

# S322 Small Group Theory and Practice (3 cr.)

## Course Information

**Semester Year:** XXXXX  
**Section Number:** XXXXX  
**Location:** XXXXX  
**Days:** XXXXX  
**Times:** XXXXX

**Instructor:** XXXXX  
**Office:** XXXXX  
**Email:** XXXXX  
**Phone:** XXXXX  
**Office Hours:** XXXXX

## Course Description

The course examines the significance of the small group as both the context and means for social development of individuals and as a vehicle for generalist practice. It includes discussion of the individual as a member of a variety of groups, including the family and covers group theories as well as mezzo practice strategies. Generalist social work practice recognizes the importance of groups in the life of individuals and societies and as one of the most important vehicles for the social development of the individual as well as one of the basic structures by which a society organizes itself. Groups are often the means in which both individual and collective empowerment can occur, enabling the parties involved to effect change in their environment. Because of this significance, the study of group process and group practice is essential for social work. S322 Small Group Theory and Practice serves as a linkage between the HBSE I and III courses and should be taken in sequence or concurrently. Additionally, S322 is based on the strengths and empowerment perspectives and uses a systems analysis for understanding the impact of the small group on both the individual and society. This course focuses on group dynamics and practice, with an emphasis on the small group and is designed to enhance students' effectiveness for group participation and leadership. The course also analyzes different social work roles and the various interventions used in working with groups. Course activities include student participation in a small group experience where they will have the opportunity to learn selected skills for practice with small groups while studying the specifics of group theory and group dynamics.

## Course Competencies

Council on Social Work Education (CWSE) 2015 EPAS Competencies addressed by this course.

### Primary

- 6: Engage with Groups

Social workers understand theories of HBSE and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including groups (CSWE, 2015 EPAS, p. 8).

- 7: Assess Groups

Social workers understand theories of HBSE and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including groups (CSWE, 2015 EPAS, p. 8).

- 8: Intervene with Groups

Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals (CSWE, 2015 EPAS, p. 9).

- 9: Evaluate Practice with Groups

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse groups (CSWE, 2015 EPAS, p. 9).

## Secondary

- 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
- 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

## Course Objectives

- S322-01:** Recognize the significance of group membership for individual development throughout the life span.
- S322-02:** Analyze the role groups play in the quest for social and economic justice.
- S322-03:** Analyze the implications of diversity and discrimination for small group functioning and for the functioning of group members.
- S322-04:** Analyze the current theories, research, and literature on small group development and behavior.
- S322-05:** Apply skills in appropriately selecting the roles necessary for generalist social work practice with groups.
- S322-06:** Apply skills in delineating and prioritizing the various tasks in the helping relationship with small groups.
- S322-07:** Apply skills in using selected group theories and processes to identify client's strengths and to empower them to bring change to themselves and others through mutual aid.
- S322-08:** Develop cultural humility and apply skills in cultural competence in assessment, intervention plans, implementation strategies, and evaluation processes.
- S322-09:** Demonstrate knowledge of the impact of information technology on groups.
- S322-10:** Analyze the range of challenges faced by families and other small groups in Indiana. Formulate research problems, hypotheses, and research questions.

## Required Texts

Toseland, R., & Rivas, R. (2017). *An introduction to group work practice* (8th ed.). Needham Heights, MA.: Allyn & Bacon

## Course Content

In this course students will learn to engage, assess, and intervene with groups. Opportunities are provided to apply group theory and learn group skills with particular attention given to applying knowledge and skills to diverse clients and constituencies in group work. Knowledge and skills come together when students identify, analyze, and implement evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Opportunities for reflection on knowledge, skills and values as well as cognitive & affective reactions will also be provided. The major evaluation of students' progress in accomplishing the learning objectives of this course is the signature assignment of extended group participation and written reflection thereof.

## Course Outline

### Module 1 - Tuesday: Preparation

Dates:

#### *Assignments*

1. Print, read, and bring syllabus to class
2. Have two questions about your syllabus that can be shared/compared in class

### Module 1: Tuesday

Dates:

#### *Topic*

1. Introduction to course, syllabus, and group work
2. See your "Reading Logs" assignments for future classes on Canvas

### Module 1 - Thursday: Preparation

Dates:

#### *Assignments*

##### *Readings*

- A. Chapter 1: Introduction

##### *Assignment*

- A. Reading Log

### Module 1: Thursday

Dates:

