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Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
Counselor Education Program  
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies  
**EDCO 5234: GROUP COUNSELING**  
Fall 2016

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Instructor: Karen Raymond, M.S, LPC, NCC  
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Class Times: Thursdays 1:00 pm – 3:50 pm  
Class Location: RHEC Lecture Room

**Course Description**

Welcome to Group Counseling! In this course, students will be introduced to important concepts related to group counseling theory and practice. Emphasis will be upon application of group counseling principles to practical settings. It is expected that students will gain an understanding of how to develop and create a group from the initial stages across various group settings. Ethical, legal, moral, and personal issues in group work will be discussed. Particular emphasis will be placed on understanding the group process and how to successfully implement strategies to complement a group's theoretical focus. Finally, multiculturalism as it relates to group dynamics and practices will be outlined as well as the importance of group leadership and group leader wellness. Students receive feedback about their personal behavior in a group and supervised practice in the design, implementation, and evaluation of group counseling.

**Required Text:**

Corey, G., Corey, M. S., & Corey, C. (2013). *Group: process and practice (9<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

**Recommended Text:**

American Psychological Association (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Washington

**Course Objectives (Based on 2009 CACREP Standards):**

Upon completion of the course, the students will be able to:

- Identify and explain principles of group dynamics, group process, and group development.
- Describe selected major theoretical approaches used in group counseling.
- Demonstrate and explain group leadership approaches as related to selected counseling theories.
- Evaluate strengths and limitations of major psychotherapeutic approaches as used in group counseling.
- Understand roles and behaviors of group members and strategies for effective group facilitation.

- Identify characteristics of effective group counselors.
- Identify and describe legal and ethical principles as they apply to group counseling.
- Apply techniques and procedures that may be used in group counseling with diverse populations.
- Design and evaluate appropriate activities for a specific client group.
- Apply group counseling principles and practices to class activities.
- Demonstrate effective group counseling methods including group counselor direction and behavior, appropriate selection standards, methods of evaluation, and ethical standards.

### **Student Responsibilities:**

*Academic Integrity and Ethical Code:* Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities of Virginia Tech. All work should be in accordance with the ethical code of the American Association of Counseling and in compliance with the Virginia Tech Graduate Honor System. Plagiarism and/or cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Please familiarize yourself with these policies available online at [www.gradhonor.grads.vt.edu](http://www.gradhonor.grads.vt.edu). The Virginia Tech honor pledge is as follows: “I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this assignment.”

*Attendance and Participation:* This course will invite you to participate in numerous ways throughout the semester. Successful completion of this course requires attendance and active participation. Thus, students are required to be present for the entirety of each class session and to actively participate in all classroom activities. It is also expected that students will come to class prepared to discuss the topics of the day including having conducted the relevant reading. All questions are welcomed and encouraged. You are an active member of the class and your participation will only enhance yours and classmate’s experience. In the event of illness or emergency and you must miss part of all of a class session, please notify the instructor via email as soon as possible. If illness or emergencies prevent engagement in two or more classes, the course may need to be repeated as excessive absences jeopardize mastery of the class material.

*Lateness to Class:* It is understood that everyone in class is also engaged in meaningful activities outside of class, however it is still expected that students arrive to class on time. This is not only imperative for a successful class, but is also a very important skill for future counselors. In the spirit of professional development, it is expected that you will arrive to class on time. **The instructor reserves the right to penalize excessive tardiness through points deducted on the final grade.**

*Assignments:* It is the student’s responsibility to turn in assignments by the scheduled due date. Please note in the event of absence that it is your responsibility to get any material covered in class including any assignments given. **Ten percent will be deducted for each day an assignment is late.** This policy is non-negotiable. Contact the instructor as soon as possible if you will not be able to turn in an assignment on time.

