CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY

Principles and Techniques of Group Counseling
COUN 5670.61 – 3 credit hours
Thursday 5:00 – 7:50 pm
HWH: 304H

Professor:	LaShonda B. Fuller, Ph.D., LPC, SCL
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	(also by appointment)

Required Texts: Corey, G. (2016). *Theory and practice in group counseling* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.
Supplemental reading: Selected readings from articles made available by the instructor

Course Prerequisites: COUN 5650 or 5640. Admission to the master's degree program.

Course Description: Group methods, for identifying, understanding, and solving problems. Explores counseling and therapy in a group setting.

Attendance Policy: Attendance for all courses is mandatory. *One excused absence* is allowed. *Additional* unexcused absences will result in a 3 point reduction from your final grading score and possibly administrative withdrawal from the course per Chicago State University attendance guidelines. If students are tardy or leave class early without prior notice, a deduction of .5 points for every half hour will be deducted from final grade. It is students' responsibility to obtain content and information from discussion points if unable to attend class. It is also students' responsibility to drop the course if unable to meet requirements.

ADA Policy (Americans with Disabilities Act): Students with a disability who require reasonable accommodations to fully participate in this course should notify the instructor within the first two weeks of the semester. Such students must be registered with the Abilities Office which is located in the Cordell Reed Student Union Building, Room 190 (773) 995-4401. Accommodations may be requested at any time, but they are not retroactive.

Emergency Procedure Request: In order to maximize preparedness in the case of an emergency, students who may need assistance should an evacuation be necessary are asked to inform their instructors at the beginning of each semester. This request is made to improve the safety of all members of the CSU Community.

Conceptual Framework: The College of Education and the Department of Psychology's conceptual framework serves as the model for preparing all candidates to succeed in serving urban populations. This preparation is characterized and distinguished by five core themes. (1) Partnerships with the education community, (2) assessments of teaching and learning that are consistent and frequent, (3) contextualized teaching experiences, (4) technology-integrated curricula and instructional delivery and (5) standards-based teaching and learning.

Department Mission: The mission of the Counseling Graduate Program is to produce highly qualified graduates equipped to serve the complex counseling needs in the urban setting with specific emphasis on addressing the needs of urban youth and their families. This mission is generated from the belief that counselors equipped to deal with the more difficult problems in large cities will also be effective in other, less challenging settings.

Method of Instruction: Course will include: didactic lectures, course discussion, and review of documents and review of relative films, and group activities. Each student will develop a lesson plan for a group activity and lead their group in the activity. *Note: In addition, students from the class will participate together in at least 10 hours of experiential group process led by a clinician from CSU Counseling Center and the experiential group process led by classmates during class time. Your grade from this course will depend on your participation as well as the preparation of your group leadership, lesson plans, and group proposal. Points will be deducted from your total points achieved in the class if you do not participate or fail to submit required assignments on time. You cannot pass this course without a minimum of 10 hours of participation in the class experiential group. You will be required to meet with the Program Director and depending on the circumstances, will be required to repeat some or the entire experiential component the following semester. As a group member, it will be your responsibility to notify the group leader and the instructor of any attendance concerns. If the group is led by a counselor in the counseling center, the group leader will not discuss details shared during the group with the instructor but will notify the instructor concerning non-attendance or a lack of participation from students.*

Use of Technology: Students are expected to be able to use a computer, access the internet, send and retrieve email, open attachments, and conduct a library search online. The CSU Blackboard will be used to make announcements, course documents, and related videos. Email will be used to send messages to the class and to individual students. It is student's responsibility to ensure that they have access to CSU Blackboard and an email account as messages will be sent to the account on file with the university. In the event that a student has problems with accessing Blackboard or an individual email account, students should contact Academic Computing as soon as possible. If students do not utilize their university email account, Academic Computing can assist in having email messages forwarded to an address of the student's preference. *When using computer during class inappropriately for anything outside of class notes and any other device that causes distraction for the instructor or colleagues during lecture, the instructor will request the student not to bring computer and/or other devices to future classes.* **Electronic Device Notice:** As a matter of courtesy to your classmates and the instructor, please turn off all electronic devices that make noise.