#### *Topic*

- A. Introduction to Group Work Practice text
- B. Reading logs processed in circle (20 minutes)
- C. Modeling group work
- D. Form future task groups for Modules 4-8
- E. Chapter Recaps:
  1. The Focus of Group Work Practice
  2. Values and Ethics in Group Work Practice
  3. Definition of Group Work
  4. Classifying Groups
  5. Group versus Individual Efforts
  6. A Typology of Treatment and Task Groups
  7. Treatment Groups
  8. Task Groups

### Module 2 - Tuesday: Preparation

Dates:

## *Assignments*

### *Readings*

1. Chapter 2: Historical and Theoretical Developments

### *Assignment*

- A. Reading Log

## Module 2: Tuesday

### Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Reading Logs processed in circle (20 minutes)
- B. Chapter Recaps
  - a. Knowledge from Group Work Practice: Treatment Groups
  - b. Knowledge from Group Work Practice: Task Groups
  - c. Knowledge from Social Science Research
  - d. Influential Theories
    1. Systems Theory
    2. Psychodynamic Theory
    3. Learning Theory
    4. Field Theory
    5. Social Exchange Theory
    6. Constructivist, Empowerment, and Narrative

## Module 2: Thursday

### Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Psycho-Geometrics
- B. Guest speaker from the Kelly School of Business: Dawn Kutza
- C. Group Work Class Exercise
  1. Providing the right kind of feedback to others
  2. What kind of group member am I?

### *Assignment*

- A. Quiz on Canvas: Completed by midnight

## Module 3 - Tuesday: Preparation

### Dates:

## *Assignments*

### *Readings*

- A. Chapter 11: Task Groups - Foundation Methods

### *Assignment*

- A. Reading Log

## Module 3: Tuesday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Reading logs processed in circle (20 minutes)
- B. Chapter Recaps
  - e. The Ubiquitous Task Group
  - f. Leading Task Groups
  - g. A Model for Effective Challenge Solving

## Module 3: Thursday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Meet in Groups
- B. Tasking with the group (toxic waste activity)

## Module 4 - Tuesday: Preparation

Dates:

### *Assignments*

#### *Readings*

- A. Chapter 12: Task Groups – Specialized Methods

#### *Assignment*

- A. Reading Log

## Module 4: Tuesday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Reading Logs processed in circle (20 minutes)
- B. Chapter Recaps
  - a. Small Organization Groups
  - b. Brainstorming
  - c. Focus Groups
  - d. Nominal Group Technique
  - e. Large Organizational Groups
  - f. Methods for Working with Community Groups

## Module 4: Thursday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Meet in Task Groups
- B. Group Work: Lab

1. Begin Task Groups
2. Fill out processing form

## Module 5 - Tuesday: Preparation

Dates:

### *Assignments*

#### Readings

- A. Chapter 3: Understanding Group Dynamics

#### Assignment

- A. Reading Log

## Module 5: Tuesday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Reading Logs processed in circle (20 minutes)
- B. Chapter Recaps
- C. The Development of Helpful Group Dynamics
- D. Group Dynamics
- E. Stages of Group Development

## Module 5: Thursday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Meet with your Task Groups
- B. Group Work: Lab
  1. Second Task Group
  2. Fill out processing form

## Module 6 - Tuesday: Preparation

Dates:

### *Assignments*

#### Readings

- A. Chapter 4: Leadership

#### Assignment

- A. Reading Log

## Module 6: Tuesday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Reading Logs process in circle (20 minutes)
- B. Chapter Recaps

- a. Leadership, Power, and Empowerment
- b. An Interactional Model of Leadership
- c. Group Leadership Skills
- d. Co-Leadership

## Module 6: Thursday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Meet with your Task Groups
- B. Group Work: Lab
  1. Third Task Group
  2. Fill out processing form

### *Assignment*

- A. Quiz 2 on Canvas: Due by Midnight

## Module 7 - Tuesday: Preparation

Dates:

### *Assignments*

#### *Readings*

- A. Chapter 5: Leadership and Diversity

#### *Assignment*

- A. Reading Log

## Module 7: Tuesday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Reading Logs processed in circle (20 minutes)
- B. Chapter Recaps
  - a. Approaches to Multicultural Group Work
  - b. Developing Cultural Sensitivity
  - c. Assessing Cultural Influences on Group Behavior
  - d. Intervening with Sensitivity to Diversity
    - Reflecting/trouble shooting on Task groups
  - e. Classroom exercise: Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

## Module 7: Thursday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Meet in Groups
- B. Group Work: Lab

1. Fourth and Final Task Group
2. Fill out processing form

## Module 8 - Tuesday: Preparation

Dates:

### *Assignments*

#### Readings

- A. Chapter 6: Planning the Group

#### Assignment

- A. Reading Log
- B. Mid-term Evaluations

## Module 8: Tuesday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Reading Logs processed in circle (20 minutes)
- B. Chapter Recaps
  1. Planning Focus
  2. Planning Model for Group Work
- C. Develop Presentation on Task Group for next class period

## Module 8 - Thursday: Preparation

Dates:

### *Assignments*

- A. Task Group Presentation

## Module 8: Thursday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Present Task Group Process and Findings
- B. Group Work: Lab
  1. Assignment on Motivation

## Module 9 - Tuesday: Preparation

Dates:

### *Assignments*

#### Readings

- A. Chapter 7: The Group Begins

#### Assignment

- A. Reading Log



## B. Mid-term Evaluation

**Module 9: Tuesday****Dates:***Topic*

- A. Reading Logs process in circle (20 minutes)
- B. Chapter Recaps
  - a. Objectives in the Beginning Stage
  - b. Introducing New Members
  - c. Defining the Purpose of the Group
  - d. Confidentiality
  - e. Helping Members Feel a Part of the Group
  - f. Guiding the Development of the Group
  - g. Task and Socioemotional Focus
  - h. Goal Setting in Group Work
  - i. Contracting
  - j. Facilitating Members' Motivation
  - k. Addressing Ambivalence and Resistance
  - l. Working with Involuntary Clients
  - m. Anticipating Obstacles

**Module 9: Thursday****Dates:***Topic*

- A. Meet in Groups
- B. Group Work
- C. Assignment on Assessing Group Roles

**Module 10 - Tuesday: Preparation****Dates:***Assignments**Readings*

- A. Chapter 8: Assessment

*Assignment*

- A. Reading Log

**Module 10: Tuesday****Dates:***Topic*

- A. Reading Logs processed in circle (20 minutes)
- B. Chapter Recaps

- a. Definition of Assessment
- b. The Assessment Process
- c. Assessing the Functioning of Group Members
- d. Assessing the Functioning of the Group as a Whole
- e. Methods for Assessing the Group as a Whole
- f. Assessing the Group's Environment
- g. Linking Assessment to Intervention

## Module 10: Thursday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Meet in your groups
- B. Group Work: Lab

## Module 11 - Tuesday: Preparation

Dates:

### *Assignments*

#### *Readings*

- A. Chapter 9: Treatment Groups – Foundation Methods

#### *Assignment*

- A. Reading Log

## Module 11: Tuesday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Reading Logs processed in circle (20 minutes)
- B. Chapter Recaps
  - a. Middle-Stage Skills
  - b. Preparing for Group Meetings
  - c. Structuring the Group's Work
  - d. Involving and Empowering Group Members
  - e. Helping Members Achieve Their Goals
  - f. Working with Reluctant and Resistant Group Members
  - g. Monitoring and Evaluating the Group's Progress

### *Assignment*

- A. Quiz 3 on Canvas: Due by Midnight

## Module 11: Thursday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Meet in Groups

- B. Group Work: Lab

## Module 12 - Tuesday: Preparation

Dates:

### *Assignments*

#### Readings

- A. Chapter 10: Treatment Groups – Specialized Methods

#### Assignment

- A. Reading Log

## Module 12: Tuesday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Reading Logs processed in circle (20 minutes)
- B. Chapter Recaps
  - a. Intervening with Group Members
  - b. Intervening in the Group as a Whole
  - c. Changing the Group Environment
  - d. Links with Interagency Networks
  - e. Increasing Community Awareness

## Module 12: Thursday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Meet in Groups
- B. Group Work: Lab
  - 1. Assignment on Group Project

## Module 13 - Tuesday: Preparation

Dates:

### *Assignments*

#### Readings

- A. Chapter 13: Ending the Group's Work

#### Assignment

- A. Reading Log

## Module 13: Tuesday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Reading Logs processed in circle (20 minutes)
- B. Chapter Recaps

- a. Factors That Influence Group Endings
- b. The Process of Ending
- c. Planned and Unplanned Termination
- d. Ending Group Meetings
- e. Ending the Group as a Whole

## Module 13: Thursday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Meet in Groups
- B. Group Work
  1. Assignment on Ending the Group's Work

## Holiday Break!

Dates:

Enjoy the break!

