance abuse, sexual, eating, psychotic disorders for adolescents, adults, and older adults.
3. Advanced social workers in DPMHSA recognize the impact of illness phase-specific and treatment-phase-specific transitions and stressful life events throughout the individual’s and family’s life course; identify issues related to losses, stressors, changes, and transitions over their life cycle in designing theoretically based interventions and treatment.
4. Advanced social workers in Children and Families describe causes (empirically validated and theoretical), advanced assessment methods, and the most effective interventions treatments for a variety of problems that effect children and families.
5. Advanced social workers in Children and Families recognize the impact of stressful life events (losses, stressors, changes, and transitions) throughout the individual’s and family’s life course.
6. Advanced social workers in Children and Families demonstrate the use of appropriate clinical techniques for a range of presenting concerns identified in the assessment, including crisis intervention strategies as needed.

**Educational Policy 2.1.10(d)**—**Evaluation**

Social workers critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

1. Advanced social workers in CAP evaluate programs and use professional judgment to improve and enhance program outcomes.
2. Advanced social workers in children and families contribute to the theoretical knowledge base in the area of children and families through practice-based research, and use evaluation of the process and/or outcomes to develop best practices with children and families.
3. Advanced social workers i\n DPMHSA contribute to the theoretical knowledge base in the area of mental health and mental illness through practice-based research, and use evaluation of the process and/or outcomes to develop best practices.

**Upon completion of this course, the participant will be able to:**

1. Demonstrate knowledge and skill in social group work practice, including the ability to identify, evaluate and apply small group theory and research findings to the analysis of groups. Selected theoretical and empirical orientations can be related to ways in which (1) individuals affect group process, (2) group affects individual behaviors, (3) group influences group processes, and (4) the interactional effect of group and individual exchanges on the group process, and on individual change. EPAS 2.1.6, 2.1.10
2. Complete multidimensional, biopsychosocial assessments with client systems and groups, taking into account client strengths, diversity and social justice. EPAS 2.1.10 a-b
3. Develop and apply appropriate, evidence-informed, empowerment-based intervention plans. EPAS 2.1.10 c-d
4. Critically analyze theoretical models of practice to challenge societal oppression and discrimination, as well as for decision-making in practice, including demonstration of an understanding of race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, culture, and other client characteristics, in conducting culturally sensitive, competent, and ethical social work practice. EPAS 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.1.4
5. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate practice activities by use of outcome and process techniques, using the results to modify practice. EPAS 2.1.10 e
6. Develop the ability to translate theoretical and empirical knowledge into practice principles and techniques for understanding, analyzing and implementing systematic planned change in groups, and through groups. EPAS 2.1.10
7. Acquire through simulations and role-playing, a beginning competence in group leadership skills, and experience how role in groups affects individual status, learning to use feedback in group communication and communicate with clarity in receiving and giving feedback. EPAS 2.1.10

**C. *Required* Text(s) and Other Course Materials:**

Toseland, R. W. & Rivas, R. F. (2012). An introduction to

group work practice (7th ed.) Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

*Clinical Evidence* and *Best Practice* e-databases:The developing evidentiary base on group interventions contained in the Central Library e-databases *Clinical Evidence* and *Best Practice* will serve as another set of required “texts” in this course.

**D. Additional *Recommended* Text(s) and Other Course Materials:**

As assigned through Blackboard.

**E. Major Course Assignments & Examinations:**

The assignment requirements for this course are divided into three parts:

(1) Exams, a midterm and final;

The exams are discrete in that they only cover the material from the preceding weeks. They will be posted on Blackboard for a limited time, and then closed. If you do not complete the exams in time, you will receive whatever grade you earn for the questions completed.

(2) Group experience and journal pages;

This course has a strong experiential component. At the beginning of the semester you will be divided into three smaller groups. These smaller groups will meet for eight sessions during the semester, all on the same day as the class, one from 5:00 to 5:50 PM, the second from 6:00 to 6:50 PM, and the third from 9:00 to 9:50 PM. Please note also, that for those weeks where you will be attending the experiential group, the lectures will only be two hours in length; the total time spent in classroom activities will remain three hours each week. I will make every effort to accommodate your schedules as much as possible. The times throughout the semester are listed in the course outline.

You will receive a handout consisting on the group rules, and a group contract. You will need to submit the signed copy before the start of the group sessions.

The journal pages are to consist of your own impressions of the experience and need to include the following information:

1. The date of the session
2. A brief synopsis of what was discussed
3. The stage(s) the group appeared to be in
4. In one sentence, the overall theme of the session
5. Your overall impressions of the session

(3) A final group report.

This is to be a complete 5 – 8 page summary of your time in the experiential group. The report needs to include the following information:

1. A summary of the entire group process
2. How did the group development progress?
3. What group norms were established?
4. How cohesive did the group appear to be?

