

Benchmark Syllabus Assignment

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Author Note

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I have no known conflict of interest to disclose.

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LIBERTY
UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL
ONLINE

COURSE SYLLABUS

CENTER FOR COUNSELING AND FAMILY STUDIES

COUN 500 (Online)

COURSE TITLE: GROUP COUNSELING

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OFFICE LOCATION: TBA

OFFICE HOURS & APPOINTMENTS: APPOINTMENT ONLY

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to best practices concerning group counseling, including the role of the counselor in diverse/inclusive groups, ethics, multicultural considerations, and legal issues. The *ACA Code of Ethics* (2014) is also explored.

II. RATIONALE

Developing professional counselors, who are effective and ethical in group counseling, requires an overall understanding about the basics of group, state and local laws, and ethical and multicultural considerations. Focusing on the importance of learning how to deal with issues that might arise from a biblical and professional perspective will ensure that students develop best practices and are fully equipped to run successful groups in their community.

III. PREREQUISITES

None

IV. RESOURCES

REQUIRED:

Gladding, S. T. (2016). *Groups: A counseling specialty* (8th ed.). Merrill Counseling Series. ISBN-13: 9780135166895

Rationale: This specific text was chosen due to its updates being more comprehensible and scholarly, as well as relevant. The information aligns with 2016 CACREP standards and includes updated references, more theories pertaining to group work, and current case studies, examples, and exercises designed to give the student more practical ways of running and dealing with a group.

American Counseling Association (2014). *2014 ACA code of ethics*.

<https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center>

Rationale: The *ACA code of ethics* (2014) was chosen because it is a necessity for every counselor educator/counselor to know and fully understand as it relates to working in the field of counseling, including working with groups.

RECOMMENDED

American Psychological Association. *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (Current ed.) Washington, DC: Author.

Szuchman, L.T. (2011). *Writing with style: APA style made easy* (4th ed.).

Wadsworth. ISBN: 9780840031679.

Disclaimer: The above resources provide information consistent with that required by state licensing boards in the area of counselor professional identity, function, and ethics.

Liberty University does not necessarily endorse specific religious, philosophical, or political positions found in these resources.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS FOR LEARNING

- A. Computer. (See information technology recommendations @ <http://www.liberty.edu/information-services/index.cfm?PID=20923>)
- B. Internet access (broadband recommended)
- C. Microsoft Word and PowerPoint
(Microsoft Office is available at a special discount to Liberty University students.)
- D. Canvas recommended browsers (<https://www.liberty.edu/information-services/canvas/>)

V. MEASURABLE LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course is created to meet licensure standards found in Clinical Mental Health Counseling programs, which develop and prepare students to demonstrate an understanding of **ethical practices, legal standards, multiculturalism, and inclusivity concerning group**. Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

- A. Demonstrate comprehension about significant ethical issues in group counseling.
- B. Effectively apply ethics in group counseling
- C. Demonstrate an understanding about the 2014 *ACA Codes of Ethics*.
- D. Demonstrate an understanding about the importance of legal aspects concerning group, including community, state, and national standards.
- E. Apply strategies found in the Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW)'s "Ten Strategies to Intentionally Use Group Work to Transform Hate, Facilitate Courageous Conversations, and Enhance Community Building" to create an environment built upon equity, multiculturalism, and social justice.

- F. Demonstrate an understanding of how to work with various cultures and different types of groups professionally and ethically.

CACREP Standard	Performance Measure
F1. Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice	
F.1.j. ethical standards of professional organizations and credentialing bodies, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling	Gladding, Chapter 10 Group Reflection Paper Assignment Read/discuss: ethics; 2014 <i>ACA Code of Ethics</i> ; CACREP; & Case Study
F.1.k. strategies for personal and professional self-evaluation and implications for practice	Group Reflection Paper Assignment Discussion Boards (Weeks 1, 2, 3, 4)
F.2 Social and Cultural Diversity	
F.2.a. multicultural and pluralistic trends, including characteristics and concerns within and among diverse groups nationally and internationally	Gladding, Chapter 8 Discussion: Social Justice and Multiculturalism Discussion: Multiculturalism and Inclusive/Diverse groups Read the Association for Specialists in Group Work’s “Ten Strategies to Intentionally Use Group Work to Transform Hate, Facilitate Courageous Conversations, and Enhance Community Building” pdf
F.2.c. multicultural counseling competencies	Gladding, Chapter 8 Discussion: Social Justice and Multiculturalism Discussion: Multiculturalism and Inclusive/Diverse groups Read ASGW’s “Ten Strategies to Intentionally Use Group Work to Transform Hate, Facilitate Courageous Conversations, and Enhance Community Building” pdf

