



University of Lynchburg

COUN 620: Group Counseling

College of Health Sciences

University of Lynchburg

Fall 2025

Dr. Heather Summers My pronouns: she/her/hers https://www.mypronouns.org/ Office: Warren Counseling Center – 330J email: summers_h@lynchburg.edu	Location: Thompson-Polloway Hall, 202 Class Time: Wednesday 4:30 – 7pm Student Office Hours: By appointment <i>Please reach out and check in!</i>
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Course Description:

This course is an examination of group dynamics, ethical issues special to group work, and group leadership skills. Topics include member roles, stages of group development, and leadership styles and techniques. As required by CACREP, students participate in small group activities for a minimum of 10 hours over the course of the academic term.

Course Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes:

The following are the course objectives and expected learning outcomes based on [2024 CACREP Standards](#):

Objective	CACREP Standard	Assessment
Understand theoretical foundations of group counseling and group work	3.F.1	Weekly Interaction Assignments
Articulate dynamics associated with group process and development	3.F.2	Experiential Group Practice
Understand therapeutic factors of group work and how they contribute to group effectiveness	3.F.3	Weekly Interaction Assignments, Group Reflections
Demonstrate characteristics and functions of effective group leaders	3.F.4	Weekly Interaction Assignments, Exams

Demonstrate approaches to group formation, including recruiting, screening, and selecting members	3.F.5	Experiential Group Practice
Demonstrate application of technology related to group counseling and group work	3.F.6	Group Practice
Articulate types of groups, settings, and other considerations that affect conducting groups	3.F.7	Exams, Reflections
Understand culturally sustaining and developmentally responsive strategies for designing and facilitating groups	3.F.8	Exams
Understand ethical and legal considerations relative to the delivery of group counseling and group work across service delivery modalities	3.F.9	Exams, Book Response
Participate in direct experiences for a minimum of 10 clock hours over the course of one academic term	3.F.10	Group Participation and Reflections

Required Text(s) and/or Reading(s):

Jacobs, E.E., Schimmel, C.J., Masson, R.L., & Harvill, R.L. (2014). *Group counseling: Strategies & Skills* (8th Ed.). Belmont, CA: Cengage.

Rosenstein, Donald & Yopp, Justin. (2018). *The group: Seven widowed fathers reimagine life*. Oxford University Press.

Recommended resource:

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). American Psychological Association.

*Other readings may be assigned by the instructor and will be posted in Google Classroom.

Syllabus Statements:

The University of Lynchburg Honor Code; Student Conduct Code; Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources Statement; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Respect Syllabus Statement; Knight-Capron Library Syllabus Statement; Wilmer Writing Center Syllabus Statement; Religious Holiday Observance Syllabi Statement, the Mandatory Reporting and Faculty Responsibility Statement and other resources including the new AI Syllabus Statement can all be found [here](#). Please reach out with any questions.

Inclement Weather:

If classes are canceled due to inclement weather or other circumstances, announcements will be made on the University of Lynchburg Weather Hotline, (434) 544-SNOW, and University website.

Course Policies**Methods of Instruction:**

The instructor will utilize methods such as, but not limited to, online recorded lectures, online discussions, small group online activities, observational and participatory experiences, podcasts, and video clips. It is expected that students have a working knowledge of technology including software used for accessing email, the internet, word processing, and presentation development. Because this is an online course, please be sure to establish “back-up” options should your internet access be compromised (e.g., storms, changing residences). You will have adequate notice for all submitted assignments, so please include “buffer time” in case of technological glitches.

You will be required to attend a group outside of class time for eight weeks. Due to the additional time requirement, we will meet for 90 minutes and the other 60 minutes should be spent participating in a group counseling session.

Professionalism:

Professionalism is continuously monitored and used as an indicator of a student’s ability to maintain professionalism in the workplace, and therefore, there is an expectation that students will conduct themselves as professionals *at all times* in asynchronous classroom activities. This expectation extends to interactions with faculty, site supervisors, and fellow students outside of class, including professional communication in email and other written correspondence.

Professionalism extends to expectations regarding standards of academic products. “To complete the rigors of the program successfully, students are expected to produce graduate-level scholarship as evidenced through professionalism, high levels of mastery as assessed through course examinations, and quality written work that meets the standards of academic writing and the criteria for the discipline as set forth by the [American Psychological Association](#) (APA)” (University of Lynchburg Counselor Education Student Handbook, 2023-2024, p. 8). In addition, [Requirements for Written Assignments](#) provides additional writing and formatting guidance. Failure to integrate feedback into future work will result in points deducted from such future work.

Assignment submissions:

All assignments for COUN 620, unless otherwise specified, are due by 11:59pm on the day the assignment is due. The “due by” time represents the moment at which the submission portal closes.

Late assignments will not be accepted without express permission from the instructor.

If a student wants to request permission to submit a late assignment, they must consult the instructor to discuss the reason for the late submission. If approved for late submission, students will abide by the agreed-upon late submission deadline. Assignments submitted after the original assignment date will be graded with a 20% reduction in possible points.

