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### SW 360.01: Social Work Intervention Methods II - Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Maxine Jacobson

*University of Montana - Missoula*

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**Social Work 360, Section 01 (Tues, Thurs)**  
**Social Work Intervention Methods II: Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

**Professor:** Maxine Jacobson  
**Teaching Assistant:** Nancy McCourt  
**Office:** Jeannette Rankin Hall 116  
**Phone:** 243-6384  
**E-mail:** [mj@selway.umt.edu](mailto:mj@selway.umt.edu); [nancitamcsnort@msn.com](mailto:nancitamcsnort@msn.com)  
**Office hrs:** Tues & Thurs, 2:00-4:00 or by appointment  
**Class Time:** Tues & Thurs, 9:10-11:00  
**Prerequisites:** SW 350, 2.5 GPA and approval of application to enroll in upper division social work courses.

*“Keep your fingers on the near things and your eyes on the far things.”*

-Catherine Cooke Gilman

*“[The small group is a way of exchanging] the music of isolated voices [for] the volume and strength of the chorus.”*

-Jane Addams

**Introduction:** This course is the third in a series of generalist social work practice courses. It introduces students to work with groups, organizations, and communities and it explores the relationship among individual, group, organizational, community, and societal change. Group work and community practice have been essential components of social work throughout its history. They were key parts of early social work efforts to both change oppressive social conditions and promote democratic participation. Groups have been used to strengthen individual skills and capacities, enhance organizational functioning, improve the quality of community life, and to advocate for more just social policies, institutions, and practices. Most social work practice occurs in organizational settings, requires collaboration with others, and is shaped by community context. Further, the problems confronting individuals and groups cannot be effectively understood or addressed outside of the larger contexts in which they occur. Personal struggles are intimately tied to social issues of poverty, inequality, violence, and discrimination. Group processes of critical reflection, power analysis, and participatory planning, action and evaluation provide an important bridge between personal struggles and public issues. Effective social work practice calls for effective group participation, leadership skills, and engagement in social change efforts. It is through ongoing learning and teaching of the skills of group work and community practice that we craft spaces for collaborative action and create opportunities for people to participate in the decision-making that affects their lives.

**Course Description:** In this course we will explore the dynamic relationship between personal and social change and examine the opportunities for change through group and community practice. Course materials and assignments will focus on principles and processes of group work, leadership, skills and strategies for organizational and community assessment, participation, and change. Class members will put knowledge and skills into practice and experience the potential of both individual and social change through the use of mutual aid and community action groups. Students will have hands-on opportunities to develop skills in group leadership and facilitation. Lessons for practice will be drawn from case studies set in diverse historical, political, and cultural contexts that document group and community efforts to change oppressive social conditions and promote social justice. Students will be learning from and teaching one another as they develop and participate in groups that promote individual, organizational, and community change. Regular attendance and active participation in both in-class and out-of-class projects are expected.

**Course Objectives:** Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Discuss the relationship of group, organizational, and community practice to an empowerment approach to generalist social work.
2. Describe elements of the mutual aid group process.
3. Define leadership and the skills identified as contributors to effective leadership development.
4. Appraise personal leadership skills and identify a plan for continued development in this area.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of group process, group decision-making, and the impact of power and authority on individual and group dynamics.
6. Identify and practice skills of mutual aid group work to include: group formation, engagement, assessment and planning, group development and intervention; critical reflection, evaluation and celebration.
7. Identify and practice skills needed to initiate and facilitate community action groups and to engage in assessment and planning, implementation and accompaniment, and evaluation of community-based projects.
8. Demonstrate knowledge of the six strategies of community change: mass mobilization; social action; citizen participation; public advocacy; popular education; local services development.
9. Describe how historical, cultural, political, and economic factors impact the community context, public attitudes, available resources, and the decision-making processes of community-based groups.
10. Discuss the relationship of factors such as ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual identity, and age to the development and facilitation of small groups and to the implementation of community change efforts.
11. Describe and practice a collaborative process of needs assessment and data gathering through which those affected by the identified problem have a meaningful voice in understanding and changing the situation.
12. Describe how social work perspectives apply to practice with small groups, organizations, and communities.
13. Describe and apply the strengths perspective and an empowerment model in the building of collaborative, action-oriented relationships that promote personal, organizational, and community development.
14. Identify evaluation methods for assessing the effectiveness of intervention efforts with groups, organizations, and communities.
15. Discuss how the values and ethics of the social work profession (i.e., respect for human diversity, social justice, self-determination and equality) influence the development and implementation of intervention strategies with groups, organizations, and communities.

