

# COURSE NAME

* January 9 – April 7, 2023; Tuesdays, 7-10pm
* INSTRUCTOR: Dana Gillespie Tozer
* Office hours: by appointment
* Email: [gillesdc@mcmaster.ca](mailto:gillesdc@mcmaster.ca)

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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.

## Our 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.

Our collaborative work together will be rooted in an Interpersonal Classroom Model (Taylor, 2022). This is an approach to teaching and learning effective social work group practice that prioritizes activities that ‘mirror or simulate what students will actually do as professionals’ (Taylor, 2022, pg. 296). Our shared learning throughout our course will aim to be relational, experiential, flexible and embedded in critical reflexivity.

## 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. Unpack and understand - through the lens of critical reflexivity and intersectionality - mindfulness, here-and-now, mutual aid, group conflict and group cohesion, within the group context;
3. Develop personal goals regarding skills in analysis of group planning, process, participation and facilitation;
4. Reflect upon ethical considerations, organizational and social contexts while attending to issues of power and structural forces,
5. Understand what it means to embed an anti-racist, anti-oppressive and anti-Colonial approach to social work practice within groups, and;
6. Demonstrate self-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

Our course will be divided into two parts – content learning and experiential learning. The central focus of course content learning, that will take place in the first half of our weekly shared time, is abstract conceptualization or thinking. Content learning may include didactic component with short lectures, discussion questions, guest speakers, etc. The second half of our time together will be rooted in experiential learning, aimed to engage students directly with the group process. This will take place in smaller tutorial groups that will be assigned the second week. Classroom discussions are welcomed, and students are encouraged to bring examples from their practice and/or life experience to illustrate or enrich the material.

## Required Texts:

Weekly readings assigned throughout the course and posted on Avenue to Learn one week prior to class.

*Additional* Suggested Readings:

Books:

1. Pelech, W., Basso, R., Lee, C. & Gandarilla, M. (2016). *Inclusive Group Work*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
2. Brandler, S. & Roman, C.P. (2016). Group work: Skills and strategies for effective interventions. (3rd Ed). New York: Routledge.
3. Corey, M., Corey, G. & Corey, C. (2008). Groups: Process and Practice. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.
4. Garvin, C.D., Gutierrez, L.M. & Galinsky, M.J. (2004). Handbook of Social Work With Groups. New York, NY: Guilford.
5. Gitterman, A. & Shulman, L. (Eds.). (2005). Mutual aid groups, vulnerable and resilient populations, and the life cycle. 3rd Edition. New York: Columbia University Press.
6. Northen, H., & Kurland, R. (2001). Social work with groups (3rd ed.) New York: Columbia University Press.
7. Toseland, R.W. & Rivas, R.F. (2017). An Introduction to Group Work Practice. Toronto, ON: Allyn & Bacon.
8. Wickham, E., Pelech, W. & Basso, R. (2009). Group Work Practice: An Integration of Experience, Theory & Practice. Toronto, ON: Thompson Educational Publishing.
9. Zastrow, C. H. (2012). Social Work with Groups: A Comprehensive Worktext. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning.

Journal:

Social Work with Groups – available as ejournal through McMaster Libraries

Course Requirements/Assignments

Requirements Overview and Deadlines:

1. 10 Journal submissions, due every Friday
2. 10 weekly survey submissions, due after every tutorial
3. Group Proposal (culminating) assignment, due April 21, 2023

Requirement/Assignment Details

1. Journal Submissions (10 submissions, worth 5% of final grade each; 50%)
   * Throughout our 13-week course, you will be invited to submit 10 reflection journal entries. These are aimed to assist you in solidifying what you have learned via content learning, reflect on the group process that is evolving within your tutorials by way of experiential learning, and develop and be accountable to personal goals for yourself as an evolving group facilitator. Prompting questions will be provided weekly, which may be used as a starting point for your entry.
   * Each journal reflection must be 1-2 pages in length, and you may only submit one journal entry per week. Every submission is worth 5% of your final grade, totalling 50%, if all 10 are submitted. Each journal entry is due the Friday following our Tuesday class. For example, if submitting a journal entry week, one based on our class on January 10th, your journal submission would be due Friday, January 13th.
   * Please see journal assignment outline and rubric for further details.
2. Survey Submissions (10 submissions, worth 1% of your final grade each; 10%)
   * Following every tutorial, you will be invited to complete a likert-scale survey that reflects on yourself, the facilitator, and the group process as a whole. This will only be viewed by your tutorial leader. Class time will be given to complete this task. Surveys will be anonymous, however you will be granted 1% of your final grade for every survey submitted, to a maximum of 10. You may only submit one survey per week, and it must be based upon your tutorial experience that week.
   * If you find that you have missed more than 30% of your tutorial due to extenuating circumstances, please connect with your tutorial leader to discuss alternatives for this assignment.
3. Group Proposal (40%)
   * For this assignment, you will imagine that you are planning a group and must prepare a proposal to submit to your (assumed) agency/community group for approval. Students are expected to use both course materials and external sources for this assignment and should reference as appropriate.
   * This assignment should be 10-12 pages in length, and is due Friday, April 21st, 2023.
   * Please consult group proposal assignment outline and rubric for formatting, grading structure and expectations.