Assignments will be submitted in Google Classroom and should be written using current APA (2020) writing conventions and using the Requirements for Written Assignments (under “Writing Conventions” in Classroom). Students MUST submit all assignments in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

All written assignments must be submitted in Google Classroom as Google docs. Written assignments submitted in any other format will be returned ungraded. Once resubmitted (within 24 hours), the resubmission will be graded with a 20% reduction in total possible points.

Activities and Assignments

1. **Group Participation and Reflection.** Students will select a group to join and attend for a *minimum* of eight sessions. Ideas for groups are provided. Students are highly encouraged to select a personally beneficial group topic for this experiential component. Journal reflections will be submitted every week. Due to the additional time requirement, we will meet for 90 minutes and the other 60 minutes should be spent participating in a group counseling session.

Note: The reflections and your group participation are crucial and account for a significant portion of your overall grade. Please select a group with thought and intention and engage fully in the group counseling process.

3. **Midterm Exam:** This will be a reflective exam demonstrating your ability to practically apply group concepts in a personal and creative format.
4. **Book Response:** Read “The Group” by Donald Rosenstein and Justin Yopp. Write a 2-3 page reflection on the book. This could include (but is not limited to): What was effective in connecting group members? What surprised you about the group process? What did you learn from the way this group was conducted and the experiences of the members?
4. **Cultural Competence:** This assignment will require knowledge of and reflection related to competence and ethical group practice across cultural considerations and with specific populations.
5. **Group Proposal: This assignment consists of two separate components.**
 1. **Review of the Literature (5%):** The first component of this assignment is a review of professional literature researching the use of group work with a specific client population and/or presenting concerns. The information garnered in this component serves as the foundation for the second.
 2. **Group Proposal (15%):** The second component of this assignment is the development of a thorough group overview that encompasses the planning considerations that would be necessary to lead and facilitate a psychoeducational group. Students in the School Counseling specialization will develop a proposal suitable for use with a student population; students in the Clinical Mental Health specialization will develop a proposal suitable for use with a client population in a specified area of professional work and/or a specific setting. No specified page

expectation – you determine the length of the paper needed to answer all components outlined on the rubric.

6. **Experiential Exam:** Students will lead a 25-30-minute group session to demonstrate the acquisition of group leadership skills.

Evaluative Methodology:

Your final grade will be computed utilizing the following percentages for each requirement:

Group Participation and Reflections		25%
Midterm Exam	10%	
Book Response	15%	
Cultural Competence Assignment		10%
Experiential Exam	15%	
Literature Review	10%	
Group Proposal	10%	
Attendance and Participation		<u>5%</u>
Total		100%

Grading Scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93-100
A-	90-92.9
B+	87-89.9
B	83-86.9
B-	80-82.9
C+	77-79.9
C	73-76.9
F	72.9 or below

Tentative Course Schedule

*This schedule is tentative and subject to change at the discretion of the instructor (see below).

Week Dates	TOPICS/To Read/Watch	Major assignments due date
1 8/27	Course Introduction	
2 9/3	Group Therapy: Chapters 1-2 Group Stages, Group Process, Therapeutic Process	
3 9/10	Group Therapy: Chapters 3-4 Purpose of Groups, Group Planning	
4 9/17	Group Therapy: Chapter 5 Getting Started: Beginning Stage and Beginning Phase	Group Reflection #1 DUE
5 9/24	Group Therapy: Chapters 6-7 Basic Skills and Focus Prof Leazers class at 6	Group Reflection #2 DUE
7 10/1	Group Therapy: Chapter 8 Cutting Off and Drawing Out Group Therapy: Chapter 9 Rounds and Dyads Prof Leazers class at 6	Review of Literature Due Group Reflection #3 DUE
10/8	NO CLASS	Fall Break
8 10/15	Midterm Exam - Virtual <i>Virginia School Counseling Association Conference - Hampton, VA</i>	Midterm Exam - Virtual
10/22	NO CLASS <i>Dr. Summers presenting at EB-ACA conference in Romania</i>	Group Reflection #4 DUE
10/29	NO CLASS	Group Reflection #5 DUE
9 11/5	Group Therapy: Chapter 10-12 Exercises, Introducing, Processing and Conducting Exercises Leading the Middle Stage of a Group	Book Response DUE

10 11/12	Group Therapy: Chapter 13 Using Counseling Theories in Group Prof Leazers class at 6	Group Reflection #6 DUE
12 11/19	Group Therapy: Chapter 14-16 Counseling and Therapy Groups Closing a Session or Group Dealing with Problem Situations	Cultural Competence Assignment Group Reflection #7 DUE
11/26	NO CLASS	
13 12/3	Experiential Exams in Class	Group Reflection #8 DUE Group Proposal Project DUE
14 12/10	Experiential Exams in Class	

*The Tentative Course Schedule lists the main assignments and reading schedules for COUN 620 this semester.