

# SW 3F03: Social Work with Groups

* January 6 – April 7, 2020, Thursdays, 7-10 p.m.
* Instructor: Dana Gillespie Tozer
* Office: KTH-328
* Office hours: by appointment
* Email: gillesdc@mcmaster.ca
* Phone: 905-525-9140 ext. 21587

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# Course Overview

## Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to deepen your understanding of social work with groups. Social workers are required to work with groups in almost all practice settings. Whether the “group” is a case conference, team meeting, research focus group, community meeting, or group therapy, social workers are called upon to understand group dynamics and know how to facilitate group process.

This course will provide an opportunity to learn and practice specific skills necessary to promote effective group functioning – both as group members and group facilitators – based on an understanding of various dynamics, systems and structural influences. It is designed to help students further develop skills and comfort in group development, analysis, facilitation, and evaluation.

## Course Objectives:

1. Construct meaning from the history and development of group work practice within the profession of Social Work, as well as its function within the current socio-political context;
2. Demonstrate an awareness of different types of groups and their appropriate use in meeting service users’ needs;
3. Analyse and interpret theories that frame group work;
4. Demonstrate skills in analysis of group planning, process and facilitation;
5. Reflect upon ethical considerations, organizational and social contexts while attending to issues of power and structural forces, and;
6. Demonstrate awareness of social location and its impact on group process, dynamics and participation.

The basic assumptions of this course concur with the broader curriculum context set by the **School of Social Work's Statement of Philosophy**:

*As social workers, we operate in a society characterized by power imbalances that affect us all. These power imbalances are based on age, class, ethnicity, gender identity, geographic location, health, ability, race, sexual identity and income. We see personal troubles as inextricably linked to oppressive structures. We believe that social workers must be actively involved in the understanding and transformation of injustices in social institutions and in the struggles of people to maximize control over their own lives.*

## Course Format:

The course will provide a variety of learning experiences including lectures, case study analyses, small and large group discussions. The course will be divided into two parts – the first half will involve a lecture, and the second half will be in tutorial groups that will be assigned in the second week. Classroom discussion is welcomed and students are encouraged to bring examples from their practice and/or life experience to illustrate or enrich the material.

## Required Texts:

1. Pelech, W., Basso, R., Lee, C. & Gandarilla, M. (2016). *Inclusive Group Work*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
2. Drumm, K. (2006). The Essential Power of Group Work. *Social Work with Groups*. 29(2-3), 17-31.
3. Humphrey, K.R. (2013). Using a Student-Led Support Group to Reduce Stress and Burnout Among BSW Students. *Social Work with Groups*. 36(1), 73-84.

## Additional Suggested Readings:

Books:

1. Toseland, R.W. & Rivas, R.F. (2017). *An Introduction to Group Work Practice*. Toronto, ON: Allyn & Bacon.
2. Corey, M., Corey, G. & Corey, C. (2008). *Groups: Process and Practice*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.
3. Garvin, C.D., Gutierrez, L.M. & Galinsky, M.J. (2004). *Handbook of Social Work With Groups*. New York, NY: Guilford.
4. Wickham, E., Pelech, W. & Basso, R. (2009). Group Work Practice: An *Integration of Experience, Theory & Practice*. Toronto, ON: Thompson Educational Publishing.
5. Zastrow, C. H. (2012). *Social Work with Groups: A Comprehensive Worktext.* Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning.

Journal:

1. *Social Work with Groups* – available as ejournal through McMaster Libraries

# Course Requirements/Assignments

## Requirements Overview and Deadlines:

1. Assignment One (15%) – due February 6, 2020
2. Assignment Two (30%) – due March 12, 2020
3. Assignment Three (35%) – due April 2, 2020*\* Note: this is the final assignment for purposes of the Late Withdrawal Policy.*
4. Assignment Four (20%) – due 2 weeks following facilitation date

Requirement/Assignment Details

1. Assignment One: Exploration of Group Application:

Drawing upon lectures, reading, fields of interest and lived experience, you will submit a paper exploring a social issue/presenting problem/population and the potential of group work as an effective practice application.

*This paper will include at least one external source (in addition to the course text) and will consider the following questions:*

* A brief synopsis of the issue you wish to explore and the type of group you propose
* *An argument why group work might be an appropriate and effective practice application*
* Possible ethical considerations, or worries you might have in facilitating this group
* *How this group would aim to incorporate principals of inclusivity*

Please consult Assignment One rubric for grading structure and expectations.

Length: 3-5 pages; double spaced

Due: February 6, 2020

Weight: 15%

### Assignment Two: Literature Review & Annotated Bibliography

A literature review is an objective, critical summary of published research literature relevant to a topic under consideration. Its purpose is to create familiarity with current thinking and research on a particular topic and may justify future ideas/thoughts into a previously overlooked or understudied area.