Program Objectives met in this Course (*italicized*):
1. Integrate knowledge of human growth and development into the diagnostic and counseling process.
2. Appropriately use counseling assessment, research, and evaluation protocols.
3. *Use the analysis of the dynamics of the helping relationship in the counseling process.*
4. Prepare and utilize effective educational and career planning in school/clinical mental health counseling settings, including settings with the complex challenges of urban youth, families and communities.
5. *Effectively respond to professional and ethical issues.*
6. Implement an appropriate plan of intervention to use in effectively teaching and counseling clients, including urban youth.
7. *Appropriately respond to social and cultural issues in school/clinical mental health counseling settings.*
8. Integrate counseling knowledge and skills into effective performance as a school/clinical mental health counselor.
9. Effectively coordinate services with other professionals in the school/clinical mental health counseling setting.

Course Objectives: Students will be able to:

Assessments/ Student Outcomes

	Course Objectives	Standards CACREP = Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs CMH = Clinical Mental Health Counseling SC = School Counseling	Assessments/Outcomes
1	Describe the theoretical foundations of groups counseling and group work	**CACREP = 6a**	Exam
2	Explain the dynamics associated with group process and development	**CACREP = 6b**	Individual Group Proposal, Exam
3	Describe the therapeutics factors and how they contribute to group effectiveness.	**CACREP = 6c**	Exam
4	Describe the characteristics and functions of effective group leaders	**CACREP = 6d**	Individual Group Proposal, Group Facilitation, Exam
5	Describe and identify the approaches to group formation, including recruiting, screening, and selecting members.	**CACREP = 6e**	Class Discussion, Group Facilitation, Exam
6	Explain the types of groups and other considerations that affect conducting groups in varied settings	**CACREP = 6f**	Class Discussion, Exam
7	Identify ethical and culturally relevant strategies for designing and facilitating groups	**CACREP = 6g**	Group Facilitation
8	Participate in direct experiences in which students participate as group members in a small group activity, approved by the program, for a minimum of 10 clock hours over the course of one academic term	**CACREP = 6h**	Individual Group Proposal, Group Facilitation, Exam

Professional Standard Sets:

Council for Accreditation for Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) <http://www.cacrep.org>

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Mini Group Leader**
   Each group member will have a minimum of one opportunity to serve in the role of a group facilitator. It is your responsibility as the facilitator to take an active leadership role in the group process on your assigned night. As a facilitator you are expected to meet with the instructor prior to the group in order to discuss the mini group activities (dynamics, group process, skills, techniques, etc.). Each leader will complete the "GROUP LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS SCALE and INTERPRETATION SHEET" as a point of reference for self. As well, each *group member* will complete the "GROUP LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS SCALE" as feedback for group leaders (Appendix A) while group leaders complete the INTERPRETATION SHEET for leadership awareness. The Interpretation Sheet will be given to the group leaders following their facilitation of the group.
   Group Agendas. Group agendas and activities should reflect a theoretical framework inclusive with group goals/objectives for the session you are responsible for facilitating. Group agendas should be prepared and submitted to the instructor one week prior to your group session and copies should be generated amongst group members.
   Professional Disclosure Statement. If you already have a PDS created, you may revise your current PDS to resemble a group PDS for this class. If you have not developed an individual PDS the following items should be included to reflect the group PDS needed for distribution amongst group members. For an example, please see your instructor during your initial group preparation meeting.

- Name
- Contact information
- Formal education
- Professional membership(s)
- Purpose of group counseling
- Diversity statement
- Theoretical foundation
- Confidentiality statement
- Expectations from group counseling
- Drawbacks from group counseling
- Responsibilities of group leaders
- Responsibilities of group members
- Fees
- Referral

2. **Journals**

Every week, students will submit a written record of group experience. The personal reaction journal requires that each student record their thoughts, feelings and general reactions to the group experience. In these separate entries about your personal experience in the group, you will need to incorporate terms and theories learned in class (you are to write an entry about the group experience each week). The journal should include the following: impressions, observations about leader techniques and group interaction, personal concerns, emotional moments or high points, effective interventions, turning points in the course of the group interaction, comments on what is happening in the group and how group is impacting your growth.