# Assignment Submission and Grading

## Form and Style

* Written assignments must be typed and double-spaced and submitted via Avenue to Learn (A2L) in the appropriate drop box.
* Format must be in accordance with the current edition of American Psychological Association (APA) publication manual with particular attention paid to font size (Times-Roman, Arial or Calibri 12), 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.

### Submitting Assignments & Grading

* Assignments are to be submitted via Avenue to Learn.
* 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.

### 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.

## 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

## Authenticity/Plagiarism Detection:

## This course uses a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g., A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

## Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster’s use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity) .

### Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning, and working communities. These expectations are described in the *Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities* (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g., use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

### Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* 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.

### Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or 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 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.

### Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic work, including lectures by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

The School of Social Work requests and expects that:

* Instructors inform students about what they will record, when they will record, and what they will do with the recording.
* Students who wish to record contact the instructor first. This is so the instructor can inform the class when permission has been given to a student to record (the identity of the student will be kept confidential by the instructor).
* Recordings by students are used for personal study only, and not shared with anyone else, and are deleted when no longer needed for personal study
* There will likely be times when students or guest speakers share personal or sensitive information. In this circumstance we expect everyone to stop recording. The instructor (or student or guest sharing) may also ask for recording to stop, and we expect everyone to respect such a request.

## Confidentiality

A cornerstone of professional social work relationships is confidentiality with respect to all matters associated with professional services to clients. Social workers demonstrate respect for the trust and confidence placed in them by clients, communities, and other professionals by protecting the privacy of client information and respecting the client’s right to control when or whether this information will be shared with third parties (CASW Code of Ethics, 2005).

In courses such as the 3D06 and 4D06 integrative seminars it is recognized that students participate and learn by discussing their placement and lived experiences. As such, it is important to identify issues of confidentiality that arise in addition to those related to client confidentiality. Each student will be required to review the Confidentiality Agreement for 3D06 and 4D06 Integrative Seminars and sign off to indicate their understanding and agreement. <https://socialwork.mcmaster.ca/documents/confidentiality-agreement-3d-4d-2020.docx/view>

### 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.

### Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work

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”.

### 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 Jennie Vengris, Undergraduate Chair ([vengris@mcmaster.ca](mailto:vengris@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* *Jennie Vengris, Undergraduate Chair (*[*vengris@mcmaster.ca*](mailto:vengris@mcmaster.ca)*).*

Course Weekly Topics

*This lecture schedule is based upon current university and public health guidelines and may be subject to changes during the term. Any changes to the schedule or course delivery will be communicated on the course announcements section on Avenue to Learn. Please check the announcements prior to attending class.*

*All course readings will be uploaded to Avenue to Learn one week prior to class. Students are expected to attend class having reviewed posted content.*

Course Weekly Topics and Readings:

Week 1: January 10, 2023 (no tutorials)

Topics:

* Introduction to groups
* Introduction to this course

Week 2: January 17, 2023 (tutorials begin)

Topics:

* Mindfulness in the social work context
* Unpacking cultural safety and humility in our practice

Week 3: January 24, 2023

Topics:

* Mindfulness in the group context

Week 4: January 31, 2023

Topics:

* Understanding Here-and-Now
* Group dynamics and development

Week 5: February 7, 2023

Topics:

* Practicing Here-and-Now in the group context

Week 6: February 14, 2023

Topics:

* Mutual Aid
* Nurturing brave spaces within group

Week 7: February 21, 2023

* Reading Week – no class ☺

Week 8: February 28, 2023

Topics:

* Mutual Aid in the group context
* Group beginnings

Week 9: March 7, 2023

Topics:

* Group Conflict

Week 10: March 14, 2023

Topics:

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

Week 11: March 21, 2023

Topics:

* Group Cohesion
* Exploring trust and marginalization and oppression

Week 12: March 28, 2023 (last tutorial)

Topics:

* Group Cohesion
* Group endings and evaluations

Week 13: April 4, 2023 (no tutorial)

Topics:

* Course wrap up and reflections

Week 14: April 11, 2023

Independent work week – no in person class or tutorials; Teaching team available virtually for consults regarding group proposal assignment