This assignment invites you to further delve in and explore the issue or population that your group is aimed at, by examining the existing body of knowledge on this topic. Your literature review will include the following:

* An introduction detailing the intent and scope of the literature review
* A review of at least 5 peer-reviewed academic sources related to your topic of exploration, outlining premise, findings/conclusions and critical reflections; in the form of an annotated bibliography
* A conclusion summarizing key findings and a re-developed argument for the use of group work and your area of interest.

Please consult Assignment Two rubric for grading structure and expectations.

Length: 8-10 pages; double spaced

Due: March 12, 2020

Weight: 30%

### Assignment Three: Group Proposal

For this assignment, you will imagine that you are planning the proposed group you have be exploring in your first two assignments and must prepare a proposal to submit to your (assumed) agency/community group for approval. A handout will provide proposal headings and an outline. Additionally, many of the texts listed as potential sources within this outline, offer examples.

Students are expected to use course materials for this assignment, incorporating learning from previous assignments, and should reference as appropriate.

Please consult Assignment Three rubric for grading structure and expectations.

Length: 10-12 pages; double spaced

Due: April 2, 2020

Weight: 35%

### Assignment Four: Peer Led Support Group Facilitation Reflection

Throughout the course, students will be utilizing tutorials for a peer-led support group for BSW students. All students will take turns facilitating the weekly group, on a specific topic. This assignment will draw upon this experience by outlining the following:

* Your outline/plan for the session
* Your reflection on the session itself – what went well, what you might have done differently; incorporating peer feedback
* Specific ways you aimed to incorporate principles of inclusivity
* Your understanding of your own emerging style of group leadership/ facilitation, including strengths, as well as areas for further development

Please note that no marks on this assignment will be attributed to how ‘*well’* you facilitated a group. Rather, this paper explores your ability to critically reflect on your facilitation and leadership style. A handout will be provided outlining the expectations of this assignment more thoroughly.

Length: 3-5 pages; double spaced

Due: 2 weeks following your facilitation

Weight: 20% (including 5% for outline, provided to and approved by marker one-week prior group facilitation)

# Assignment Submission and Grading

## Form and Style:

* Written assignments must be typed and double-spaced and submitted with a front page containing the title, student’s name, student number, and the date. Number all pages (except title page).
* Assignments should be stapled together. Please do NOT use plastic report covers or binders.
* Paper format must be in accordance with the current edition of American Psychological Association (APA) publication manual with particular attention paid to font size (12 pt.), spacing (double spaced) and margins (minimum of 1 inch at the top, bottom, left and right of each page) as papers not meeting these requirements will not be accepted for grading.
* Students are expected to make use of relevant professional and social science literature and other bodies of knowledge in their term assignments. When submitting, please keep a spare copy of your assignments.

## Submitting Assignments & Grading:

* All assignments are due on the dates outlined in this course outline.
* Assignments are expected to be handed in at the beginning of class, to your assigned marker; with the exception of Assignment Three, which will be submitted via your mac email account to your marker.
* Rubrics will be distributed for all the assignments prior to the assignment being due.
* Any late assignments must be negotiated with the instructor directly, prior to submission.
* Mark deductions based on late submissions may be assigned.

### Statement for Foundation Course Outlines:

This course is a foundation course. Students must obtain a minimum grade of C+ in all foundation courses and a “Pass” in each placement (as well as maintain a minimum overall GPA of 6.0) in order to remain in the Social Work program.

Please see the Resources section of our [website for details on the policy regarding minimum grade requirements in foundation courses and what happens if these are not met.](https://socialwork.mcmaster.ca/resources/undergraduate-resources/minimum-grade-requirements-in-the-bsw-programs.docx/view)

## Privacy Protection:

In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers themselves; tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student. Similarly, grades for assignments for courses may only be posted using the last five digits of the student number as the identifying data. The following possibilities exist for return of graded materials:

1. Direct return of materials to students in class;
2. Return of materials to students during office hours;
3. Students attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with assignments for return by mail;
4. Submit/grade/return papers electronically.

Arrangements for the return of assignments from the options above will be finalized during the first class.

**Extreme Circumstances:**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

# Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to contribute to the creation of a respectful and constructive learning environment. Students should read material in preparation for class, attend class on time and remain for the full duration of the class. A formal break will be provided in the middle of each class, students are to return from the break on time.

In the past, student and faculty have found that non-course related use of laptop computers and hand-held electronic devices during class to be distracting and at times disruptive. Consequently, during class students are expected to only use such devices for taking notes and other activities directly related to the lecture or class activity taking place.

Please check with the instructor before using any audio or video recording devices in the classroom.

Students are expected to enter into the classroom space with empathy and contribute to nurturing a safer space amongst their peers and the teaching team. This includes being mindful of the impact of their statements, verbal and non-verbal communication, and an awareness of the socio-cultural-political dynamic present both within and outside of the class environment.

## Attendance

## Foundation Course Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all classes. If you anticipate difficulty with this, please speak with the instructor. Missing a substantial number of classes often results in essential course requirements not being met (these must be met to pass the course). Students who are close to missing 20% of classes must contact the instructor to discuss.