F.2.h strategies for identifying and eliminating barriers, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination	<p>Gladding, Chapter 8</p> <p>Discussion: Social Justice and Multiculturalism</p> <p>Discussion: Multiculturalism and Inclusive/Diverse groups</p>
3.F.6 Group Counseling and Group Work	
F.6.c. therapeutic factors and how they contribute to group effectiveness	<p>Gladding, Chapter 8</p> <p>Gladding, Chapter 10</p> <p>Webex Synchronous Class Discussions and Participation</p> <p>Read ASGW’s “Ten Strategies to Intentionally Use Group Work to Transform Hate, Facilitate Courageous Conversations, and Enhance Community Building” pdf</p>
F.6.d. characteristics and functions of effective group leaders	<p>Gladding, Chapter 10</p> <p>Webex Synchronous Class Discussions and Participation</p> <p>Discussion Boards (Weeks 1, 2, 3, 4)</p>
F.6.f. types of groups and other considerations that affect conducting groups in various settings	<p>Gladding, Chapter 8</p>
F.6.g. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for designing and facilitating groups	<p>Gladding, Chapter 8</p> <p>Gladding, Chapter 10</p> <p>Read/discuss: Ethics; 2014 <i>ACA Code of Ethics</i>; CACREP; Case Study; & ASGW’s pdf</p> <p>Group Reflection Paper Assignment</p>

VI. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

- A. The student will read the Course Syllabus and the student expectations on Liberty's website @ <https://www.liberty.edu/institutional-effectiveness/student-expectations/>. The student will then complete the Course Requirement Checklist online.
- B. **Assigned Readings.** The student is expected to read the assigned readings before each class and as listed in this syllabus. (CLOs: A, B, C, D, E)
- C. **Discussion Boards (4).** The discussions are engaging, collaborative, and respectful. The discussions will cover the Gladding text and questions assigned for each week. First, the student will create a thought-provoking, 350-400 word post based upon the assignment/prompt by 11:59 PM on Sunday night. Next, the student will post a 250-300 word reply to two of his/her peers' initial posts by 11:59 pm on Wednesday night. The initial post and the responses must be supported by the Gladding's text and 2 scholarly, peer-reviewed articles that have been published within the past five years. The current APA style must be used. This experience produces engagement, as well as a collaborative learning opportunity. (CLOs: A, B, C, D, E) (See Discussion Board Rubric- Appendix A.)
- D. **Webex Synchronous Class Discussions (4).** Participation in the Webex synchronous class discussions is expected of each student. The student will receive 25 points for attending each Webex synchronous class meeting. These also help to enrich the student's learning experience, which is collaborative, and helps to gauge the student's prior knowledge about group and about the specific topic.
- E. **Class Participation.** The student is expected to engage/participate in the class discussions and activities. This class is extremely interactive, and each student will be

graded on participation. (CLOs: A, B, C, D, E) (See the Participation Rubric- Appendix B.)

F. Group Reflection Paper Assignment. The student is expected to write a concise, 3-4 page, double-spaced, reflective paper concerning what he/she learned in this class concerning ethics, legal aspects, social justice, and multicultural and inclusion issues in group work (1st section). The student will also include how he/she will integrate the information learned in this class both personally and professionally (2nd section). It must be supported by Gladding's text and by the other information presented and discussed in the class. It must also include 2 scholarly, peer-reviewed articles that have been published within the past five years, and the current APA format must be used. Everything must be cited in current APA style. (CLOs: A, B, C, D, E) (See the Group Reflection Paper Assignment Rubric- Appendix C.)

VII. COURSE GRADING

All assignments must be completed to pass the course.