## Module 14 - Tuesday: Preparation

Dates:

### *Assignments*

#### Readings

- A. Chapter 14: Evaluation

#### Assignment

- A. Reading Log

## Module 14: Tuesday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Reading logs processed in circle (20 minutes)
- B. Chapter Recap
  - a. The Practitioner's Dilemma
  - b. Why Evaluate? The Group Workers' View
  - c. Evaluation Methods
  - d. Evaluations for Planning a Group
  - e. Evaluations for Monitoring a Group
  - f. Evaluations for Developing a Group
  - g. Evaluations for Determining Effectiveness and Efficiency
  - h. Evaluation Measures
- C. Exercise: Conflict Management in Groups
  1. Sharing Feelings
  2. Giving Feedback

3. Receiving Feedback
4. Requesting a Change in Behavior
5. Fogging and Broken Record
6. Facilitating Group Process

## Module 14: Thursday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Meet in Groups
  - B. Group Work
1. Assignment on Evaluation

### *Assignment*

- A. Quiz 4 due by midnight on Canvas

## Module 15 - Tuesday: Preparation

Dates:

### *Assignments*

- A. Group work with kids (Boyd Webb PDF)

## Module 15: Tuesday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Group Work
1. Divorce Group
  2. Social Skills Group
  3. Grief and Loss Group
  4. Adventure-Based Group

## Module 15: Thursday

Dates:

### *Topic*

- A. Final Circle Up
- B. Whole Group Facilitation

## Module 16: Preparation

Dates:

### *Assignments*

- A. 2 PM Section:
- B. 4 PM Section:

## Module 16: Tuesday

Dates:

### Topic

- A. Group Presentations on Psycho Social groups Reflection and Evaluation
- B. Skill Development Evaluation

The above schedule and procedures are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.

## Assignments and Grading

The course will be a mix of traditional academic and experiential learning. Students are expected to actively participate in an in-class, and in groups. The group meetings will provide hands-on experience to demonstrate concepts discussed in lectures as well as develop a knowledge base in group work practice with a specific population-at-risk. Traditional learning activities in this course include exercises, group presentations, lectures and discussions. Because of the nature of the learning process in this course, regular class attendance and participation are required.

The three purposes of the in-class group are 1) to facilitate your understanding of the use of groups in social work, 2) to illustrate the major group concepts and processes and 3) to help you develop basic skills for group leadership. The group is an opportunity for you to make connections among class activities and your independent efforts (e.g., readings). You will participate in one of the in-class groups formed in the class. Each group will hold 14 weekly meetings of one hour and 15 minutes during the regular Thursday class sessions.

Major assignments for the course include four Reading Log Warm-ups, quizzes, group work, leader reports and member's reflections.

## Assignments

1. Reading Logs
  - a. DUE: .....
  - b. Final Grade Percentage: .....40.9%
2. Quizzes
  - a. DUE: .....
  - b. Final Grade Percentage: .....11.7%
3. Task Group Presentation
  - a. DUE: .....
  - b. Final Grade Percentage: .....8.8%
4. Social Emotional Presentation
  - a. DUE: .....
  - b. Final Grade Percentage: .....8.8%
5. Leader's Report (part of signature assignment)
  - a. DUE: .....

- b. Final Grade Percentage: .....3.5%
- 6. Members' Reflection (part of signature assignment)
  - a. DUE: .....
  - b. Final Grade Percentage: .....11.7%
- 7. Professionalism and Participation Evaluation
  - a. DUE: .....
  - b. Final Grade Percentage: .....14.6%

Note: Late assignments will have a 50% of points deducted. Each 24 hours that follows a 10% deduction will be added. Assignments may be uploaded to Canvas if the student will be absent from class on the date due. Full credit for the assignments will be given (accept for reading logs or other assignments that involve in class activity) if they are uploaded before the start of class.

## Assignment Details

### *Reading Logs- 5 points 70 total– submitted in Canvas and hard copy in class*

Each weekly reading will require one reading log. The purpose of the log is for you to critically engage in the reading. There is a reading log example on Canvas that serves as an example.

- Reading logs are to be written by the student, not cut and pasted regarding content
- Hard copies of reading logs are to be brought to class—hand written or typed
- Reading logs are to be turned in on Canvas before class begins
- Reading logs will be randomly chosen for complete feedback

### *Quizzes- 5 points each 20 total*

Although no exams will be given for this course, on the last Thursday of each month, there will be a quiz on Canvas. The quiz will have content from the text and lecture. The quiz' contains multiple choice and fill in the blank questions and will be taken online on canvas. Each quiz is worth five points.

### *Leader's Report –3 points each 6 points total*

Groups will assign the role of group leader to two students for each meeting. Students will take a turn so that he or she is the group leader at least twice during the semester. The group leader is responsible for posting on Canvas a brief Leader's Report before the next class meeting. The report is worth 3 points if it is posted on time, contains the three items, and is discussed in class. The three items that must be in each report are: 1) how the group used its time, 2) what concepts from the textbook were observed in the group (for example, group stages and group dynamics), and 3) what theme describes the group meeting. Leaders will post their report to the group's Canvas Discussion Forum before class and bring their reports to class to discuss and hand in. Each Leader's Report is worth three points, for a total of six points.

