I. Catalogue Description

SW 624 - Exploration of the small group as the interventive unit; major models and techniques; principles guiding the selection of the small group approach to intervention based on research knowledge of problems, processes, and outcomes.

SW 454 - Exploration and application of theory to the formation and development of small groups deliberately used by social workers to effect specified change in interpersonal relationships.

II. Course Overview and Objectives

Social Work 454/624 is a practice course intended to enhance the student’s ability to understand, develop, and implement group interventions in social work practice. This will be done through readings, lectures, example presentations, and practice using social work theory in the direct practice of change with social work clients while focusing on culturally competent skills development for working with small groups.

The course content is what you need to know to master the course objectives. The focus of this course is the mastery of general knowledge and interventions in the field of social work as they relate to small group interventions as educational, counseling, therapy, and task-focused interventions. These interventions will incorporate individual, family, agency, and community needs assessment to establish group utility and focus. It will involve acquiring the necessary sanctions to implement the groups in a variety of settings. The course will explore the concept of recruiting members and assessing group-readiness or these recruits. The course will also examine the various theories associated with group change, group process, and evaluating group effectiveness. Intertwined within each of the areas of focus will be the consideration and application of culturally-relevant issues and a strength-based approach to implementing the small group interventions.
By the end of this semester, students should have:
1. Developed an understanding of the generalist and strengths-perspectives as it relates to
group work theories, knowledge, and skills.
2. Developed and understanding the implications of cultural diversity (*i.e.*, age, race,
gender, ethnicity, income, sexual orientation, disability, setting) on the functioning and
use of groups.
3. Practiced the skill of assessing a group activity for a range of implementation criteria.
4. Practiced at an entry-level, the conducting of micro-level small group interventions.
5. Utilized their understanding of the course material and their own creativity to develop a
small group’s intervention strategy to address a community need.

III. COURSE COMPETENCIES AND PRACTICE BEHAVIORS:

Successful completion of this course implies that students will have progressed toward achieving
social work competencies by demonstrating the following behaviors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies Addressed in Course</th>
<th>Practice Behaviors Addressed in Course</th>
<th>Assignment(S) Measuring Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly</td>
<td>▪ Applying knowledge of social services, policies, and programs relevant to work with a variety of social work clients using small group format. In so doing will utilize the generalist social work perspective.</td>
<td>Assignment One, Two, and Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice</td>
<td>▪ Evaluate ethical dilemmas related to problems and issues encountered while using small groups in social work practice.</td>
<td>Assignments One and Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments</td>
<td>▪ Identify and synthesize multiple sources of knowledge on the use of small groups from a variety of theoretical models. Examine practice issues related to the assessment and treatment of participants served with the small group interventions. ▪ Identify and evaluate models of intervention that are appropriate for the use of small groups interventions.</td>
<td>Assignments One, Two, and Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice</td>
<td>▪ Demonstrate an understanding of how culture and values affect diverse conceptualizations and construction applicable to small group interventions.</td>
<td>Assignment One and Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research</td>
<td>▪ Critically evaluate and utilize empirical research relevant to developing, conducting, and evaluating small group interventions for social work.</td>
<td>Assignments One and Two</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment

- Evaluate and apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment to choose populations and circumstances appropriate for small group interventions.

Assignments One and Two

2.1.10a Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

- Employ diverse strategies to engage with individuals, families, organizations, and communities using small group formats and strategies.

Assignments One and Two

2.1.10b Assess individuals and families

- Assess individuals and families to determine a range of potentially effective and appropriate small group interventions.

Assignment One

2.1.10c Intervene with individuals and families

- Demonstrate ability to intervene at different levels utilizing small group conceptualization and implementation skills.

Assignment One

IV. Course Content

Students are required to complete all outside readings for each week prior to class, including review of any assigned websites. This course is designed as an interactive seminar that uses a variety of formats to integrate class with practice experiences that students encounter in field training. Active, meaningful participation in class sessions is essential for an optimum learning experience. The course will include some lecture, experiential exercises, use of media, outside guest speakers (if possible), and considerable opportunity for discussion and critical thinking. Students will also engage in direct practice assessing, facilitating, and developing small group interventions.

Course outline, topics and readings:

Week 1: January 17, 2017

Topics: Introductions; Review of the Syllabus

Theory and Practice related to selecting small groups as an intervention.

