

**COUN 6180, LABORATORY IN GROUP
COUNSELING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY**



Background Information:

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) requires in its *Standards* (2009):

II.G.6.. Studies that provide both theoretical and experiential understanding of group purpose, development, dynamics, theories, methods, skills, and other group approaches in a multicultural society, including...

- e. 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. (p. 12)

Likewise, the Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW): *Professional Standards for the Training of Group Workers* (2000), states, “Core training shall include a minimum of 10 clock hours (20 clock hours recommended) observation of and participation in a group experience as a group member and/or as a group leader.”

See p. 43 in Corey, G. (2004). *Student manual: Theory and practice of group counseling* (6th ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Students in the Professional Counseling Program of MTSU meet these group participation and leadership requirements primarily in COUN 6180, Laboratory in Group Counseling and Psychotherapy, during the semester of enrollment in COUN 6170, Group Counseling and Psychotherapy.

Purpose:

The primary purpose of the lab is to provide an opportunity for students to experience group process from a member’s perspective, which is a vital aspect of counselor training. This is purposely scheduled prior to student leadership of groups in practicum and internships. As a growth group, the lab provides an opportunity for students not only to learn about group process, but also to learn more about themselves, their feelings, and their interactions with others. They are given the opportunity to participate as a member, free from the stress of any leadership responsibilities, for 10 hours under the direction of an experienced group leader, and then for an additional period of time (approximately 10 hours) under the rotating leadership of their classmates. During this second portion of the lab experience, each student plans and leads a group counseling session

Requirements:

1. Faculty-Led Group Participation

Portion 1 of the lab is conducted prior to mid-term of the semester, and students participate as members. They are asked to participate as much as possible in the process from their own frame of reference and to express their own feelings, but they may share as much or as little personal information as they choose, and they may "pass" or participate at the "role-play" level when they feel uncomfortable doing otherwise. The COUN 6180 instructor this semester will lead the group and will assign a grade based entirely upon attendance, punctuality and cooperation for the meetings. If the group leader excuses an absence because of extreme circumstances, then she will make an out-of-group assignment that can make up the absence.

At the conclusion of the first portion of the lab, the COUN 6170 instructor may include on a test one or more discussion questions relating to process factors of your lab experience and we will discuss these factors in class, but no group "content" is to be revealed in those essays or discussions. The instructor may also ask for voluntary, anonymous written feedback from the members concerning their experience.

This portion of the lab will meet as advertised in the schedule, at the Center for Counseling and Psychological Services. The times and dates may be changed by a unanimous decision of the class and instructor.

2. Student-Led Group Participation

Portion 2 of the lab meets during the second half of the semester, when students will plan and lead one session and participate as members when their classmates are leading. Because this leadership task is part of the requirement for COUN 6170, the instructor will grade the leaders on the demonstration of their leadership skills. This has been scheduled and was advertised in the schedule book. It will be held at that time and on another given day for extended class times unless the class makes a unanimous decision to meet at other times.