Spring 1-2003

SW 525.01: Theory and Practice of Groups and Communities

Maxine Jacobson
University of Montana - Missoula

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Instructor:	Maxine Jacobson, Ph.D.
Office:	JRH 116
Phone:	243-6384
E-mail	mj@selway.umt.edu
Office Hrs:	by appointment
Class Time:	Fridays – 1:00-5:00
Credits:	4 credits
Prerequisities:	Admission to MSW program or permission of instructor

Course Overview:
This course is an introduction to the theories, frameworks, principles and skills of group and community practice. It builds on the integrative model of social work knowledge and skills students have been developing in previous practice courses and translates and expands on these for effective group and community work. The course begins by examining social work's historic commitment to group and community work beginning at the turn of the 20th century with the settlement house movement. Students learn about the principles and dynamics of group work and examine and participate in mutual aid groups and community action project. Group practice will be assessed and evaluated according to the principles of integrated practice and the five key concepts of meaning, power, history, context and possibility discussed in the foundation course. This course focuses on the skills necessary to become effective group- and community-based practitioners. Students will develop and hone interpersonal, group, and organizational skills as they identify specific problems and formulate plans for intervention. Throughout the course student will use diverse approaches to self-assessment of personal and professional development; evaluate strategies and tactics of practice; and critically reflect on the interrelationship of values, ethics, power, knowledge, and communication. Particular attention will be paid to the influence of systemic inequalities (racism, sexism, classism, ageism) in interpersonal interactions and skill building for empowerment-oriented intervention.

Course Content:
This course will cover practice methods for working with groups and communities. Special emphasis will be placed on how to work in collaboration or partnership with organizations, groups, and community members to plan, implement, and evaluate group and community change efforts. Practice techniques will include listen surveys, group leadership skills, team work skills, and organizing and facilitating mutual aid groups and collaborating with communities to develop, enrich, or evaluate local programs, services, and assets. Methods for encouraging community participation and empowerment will be highlighted.

Relation to other Courses:
This course builds on the following courses: Foundation of Integrated Social Work Practice Course and Practice with Individuals and Families in a Community Context. It gives students the opportunity to reflect on and apply foundation knowledge in the context of practice with groups and communities.

Foundation Objectives Related to the Course:
Obj. 1 Provide students with analytical skills needed to critically examine the cultural, historical, political, and economic contexts that have shaped the meaning of social work and its practice.
Obj. 2 Provide students with knowledge and skills of generalist social work practice as a

foundation for assessment and intervention with diverse systems and client populations.

Obj. 5   Provide student with theoretical perspectives and practice frameworks to understand and address questions of difference and diversity and forms and mechanisms of oppression, inequality, discrimination, with particular attention to special populations in the region.

Obj. 6   Engage students in collaborative teaching-learning opportunities with diverse scholars, activists, and community practitioners regarding contemporary issues and debates in social welfare.

Obj. 7   Promote understanding of key social, political, and economic issues facing communities in the Rocky Mountain West, and their implications for social work.

Obj. 8   Provide students with knowledge and skills to engage in integrated practice with individuals, families, groups, and communities, assess the process and outcome of practice, and promote best practice approaches.

Obj. 9   Provide students with knowledge of different styles and skills of community and organizational leadership.

Obj. 12   Socialize students to continually assess and evaluate their professional competence and pursue opportunities for self-awareness and professional growth and development.

Obj. 13   Promote understanding of research as a fundamental component of practice and prepare students to use research to inform and evaluate practice.

Obj. 15   Provide students with skills and strategies of participatory, collaborative practice that include the voices of client populations in the decisions that affect their lives.

Course Objectives:

Following completion of this course, students will be able to:

1.   Analyze dominant and alternative models and methods of practice of group and community work.
2.   Demonstrate knowledge and skills to formulate participatory group and community strategies, assessments, plans, and build group and community support and promote diverse participation in change efforts.
3.   Understand how groups and communities can play a significant role in improving the well-being of individuals, families, organizations, and communities.
4.   Describe how gender, race, religion, the political/economy and a number of other factors affect the functioning and effectiveness of groups and communities.
5.   Identify how the concepts and principles of integrated practice can guide practice with groups and communities.

Textbooks: (required reading)

Homan, M. (1999). *Rules of the game: Lessons from the field of community change*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Pub. Co.

Horton, M. (1998). *The long haul: An autobiography* (with Judith and Herbert Kohl). New York: Teacher's College Press.