Required Readings:


Week 2: January 24, 2017  
Topics: Evidence Based Practice  
Socially Conscious Group Dynamics (Macro)

Required Readings:


Week 3: January 31, 2017  
Topics: Socially Conscious Group Dynamics (Macro)(Cont'd)  
Group Leadership

Required Readings:


Week 4: February 7, 2017  
Topics: Group Development

Required Readings:


Week 5: February 14, 2017  
Topics: Group Stages - Initial Stage  

Required Readings:  

Week 6: February 21, 2017  
Topics: Group Stages – Transition Stage  

Required Readings:  

Week 7: February 28, 2017  
Topics: Group Stages – Working Stage  

Required Readings:  

Week 8: March 7, 2017  
Topics: Group Stages – Final Stage  
*Group Observation Assignment Due*  

Required Readings:  


Week 9: March 14, 2017  
Topics: Types of Groups – Purpose and Theory  

Required Readings:  

Week 10: March 21, 2017
Topics: Types of Groups – Population and Setting

Required Readings:


Week 11: March 28, 2017
Spring Break

Week 12: April 4, 2017
Topics: Types of Groups – Organization/Community

Required Readings:


Week 13: April 11, 2017
Topics: Group Work Research and Evaluation

Required Readings:


**Week 14: April 18, 2017**  
Topics: Ethical/Professional Issues

**Required Readings:**  


**Week 15: April 25, 2017**  
Topics: Ethical cont’d  
Course Overview

**Required Readings:**  


**Week 16: May 2, 2017**  
Topics: Course Overview

* **Group Development Paper Due**

V. Texts and Reading Materials for the course  
Readings will be available through LEARN@MyUW, provided in class, or available on the internet. While not assigned, it is expected that students have read the NASW Code of Ethics and can draw upon their understanding of the Code in discussions and assignments. A hardcopy of the readings will be on reserve in the Social Work Library.

The readings were drawn from articles and the following text books:

VI. Evaluation of Competencies and Practice Behaviors: Assignments, Grading and Methods

Grades are assigned according to the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>outstanding; excellent work in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>88-93</td>
<td>outstanding; excellent work in many areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82-87</td>
<td>meets expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>76-81</td>
<td>meets expectations in some areas; below in others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-75</td>
<td>below expectations in most areas; (not acceptable graduate work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64-69</td>
<td>below expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;64</td>
<td>fails to meet minimal expectations in all areas, not acceptable work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grade Points:**
- Course Contribution-Professional Participation: 10 points
- Group Observation Assignment: 20 points
- Assignment Plan For Video/Class Role Play: 15 points
- Video/Class Role Play: 20 points
- Final Paper: 35 points
- Total Points: 100 points

**Assignments and Grading**

1. **Course Contribution-Professional Participation (10 Points)**
   Students are expected to attend class weekly, read assigned material ahead of time, come to class on time with questions and comments, performing as a volunteer in the group role plays, and participate professionally in class discussions.

   Participation is viewed qualitatively rather than quantitatively (emphasis on the quality of participation more than quantity). All students come with a variety of experiences, personal and professional. Please do not slight yourself because your perspective is different or because you feel as if others have more professional experience. This is a class to learn, all of us will be engaging in a collaborative learning process.

2. **Group Observation Assignment (20 points)**
   Students are required to locate a service agency that provides group social work services or support groups. When the student locates an agency they want to use for this assignment, they must request and obtain permission from an agency administrator and a group leader to observe a group. Sometimes students have difficulty finding a group to observe. Therefore, start researching agencies for opportunities as soon as possible to ensure completing this assignment! Many agencies have requirements that student observers be approved as “volunteers” and sometimes approval entails various background checks. Volunteer coordinators at agencies usually know what the agency’s requirements are. Agencies that offer psycho-educational groups can be more likely to allow observers. If the student cannot find a group to observe, other options include:
• Attending TWO 12-step program meetings and observing the group interactions in self-help groups.
• Joining a therapy or psycho-educational group and observing the interactions in the group while attending.