## Academic Integrity:

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf)

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

* Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
* Improper collaboration in group work.
* Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

## Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](https://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-StudentsWithDisabilities.pdf) policy.

## Accessibility Statement:

The School of Social Work recognizes that people learn and express their knowledge in different ways. We are committed to reducing barriers to accessibility in the classroom, and working towards classrooms that welcome diverse learners. If you have accessibility concerns or want to talk about your learning needs, please be in touch with the course instructor.

## Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO):

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar’s Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Please review the [RISO information for students in the Faculty of Social Sciences](https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/current-students/riso) about how to request accommodation.

## E-mail Communication Policy:

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, they may not reply.

### McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF)

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

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### Extensions and Incomplete Courses

Extensions:

All instructors understand that life situations sometimes make it very difficult to hand in an assignment on the date it is due. If you need more time to complete an assignment, talk with your instructor – in advance of the assignment deadline! Once you and your instructor have agreed on a new due date, it is your responsibility to submit your assignment on time. If you find yourself unable to meet deadlines in more than one course, please reach out to Tammy Maikawa, Administrator ([millet@mcmaster.ca](mailto:millet@mcmaster.ca) ) or Sandra Preston, Undergraduate Chair ([prestosl@mcmaster.ca](mailto:prestosl@mcmaster.ca) ). We are here to support you to think about options (such as reducing your course load) that can take the stress off and contribute to your success in the program overall.

Incomplete courses:

If you are not able to complete all of your assignments by the end of term, you have the option of contacting the instructor to request an Incomplete (INC) on the course. If the instructor agrees, (taking into account the amount of outstanding coursework and the time it will likely take to complete), the instructor will enter the grade you have so far in the course (the default grade) and the course will appear in Mosaic as INC (incomplete).

The School’s requirements for completing courses depend on a) the nature of the course (whether it is a foundation course\*, or a social and political context course) and b) when you are hoping to start placement. For example, a student who has an incomplete in a foundation course cannot start placement. Please see the [Policy on Extensions and Incompletes in the BSW Program](https://socialwork.mcmaster.ca/resources/undergraduate-resources/policy-on-extensions-and-incompletes-november-2019.docx/view) for more details.

At approximately 52-60 days after the end of term, the Mosaic system will automatically change an INC to the default grade. Depending on the default grade, this might affect your standing or progress in the program.

*As always, if you have any questions or concerns about your progress in the program, please connect with Tammy Maikawa, Administrator (*[*millet@mcmaster.ca*](mailto:millet@mcmaster.ca) *) or Sandra Preston, Undergraduate Chair (*[*prestosl@mcmaster.ca*](mailto:prestosl@mcmaster.ca)*).*

# Course Weekly Topics and Readings

Course Weekly Topics and Readings:

Week 1: January 9, 2020

Topics:

* Introduction to groups
* Introduction to this course

Readings:

* Pelech et al., Ch. 1
* Drumm, K. (2006). The Essential Power of Group Work. *Social Work with Groups*. 29(2-3), 17-31.

Week 2: January 16, 2020

Topics:

* Strengths-based group leadership and facilitation

Readings:

* Pelech et al., Ch. 3
* Humphrey, K.R. (2013). Using a Student-Led Support Group to Reduce Stress and Burnout Among BSW Students. *Social Work with Groups*. 36(1), 73-84.

Week 3: January 23, 2020

Topics:

* Principles of inclusive group work
* Striving towards cultural safety and humility in the group setting

Readings:

* Pelech et al., Ch. 4

Week 4: January 30, 2020

Topics:

* Group theory and models of practice

Readings:

* Pelech et al., Ch. 2
* Pelech et al., Ch. 5

Week 5: February 6, 2020

Topics:

* Group dynamics and development

Readings:

* Pelech et al., Ch. 8

Assignment One Due

Week 6: February 13, 2020

Panel Discussion (pending)

Readings:

* Choose your own areas of interest from Part Three in Pelech et al.

Week 7: February 20, 2020

Reading Week – no class ☺

Week 8: February 27, 2020

Topics:

* Group planning and proposals

Readings:

* Pelech et al., Ch. 6

Week 9: March 5, 2020

Topics:

* Practice Applications – innovative and creative approaches to groups

Readings:

* Choose your own areas of interest from Part Three in Pelech et al.
* Work on literature review research

Week 10: March 12, 2020

Topics:

* Group beginnings

Readings:

* Pelech et al., Ch. 9

Assignment Two Due

Week 11: March 19, 2020

Topics:

* Middle stage of group
* Conflict resolution within the group process

Readings:

* Pelech et al., Ch. 11
* Pelech et al., Ch. 12

Week 12: March 26, 2020

Topics:

* Group endings and evaluations

Readings:

* Pelech et al., Ch. 13

Week 13: April 2, 2020

* Final wrap up
* Assignment Three Due