Loeb, P. (1999). *Soul of a citizen: Living with conviction in a cynical time*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin.

Readings on hard copy reserve in Mansfield Library and ERES. I've also placed a copy in the student lounge in JRH (List at end of syllabus).

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

Class Participation/Attendance: (60 points)
Due to the experiential nature of this class, **weekly attendance is required**. Attendance is essential for the development of effective group dynamics. Students will be forming their own mutual aid groups and meeting weekly for six weeks. Groups will be formed around a specific shared issue, problem, or concern that students would like to address. These will vary across groups. We will brainstorm possible topics during the first class session. One hour of class time for **five weeks** will be reserved for mutual aid group meetings. Following each group, time will be devoted to processing the group – assessing group dynamics, interpersonal communication skills, group work skills and process, membership and leadership roles, and the group's developmental progress towards meeting its goals and the expectations of participants. More details on this process will be discussed in class.

Beginning the fifth week of the semester, our class will be spending more time in the community and less in the classroom. Students will be learning about community organizing and neighborhood development by working with the North Missoula Community Development Center on a neighborhood project. Attendance at these meetings and work sessions is also required.

Grading for participation and attendance works as follows: For each class attended, students receive 3 points toward their total attendance/participation grade. An additional 1 point will be given to students who arrive for class on time.

Group Work Presentation: (Small Group Project) (30 points) (February 21st)
Social work group work has historically been informed by a range of theoretical perspectives. There are a number of contemporary approaches to social group work practice (e.g. task groups, psychotherapy groups, social skills development, educational groups, social action groups.) It is important for social workers to understand the key assumptions that inform different approaches to group work practice and critically assess the values, beliefs and ideology that guide practice in certain directions and not in others.

As part of the teaching-learning process, students will form small groups during the first class and choose a specific type of group work to research and present to the class as part of the teaching-learning process. Students presentations will be graded based on the following criteria: 1) Organization of presentation 2) Clarity of presentation 3) Use of auxiliary materials (handouts, overheads, etc.) 4) Creativity in getting message across to learners. 5) Use of examples to illustrate group type. 6) Application of the integrated practice framework to include consideration of the five key concepts of meaning, context, power, history and possibility. **Each group will turn in an outline of their presentation on February 21st.** Group members will receive the same grade for the presentation.

Mutual Aid Group Critical Analysis: (20 points) (March 14th)
Following completion of the mutual aid groups, students will write an in-class analysis paper summarizing their experience in the following areas: 1) leadership and membership roles and functions 2) mutual aid group dynamics 3) group process 4) stages of group development 5) addressing conflict and decision-making. The paper will be used as the basis for class discussion on the mutual aid group process and applications for social work practice on March 14th.

Community Assets Mapping Project: Large Group Project (110 points)
An integrated social work practice model requires that students bring the skills of individual and group practice to bear on their work in communities. Community practice skills also "play back" into individual

and group practice. As an example of integrated practice, we will be engaging in a collaborative project with the North Missoula Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit organization that has a commitment to improving the quality of life of residents living in Missoula's most diverse and economically disadvantaged neighborhood. After learning about the Northside neighborhood, its history, demographics, and on-going projects and accomplishments, we will engage in a community assets mapping project. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) envision assets mapping as a community development strategy that identifies what is already present in a neighborhood and community in terms of capacity and resources. They see this as a relationship-driven process that focuses on building and rebuilding relationships among local residents, local associations, and local institutions (p. 9). This idea of "relationship building" illustrates the clear linkage between individual, group and community work and how skills of individual work are essential to community change and vicea versa. More information and logistics of the project will be disseminated and discussed in class.

> **Point Distribution for the Project:**
> *Instructor Assessment of Student's Contributions to the Project (80 points)* – The instructor will write a 1-2 page type written assessment for each student based on their involvement in the community project component of the course. Areas the assessment will address will be covered in class.
>
> *Self-Assessment Essay (30 points)* – Following completion of the community assets mapping project, students will write a three page type written self assessment addressing the following areas: 1). Personal/Professional Learnings 2) Personal/Professional Challenges of Community Work 3) Personal/Professional Goals for Continued Growth

Portfolio Project: (80 points) (Proposal Due March 14th) (Project Due May 2nd)
The social work portfolio is a compilation of materials that provide evidence of student's knowledge, values, competencies and ability to reflect on the practice of social work. Each student will complete one project related to the theme of practice with groups and communities that will comprise part of his/her social work portfolio. Student may consider extending their investigation into different types of groups, developing a group for their practicum site, or using the community project as a jumping off point for a portfolio project. The project must be developed in consultation with the student's faculty advisor. It should address one or more of the student's individual learning goals and one or more of the SW 525 course objectives. A half page proposal for the portfolio project is due on March 14th.