*Confidentiality:* While engaged in EDCO5234 learning activities, students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner. We will occasionally deal with personal and sensitive matters. Remember that as counselors-in-training, students are held to the same

standards of confidentiality as other counseling professionals. Please show respect for your classmates by keeping confidential any personal information revealed during class time. It is also expected you will be respectful of others and differing opinions. Discussion related to differing opinions is welcomed; however, keep in mind that we are a diverse class coming from multiple backgrounds with very unique histories. Students should know, understand, and incorporate into their professional behavior the standards as defined by the American Counseling Association. Students MAY NOT discuss any clinical information shared by the professor or other students outside of the classroom. Inappropriate conversations violating general rules of confidentiality, and of this syllabus, will be deemed a profound professional and ethical violation. If you are concerned about the safety or welfare of a classmate please contact the instructor. The goal is to have a safe environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing and discussing issues related to the course content.

*Accommodations:* Students needing an accommodation for any aspect of this course should immediately inform the instructor. By law, accommodations cannot be given without written documentation from Student Affairs ([www.ssd.vt.edu](http://www.ssd.vt.edu)). Students are referred to Student Affairs to secure support services when appropriate. Please let the instructor know if you need assistance making these arrangements.

*Writing Style and Quality of Work:* This course is a graduate course in the field of counseling. As future counselors and helping professionals, it is expected that you maintain a respectable quality of work. Written assignments are to meet the style guidelines set forth by the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). All submitted work is to be in 12 point font with 1 inch margins. Please remember to check your spelling and grammar and use your APA reference manual.

### Course Assignments and Grading Criteria

Grades on individual assignments will be recorded on Canvas throughout the semester. Any student with questions about a grade should contact the instructor promptly.

<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Attendance, Participation & Professionalism	5	Required
Self-Reflections/Journal	25	Weekly
Study Guide	10	tba
Group Facilitation	10	tba
Community Group Attendance & Reflection	10	tba
Group Counseling Program Development Project	25	tba
Final Exam	15	tba
Total	100	

Grading scale:

<b>94-100</b>	<b>90-93</b>	<b>87-89</b>	<b>83-86</b>	<b>80-82</b>	<b>77-79</b>	<b>73-76</b>	<b>70-72</b>	<b>60-69</b>	<b>0-59</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>A-</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>

## **Assignments/Learning Opportunities:**

### *Self-Reflections/Journal (25 points)*

This class and the experiential group in particular are designed to promote increased self-awareness and personal growth as it relates to your work as a counselor. All students are required to keep a group-counseling journal throughout the semester. You will need to have a minimum of 11 journal entries. The dates of the required reflections are listed in the syllabus but you are free to do more and journal on other days if you so desire. The goal of this journal is to reflect on your feelings about the class and the group experiences. See supplemental handout and Canvas assignment prompts for more information. Weekly reflections are due by Friday at 11:55 pm.

### *Study Guide (10 points)*

During the first week of class, each student will select a group counseling theory and prepare a summary study guide. You will prepare for each class member a one-page summary of your particular group approach. You will need to consult professional references other than your group texts to successfully complete this assignment. A minimum of five professional references (other than your group text or other class texts) will be needed to fulfill this requirement. Please note: websites are not acceptable references for this assignment. It is expected you will search group counseling journals, book chapters, and books to find out more information about your theory. A format for this component is available on Canvas.

### *Group Facilitation (10 points)*

You will facilitate the experiential group one time this semester (as scheduled on sign-up sheet). You are required to email the doctoral student supervisor a facilitation plan by 11:55 pm on the Monday prior to your group. The supervisor will respond with helpful feedback. You are also required to meet in-person with the supervisor immediately prior to the group and immediately after the group. Your Group Facilitation grade is determined by your active interaction with the supervisor and your effort facilitating the group.

