**ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE**

**Social Sciences Division**

**PSY 210 – Group Dynamics**

**Course Outline**

**Course Number & Name:**  PSY 210 Group Dynamics

**Credit Hours:**  3 .0 **Contact Hours:**  3.0 **Lecture:** 3.0 **Lab:**  N/A **Other:**  N/A

**Prerequisites**:  Grade of “C” or better in PSY 101

**Co-requisites:** None **Concurrent Courses:** None

**Course Outline Revision Date:**  Fall 2010

**Course Description**: This course explores the fundamental concepts of understanding interpersonal behavior in the context of small groups. Integrating group theory and research with experiential activities, students will gain a better understanding of group processes and improve their interpersonal skills as group members. This course will be of special value to students entering mental health, social work, education, business, or similarly related professions in which the knowledge of group processes would be beneficial.

**Course Goals:** Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. identify general theories pertaining to studying groups;

2. discuss how research is used to study the processes and efficacy of groups;

3. participate in groups to become more cognizant of their “dynamics”;

4. demonstrate a proficiency in observing, analyzing, and/or writing about group processes;

5. communicate proficiently within a group; and

6. apply concepts of group dynamics to oneself for self-understanding and improvement.

**Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs)**: Upon successful completion of this course, students should specifically be able to do the following:

1. Identify general theories pertaining to studying groups:

1.1 *discuss the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in group dynamics;* and

1.2 *demonstrate knowledge of various content areas of group dynamics including, but not limited to, experiential learning; group goals, norms, and roles; communication; leadership and facilitation; the use of power; decision making; controversy and conflict; cooperation; diversity; group and team development; and assessment*

**Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs)** (continued):

2. Discuss how research is used to study the processes and efficacy of groups:

2.1 *describe how basic research methods are used in studying group dynamics*;

2.2 *evaluate the appropriateness of conclusions derived from group dynamics research;*

2.3 *discuss the conclusions presented in research reports on group dynamics;* and

2.4 *identify and* *describe relevant databases used to study group dynamics*

3. Participate in groups to become more cognizant of their “dynamics”:

3.1 *describe and apply group dynamics principles to personal and social issues;* and

3.2 *apply psychological concepts, theories, and research findings as these relate to everyday life*

4. Demonstrate a proficiency in observing, analyzing, and/or writing about group processes:

4.1 *demonstrate information literacy and the ability to use computers and other technology*;

4.2 *demonstrate effective writing skills in various formats (e.g., essays, correspondence (blogs) technical papers, and note taking) and for various purposes (e.g., informing, defending, explaining, persuading, arguing, and teaching)*;

4.3 *demonstrate professional writing conventions (e.g., grammar, audience awareness, and formality) appropriate to purpose and context;* and

4.4 *utilize APA style effectively in empirically-based reports, literature reviews, and theoretical papers*

5. Communicate proficiently within a group:

5.1 *demonstrate effective oral communication skills in various formats (e.g., group discussion, debate, and lecture) and for various purposes (e.g., informing, defending, explaining, persuading, and arguing)*;

5.2 *demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills*;

5.3 *demonstrate the ability to listen accurately and actively;*

5.4 *utilize group dynamics concepts and theory to evaluate and explain interactions with others;*

5.5 *identify the impact or potential impact of one’s behaviors on others;*

5.6 *utilize appropriately worded questions to articulate ideas and improve interpersonal understanding;*

5.7 *demonstrate the ability to use nonverbal behavior and evaluate its meaning;*

5.8 *provide constructive feedback to student peers;*

5.9 *collaborate effectively;*

5.10 *work with groups to complete projects;*

5.11 *solicit and integrate diverse viewpoints in group work;* and

5.12 *manage conflicts appropriately and ethically in group work*

6. Apply concepts of group dynamics to oneself for self-understanding and improvement:

6.1 *insightfully* *assess your own and others’ behavior and mental processes and apply effective strategies for self-management and self-improvement;*

6.2 *reflect on and interpret personal experiences to ascribe meaning to them;*

6.3 *discuss one’s own feelings, emotions, motives, and attitudes based on group dynamics principles to demonstrate insightful awareness;*

**Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs)** (continued):

6.4 *apply group dynamics principles to promote personal development;*

6.5 *demonstrate self-regulation in setting and achieving goals;* and

6.6 *complete a self-assessment performance quality accurately, and incorporate feedback for improved performance*

**Methods of Instruction**: Instruction will consist of, but not be limited to, a combination of lectures, class discussion, demonstrations and exercises, and media/audiovisual or educational videos. Specific choice of instructional methods is left to the discretion of the instructor.

**Outcomes Assessment:** Quiz and exam questions (if applicable) are blueprinted to course objectives. Checklist rubrics are used to evaluate non-test type assessment instruments (e.g., logs, reaction papers, theme papers, oral/written presentations, and projects) for the presence of course objectives. Data collected will be analyzed to provide direction for the improvement of instruction, viability of class assignments, relevancy of assigned literature, and evaluation of instructional time spent on specific topics.

**Course Requirements:** All students are required to:

1. Maintain regular and prompt attendance to all class sessions.

2. Participate in class discussions.

3.    Complete all readings and assignments and take all quizzes and exams that are scheduled.

4. Follow any specific class requirements mandated by the instructor.

**Methods of Evaluation:** Final course grades will be computed as follows:

 **% of**

**Grading Components final course grade**

* **Attendance/Class Participation** **5 – 15%**

Attendance points will be computed based on the ratio of the number of days attending the course during a regular semester (i.e., 28 contact days). A similar procedure will be used to determine participation points.