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.

Determination of Course Grade:

Community Assets Mapping Project	110	
Group Work Presentation	30	
Mutual Aid Group Critical Analysis	20	
Attendance/Participation		60
Portfolio Project		80
Total:	300	

<u>Points Earned</u>   <u>Final Grade</u>

300-276	A
275-251	B
250-226	C
225-195	D
< 195	F

Grading Criteria: 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:
- correct grammar, spelling and punctuation
- indications of thoughtfulness and critical reflection
- thoroughness and attention to detail
- well organized (use of headings, subheadings and clarity of thought)
- push beyond surface content to interpretation, analysis, and original ideas
- make connections to class readings, discussion and illustrate these in your written work

Grading Policy: Papers and homework assignments are expected to be turned in on the date specified in the syllabus. Points will be deducted for late papers and quizzes which will decrease the grade one grade level (e.g., an A becomes a B; a B becomes a C, etc.) unless the student has made prior arrangements with the instructor.

WEEKLY COURSE TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Jan 31: Course Introduction and Overview
Topics: Course Overview, Course Structure – Teaching/Learning, Defining Groups and their Connection to Community Work, Historical Context of Social Work Group Work, Attitudes about Group Work Exercise, Mutual Aid Group Topics Brainstorm, Getting Started (handout).
Assignments: Andrews & Reisch, *The Legacy of McCarthyism on Social Group Work: An Historical Analysis*; Schwartz, *The Group Work Tradition and Social Work Practice*; Lee, *Empowerment through Mutual Aid Groups: A Practice Grounded Conceptual Framework*; Shulman, *The Dynamics of Mutual Aid;* Horton, *The Long Haul* (pp.1-55).

Feb 7: Theoretical Possibilities and Ethical Considerations
Topics: Therapeutic Dynamics of Mutual Aid; Theory Base of Social Group Work; Ethical Issues Concerning Group Work, Mutual Aid Group #1, Mutual Aid Group Processing**.**
Assignments: Horton, *The Long Haul* (pp. 56-112); Dutton, *Urban Youth Development*; Hurdle, *"Less is Best"*; Malekoff & Laser, *Addressing Difference in Group Work with Children and Young Adolescents.*

Feb 14: Group Process: Stages of Group Development and the Skills Essential for Progress and Reflection
Topics: Forming a Group; Initial Stage of Group Development; Mutual Aid Group #2, Mutual Aid Group Processing
Assignments: Horton, *The Long Haul* (pp.113-168); Sternbach, *Men Connecting and Changing – Stages of Relational Growth in Men's Groups*; Wilbur et al., *Talking Circles: Listen or Your Tongue Will Make You Deaf*; Wood & Roche, *Representing Selves, Reconstructing Lives: Feminist Group Work with Women Survivors of Male Violence*. **Prepare presentation on group work.**

Feb 21: Types of Social Work Groups
Topics: **Student presentations on types of groups**; Mutual Aid Group #3, Mutual Aid Group Processing
Assignments: Horton, *The Long Haul* (pp.169-228); Rapping, *There's Self-Help and Then There's Self-Help: Women and the Recovery Movement*.

Feb 28: Andy Robinson Workshop – 8:00 am to 12:00 pm – UC rooms 326-327 - (Workshop on fundraising and grant writing in tough economic times. I'll be in Atlanta. Ryan's class will be in the afternoon on this day.)

March 7: Group Process: Stages and Skills Group Development
Topics: Transition, Working, and Ending Stages of Group Development; Mutual Aid Group #4, Mutual Aid Group Processing
Assignments: Horton, *The Long Haul* (pp. 169-228); Finn, Jacobson, & Campana, *Participatory Research, Popular Education, and Popular Theatre: Contributions to Group Work;* Portfolio Project Proposal Due March 14th.

March 14: Linking Group Work and Community Work: Integrated Practice
Topics: Portfolio Project Proposal Due; Lesson for Group Work from "The Long Haul;" Introducing the North Missoula Community Development Center; Mutual Aid Group #5, Mutual Aid Group Analysis Exercise.
Assignments: Reisch & Wenocur, *The Future of Community Organization in Social Work: Social Activism and the Politics of Profession Buildiing*; Fisher & Shragge, *Challenging Community Organizing: Facing the 21st Century*; Loeb, *Soul of a Citizen* (pp. 1-75).