- The content of these reflections should be specific and detailed: BE CONCISE, but will be graded on quality, not quantity. **Limit your logs to no more than 2 pages each week, no less than 1 ½ pages double spaced.** These records should have NO specific names of people contained within their text.
- There MUST be at least three paragraphs that follow the format listed within the next few sentences. A paragraph is defined as a minimum of three complete sentences.
    i. Paragraph one provides an account of at least 4group dynamics you observed during the group sections of class. At least one of your dynamics should focus on the leader's role.
    ii. Paragraph two is a reflection that speaks to themes and subjective points that you as a student managed to find between the course topic and the group experience that week.
    iii. Paragraph three is your self-evaluation of your performance as a group member.
- Reflections will be graded based on appropriate application of concepts and accurate identification of group dynamics observed in small group meetings, as well as ability to link observations to course content and to thoughtfully evaluate your own impact on the group process.
- Reflections cannot receive credit if a class is not attended, you cannot submit a reflection for that class and thus, a grade of zero is earned for that reflection as well as deducted points for attendance.

Note: There are 10 reflections that are required per group session. Each reflection is worth 1 point at full credit and will be deducted if requested information for paragraphs i-iii are missing. The following questions should assist you in critically thinking about your group experience. (**10 POINTS**)

The following questions could also be discussed:
- What would you do differently if you were the leader?
- What was your role in the group?
- What overt and covert norms are developing in the group?
- What degree of cohesiveness do you observe and what has impacted the group's cohesiveness?
- What changes have you seen in yourself and others as a result of the group experience?

2. **Individual Theory Presentation**

Each student will select a specific group treatment modality (e.g., Psychodynamic, Gestalt, Existential, etc.) to be researched and presented to the class in a 30 minutes presentation. The presentation should include the following:

Brief History, Key Concepts, Techniques, and ways the modality can be directed toward a specific population or setting (i.e., child, adolescent, adult, correctional facility, community mental health center, child protective services). *A handout or study guide for each student is required and should be distributed amongst class.* Creativity and class involvement are also required (e.g., visual aids, video clips, role-plays, quizzes, cartoon strips, Q & A's, games). The student will lead a class group using methods and techniques from the selected theoretical orientation on the student's scheduled date to lead group. The **last few minutes of the presentation will be used to process the experience of group leader and members (10).**

3. **Individual Group Proposal**
Each student will prepare and illustrate a group proposal that they may one day want to implement as a professional counselor. Students will submit a thoroughly designed **bonded group proposal** for a group program framed in the theory assigned. Students will have two drafting opportunities to submit the approximately 25 pages, APA (6th edition) style paper (Title page, abstract, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12 pt. font, reference page). Minimum of 10 scholarly references are required. References can be articles from journals, books or book chapters that the student has researched and read relative to the population targeting. Please follow the rubric when preparing your proposal to prevent minor point deductions. The proposed group must include the following:

    (30 points) The following points should assist you in critically thinking about your conceptualization. For an example of a possible group proposal, see your instructor.

        a. Rationale for offering the group (Why is this relevant)
        b. Description of the type of group (open vs. closed, personal growth, issue, etc.)
        c. Description of target population (adolescents/adult, age, gender, ethnicity, etc.)
        d. Objectives of group process and possible personal goals of individual members
        e. Legal/ethical information (parental permission, confidentiality safeguards)
        f. Format for pre-screening, initial meeting
        g. Structure of the group process (e.g. Topics for group exploration-can be specific if group includes didactic component or possible themes for more experiential group)
        h. Group leadership requirements (e.g. co-leaders, training)
        i. 8-10 sessions and activities for each session (include actual activities or handouts)
        j. Comments on ethical issues that might arise
        k. Multicultural perspective (interventions with selected population)
        l. Possible problems with this particular group and possible solutions
        m. List of techniques that might be appropriate for this group according to stages of development (from course textbooks and other resources)
        n. Evaluation procedure

Format of the Group Proposal

    I. Introduction
      i. *Purpose & Rationale*
      ii. *Goals & Objectives*
     iii. *Overall Evaluation of Group Program*
    II. Methods
      i. *Logistics of Group Program*
      ii. *Selecting Group Members*
    III. Description of 10 Group Sessions/Activities
      i. *Session's Topic*
      ii. *Goals & Objectives:*
     iii. *Session Activities:*
     iv. *Cultural Implications:*
      v. *Ethical Implications:*
     vi. *Session Evaluation:*
    vii. *Materials Needed:*
    IV. Evaluation of Group
    V. References
    VI. Appendix

i. *Group Flyer*
ii. *Pre-screening Interview Form*
iii. *Applicant's Consent Form*
iv. *Professional Disclosure Statement (PDS)*
v. *Activities*
vi. *Handouts*
vii. *Session Rating Form*
viii. *Group Counseling Feedback Form*

**<u>CAUTION</u>: Before submitting your *1st and final drafts* to the instructor, please take your proposal to the on campus writing lab to have your work proofread for accurate APA format and flow of proposal. You will need to review the criteria to ensure your work is being reviewed per the proposal's requirements before submitting for credit.