## **Textbooks:**

Faculty Pack SW 360, Selected Readings on Groups, Organizations, and Communities

## **Course Assignments:**

The assignments in this course are geared to promote students' knowledge of and engagement in processes of personal, group, organizational, and community change and development. All assignments are due on the date specified unless prior arrangements have been made. All written assignments are to be typed. All references are to be appropriately cited according to APA guidelines.

### **1. Mutual Aid Group Facilitation Report: (30 points. Due the Thursday following the group meeting in which you serve as facilitator)**

Beginning the second week of the semester, students will participate as members and facilitators in mutual aid groups. The focus of the groups is personal and professional development. They will provide an opportunity for integrating "knowing, feeling, and doing" through discussion and reflection. The groups will meet for 45 minutes, once a week, for six weeks, during the second hour of class on Thursdays. Each class member will have the opportunity to plan and facilitate one group session. When serving as facilitator, the student prepares:

- a). A Plan for Session
- b). A Summary Assessment of Session
- c). A Summary of the "Assessing Your Group" Feedback Sheets (FP 34) from group members. Note that copies should be made and distributed to the group during the last few minutes of the group the student facilitates and collected to submit with this report.
- d). An Assessment of Personal Strengths and Areas for Growth as a Facilitator.

The report should be no longer than 3 typed pages.

### **2. Group Work Analysis. Due Oct 17<sup>th</sup> (40 points)**

Drawing from the course pack readings, write an essay addressing the strategies, challenges, and possibilities of group work. Your essay is to include a comparative analysis of **at least two** of the articles that focus on case studies of group work (FP, 10, 12, 13, 14). Be specific in your discussion. What are some of the common themes and important differences? What dynamics of mutual aid are highlighted by the examples? And how do these differ across examples? How is leadership practiced and addressed? What might you change in these group examples to better address questions of difference, power, history, and meaning? What lessons for group work practice can you learn from your analysis? Draw from the Shulman article (FP 5) in developing a structure for your essay. Maximum length – 4 pages.

### **3. Leadership Essay: Due Oct 31 (40 points)**

Write an essay that addresses the topic of leadership and draws from personal reflection and faculty pack readings. The essay will respond to the following questions:

- a). What are the characteristics of an effective leader?
- b). What are some ways to develop leadership skills?
- c). How would you assess your own leadership skills and strengths? What are your challenges? How could you build on your strengths?

Maximum length is 4 typed pages.

**4. Social Action Group Portfolio, Case Study and Presentation. Presentations will be scheduled during last week of semester and final exam session. Case Study and Portfolio due Dec 12<sup>th</sup> (Portfolio - 40 points; Case Study and Presentation – 70 points)**

Beginning the 7<sup>th</sup> week of the semester, students will form small groups (4-5 members) for community action. Students will participate in a brainstorming exercise to select an area of concern. The groups will then assess needs and possibilities, develop an action plan, and carry out a modest project in response to the identified concern. Given the limited time available, the project needs to be realistic and achievable. One hour of class each week will be used for action group meetings.

**Social Action Portfolio**

Group members will build a portfolio documenting the group’s activities. The portfolio should include:

- X Log of group members' activities and contacts;
- X Action plan, timeline, and member responsibilities
- X Minutes of group meetings
- X Summaries of outside meetings and interviews (where applicable)
- X Overview of group’s decision-making processes
- X Press release announcing group’s class presentation

**Social Action Case Study and Presentation**

Each action group will prepare a case study of their work. The case study should include an introduction and overview; an assessment of need and possibilities; summary of the action plan and its implementation; discussion of the group process (decision-making, leadership, etc); discussion and evaluation of the outcome(s); critical reflection on group effectiveness (FP 41) and pitfalls (FP 42); successes, challenges, and surprises; and lessons for group, organization, and community practice. The case study should be no longer than 8 pages, and it should include relevant citations from course materials. Each action group will give a 20-30 minute in-class presentation on their project. Each group member will receive the same grade for this project.

