

**Prepared by the Department of Social Sciences, Behavioral Sciences, and Human Services**

**Date of Departmental Approval: September 14, 2011**

**Date Approved by Curriculum and Programs: December 7, 2011**

**Effective: Fall 2012**

1. **Course Number:** PSY209  
**Course Title:** Group Dynamics in Human Services
2. **Description:** Group Dynamics explores the various stages of therapeutic groups, including group development. Emphasis is on basic group theory, process, and effective practice skills. Students are acquainted with task-oriented and treatment-oriented groups in a broad range of settings. This course may incorporate experiential learning where students learn about group processes via group exercises in class. Service Learning may be required.
3. **Student Learning Outcomes:** Upon successful completion of this course, students are able to do the following.
  - A. Knowledge Base of Group Dynamics  
Students who successfully complete the course will demonstrate familiarity with the major characteristics in leadership and group stages. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the tasks of group leadership at each stage of the group process and a basic understanding of different types of groups.
  - B. Research Methods in Group Dynamics  
Students who successfully complete the course will be able to use critical thinking when evaluating research methods used in human services by articulating strengths and limitations. Students will analyze important topics in group dynamics and explore the specialized terminology of the group leader and social change agent.
  - C. Critical Thinking Skills in Group Dynamics  
Students who successfully complete the course will respect and use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to group dynamics. The student will demonstrate the ability to use critical thinking effectively by making connections between personal values and the affect they have on the group process. Student will learn to use current state forms and write case notes.
  - D. Application of Group Dynamics  
Students who successfully complete the course will understand and apply concepts and theories to the group process. Students will demonstrate the ability to formulate an agenda for a group session. Students will demonstrate awareness of the importance of building a climate of trust in a group setting. Student will learn to use current paperwork used for group leaders. Student will learn to use current state forms and write case notes.
  - E. Values in Group Dynamics  
Students who successfully complete the course will develop a personal philosophy of working with individuals in a group that respects human diversity. The student will recognize and respect human diversity and understand that principles of group dynamics may vary across populations and contexts. The student will recognize the necessity for ethical behavior in all aspects of the science and practice of group dynamics.
4. **Credits:** 3 credits
5. **Satisfies General Education Requirement:** No
6. **Prerequisites:** PSY101 or SOC106

**7. Semesters Offered:** Spring, Fall

**8. Suggested General Guidelines for Evaluation:** The methods of assessment used to measure these outcomes may be written assignments, tests, online and class discussion, small group activity and presentations.

**9. General Topical Outline:**

- I. Introduction: Theories and overview of the group process and types of groups. Multicultural perspective on group work.
- II. Becoming a Leader: Learning the leadership role. Problems and issues facing a new group leader. Becoming diverse and competent as a group leader.
- III. Ethics and Legal Issues in Groups: Understanding informed consent and confidentiality. The role of the leaders own value system is explored. Student will learn to use current paperwork.
- IV. Forming the Group: Creating the initial stage of a group through trust creation, identifying and clarifying goals, and realizing the dynamics within various groups.
- V. Transition Stage: Dealing with defensive behaviors, avoidance, transference, and countertransference.
- VI. Working Stage: Leader interventions and self-disclosures. Group norms and behavior within various settings. Setting agendas and follow through.
- VII. Final Stage: Termination issues such as feelings of separation, setbacks, and dealing with unfinished business.
- VIII. Application of Group Process to Specific Groups: Guidelines for various groups. Management and conflict resolution within various groups. Change of leadership role in various groups.