COUN 5670: THEORIES & TECHNIQUES IN GROUP COUNSELING ASSESSMENT SHEET

STUDENT: _____   **FINAL GRADE:** _____(30 pts. for this assignment)

PROPOSAL TITLE: _____

ITEM	YES	NO	POSSIBLE POINTS	ACTUAL POINTS	COMMENTS
I. INTRODUCTION					
Purpose & Rationale			2		
Overall Group Goals					
• Multicultural/Diversity			1		
• Ethical issues addressed			1		
Overall Evaluation Plan for Total Group Experience			1		
II. METHODS					
Logistics			2.5		
Selecting group members			2.5		
III. DESCRIPTION OF GROUP ACTIVITIES					
Description in outline form			1		
Time estimates for each activity			1		
Activities			1		
Multicultural considerations			1		
Evaluation plan per session			1		
IV. EVALUATION OF THE GROUP					
Description of evaluation method as described/defined in introduction			1		
Copies of tests, rating forms, questionnaires that are culturally appropriate			2		
Formal/informal evaluation for each objective listed in introduction			2		
V. REFERENCES					
APA (no more than 10 yrs. old)			1		
2 cultural/diversity references			2		
2 ethics references			2		
VI. PROPOSAL IS					
Neat/Creative			1		
Grammatically accurate			2		
Culturally/theoretically competent			2		

BEST WISHES IN YOUR CONTINUED MATURATION
AS A CULTURAL COMPETENT GROUP LEADER

5. **Annotated Bibliography**
   Students will prepare an annotated bibliography for 10 scholarly articles used in the group proposal. Description of article should be thorough, providing the reference citation, a synopsis of the article, and highlights of pertinent details that are relevant to the topic of student's group proposal.

POINTS FOR ASSIGNMENTS
1. Attendance, active participation, and journal reactions   30
2. Co-facilitation/group leadership: 20
   a. agendas/activities (5)
   b. professional disclosure statement (10)
   c. professionalism (5)
3. Theory Presentation *(See rubric)*   10
4. Group Proposal   30
5. Annotated Bibliography   <u>10</u>
                                          Total: 100 points

100- 90 points A; 89- 80 points B; 79-60 points C

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Tentative Class Schedule

Week	Topics	Readings & Assignments
Week 1	Overview/Understanding Group Counseling Presentations/Mini Groups/Population Identification (sign-up)	Handouts
Week 2	Group Dynamics Group Work **Yalom's Group Processes**	Chapters 1/Handouts **10 Scholarly Articles due**
Week 3	Group Leadership (person-ship + leadership) **Yalom's Group Processes**	Chapter 2/Handouts **Bibliography due**
Week 4	Ethics and Professional Issues	Chapter 3/Handouts **GL's 1-Agenda/PDS Due**
Week 5	Early Stages of Group *Experiential Group Session 1 (Group Leader's-1)*	Chapter 4 **GL's 2-Agenda/PDS Due**
Week 6	Early Stages of Group *Experiential Group Session 2 (Group Leader's-2)*	Chapter 5 **Purpose & Rationale due** **GL's 3-Agenda/PDS Due** **Reflective Journal 1 Due**
Week 7	Early Stages of Group *Experiential Group Session 3 (Group Leader's -3)*	Chapter 6 **GL's 4-Agenda/PDS Due** **Reflective Journal 2 Due**
Week 8	Early Stages of Group *Experiential Group Session 4 (Group Leader's -4)*	**GL's 5-Agenda/PDS Due** **Reflective Journal 3 Due**
Week 9	Later Stages of Group *Experiential Group Session 5 (Group Leader's-5)*	**Goals & Objectives /Evaluation due** **GL's 1-Agenda Due** **Reflective Journal 4 Due**
Week 10	Gestalt Therapy & Psychodrama Approach *Experiential Group Session 6 (Group Leader's -1)*	Chapter 7 & 8 **GL's 2-Agenda Due** **Reflective Journal 5 Due**
Week 11	Adlerian Modality & Psychoanalytic Approach Student Presentation/Mini Groups *Experiential Group Session 7 (Group Leader's -2)*	Chapter 9 & 10 **GL's 3-Agenda Due** **Reflective Journal 6 Due**
Week 12	Rational Emotive Therapy & Transactional Analysis Student Presentations/Mini Groups *Experiential Group Session 8 (Group Leader's -3)*	Chapter 11 & 12 **Methods/Evaluation due** **GL's 4-Agenda Due** **Reflective Journal 7 Due**
Week 13	Cognitive Behavioral Approach & Choice/Reality Therapy Modality Student Presentations/Mini Groups *Experiential Group Session 9 (Group Leader's -4)*	Chapter 13 & 14 **GL's 5-Agenda Due** **Reflective Journal 8 Due**
Week 14	*REVIEW* Solution Focus Brief Therapy & Existential Modality *Experiential Group Session 10 (Group Leader's -5)*	Chapters 15 & 16 **10 Sessions/Activities due** **Reference Page due** **Reflective Journal 9 Due**
Week 15	*WRAP UP*	**Reflective Journal 10 Due**
Week 16	*Final Exam* *Presentation of Research Proposal*	**Final Draft Due** **Copies of Ann. Bibs due**