* What evidence did you have of the cohesiveness?
* What helped the development of cohesiveness?
* What hindered the development of cohesiveness?

1. A summary of your impressions
2. A summary of what you learned

***Note that all of these elements of your final report need to be included; please use the headings provided above. Otherwise your report will be considered incomplete, which will affect the grade. Also, the final paper must be your own original work; group projects are not allowed. In addition, this project should be original for this course; for the purposes of this course, using your own material from assignments from other courses will be considered plagiarism.***

**F. Grading Policy:**

All papers must be grammatically correct using APA style. Papers with many grammatical errors and misspellings will not receive a satisfactory grade.

Course grades will be determined by your performance in the following areas:

1) Midterm exam 20%

2) Final exam 20%

3) Journal pages: 8 @ 5% each 40%

4) Final group experience report 20%

Final grades are as listed in the University catalog:

90 – 100% = A (4.0)

80 – 89 % = B (3.0)

70 – 79% = C (2.0)

60 – 69 % = D (1.0)

59 or below = F (0.0)

Note: At course completion grades cannot be reported by email. Official grades will be posted by the University in MyMav on the date for posting. Exams and assignments are retained by the instructor.

**G. Make-Up Exam or Assignment Policy**:

There will be no make-up assignments for this course. ***No Incomplete grades will be given in this class.***

**H. Attendance Policy:**

At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students’ academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. For this course, here is the attendance policy:

It is expected that you attend class and participate in class discussion. Class participation is expected, in particular during the group experience sessions. During the lectures a sign-in sheet will be circulated, and your participation will be evaluated on that basis; it is only possible to participate if you are in class. Participation in the group experience sessions will be based on the journal pages submitted the following week.

* 1. Students are expected to be on time, attend all class sessions, and stay until the completion of the class.
  2. Students are to complete reading assignments and be prepared to participate in class discussions and small group activities.
  3. All written assignments are due at the by 11:58PM through SafeAssign within Blackboard of the date specified on the course outline. *Assignments turned in after the due date and time will not be accepted.*
  4. Assignments are to be completed correctly at the time of submission. No papers or assignments may be resubmitted once a grade is given.
  5. Any disruption of the classroom learning environment (through actions in or out of class) will result in the identified student(s) being required to leave the class, without possibility of being readmitted, and cancellation of class work scores for the disrupted class session(s), with a recorded failing semester grade.
  6. All graduate students have ascribed to the NASW code of ethics at admission and are responsible for adhering to standards of professional conduct with colleagues/faculty and elsewhere in the graduate program.
  7. Please turn off all cell phones, pagers, or communication devices while in class, or the classroom, as a courtesy to both the course instructor and fellow students, as these devices are considered disruptive to the course delivery. Laptop computers may be used with permission of the instructor. Under no circumstances are communication devices to be active during the group experience sessions.
  8. You will be counted absent for the following: not returning after a break, packing up prior to completion of the class session, sleeping, repeated tardiness, demands to end the class session early, web surfing if (or when) computers are permitted, disrupting the class, or not attending to (i.e. doing unrelated activities in class) and not participating in the course content.

**I. Course Schedule:**

**Date Topic Readings**

January 22 Introductions None

(Week 1)

January 29 Group work and Group Types Toseland and Rivas, Ch. 1

(Week 2) Defined

February 05 History of Group Work Toseland and Rivas, Ch. 2

(Week 3) In Social Work

February 12 Introduction to Group Toseland and Rivas, Ch. 3

(Week 4) Dynamics

February 19 Group Leadership Toseland and Rivas, Ch. 4, 5

(Week 5) **[Group session 1]**

February 26 Stages of Group Toseland and Rivas, Ch. 7

(Week 6) Development I

**[Group session 2]**

March 05 Stages of Group Toseland and Rivas, Ch. 13

(Week 7) Development II

**[Group session 3]**

March 12 ***[SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES]***

March 19 **[Midterm Exam]**

(Week 8) Planning the Group Toseland and Rivas, Ch. 6

**[Group session 4]**

March 26 Evaluating for Group Toseland and Rivas, Ch. 8

(Week 9) Membership

**[Group session 5]**

April 02 Treatment Groups I Toseland and Rivas, Ch. 9

(Week 10) [**Group session 6]**

April 09 Treatment Groups II Toseland and Rivas, Ch. 10

(Week 11) **[Group session 7]**

April 16 Task/Work Groups I Toseland and Rivas, Ch. 11

(Week 12) **[Group session 8]**

April 23 Task/Work Groups II Toseland and Rivas, Ch. 12

(Week 13)

April 30 **[Final Exam]**

(Week 14) Evaluating the Group Toseland and Rivas, Ch. 14

Outcome

May 07 **[Final report due]**

(Week 15) Evaluating the Group Toseland and Rivas, Ch. 14

Outcome (cont’d)

As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course. Should technical problems arise with course delivery, alternate but equivalent assignments may be given so long as the overall learning objectives, general time frame and grading structure for the course are sustained.