In all situations of group observation or participation and observation students must respect and keep confidentiality. Students are to observe the group, taking notes while you observe or immediately afterwards if note-taking behavior seems too disruptive to process. This assignment includes the requirement that once the student returns home and reflects on their experience, he or she creates a group profile and reaction paper including the following information:

a) **Purpose & Group Composition:** The purpose of the group, including the benefits and goals for group participants and Group composition and structure – **2 points**

b) **Facilitator’s Leadership Style:** The facilitator’s leadership techniques and style (students may interview the group facilitator after their group experience to find out more about how the group operates, etc.) – **3 points**

c) **Group Dynamics:** Specific dynamics noted re: interactions between members, systems observations, etc. – **3 points**

d) **Group Stage:** The stage of group development that the student can analyze from observations. – **3 points**

e) **Overall Assessment:** Based on student’s group analysis (c-f above) and material from the class, conclude the paper with an overall assessment of the strengths of the group and areas that might be improved or facilitated differently. – **4 points**

This paper should be 3-5 Pages, double spaced, 12-point font. It is acceptable for this papers to be written in a casual, first-person manner, but must include proper grammar and be clearly written. Most importantly the paper should demonstrate reflection and critical thinking

**Grading Rubric for Group Observation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria:</th>
<th>Point Value:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper meets basic requirements of length, clarity and strong writing.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper answered each of the questions above, addresses connection of materials to field work, important themes of the class, and weekly readings</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper includes evidence of critical thinking and analysis.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Video/Class Role Play** (**35 points-15 points for Assignment Plan, 20 for video/Class Role Play**)

Students will pair up and inform the instructor of their parings by the third class period (if students need help in pairing up the instructor will assist in this process). Each member of the pair will take turns as a group leader and as a supportive group co-facilitator.

The assignment should be done in the following four steps:
STEP ONE: Each student will select a theory or method of group facilitation from class, the required readings, or the recommended readings. Each student will develop a working knowledge of this theory and be prepared to use it in a 30 minute role play as a group leader.

STEP TWO: *(Written product)* Each student will submit a “Video/Class Assignment Plan” that includes the following:

1) A brief scenario outlining the group topic, location, and a general description of who would be attending the group (type of client that your fellow class mates will be role playing). **2 points**

2) Why you chose this particular group theory or method for this population and topic. **2 points**

3) 1-2 objectives you hope to accomplish during this group session. **2 points**

4) How you would go about reaching proposed objectives. **3 points**

STEP THREE: The theory being used and the scenario should be shared and reviewed with your partner. (Ideally you will pair up with someone who has similar interests theoretically or population wise.)

STEP FOUR: You should select one of the available due dates for submitting the video/class role play assignment (note that the Video/Class Assignment Plan is due one-week prior to the video submission or class role play).

As a class we will assign 5-6 volunteers to act as group members. (Note: Part of your class participation grade is participating in a cooperative manner with this assignment as a participant volunteer). We will then role play the group for 20-30 minutes, with one of the pair acting as the Lead facilitator and the other acting as a co-facilitator for 10-15 minutes each. Following the role play, group members will offer feedback as will the class as to what seemed to go well and what might have been better (Note: Feedback is expected to be given constructively and respectfully, in line with the professional conduct of social workers in-training).

**(Assignment Plan (15 Points) + Videoed/Class Role Play (20 points) = 35 total points.**

*Grading Rubric for Video/Class Assignment Plan:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria:</th>
<th>Point Value:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper meets basic requirements of length, clarity and strong writing.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper addresses connection of materials to field work, important themes of the class, and weekly readings.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper includes evidence of critical thinking and analysis.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Grading Rubric for Video/Class Role Play:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria:</th>
<th>Point Value:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructions were followed including staying within the time limit and staying consistent with theory or method of group facilitation selected based on the required readings, or the recommended readings.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a part of the Role Play, working collaboratively with the co-facilitator, Show knowledge of theory or method being used, ability to adapt, keep the group on topic, working towards group objectives, shows appropriate</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
verbal and non verbal responses, and uses language appropriate and consistent with selected population.

4. **Group Development Paper – 35 pts**  
   Identify and study an issue relevant for social work practice in a Wisconsin community or agency of your choosing. (Can be a community or agency in another state if you plan to re-locate to that community.) Examples of issues might be teenage pregnancy, drug prevention, drug treatment, unemployment, violence, etc. Describe the development of a group for that population. Factors to be considered when proposing a group are:

- Rationale
- Objectives
- Practical Considerations
- Procedures
- Evaluation

For this assignment you are expected to address these issues along with a few additional points of concern. To assist you I have provided an outline that addresses the five points for the checklist as well as the additional considerations. They are listed below along with the point value assigned to each:

**RATIONALE: **[5 total points]
A. Introduction: Brief Introduction of topic and need identified in community. – 2 pts.
B. Setting the Stage: Describe your plan for identifying a host agency and getting permission from your host agency to implement this group. – 3 pts.