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct: 'Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to cheating, encouraging academic dishonesty, fabrication, plagiarism, bribes, favors, threats, grade tampering, non-original work, and examination by proxy. Procedures regarding academic misconduct are delineated in "Student Policies and Procedures" article X, section 2. If an incident of academic misconduct occurs, the instructor has the option to notify the student and adjust grades downward, award a failing grade for the semester, or seek further sanctions against the student.' Simply stated, plagiarism is using someone's work without giving the appropriate credit. This can mean several things. For examples, all of the following are considered plagiarism.

Copying and pasting text from on-line media, such as encyclopedias.
Copying and pasting text from any web site.
Transcribing test from any printed material, such as books, magazines, journals, encyclopedia, and newspapers.
Simply modifying test from any of the sources is plagiarism. For example, replacing a few words, using a thesaurus does not constitute original work.
Using another students' work and claiming it as your own, even with permission, is academically unethical and is treated as plagiarism.
Anytime you quote, summarize, or paraphrase; you must acknowledge the original source. Even if you summarize or paraphrase, you must acknowledge the original source, if you so not directly credit your sources through a citation you are plagiarizing.

Please refer to this website for more information on plagiarism.
http//www.hamilton.edu/academics/resource/wc/AvoidingPlagiarism.html

Academic Warnings: If students experience issues related but not limited to attendance, missing assignments and exams, and/or limited progress, which may hinder satisfactory progress for course, students should make contact with the instructor and his/her academic advisor as soon as possible.

CSU Credit Hour Definition: For every credit hour of direct instruction in any format (face-to-face, hybrid, online), it is expected that the student will spend a minimum of two additional hours on out-of-class assignments (homework, reports, essays, critical analysis of readings, etc.), which is in addition to studying.

Maintaining confidentiality: This course requires that the students maintain absolute confidentiality regarding all personal material revealed in class. Any breach of confidentiality will be considered a serious ethical and academic violation. Due to the nature of this course, which involves a fair amount of role-playing and other activities that may elicit personal information, it is your duty to maintain confidentiality and trust.

Educational Policies: Classroom expectations and procedures will be governed by the policies of Chicago State University
A. *Disclaimer*: Information contained in this syllabus was, to the best knowledge of the instructor, considered correct and complete when distributed for use at the beginning of the semester. However, this syllabus should not be considered a contract between Chicago State University and any student. The instructor reserves the right, acting within the policies and procedures of CSU, to make changes in course content or instructional techniques without notice or obligation.

B. *Academic Honesty*: Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to cheating, encouraging academic dishonesty, fabrication, plagiarism, bribes, favors, threats, grade tampering, non-original work, and examination by proxy. Procedures regarding academic misconduct are delineated in "Student Policies and Procedures", article X, section 2. If an incident of academic misconduct occurs, the instructor has the option to notify the student in writing and adjust grades downward, award a failing grade for the semester, or seek further sanctions against the student.

C. *Policy on Unattended Children:* Unattended children are not allowed in Harold Washington Hall and other campus buildings.   Please consider leaving your child at the CSU Child Care Center (x2556) where they will be safe while you are in class.