### Note*: Grades will be posted to the campus MyMav system at course completion and made available on the University Schedule for posting of grades. Official grades cannot be given by email or individually by the instructor, per University Policy.*

**J. Expectations for Out-of-Class Study**:

Beyond the time required to attend each class meeting, students enrolled in this course should expect to spend at least an additional three hours (for each hour of class or lecture per week) of their own time in course-related activities, including reading required materials, completing assignments, preparing for assignments and exams, and reviewing online content, etc.

**K. Grade Grievance Policy**:

See BSW/MSW Program Manual.

**L. Student Support Services:**

UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit or contact Ms. Jennifer Malone, Coordinator of the Office of Student Success and Academic Advising located on the third floor of Building a of the School of Social Work Complex. Dr. Chris Kilgore serves as a writing coach and resource as well and has posted an online writing clinic. Also, the Maverick Resource Hotline may be contacted at 817-272-6107, or send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

**M. Librarian to Contact:**

The Social Sciences/Social Work Resource Librarian is John Dillard. His office is in the SCWA, room 301C, from 4:00 to 7:00 PM, Mondays and Tuesdays, and the campus Central Library, room 410, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday to Friday. He may also be contacted via E-mail: [dillard@uta.edu](mailto:dillard@uta.edu). Below are some commonly used resources needed by students in online or technology supported courses:

<http://www.uta.edu/library/services/distance.php>

The following is a list, with links, of commonly used library resources:

Library Home Page <http://www.uta.edu/library>

Subject Guides <http://libguides.uta.edu>

Subject Librarians <http://www-test.uta.edu/library/help/subject-librarians.php>

Database List <http://www-test.uta.edu/library/databases/index.php>

Course Reserves <http://pulse.uta.edu/vwebv/enterCourseReserve.do>

Library Catalog <http://discover.uta.edu/>

E-Journals <http://utalink.uta.edu:9003/UTAlink/az>

Library Tutorials <http://www.uta.edu/library/help/tutorials.php>

Connecting from Off- Campus <http://libguides.uta.edu/offcampus>

Ask a Librarian <http://ask.uta.edu>

**N. Emergency Exit Procedures:**

Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exits, which are the stairwells located at either end of the adjacent hallway. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist handicapped individuals.

**O. Drop Policy:**

Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period; for this semester, the last day to drop classes is April 03, 2015. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships

(<http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**P. Americans with Disabilities Act:**

The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Q. Title IX:**

The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to upholding U.S. Federal Law “Title IX” such that no member of the UT Arlington community shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. For more information, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX).

**R. Academic Integrity:**

Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence. I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents’ Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University.

**S. Electronic Communication:**

UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**T. Student Feedback Survey:**

At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**U. Final Review Week**:

This ONLY applies to courses administering a major or final examination scheduled in the week and locations designated for final examinations following last classes. A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**V. School of Social Work - Definition of Evidence-Informed Practice:**

Evidence-informed practice (EIP) is a guiding principal for the UTA-SSW. This approach is guided by the philosophy espoused by Gambrill (2006) and others who discuss evidence-based practice (EBP). Though many definitions of EIP/EBP saturate the literature, we offer two definitions that most closely define our understanding of the concept and serve to explicate our vision of EIP for the UTA-SSW:

The use of the best available scientific knowledge derived from randomized, controlled outcome studies, and meta-analyses of existing outcome studies, as one basis for guiding professional interventions and effective therapies, combined with professional ethical standards, clinical judgment, and practice wisdom (Barker, 2003, p. 149). ...the integration of the best research evidence with our clinical expertise and our patient’s unique values and circumstances (Strauss, et al., 2005).

The University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work vision statement states that the “School’s vision is to promote social and economic justice in a diverse Environment.”  Empowerment connects with the vision statement because, as Rees (1991) has pointed out, the very objective of empowerment is social justice.  Empowerment is a seminal vehicle by which social justice can be realized.  It could well be argued that true social justice cannot be realized without empowerment. Empowerment, anchored with a generalist base, directs social workers to address root causes at all levels and in all contexts, not simply “symptoms”.  This is not a static process but an ongoing, dynamic process, a process leading to a greater degree of social justice and equality.

University of Texas at Arlington-School of Social Work: Definition of Empowerment

Empowerment is defined by Barker (2003:142) as follows: In social work practice, the process of helping individuals, families, groups, and communities increase their personal, interpersonal, socioeconomic, and political strength and develop influence toward improving their circumstances.

*Note: Please also consider conserving paper by formatting and two-sided printing of syllabi with ½ inch margins. Please help our fragile environment by recycling all paper when finished, as well as plastic bottles, cans, etc., in the many recycling stations available in the Social Work Complex. Thank you.*