### *Community Group (10 points)*

Identify and attend a minimum of one session of an external group during the semester. Choose a group that is relevant to your personal goals and attend as a person interested in learning more or getting support. You may not attend AA, NA, Al-Anon, or other addiction related group (you will get to do that in the Addictions class). Any group that is designed to increase personal wellness through social connectedness is acceptable (e.g., Divorce Support Group, Families of People with Mental Illnesses, Caring for Aging Parents, Reiki Club, Graduate Student Support Group, Religious or Spiritual Fellowship Group, Codependency Group, Creating your Own Joy Yoga, Weight Watchers, etc.). When you attend, notice how what you are learning in class is evident in the group and your own thoughts, feelings, and observations about the experience. A two page written reflection of this experience is due as noted on the course schedule and can be turned in early if completed early.

### *Group Counseling Program Development Project (25 points)*

You will develop a six-session group counseling program for a clinical population, setting, and topic of interest of your choice. The program should be complete enough that any counselor could pick it up and implement in a practicum, internship, or post-graduate workplace setting.

The work should be organized in a notebook. We will work on this project in parts throughout the semester. A detailed description of the entire group project is available in the resources on Canvas. Each portion of the group project will be completed separately. All due dates are noted on the course schedule. You will be receiving feedback from the instructors and your peers which will help you improve and revise your project as we move through the semester.

*Final Exam (15 points)*

You will be required to take one examination during the semester. The final exam will be in class and will test your knowledge and understanding of issues and materials covered during the semester. Tentatively, test items will be in the format of multiple choice, matching, and short answer based on information covered during lectures, by guest presenters, and in the assigned text. Additional information on the examination, including exam review, will be discussed as the semester progresses.

*Participation and Professionalism (5 points)*

Participation points are earned by active participation in class activities. Class is your opportunity to demonstrate group participation and leadership skills. Missed class time will result in a lower participation grade. Behavior appropriate for a professional counselor is required at all times.

**EDCO 5234: GROUP COUNSELING**  
 Group Counseling Theory Study Guide  
 Fall 2016

<b>Theory</b>	
<b>Founder(s) and/or Contributors</b>	
<b>One Sentence Summary of Theory</b>	
<b>Role of the Therapist</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> </ol>
<b>Process of Counseling (Hallmarks)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> </ol>
<b>Techniques</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> </ol>
<b>Other Information</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>

## **EDCO 5234 Group Counseling Group Counseling Program Development Project**

You will develop a six-session group counseling program for a clinical population, setting, and topic of interest of your choice which could be used in your practicum, internship, or post-graduate work. Work should be organized into a notebook. It should be complete enough that any counselor could pick it up and implement your program. Get creative and have fun!

Examples of group programs will be provided. Note that counseling groups vary tremendously and the group you design should be appropriate for your chosen population/topic/setting. The examples are intended to be used as templates, not specific guides.

Finally, this is a large, multipart assignment (think marathon, not sprint!). Please be sure to take advantage of opportunities for incremental feedback from the instructor and your peers. Work on the project in stages to allow time for reflection and revisions.

Organize your notebook with a table of contents including:

### *Introduction*

You will create a plan of action or proposal for your setting. Describe the client population (e.g., adolescent girls, age range of members, number of members), setting (e.g., 8<sup>th</sup> grade), timeline (e.g., weekly for 6 weeks), and purpose of the group (e.g., self-esteem/empowerment). Describe the salient considerations for planning and facilitating this type of group (e.g., recruitment, screening, pre-group preparation, confidentiality, supplies, location, etc.). What do we know works well with this population? What are important considerations for groups in this setting? Include at least five references in this section. The references should provide information about your population, treatment strategies, and core group counseling principles.

### *Session Plans and Materials*

Name each of the six sessions and state the basic goals. Describe the expected group stage of development and any considerations and strategies for handling this group stage effectively. Describe the components of the session and your rationale for choosing each topic or activity. Include all components of planned activities (e.g., questions/prompts for planned discussions or worksheets) so that another counselor could facilitate the group from your manual alone. Including verbatim directions is best.

### *Post-Group Plan and Evaluation*

Describe how you will evaluate client progress and the effectiveness of your group. Have measurable ways to evaluate success. How will you know your clients got something out of it? How will you know what they gained? How will you use that information to improve future groups? How will your group members continue their good work after the group ends? Will you have a post-group follow-up?