Evaluation	Points
Course Requirement Checklist	20
Discussion Boards (4 @ 150 points each; 100 points for the initial post and 25 points for the 2 replies)	600
Webex Synchronous Class Discussions (4 @ 25 points each)	100
Class Participation	80
Group Reflection Paper Assignment	200
Total	1000

Grading Criteria

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
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940-1000	920-939	900-919	860-899	840-859	820-839	780-819	760-779	740-759	700-739	680-699	679 and below
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VIII. COURSE CALENDAR

Week/Date	Topics	Assignments
1 8/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Course Overview & Student Acknowledgements (prior to class) -Brief introductions -Discuss pp. 218-226 -Ethics (code of ethics; values aligned with ethics) -2014 <i>ACA Code of Ethics</i> (emphasis on Group work; A.9, A.9.a. Screening, A.9.b. Protecting Clients, & B.4.a. Group Work) -CACREP -Case Study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Course Requirements Checklist (prior to class) -Read pp. 218-226 (Chapter 10) (prior to class). Discussion Board: Complete #3 on page 238. (prior to class) Homework: Read pp. 227-238 (Chapter 10). Read the ACA Codes of Ethics. Read before week 2.
2 8/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Discuss pp. 227-238 -2014 <i>ACA Code of Ethics</i> (emphasis on Group work; A.9, A.9.a. Screening, A.9.b. Protecting Clients, & B.4.a. Group Work) -Leader's values, referrals, records, closings and follow-up, & promoting ethical principles in groups. -Legal issues in group, including community, state, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Board: Answer the following questions: "From your reading, what key legal issues in group stood out to you? Why is it important to remember these issues when doing group work?" Homework: Read pp. 167-189 (Chapter 8) for class. Download and read the Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW)'s "Ten Strategies to Intentionally Use Group Work to

	<p>and national standards and malpractice.</p> <p>-Classroom exercise. Ask for 2-3 volunteers to discuss the discussion board assignment from p. 238, #3.</p>	<p>Transform Hate, Facilitate Courageous Conversations, and Enhance Community Building” (asgw_social justice strategies.pdf). Read for before week 3.</p>
<p>3 9/3</p>	<p>-Social justice and multiculturalism (challenges, myths, assessment, and leadership). (pp. 167-178)</p> <p>-The Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW)’s “Ten Strategies to Intentionally Use Group Work to Transform Hate, Facilitate Courageous Conversations, and Enhance Community Building.”</p>	<p>Discussion Board: Choose one of the classroom exercises on p. 189 to write for the DB.</p> <p>Homework: Read pp. 178-189. Read before week 4.</p>
<p>4 9/10</p>	<p>-Addressing multiculturalism in groups. (pp.178-189)</p> <p>-Inclusion and working with various types of groups.</p> <p>-The Group Reflection Paper Assignment and answer any questions.</p>	<p>Discussion Board: Answer the following questions: “How can you apply what you have learned from this week’s readings in your group work? What things stood out?”</p> <p>Group Reflection Paper Assignment: Write 3-4 pages, double spaced paper about the following: “How will you integrate what you have learned in this class concerning ethics, legal aspects, social justice, and multicultural and inclusion issues in group work?”</p>

IX. POLICIES

A. Late Policy**Paper:**

1. 5%-point deduction per day.
2. **Professor will not accept a paper 14 days past original due date without approving this prior to the due date. No exceptions.**

Discussion Boards:

1. 5%-point deduction on the first day after initial post. **Initial post will not be accepted after Monday at 11:59 pm.** However, the student will still be able to respond to the other two peers' original threads by Wednesday at 11:59 pm.
2. 5%-point deduction on Thursday for responses. **Responses will not be accepted after Thursday at 11:59 pm.**

B. Attendance Policy

1. Due to this being a mini-course, attendance is required for every class session. Only under extreme circumstances (at the discretion and prior approval of the professor) will the student be allowed to remain in this class if one session is missed. **However, if a student misses more than one class, the student will be dropped from the mini course. No exceptions.**
2. A student is expected to be on the Webex at the scheduled time and is considered late after the first minute of class. If late a 2nd time, the student will be given a written warning. **If late a 3rd time, the student will receive a 0 for participation for the mini course and can be dropped from the mini course.** This is at the discretion of the professor.