**5. Quizzes ( Quiz #1 – Oct 3; Quiz #2 – Nov 14)**

There will be two short answer quizzes during the course of the semester. They will be one hour in length and worth 40 points each. Quizzes will assess the student’s integration of course materials and discussion, and the application of course concepts. There is no final examination.

**Determination of Course Grade:**

Group Work Analysis Essay	40
Mutual Aid Group Facilitation Report	30
Leadership Development Essay	40
Action Group Portfolio	40
Action Group Case Study and Presentation	70
Quizzes (2@40 points each)	80

**Total Points 300**

<u>Points</u>	<u>Final Grade</u>
276-300	A
275-251	B
250-226	C
225-195	D
<195	F

**Grading Criteria:** As does any reader, I have difficulty with written work that is poorly constructed, organized and thought out. The ease with which I can understand your work has a positive effect on your grade. I do not necessarily have to agree with what you say but I do have to understand your work and make sense of it. For all written assignments, I use the following criteria for grading:

- X correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation
- X indications of thoughtfulness and critical reflection
- X good balance between thoroughness and expressing ideas concisely
- X well organized/clarity of thought (use of headings, subheadings– for larger papers)
- X moves beyond reporting surface content to interpretation, analysis, and original ideas
- X integration of class readings and course learnings; developing themes and connections

**Note: If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible.**

#### **Course Outline and Reading Assignments: (Subject to Change)**

##### **Week One: 9/3 – 9/5: Introduction and Overview**

**Topics:** Defining groups, organizations, and communities; historical connections; linking individual, group, organizational, and community development. Creating the learning climate.

**Readings:** FP 1, “The Group Work Tradition and Social Work Practice;” FP 2, “The Legacy of McCarthyism on Social Group Work: An Historical Analysis;” FP 6, “On the Beginning Phase with Groups.”

##### **Week Two: 9/10 – 9/12: Group Formation: Belonging, Difference, and Relationship**

**Topics:** Principles and processes of mutual aid; listening and trust building; engagement and teaching-learning; Film: Rachel’s Daughters.

**Readings:** FP 3, “Types of Groups: Their Nature and Development;” FP 5, “The Dynamics of Mutual Aid;” FP 8, “Individual and Social Benefits of Mutual Aid Self-Help Groups;” FP 37, “What about a Facilitator?”

**Assignment:** Mutual Aid Group Meeting #1

##### **Week Three: 9/17 – 9/19: Creating a Foundation: Thinking for Group and Community Work**

**Topics:** The Just Practice Perspective; teamwork and collaboration as a basis for social justice work; leadership and participation (more teaching-learning).

**Readings:** FP 4, “Leadership Roles, Functions, and Guidelines;” FP 9, “Using Mezzo Skills in the Macro Environment.”

**Assignments:** Mutual Aid Group Meeting #2

##### **Week Four: 9/24 – 9/26: Work: Different Patterns, Different Consequences**

**Topics:** Timing and pacing, meaning and (mis)interpretation; communication and conflict; action and accompaniment; group decision-making; interplay of individual and group; Guest Speaker, Monica Trimble – Facilitating bereavement groups.

**Readings:** FP 10, “Dreaming Their Way Into Life: A Group Experience with Oncology Patients;” FP 11, “Group Think;” FP 12, “The Power of Group Work with Kids: A Practitioner’s Reflection on Strengths-Based Practice.”

**Assignments:** Mutual Aid Group Meeting #3

**Week Five: 10/1 – 10/3: Power, Resistance, and Participation**

**Topics:** Negotiating difference; meanings of resistance, power, and participation; addressing anger; possibilities of social enactment; leadership revisited.

**Readings:** FP 13, “Talking Circles: Listen, or Your Tongue Will Make You Deaf;” FP 14, “Hoop Group: Group Work with Young “Street” Men.”

**Assignment:** **Quiz #1 – 10/3;** Mutual Aid Group Meeting #4

**Week Six: 10/8 – 10/10: Endings and Transitions: Moving From Mutual Aid to Organized Effort**

**Topics:** Evaluation, critical reflection, and celebration; Guest Speaker: Rachel Castellanos Miller – The Historical Roots of WEEL

**Readings:** FP 25, “Building Supportive Ties and Sense of Community Among the Inner City Elderly: The Tenderloin Senior Outreach Project;” FP 26, “Mujeres Unidas en Accion: A Popular Education Process.”