**OBJECTIVES and PROCEDURES: **[10 total points]
C. Suggested Model of Intervention: What population will be served by this group and what type of group would best serve this at-risk population, (include general topic and whether the group will be open or closed and give rationale for your choice). – 1 pts.
D. Group Leader: Leadership skills needed – 2 pts.
E. Outline of Group Content: A brief outline of the group’s objectives and how you propose to meet these objectives. This should include a specific intervention strategy for each objective. – 7 pts.

**PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS: **[10 total points]
F. Recruitment: Membership recruitment – 2 pts.
G. Group Setting: Setting location and Physical environment – 2 pts.
H. When will the group meet and for how long. – 2 pts.
I. Basic norms of the group – expectations of participants for attendance and participation- 4 pts.

**EVALUATION: **[5 total points]
J. Ethical and cultural considerations: Discuss these topics considering the topic suggested and the population served. – 2 pts.
K. Termination: How will you end the group and what type of follow-up might you suggest—1pts.
L. Outcome Measure: Discuss how you would measure group effectiveness—2pts.

**Grading Rubric for Final Paper:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper meets basic requirements of length, clarity and professional writing.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describes the development of a group for a selected population, addresses the five points of group development, and utilizes appropriate practice skills for working with specific group/population</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student uses critical thinking to examine and incorporate the themes of the course, including Evidence-Based Practice, Diversity, and thoughtful discussion of ethical issues and a connection to the Code of Ethics.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use of the strength-based perspective should be included in this paper. The paper should be **no less than eight to twelve pages long** (not including reference pages or cover page). It must be typed using 12 point font and double spaced.

Ground your perspective and argument(s) in your knowledge of the subject based on readings and lecture. Writing style will be important, specific attention should be given to organization, paragraphs and sentence structure, clarity, and the handling of factual and source material. Care should be used to ensure that the ideas of others are cited appropriately using APA style. **The writing Lab on campus is a great resource. The main location of the Writing Center is in room 6171 Helen C. White Hall, 600 North Park Street.**

**VII. Course Policies**

**Reading Assignments:** Students are expected to have read all assigned material prior to the class date under which the readings are listed above. Reading and critically evaluating what you have read is necessary so that you can learn, actively participate in class discussions, and successfully complete written assignments.

**Written Assignment Policy:**
All written assignments are to be either typed or computer-generated, and are due by 5:00 pm on the due date indicated. Assignments should be submitted via LEARN@UW. Please format these assignments using one-inch margins, double-spacing, and a Times New Roman 12-point font. Always include a cover sheet (not counted as one of the required pages) with the title of the paper, your name, the date turned into the instructor, course number, and course title (do not put this information on the first page of your paper). All assignments should be checked thoroughly for correct spelling and grammar.

**Late Assignment Policy:**
Unapproved late assignments will be marked down a ½ grade for each day they are late, and approval for a late assignment must be requested prior to the time the assignment is
due. You are in charge of keeping track of when your assignments are due, and are responsible for handing them in on time. Please contact me as soon as possible if any unusual circumstances arise.

LEARN@UW
All students in the class are required to access Learn UW for additional communication and information regarding the course. Please check Learn@UW on Monday evenings for student Power Points/Outlines when available and other resources pertinent to class the next day. I will respond to email communication every 24 hours (to be checked once per day, most likely in the evening). Please let me know if you have trouble accessing information in this way.

At times there have been issues with Word document compatibility, so open documents early to check for problems, and let me know if you need docs saved in a different version of Word.

Students with Disabilities
If you require accommodations to obtain equal access to this class or to any assignments that I may give, please contact me as soon as possible. I want all my students to have an excellent learning experience.

Student Professionalism:
In order to learn, we must be open to the views of everyone in the classroom. Each and every voice is important and brings with it a wealth of experiences, values and beliefs. Please respect your fellow students’ opinions and refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments of any kind. Students are expected to utilize the four skills of dialogue: Suspend judgment, listen toward understanding, uncover and examine their assumptions, and inquire with genuine curiosity. As a result of this students will be able to reflect on what has been offered with the goal of creating group cohesiveness in the learning environment. Dynamic, engaged dialogue is critical to your learning experience. Finally, remember to keep confidential all issues of a personal or professional nature discussed in class. The following is a list of additional expectations of student professionalism. 