X. OTHER POLICIES

A. Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism, dishonesty, and cheating do not align with the Honor Code statement, as well as other guidelines that address this behavior. These can be found in the *Liberty Way*. Students are expected to read and adhere to the Honor Code statement and other guidelines. **SafeAssign will be used to check the validity of all submitted papers.**

The goal is to have <25% in order to avoid being considered for either intentional or unintentional plagiarism.

B. Academic Accommodations

Liberty University Online's Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) @ LUOODAS@liberty.edu can be contacted to assist online students with a documented disability.

C. Dual Relationship

Liberty's stance on dual relationships will be upheld in this class. The faculty will responsibly engage with counseling students in a supervisory capacity/role and will only interact within the student-client setting context. The faculty will not enter into a dual relationship with the counseling student. If the student is perceived to need mental health services, the faculty will encourage the student to seek mental health services in his/her community.

D. Limits of Confidentiality

Per Liberty's stance, immediate action will take place if the student discloses either a threat, bodily harm, abuse, or neglect to himself/herself or to others, including minors, elderly, or disabled people. The appropriate officials will be notified,

including the appropriate university officials, and the student's permanent record will be reflective of the incident.

E. Professional Communication

The counseling student will uphold Liberty's viewpoint about professional communication. The student is expected to exhibit professionalism through email communication, using proper and professional grammar when communicating with peers and with the faculty. The student is also expected to communicate electronically in a way that is Christlike.

D. Dress Code

The student is expected to dress appropriately, whether casual or professional. Further information about this can be discussed with the department.

Appendix A

Discussion Board Grading Rubric

Criteria	Ratings				Points
<p>Initial Thread Content</p>	<p>40- 34 pts Advanced Provides introspective, clear, and coherent reflection of the assigned reading and discussion prompt with 350-400 words. It is supported with citations from the Gladding text and 2 scholarly, peer-reviewed articles. Posts initial thread by deadline.</p>	<p>33- 27 pts Proficient Provides some reflection of the assigned reading and writing prompt but is kind of vague or is less than 350 words. It is supported with citations from the Gladding text and 1 scholarly, peer-reviewed article.</p>	<p>26- 0 pts Developing Vague reflection of the assigned reading and writing prompt and is less than 300 words. It is either supported with one citation from the Gladding text or with 1 scholarly, peer-reviewed article.</p>	<p>0 pts Not Present</p>	<p>40 pts</p>
<p>Replies Content</p>	<p>60- 54 pts Advanced Two replies completed. Each reply is substantially interactive with the peer's original post. Each reply consists of 250-300 words and is supported with citations from the Gladding text and 2 scholarly, peer-reviewed articles. Posts initial replies by deadline.</p>	<p>53- 46 pts Proficient Two replies completed. Each reply is interactive with the peer's original post. Each reply is either lacking clarity or is less than 250 words. It is supported with citations from the Gladding text and 1 scholarly, peer-reviewed article.</p>	<p>45- 0 pts Developing Only 1 reply completed. The reply is not interactive with the peer's original post. The reply is either vague or is less than 200 words. It is either supported with one citation from the Gladding text or with 1 scholarly, peer-reviewed article.</p>	<p>0 pts Not Present</p>	<p>60 pts</p>

<p>Initial Thread: Grammar & Spelling; APA formatting</p>	<p>20- 16 pts Advanced Correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation are used. Sentences are comprehensible and concise. Paragraphs are well arranged and varied. Current APA format is used for references. Writing is professional. Quotations are barely used.</p>	<p>15- 11 pts Proficient Some spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors are present. Some sentences are not comprehensible and concise. Paragraphs are mostly well arranged and varied. Some incorrect APA formatting is present. Writing is casual and contains some quotations.</p>	<p>10- 0 pts Developing Continuous spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors are present. Unclear or incomplete sentences are used, along with poorly formed paragraphs. Minimal- no references cited in correct APA format. Writing style is subjective or biased with an abundance of quotations.</p>	<p>0 pts Not Present</p>	<p>20 pts</p>
<p>Replies: Grammar & Spelling; APA formatting</p>	<p>30- 26 pts Advanced Correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation are used. Sentences are comprehensible and concise. Paragraphs are well arranged and varied. Current APA format is used for references. Writing is professional. Quotations are barely used.</p>	<p>25- 21 pts Proficient Some spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors are present. Some sentences are not comprehensible and concise. Paragraphs consists of some different, structured sentences. Some incorrect APA formatting is present. Writing is casual and contains some quotations.</p>	<p>20- 0 pts Developing Continuous spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors are present. Unclear or incomplete sentences are used, along with poorly formed paragraphs. Minimal- no references cited in correct APA format. Writing style is subjective or biased with an abundance of quotations.</p>	<p>0 pts Not Present</p>	<p>30 pts</p>
<p>Total Points: 150</p>					

