

Birmingham Theological Seminary
2200 Briarwood Way
Birmingham, Alabama 35243
205-776-5650

Spring 2010

Group Dynamics BC7735

Professor: Luis Orteza, M.Div., M.S. D. Min.

Class Hours: 2

Cell Phone: 205-307-9542

E-mail address: uorteza@charter.net

Course Purpose

The purpose of this course is to develop an understanding of the biblical basis for group work and human interpersonal dynamics. Students will be introduced to the biblical framework of group structure, control and nurture. Contemporary and past literature coupled with actual group experience and leadership will be introduced to the students. Discussions of how to start a group, maintenance and its possible abuses will also be discussed.

Course Objectives

1. The student will be able to define a group in terms of growth, task, and the ability to lead groups.
2. The student will be able to identify and express the different phases of a group life.
3. The student will be able to identify and manage difficult group members
4. The student will be able to employ group dynamics to facilitate the care of people in group settings especially in a church context.
5. The student will learn the ethical guidelines for group work

Course Texts

Arnold, Jeffrey. *The Big Book on Small Groups*. IVP, Downers Grove, 2004.
ISBN: 0-8308-2370-0, Second Edition or current edition.

Corey, Marianne & Gerald Cory. *Groups: Process and Practice*. Brooks/Cole Publishing Co.
ISBN: 0-534-34224-8, Fifth Edition or current edition.

Long, Jimmy (Coordinator). *Small Group Leader's Handbook: The Next Generation*.
IVP, Downers Grove, Ill. 1995. ISBN: 0-8308-1139-7.

Stott, John. *One People: Helping Your Church Become a Caring Community*.
Christian Publications, Inc., Harrisburg, PA., 1982. ISBN 0-87509-324-8.

Stedman, Ray. *Body Life*. Discovery House Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI.
Revised Edition, 1995. ISBN: 1-57293-000-4.

Lead Out: A Guide for Leading Bible Discussion Groups. The Navigators, 1975.
ISBN: 0-89109-125-4.

Assignments:

1. Read textbooks by Arnold and Long. Create a study guide for each text in which you propose three questions for each chapter. State the question in bold type. Following the question, present the answer for the question (answers should be a 2 to 4 sentence discussion, not just one or two word answers). This assignment is due on the day of mid-term exam (20 % of grade).
 2. Mid-term exam covering the books by Arnold, Long and Corey (15%).
 3. Attend a small group of your choice (Career Transition, Healing Hearts, Divorce Care, AA) or other similar oriented groups at a church or in the community. You must at least attend 2 sessions. Submit information (brochure) about the group that you will attend along with you paper. Paper must be 3 to 5 pages and include these items:
 - I. Identify category of the group
 - II. Formation and purpose of the group (what was involved).
 - III. Discuss group leadership:
 - What effective characteristics did you observe?
 - What effective skills did you observe?
 - What fallacies did you observe (principles not practiced)
 - IV. To the extent possible, give your observations regarding the four stages of this group.
- B) Participate in class group Bible Study in which you will lead, prepare lessons, and facilitate discussions. You will be asked to prepare lessons from the Gospel of Mark. In leading the study, it would be advisable that you also read *Lead Out: A Guide for Leading Bible Discussion Groups*. Write a paper about your experience in leading a bible study group. Include in your paper a discussion of group leadership:
- What effective characteristics did you observe?
 - What effective skills did you observe?
 - What fallacies did you observe (principles not practiced)?
 - How did you feel about leading a group?
 - Would you change your style of leading a group if given another opportunity?
- Finally, in your conclusion include discussion how you think this class and your experience helped you understand group dynamics (30%). These papers are due on the day of the final.
4. Response papers on John Stott's book and Ray Stedman. Outline the book by John Stott and Ray Stedman. Outline it in such a way that you can use it personally to teach in a class. Highlight the main points in each chapter; use headings and sub-headings (20 %).
 5. Final (15%). Covering reading and class discussions.