March 21: Meaning, History, Context of Community Work
Topics: Defining Community, The History and Context of Community Organizing in Social Work, Hand in mutual aid group analysis; Community Project.
Assignments: Chavis, *The Paradoxes and Promises of Community Coalitions*; Checkoway, *Six Strategies of Community Change*; McCoy & Scully, *Deliberative Dialogue to Expand Civic Engagement: What Kind of Talk Does Democracy Need?*; Loeb, *Soul of a Citizen* (pp. 76-349 – not a mistake – easy read for over break).

March 28: No Class – Spring Break

April 4: Strategies and Thinking of Community Work
Topics: Strategies of Community Change; Lesson from Loeb on Community Work; Thinking for Community Work; Community Project.
Assignments: Kretzmann & McKnight, Assets-Based Community Development, McKnight & Kretzmann, *Mapping Community Capacity*, Sharpe, Greaney, Lee, & Royce, *Assets-Oriented Community Assessment*, Homan, Rules of the Game (pp. 1-30)

April 11: Community Assessment: Getting to Know the Community
Topics: Different Ways of Thinking About Community Assessment; How to Get to Know the Community; Community Project.
Assignments: Meyer, *Social Movements: Creating Communities of Change*; Stall & Stoecker, *Community Organizing or Organizing Community: Gender and the Crafts of Empowerment*;

Krauss, *Challenging Power: Toxic Waste Protests and the Politicization of White, Working-Class Women.* Homan, *Rules of the Game* (pp. 31-111).

April 18: Community Organizing and Collective Action
   Topics: Film: "Doing the Right Thing" – Participatory Budgeting in Brazil; People's Participation; Building Leadership and Community Capacity; Community Project.
   Assignments: Homan, Rules of the Game (pp. 113-193)

April 25: Ways to Approach Promoting Community Change
   Topics: Enacting; Rules of the Game a la Homan; Different Patterns with Different Consequences; Community Project.
   Assignments: Homan, *Rules of the Game* (pp. 195-203); Baptist & Bricker-Jenkins, *A View From the Bottom: Poor People and Their Allies Respond to Welfare Reform*; Lazzari, Ford, & Haughey, *Making a Difference: Women of Action in the Community*; Cavanaugh & Cheney, *Community Collaboration – A Weaving*; People Helping People, *Walking our Talk in the Neighborhood: Building Professional/Natural Helper Partnerships.*

May 2: Case Studies in Community Change – I: Lessons and Possibilities for Practice
   Topics: Portfolio Project Due; Learning about Self and Others From Homan; Community
Project.
   Assignments: Finn & Checkoway, *Young People as Competent Community Builders: A Challenge to Social Work*; Heath & McLaughlin, *Community Organizations as Family: Endeavors that Engage and Support Adolescents;* Reardon, *Enhancing the Capacity of Community-Based Organizations in East St. Louis*; Sneed, *The Garden Project: Creating Urban Communities*; Young & Padilla, *Mujeres Unidas en Accion: A Popular Education Process*.

May 9: Case Studies in Community Change II: More Lessons and Possibilities for Practice
   Topics: Learnings from Case Studies on Community Change; Community Project.
   Assignments: Thinking about evaluating the community project.

May 16: Final's Week - Community Project: Critical Reflection, Evaluation, and Celebration

**Reading List
SW 525
Theory and Practice of Groups and Communities
Spring 2003**

History of Social Work Group Work

Andrews, J. & Reisch, M. (1997). The legacy of McCarthism on social group work: An historical analysis. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 24*(3), 211-235.

Schwartz, W. (1986). *The group work tradition and social work practice*. In A. Gitterman & L. Shulman (Eds.), (7-27), The legacy of William Schwartz: Group practice as shared interaction. New York: The Haworth Press.

Mutual Aid Groups

Lee, J. (1991). Empowerment through mutual aid groups: A practice grounded conceptual framework. *Groupwork, 4*(1), 5-21.

Shulman, L. (1986). *The dynamics of mutual aid*. In A. Gitterman & L. Shulman (Eds.), (51-60), The legacy of William Schwartz: Group practice as shared interaction. New York: The Haworth Press.

Some Group Work Examples

Dutton, S. (2001). Urban youth development – Broadway style: Using theatre and group work as vehicles for positive youth development. *Social Work with Groups, 23*(4), 39-58.