Appendix B

Participation Rubric

Points	
0	-Late for class 3x and can possible termination from the class due to lateness. (A student is viewed late after the first minute of class.)
20	-Present, quiet. -Engages when called upon but does not voluntarily engage. -Often unprepared for class and has not read or completed the given assignment. -Appears to be occupied with other things (cell/computer) during class.
40	-Demonstrates being prepared but not consistently. -Engages concisely but does not either elaborate or is inconsistent. -Demonstrates some engagement in class discussions and exercises.
60	-Demonstrates good, overall preparation and engagement consistently. -Engages in the discussion well, responds to fellow peers' viewpoints respectfully, and is objective to giving and receiving suggestions.
80	-Demonstrates excellent, overall preparation and engagement consistently. -Engages significantly in the discussion, responds to fellow peers' viewpoints very respectfully, and is very interactive in class in class and group work/discussion.

Appendix C

Group Reflection Paper Assignment Rubric

Criteria	Ratings				Points
Synthesized Material	90-83 pts Advanced Demonstrates advanced level of course content comprehension. The integration and application of material presented in this course are thoroughly concise and discussed in the 2 sections of this paper. The material in the course and the 2 scholarly, peer-reviewed articles are referenced thoroughly.	82-75 pts Proficient Demonstrates proficient level of course content comprehension. The integration and application of material presented in this course are mostly concise and discussed in the 2 sections of this paper. Some of the material in the course and 1 scholarly, peer-reviewed article are referenced adequately.	74-0 pts Developing Demonstrates developing level of course content comprehension. The integration and application of material presented in this course are barely discussed and vague. Minimal to no references are used to support an understanding of the material.	0 pts Not Present	/90 pts
	50-46 pts Advanced The paper was 3-4 pages, and every requirement was thoroughly met and discussed. It	45-41 pts Proficient The paper was 3-4 pages, and some of the requirements were met and discussed. It was turned in	40-0 pts Developing The paper was either greater than 4 pages or was barely 3 pages, and the requirements were either	0 pts Not Present	
Quantity/ Timeliness					

	was turned in by the due date.	one-day late and without proper and prior approval.	barely met or not met at all. It was turned in more than one day late but less than 14 days late and without prior approval.		
Mechanics/ Composition	<p>30-26 pts Advanced</p> <p>No spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors are found. Great composition. Writing is professional, effective, and coherent.</p>	<p>27-24 pts Proficient</p> <p>Few spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors are present. Basic composition. Writing is casual and contains some quotations. It is mostly effective and coherent.</p>	<p>23-0 pts Developing</p> <p>Continuous spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors are present. Unclear or incomplete sentences are used, along with poorly formed paragraphs. It is not effective or coherent.</p>	<p>0 pts Not Present</p>	/30 pts
APA	<p>30-26 pts Advanced</p> <p>Current APA format is properly used in this paper. Citations are used appropriately. References are cited properly</p>	<p>27-24 pts Proficient</p> <p>Some incorrect APA formatting is present. Most resources from the class are used, along with one strong,</p>	<p>23-0 pts Developing</p> <p>Minimal- no references cited in correct APA format. Next to none of the class resources are used, and some non-scholarly</p>	<p>0 pts Not Present</p>	/30 pts

	according to APA formatting.	scholarly, peer- reviewed article.	resources are present. Some errors in APA formatting are present.		
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