* Logs 10 – 15%

Logs are written exercises designed to heighten student’s awareness of various psychological phenomena that is experienced, observed, read, or viewed on television. Student must relate experiences to chapters either discussed/not discussed throughout the semester.

**Methods of Evaluation** (continued):

 **% of**

**Grading Components final course grade**

* **Reaction Papers 15 – 20%**

Reaction papers are 2 – 3 page written exercises in which students read outside sources (e.g., newspapers, magazines, or “self-help” books in psychology), discuss their “emotional” reaction to the issue or author’s point of view, yet use critical thinking guidelines to assess claims made augmented by scholarly literature.

* **Theme Papers 20 – 25%**

Theme papers are 3 – 5 page written exercises in which students discuss how taking the course has been personally meaningful, beneficial, and relevant to their future professional aspirations. References can be cited using scholarly journals, psychologically-based magazines, or internet sites.

* **Literature Reviews/Research Papers 10 – 20%**

Literature reviews/research papers are written exercise in which students must investigate a particular topic either in the textbook or assigned by the instructor that is related to the course objectives and conduct a review of the psychological literature. Based on the literature review, students are required to develop a thesis/theme and draw conclusions on the topic researched.

* **Introspective Theme Paper/Case Study Analysis 30 – 40%**

The introspective theme paper/case study analysis is a 7 – 10 page written exercise in which students integrate and synthesize concepts to perform an in-depth analysis and demonstrate relevance of various theories to oneself as an emerging theoretical orientation or professional identity. If a child, teenager, adult person(s), or professional is interviewed, students must analyze, synthesize, integrate, and demonstrate relevance of concepts to course objectives.

* **Written/Oral Presentation of Child, Teenager, Adult, 15 – 25%**

**Agency, or Professional in the Field**

The written/oral presentation of the interview of a child, teenager, adult, agency, or professional requires the student to gather information and to determine its relevance to concepts and theories presented in class and related to course objectives.

* **Oral Presentations 15 – 20%**

Oral presentations are based on a topic either discussed/not discussed during the semester, that is relevant to the study of psychology and related to course objectives. The instructor may require a written outline to augment the oral presentation.

**Methods of Evaluation** (continued):

 **% of**

**Grading Components final course grade**

* **Quizzes 10 – 15%**

Quizzes will provide evidence of the extent to which students have met course objectives.

* Exams (number of exams and dates specified by the instructor) **20 – 30%**

Exams will provide evidence of the extent to which students have mastered and synthesize course material and have met course objectives.

Note: The instructor will determine the specific components appropriate for the course and provide specific weights which lie in the above-given ranges at the beginning of the semester.

**Academic Integrity:** Dishonesty disrupts the search for truth that is inherent in the learning process and so devalues the purpose and the mission of the College.  Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

* plagiarism – the failure to acknowledge another writer’s words or ideas or to give proper credit to sources of information;
* cheating – knowingly obtaining or giving unauthorized information on any test/exam or any other academic assignment;
* interference – any interruption of the academic process that prevents others from the proper engagement in learning or teaching; and
* fraud – any act or instance of willful deceit or trickery.

Violations of academic integrity will be dealt with by imposing appropriate sanctions.  Sanctions for acts of academic dishonesty could include the resubmission of an assignment, failure of the test/exam, failure in the course, probation, suspension from the College, and even expulsion from the College.

**Student Code of Conduct:** All students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible and considerate adults who respect the rights of others. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. All students are also expected to attend and be on time all class meetings. No cell phones or similar electronic devices are permitted in class. Please refer to the Essex County College student handbook, *Lifeline*, for more specific information about the College’s Code of Conduct and attendance requirements.

**Course Content Outline:** based on the text by Corey, M. S., Corey, G., & Corey, C. (2010). *Groups: Process and Practice* (8th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole; and the text by Corey, G., Corey, M. S., Callanan, P., & Russell, J. M. (2004). *Group Techniques* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole

Note**:** It is the instructor’s discretion to recommend other references, as appropriate (e.g., student handbooks, textbooks, resources pertaining to careers in psychology, or style/writing manuals).

**Unit Topic**

1 General Theories – The background and concepts of groups; utilization of concepts to arrange and run groups productively and meaningfully.

2 Research – Research methods in the study of groups and group processing; the design and conduct of groups to assess appropriateness of group processes, participants’ results, and the quality and meaningfulness of groups.

3 Group Participation – Experiential utilization to determine the usefulness, meaningfulness, and overall quality of groups, as well as to filter out questions that could improve the group for self and all participants.

4 Group Processes – Examining, testing the movement, need, effectiveness, and planning of the group.

5 Communication – Various formats of communication with groups (e.g., verbal and non-verbal, technological, and communicating in the most effective ways to reach group members successfully).

6 (optional) Self Understanding – Assessing oneself as a group member to determine the need and the efficacy of the group process for self.

Note: In PSY 210, the instructor must cover the first 5 units listed above minimally in any reasonable order throughout the duration of the semester/term. Also, the instructor may include additional areas based on his/her expertise and/or interest.