### *Group Member Reflection - 2 points each 20 total*

Each student will answer questions on a brief worksheet at the end of every group. The leader will incorporate time for group members to complete the worksheet during the group meeting. Worksheets are available on Canvas. Group reflections are to be discussed after every group and handed into your leaders. Your leaders will hand them in along with their reflections during the next class. Each Group Reflection Paper is worth two points.

### *Group Presentations - 15 points each 30 total*

Two group presentations will be completed: One from your task group and one from your psycho social group. The presentations will incorporate terms, dynamics, stages, and theories as they emerged based on your course readings. A rubric will be provided.

### *Professionalism and Participation Evaluation—25 points*

At the end of the semester each student will evaluate their performance in the classroom and in their groups. Students are expected to write in detail as to how come they rated themselves accordingly. This evaluation is found on Canvas and is to be submitted during the final class by midnight.

### *Experiential Group Leadership & Processing (Signature Assignment)*

Students will engage in *Experiential Group Leadership & Processing*, consisting of the following activities for group participation, group leadership, and group reflection.

Weeks 1-3     Lecture, preparation for leading a group

Weeks 4-8     First ½ of class consists of lecture, group skills; second ½ of class consists of student-led groups meet (privately), each student rotating through leader role. Leader must develop an activity/group intervention for that week and process with group. Intervention/Activity Summary report is due from the group leader, describing rationale, source, anticipated response, goals of activity, and identify a possible approach to evaluation. Structured reflection paper is due from leader regarding learning in leadership role, effectiveness of “intervention/activity.”

Product: One structured reflection paper on experience as group leader, including assessment of intervention in group. Students submit one Intervention/Activity Summary report as leader.

Weeks 9-15    First ½ of class consists of lecture, group skills, material; second ½ of class consists of student-led groups demonstrating group process in class. Feedback/discussion is provided by observers (rest of students). One group demonstration is given per week.

Product: Structured reflection papers are written by all students addressing a topic/question posed for that week.

## Grading Standards

Papers are graded on the quality of the final product not on the effort you extended completing them. The grade of A is reserved for truly outstanding work that goes beyond basic requirements.

Grades of A reflect Excellence. Excellent scholarly products and academic or professional performances are substantially superior to the “good,” “the high quality,” “the competent,” or the “satisfactory.” They are unusual, exceptional, and extraordinary. Criteria for assignments are not only met, they are exceeded by a significant margin. Excellence is a rare phenomenon. As a result, relatively few BSW students earn A grades.

Grades of B signify good or high quality scholarly products and academic or professional performance. Grades in the B range reflect work expected of a conscientious student in a professional program. Criteria for assignments are met in a competent, thoughtful, and professional manner. However, the criteria are not exceeded and the quality is not substantially superior to other good quality products or performances. There is a clear distinction between the good and the excellent. We expect that most BSW students will



earn grades in the B range—reflecting the good or high quality work expected of competent future helping professionals.

Grades of C and C+ signify work that is marginal in nature. The scholarly products or professional performances meet many but not all of the expected criteria. The work approaches but does not quite meet the standards of quality expected of a student in a professional school. Satisfactory in many respects, its quality is not consistently so and cannot be considered of good or high quality. We anticipate that a minority of BSW students will earn C and C+ grades.

Grades of C- and lower reflect work that is unsatisfactory. The products or performances do not meet several, many, or most of the criteria. The work fails to approach the standards of quality expected of a student and a future BSW-level professional. We anticipate that a small percentage of BSW students will earn unsatisfactory grades of C-, D, and F.

### *Grading scale*

Grade minimums are as follows [Note: grades below a C are Unsatisfactory in the BSW Program]:

|    |     |  |
|----|-----|--|
| A  | 93% | Excellent, Exceptional Quality                     |
| A- | 90% | Superior Quality                                   |
| B+ | 87% | Very Good, Slightly Higher Quality                 |
| B  | 83% | Good, High Quality (expected of most BSW students) |
| B- | 80% | Satisfactory Quality                               |
| C+ | 77% | Marginal, Modestly Acceptable Quality              |
| C  | 73% | Marginal, Minimally Acceptable Quality             |
| C- | 70% | Unsatisfactory Quality                             |

In accordance with the Indiana University School of Social Work grading policy, social work majors must earn at least a C to pass this course.