

SYLLABUS: PSY 457/557, Group Processes

Spring 1997, MWF 10 AM, 142 Straub

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Course Description: This course has three interrelated goals:

- 1) introduce you to the topics of and recent research on small groups
- 2) improve your skills as participant in & observer of small groups
- 3) enhance your critical thinking and writing skills

COURSE PREREQUISITES

- 1) Psych 302 and 303
- 2) Ability to read and understand research reported in APA journals such as the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.
- 3) Ability to write well-organized, carefully reasoned, grammatically correct papers at advanced undergraduate level (leniency on grammar for ESL students only).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Differ somewhat for undergrads (457) and grads (557). Graduates students see point # 7 for details.

1. Attendance. Attendance at class is **required**. If you cannot commit to attending class faithfully you should not take this course.

You will be working together in small groups, writing an in-class essay and doing a group exercise together every week. If you do not come to class prepared to complete the group task, the group's performance will suffer. To protect groups from free riders, groups will have sanctions available to reduce group rewards for problem members or (in intractable cases) expel them.

2. Reading. The text is Johnson & Johnson, Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills, 6th ed. Along with text chapters, you will be reading ONE additional article each week except dead week (see reading list below). Each member of the group will have a different course packet and a different reading for each week. So all members need to be responsible for keeping up on their readings.

3. Group essays. Every week except dead week, groups will write an in-class essay comparing & contrasting the readings for the week. The essay will be drafted in class, with a typed version handed in the next class. Double-spaced, clearly written, 1-2 pages (2 is MAX).

see over →

4. Research report. A formal paper reporting results from one of the weekly exercises. This paper should be 6-10 pp. doublespaced (10 is absolute MAX) and follow APA format. It needs to do the following: (1) Propose a hypothesis for the class exercise based on the readings (2) Describe the design of the exercise (3) Present the results (4) State the implications of the results for the hypothesis and (5) discuss the outcomes. Students may complete the assignment individually, in pairs, or in a collaborative groups of 3 or 4. Collaborations must be approved by the instructor. A clear division of labor is essential for approval of dyadic or group papers.

5. Journal on class exercises and other small group activities. Low-tech and high-tech options are available: low-tech requires weekly typed reactions and commentary; high-tech requires weekly posts at the class Motet site. Motet is a web-based conference system. Those who choose the high-tech option may send private messages via e-mail if they have a post that they don't want to make public. Journal entries and posts should include reactions to the class exercise and other commentary on group experiences related to the week's topic.

5. Midterm. Midterm week 6, short answer & essay format. Open book, open notes, bring your reading packets.

6. Final options for undergraduates: exam or paper.

** Grad students read #7 below re final **

OPTION ONE: A final exam will be given on **Tuesday, June 10th, 10:15 AM**. Open book, open notes, short answer plus essay question format. Bring your reading packets.

OPTION TWO: A final paper (6-10 pp., 10 is MAX). To be completed individually or working with a partner or partners in the class (no hired hands from outside!). This paper should summarize and critique a sample of literature on a specific topic in small group research (at least 10 articles), and identify three key questions that remain to be answered. APA format. Collaborations must be approved by the instructor, and a first draft will be due Monday May 26. Final papers will **NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES** be accepted if I have not received a first draft.

7. Grad students only: Grad students will work in groups with one another. I will also call upon you to help run the more elaborate class exercises (there will probably be 3 of these), which will involve meeting with me briefly prior to the session. For your final, you will write a paper that reviews the literature for a specific topic in small groups and describes a research design for investigating that topic. Papers should include an introduction, hypotheses, methods section, and a discussion of how different (hypothetical) results would be interpreted. APA format, 20 pp. MAX.

GRADE BREAKDOWN & KEY

Journal/Motet:	10	A+ 97-100	C 70-73
Group essays:	30	A 90-96	C- 67-69
Research report:	20	A- 87-89	D+ 64-66
Midterm:	15	B+ 84-86	D 60-63
Final exam/paper:	25	B 80-83	D- 57-59
		B- 77-79	N < 67
		C+ 74-76	P ≥ 67
TOTAL points	100		