- Be on time to class each week, and stay for the duration of the class. Utilize breaks so that there is no need to disrupt class time.
- Respect another person’s viewpoint with which you may disagree, and respect each student’s right to be heard in the classroom.
- Demonstrate a capacity to embrace diversity and difference.
- Actively participate in classroom discussion.
- Refrain from technology use during class.
- Write email correspondence with the instructor in a manner that is respectful and timely.
- If you miss class, obtain class materials and other notes from a classmate.
- If you have any concerns with the course, contact the instructor promptly.

Code of Ethics, Student Rights and Responsibilities & Plagiarism
BSW and incoming MSW students read and signed electronic forms of the NASW Code of Ethics, the School of Social Work Plagiarism Policy and the Student Rights and Responsibilities. In doing so, they agreed that while in the BSW or MSW Program they would honor the NASW Code of Ethics and Student’s Rights and Responsibilities, as well as adhere to the Plagiarism
Policy and that should they not do so, sanctions would be imposed. BSW and MSW students are expected to adhere to these policies in the classroom, in the field and in the preparation of course assignments.

A Note on Plagiarism
Plagiarism involves the use of others’ words, ideas, or evidence without clearly acknowledging the source. Plagiarism in this class (and other classes) is unacceptable and will be treated as serious ethical breach with possible penalties including: a failing grade on the assignment, failing the class, and/or referral to the Dean of Students Office.

Maintaining ownership of your work is often challenging when writing papers using multiple sources. Nevertheless, intentional plagiarism is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism occurs when you do any of the following in an assignment:
- Use someone else’s words either verbatim or almost verbatim without citation (even if the work does not have a clear author—for instance in a website)
- Use someone else’s evidence, line of thinking or idea without citation
- Turn in someone else’s work as your own, as in copying a peer’s paper or purchasing a readymade paper
- Turn in previously submitted work as if new, without the instructor’s approval

Attendance Policy:
This course is highly interactive and attendance is required. Attendance is defined as arriving on time, staying through the entire class, and leaving only for scheduled breaks. In order for you and your fellow classmates to benefit from this course, attendance and active participation are expected. If you are unable to attend class, please email me prior to class so that you can receive an excused absence; you may receive one per semester. Arriving late to class or leaving class early, without prior approval from the instructor, will result in an unexcused absence. Three points will be deducted from your grade for each unexcused absence incurred.

Absence
To ensure a quality educational experience, students must attend and participate in classes.
- Excused & Unexcused Absences:
  1) The first unexcused absence will result in a student’s grade being dropped one full grade
  2) The second unexcused absence will place the student at risk for failing the course

  3) On a case by case basis, it is left to the instructor’s discretion as to what is defined as an excused absence as well as to determine appropriate follow up plans

- Additional graded make-up work appropriate for the content missed will be assigned for excused and unexcused absences.
- Students are responsible for completing any class requirements for the day missed, and for obtaining from a fellow classmate any assignments, materials, and communications missed due to absence, late arrival, or early departure.
• Students who must be absent due to inclement weather or other emergencies should contact the instructor prior to the start of class to be considered for an excused absence.

• Inclement Weather Policy
  1) For weather concerns, check your email Wednesday night and/or Thursday morning prior to class, in the event that class might be cancelled due to dangerous weather.

  2) If classes are not cancelled but an individual student concludes he/she cannot safely travel to reach his/her class site, the student must contact his/her instructor(s) regarding his/her plan to not travel. This absence will be considered excused and makeup work may be assigned.

Technology in the Classroom:
A minimal level of external distractions is essential to a productive learning environment. Cellphones, smart phones, iPods, iPads, laptops and any other electronic devices are not to be used during class except in unusual circumstances and with the consent of the instructor.

Ongoing Feedback
I want to be an asset to your learning process. I will be available to discuss any aspect of the course or your work. I will plan to check email on a daily basis and make every effort to respond to emails within 24 hours. If you would like to schedule a phone consultation or meeting on campus, please inform me in advance so we can allow time for this to be scheduled.

I greatly appreciate on-going student input regarding reactions, suggestions, and/or concerns about the course. Feedback and suggestions for improving this course are always welcomed. Feel free to see me personally if you have any concerns about any part of the course. In-person or written comments are always welcome (anonymous or identified).

Final Note: While I attempt to be as thorough as possible, I reserve the right to make adjustments and changes to the syllabus. I ask that you be flexible and adaptive in the event changes are needed. I very much hope together we can make this class interesting and useful for your future endeavors.