APPENDIX A

GROUP LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS SCALE

Instructions: *Respond to each of the items below with respect to the role of a group leader as you now know them. Consider the entire 1 to 7 scale for each item.*

On a scale of 1 (very low likelihood) to 7 (very high likelihood), indicate how likely the group's leader(s)…

	Very Low			Moderate			Very High
1. Revealed own feelings about members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Showed understanding of members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Clarified members' feelings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Suggested or set limits for the group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Offered my friendship to members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Challenged members' behaviors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Conceptualized group events for members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Directly elicited members' reactions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Managed my time and that of members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Confronted members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Interpreted members' communications	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Praised members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Accepted members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Very Low			Moderate			Very High
14. Spurred reactions from members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Managed group activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Explained situations to members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Participated actively	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Questioned members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Expressed warmth to express	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Summarized members' statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. Suggested procedures for work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Appeared genuine with members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Took emotional risks with members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. Translated behavior to ideas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. Developed closer relationships with members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. Showed how to make decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. Helped members understand their experiences	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. Used personality to inspire members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Interpretation Sheet

The Four Functions:

1. **Catalyzing**   <u>Group Tally</u>
   Release of emotions by demonstration;   High > 41 ___
   leader as center; challenging-confronting   YOUR SCORE   Medium 15-41 ___
   function; modeling; stimulating emotion   Low < 15 ___

   Items: 1, 6, 10, 14, 17, 23, 28

2. **Providing**   <u>Group Tally</u>
   Care-oriented; supportive; warm;   High > 41 ___
   understanding; specific, definable personal   YOUR SCORE   Medium 15-41 ___
   relationships   Low < 15 ___

    Items: 2, 5, 12, 13, 19, 22, 25

3. **Processing**   <u>Group Tally</u>
   Cognitizing behavior; naming function;   High > 41 ___
   translation of feelings and behavior into   YOUR SCORE   Medium 15-41 ___
   ideas for both group and individual   Low < 15 ___
   members

   Items: 3, 7, 11, 16, 20, 24, 28

4. **Directing**   <u>Group Tally</u>
   Conducting; providing meaning; limiting   High > 41 ___
   pacing; sequencing; expression of emotion   YOUR SCORE   Medium 15-41 ___
   through suggestion   Low < 15 ___

   Items: 4, 8, 9, 15, 18, 21, 26

Anderson, Joseph. Social work with groups: A process model. Appendix E – Revised by Fuller, LaShonda 8/14/13

Evidence of critical thinking, must be demonstrated in each assignment. Critical thinking is a unique type of purpose thinking in which standards involve the careful examination and evaluation of beliefs and actions in order to arrive at well reasoned ones. This purposeful and responsive thinking is guided by intellectual standards of relevance, clarity, depth, and breadth. Critical thinkers routinely ask the following questions:

- ✓ What is the purpose of my thinking here (goal/objective)?
- ✓ What precise question (problem) am I trying to answer?
- ✓ What point of view (perspective) am I thinking?
- ✓ What concepts or ideas are central to my thinking?
- ✓ What am I taking for granted, what assumptions am I making?
- ✓ What information am I using (data, facts, observations)?
- ✓ What conclusions am I coming to?
- ✓ If I accept the conclusions, what are the implications?
- ✓ What would the consequences be if I put my thoughts into action?

For each element, the thinker considers the standards that shed light on the **effectiveness** of their thinking. It is self-assessing (self-critical), and self-improving (self-corrective). The thinker assesses his or her thinking, using appropriate standards. If you are not assessing your thinking, you are not thinking critically.

Many students find it difficult to prepare graduate level papers. Part of the problem is simply a paucity of practice. I strongly urge you to proofread your work and then have it reviewed by an objective individual that has a good command of writing mechanics. Below are a list of some of the most common errors related to grammar, punctuation, and other sentence-level matters. It may be wise to use the items below as a checklist during the preparation of your paper.

1. Missing coma after an introductory element pronoun reference 2. Missing comma in a compound sentence 3. Wrong word 4. Missing comma(s) with a nonrestrictive element 5. Wrong or missing verb ending 6. Wrong or missing proposition 7. Comma Splice 8. Missing or misplaced possessive apostrophe 9. Unnecessary shift in tense	10. Unnecessary shift in pronoun 11. Sentence fragment 12. Wrong tense or verb form 13. Lack of subject-verb agreement 14. Missing comma in a series 15. Lack of agreement between pronoun and antecedent 16. Unnecessary comma(s) with a restrictive element 17. Fused sentence 18. Misplaced or dangling modifier 19. Its/It's confusion