Hurdle, D. (2001). "Less is Best" – A group-based treatment program for persons with personality disorders. *Social Work with Groups, 23*(4), 71-81.

Malekoff, A. & Laser, M. (1999). Addressing difference in group work with children and young adolescents. *Social Work with Groups, 21*(4), 23-35.

Sternbach, J. (2001). Men connecting and changing – Stages of relational growth in men's groups. *Social Work with Groups, 23*(4), 59-69.

Wilbur, J., Wilbur, M., Garrett, M., & Yuhas, M. (2001). Talking circles: Listen or your tongue will make you deaf. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 26*(4), 368-384.

Wood, G. & Roche, S. (2001). Representing selves, reconstructing lives: Feminist group work with women survivors of male violence. *Social Work with Groups, 23*(4), 5-23.

Group Work Think Pieces

Finn, J., Jacobson, M., & Dean Campana, J. (2003). Chapter 19: Participatory research, popular education, and popular theatre: Contributions to group work. In C. Garvin, M. Galinsky, & Gutierrez, L. (Eds.), *Group work handbook*. New York: Guilford Press.

Rapping, E. (1997). There's self-help and then there's self-help: Women and the recovery movement. *Social Policy, 27*(3), 56-61.

Community Assessment

Kretzmann, J. & McKnight, J. (1996). Assets-based community development. *National Civic Review, 85*(4), 23-29.

McKnight, J. & Kretzmann, J. (1996). *Mapping community capacity*. Institute for Policy Research: Northwestern University.

Sharpe, P., Greaney, M., Lee, P., & Royce, S. (2000). *Assets-oriented community assessment. Public Health Reports, 115*, 205-211.

Community Change - History, Meaning, Context

Chavis, D. (2001). The paradoxes and promises of community coalitions. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 29*(2), 309-320.

Checkoway, B. (1995). Six strategies of community change. *Community Development Journal, 30*(1), 2-20.

Fisher, R. & Shragge, E. (2000). Challenging community organizing: Facing the 21st century. *Journal of Community Practice, 8*(3), 1-19.

McCoy, M. & Scully, P. (2002). Deliberative dialogue to expand civic engagement: What kind of talk does democracy need? *National Civic Review, 91*(2), 117-134.

Meyer, D. (2000). Social movements: Creating communities of change. In R. Teske & M. Tetreault, *Feminist approaches to social movement, community and po*wer (35-53). University of South Carolina Press.

Reisch, M. & Wenocur, S. (1986). The future of community organization in social work: Social activism and the politics of profession building. Social Service Review, (need volume number), 70-93.

Stall, S. & Stoecker, R. (1998). Community organizing or organizing community: Gender and the crafts of empowerment. *Gender and Society, 12*(6), 1-21.

Community Organizing/Change Case Studies

Baptist, W. & Bricker-Jenkins, M. (2002). A view from the bottom: Poor people and their allies respond to welfare reform. In Lost Ground (incomplete citation)

Cavanaugh, N. & Cheney, K. (2002). Community collaboration – A weaving. *Journal of Public Health Management Practice, 8*(1), 13-20.

Finn, J. & Checkoway, B. (1998). Young people as competent community builders: A challenge to social

work. *Social Work, 43*(4), 335-345.

Heath, S. & McLaughlin, M. (1991). Community organizations as family: Endeavors that engage and support adolescents. *Phi Delta Kappan, 72*(8), 623-627.

Krauss, C. (1998). Challenging power: Toxic waste protests and the politicization of white, working-class women. In N. Naples, *Community activism and feminist politics: Organizing across race, class and gender* (pp. 129-149). New York: Routledge.

Lazzari, M., Ford, H., & Haughey, K. (1996). Making a difference: Women of action in the community. *Social Work, 41*(2), 197-205.

People Helping People. (1997). Walking our talk in the neighborhoods: Building professional/natural helper partnerships. *Social Policy, 27*(4), 86-95.

Reardon, K. (1998). Enhancing the capacity of community-based organizations in East St. Louis. *Journal of Planning Education and Research, 17*, 323-333.

Sneed, C. (1997). The garden project: Creating urban communities. In H. Hannun (Ed.), *People, land and community* (pp. 178-187). New Haven, CN: Yale University Press.

Young, E. & Padilla, M. (1990). Mujeres unidas en acción: A popular education process. *Harvard Educational Review, 60*(1), 1-18.