**Assignment:** Mutual Aid Group Meeting #5

**Week Seven: 10/15 – 10/17: Organizations: Understanding Culture, Power, and History**

**Topics:** Organizational culture; street-level bureaucrats; surviving and influencing organizational change; the art and skill of functional non-capitulation;

**Readings:** FP 15, “Understanding Organizations;” FP 16, “The “Culture” of the Nonprofit Organization;” FP 17, “The Politics of Thriving and Surviving.”

**Assignment:** Brainstorming Community Change; **Group Analysis Essay Due – 10/17;** Mutual Aid Group Meeting #6

**Week Eight: 10/22 – 10/24: Reflection as a Starting Point for Action**

**Topics:** Reflection on the mutual aid groups; choosing an action project; assessment and planning for community change; challenge to change. Guest Speakers: To be announced.

**Readings:** FP 7, “The Five C’s of Running an Effective Task Group;” FP 18, “Things to Know About Yourself;” FP 19, “Things to Know About People;” FP 38, “Twenty Suggestions to Help Make Your Meetings More Productive, Plus One;” FP 37, “What About a Facilitator?” (review); FP 39, “Do You Have What it Takes?”;

**Assignment:** Social Action Group Meeting #1

**Week Nine: 10/29 – 10/31: Possibilities, Challenges and Strategies for Community Change**

**Topics:** Comparing strategies and understanding core concepts of community change; ways to “advertise” the effort.

**Readings:** FP 20, “Core Concepts for Community Change;” FP 21, “Six Strategies of Community Change;” FP 27, “Walking our Talk in the Neighborhoods;” FP 32, “Media;” FP 40, “Look for Ways to Build Commitment from People.”

**Assignment:** **Leadership Essay, Due 10/31;** Social Action Group Meeting #2

**Week Ten: 11/5 – 11/7: Rethinking Assessment: Tools for Understanding Community**

**Topics:** Listening surveys; teaching-learning for community change; generative themes; assets-based community development

**Readings:** Handouts from Training for Transformation; [FP 33](#), “Assets-Based Community Development;” [FP 41](#), “Characteristics of Effective and Ineffective Groups;” [FP 42](#), “Common Pitfalls for Groups Promoting Change.”

**Assignment:** Social Action Group #3

**Week Eleven: 11/12 – 11/14: Action and Accompaniment: People, Power and Participation**

**Topics:** Meanings of power and participation for community action; understanding accompaniment

**Readings:** [FP 23](#), “Community Organizations as Family;” [FP 24](#), “Young People as Competent Community Builders;” [FP 30](#), “We’ve Got Some Work To Do;” [FP 36](#), “Power – Issue Relationship;” [FP 43](#), “The Nag;” [FP 44](#), “Next Steps Action Chart.”

**Assignment:** **Quiz #2, 11/14;** Social Action Group Meeting #4

**Week Twelve: 11/19 – 11/21: Action and Accompaniment: People, Power, and Participation (con’t)**

**Topics:** Case examples of action and accompaniment; lessons learned about people, power, and participation.

**Readings:** [FP 22](#), “Alternatives for Girls: A Community Development Model for Homeless and High-Risk Girls and Young Women;” [FP 28](#), “The Garden Project: Creating Urban Communities;” [FP 29](#), “Grassroots Approaches to Violence Prevention;” [FP 31](#), “Challenging Power: Toxic Waste Protests and the Politicization of White, Working-Class Women.”

**Assignment:** Social Action Group Meeting #5

**Week Thirteen: 11/26 – 11/28: Evaluating, Reflecting on and Celebrating the Effort**

**Topics:** How do we evaluate what we’ve done? The interplay of evaluation and critical reflection; implications for community practice; Thanksgiving Vacation 11/28.

**Week Fourteen: 12/3 – 12/5: Voices of Community Change**

**Topics:** Community Activist Panel; Film: Store Wars

**Assignment:** Social Action Group Meeting #6

**Week Fifteen: 12/10 – 12/12: Reflections on the Journey and Action Group Presentations**

**Topics:** Action Group Presentation; Challenges, surprises, and successes; Course evaluation

**Assignment:** Action Group Portfolio and Case Study Due

**Week Sixteen: 12/20 – Finals’ Week (Meet some evening earlier in the week for presentations)**

**Suggested Bibliography:**

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