

University of Pennsylvania
School of Social Policy & Practice
Non-Profit Leadership Program
NPLD 782 GROUP DYNAMICS

SYLLABUS for Spring 2019

This course has four sections

301 (2/8 - 2/10)

304(2/15 - 2/17)

305(2/15 - 2/17)

307(2/22 - 2/24)

Every section meets during the following hours:

Friday 6pm – 11pm

Saturday 9am – 11pm

Sunday 9am – 6pm

Students must be present and on time for every part of this course in order to be permitted to complete the course and to receive a minimum passing grade. Please keep in mind that this course is physically, intellectually, psychologically and emotionally demanding. You will get out of this course what you and your classmates put into it.

Course Purpose:

NPLD 782 deals with the dynamics and processes operative in small groups. This is an intensely experiential course. It builds on the liberal arts understanding of **human biology, history, economics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, literature, philosophy and political science**. There is a special emphasis on how group dynamics impact: (a) human dignity and worth, (b) individuals' access to the resources needed to survive and thrive, (c) the social stigmas attached to populations-at-risk, (d) the generation of dynamics which oppress (e) the creation of human conflicts, both

destructive and constructive, (f) the fueling and/or amelioration of the classic isms, and (g) the empowerment of those seeking their own liberation.

Its purpose is to provide participants with an in depth understanding about group processes while they are in operation. It is easy to see what went right or wrong in a group, an organization or a community when one looks back in hindsight, or to understand what is going on in groups observed from a distance. To tune into these dynamics when we are embroiled in them ourselves and to take constructive actions when it could have a meaningful impact is a completely different issue. This is an art form, which requires cognitive and emotional processing that is extremely demanding.

The knowledge-in-action acquired in this course is relevant to activities such as leading organizations, facilitating groups in a variety of reparative settings, managing work groups, conducting support groups, leading project groups, chairing committees, serving on special task forces, managing a classroom, taking up leadership positions, working to solve community conflicts, starting up a new enterprise, advocating for the disenfranchised, negotiating in complex and turbulent settings, engaging in organizational and community transformation.

Course structure

The structure and rhythms of this course are based on the principle that learning of this nature rests on five processes: experiencing, observing, reading, seminarizing and reflecting.

Entry into **782** requires participation in a non-credit one day **Primer**, plus viewing a video. **782** is experiential in nature. Each cohort of students is divided into two groups, A and B. Both A and B sequentially spend substantial time "in session." When a group is "in session" members are charged with the primary **task** of investigating the group processes operating in their midst while they are occurring.

When one group is "in session" the other group sits silently and observes, monitors and tracks the dynamics operating in the group of which they are not a part. Then the roles are reversed. This is interspersed with (a) reading, (b) discussion (c) seminarizing, and (d) private reflection. A learning cycle lasts for three to four hours and is then repeated.

The instructor acts as facilitator for the group "in session." All observing participants are asked to take notes on what they witnessed, in particular the group based patterns

playing out before their eyes. These observations provide an opportunity to learn from a distance and are used to provide a grounded reality for the written papers.

This course is not for everyone. This course can be quite intense and it should not be undertaken by anyone undergoing overwhelming life stress. During the Primer, participants begin to develop the requisite frames, the capacity to sit on the learning edge, and an appreciation for how to contribute to the learning of a collective, foundational elements in this course series. Accordingly admission is only granted to those who have followed completely the “course discerning process” laid out in the pre-course announcement.

This course is the prerequisite for the courses known as the “Power Lab.” The Power Lab currently consists of two options, NPLD 785 and NPLD 791.

The goal of this series of courses is to educate at the most advanced level we can.

All participants are required to sign a course contract -- see Appendix B.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course participants are expected to:

1. Demonstrate they recognize both explicit and hidden dynamics, which shape the identity of group members (race, gender, ethnicity, social class, age etc.) across time and how to harvest the human wealth located in embracing all forms of diversity.
2. Demonstrate they recognize how the meanings of events in groups get created, both those that lead to human advancement and those that are marginalizing and dehumanizing.
3. Demonstrate they know how to sustain those dynamics that foster healthy interpersonal and intragroup group relations and how to change those likely to produce dysfunctional outcomes.
4. Enhance their understanding of group facilitation skills.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of both rational and paradoxical approaches to group behavior.
6. Demonstrate a good understanding of the role of self in the change agent process.

Course Requirements

1. Texts and Readings:

Required

Smith, Kenwyn K. & David N. Berg. (1997) *Paradoxes of Group Life*. San Francisco, CA: New Lexington Press Classics, paperback version. Available as an e-book.

Optional

Gibbard, G.S., Hartman, J.J. and R.D. Mann (Eds.) (1974) *Analysis of Groups*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

McCullom, M. and J. Gillette (Eds.) (1995) *Groups in Context: A New Perspective on Group Dynamics*. New York, N.Y: University Press of America.

1. Course Assignments: One major group paper.

Paper:

- During the 782 weekend, all students will read about the 12 paradoxes contained in Chapter 5, 6 and 7 of Smith and Berg (1997) and will have conversations about them with peers, using the data from their own group sessions and the group they are observing.
- Immediately after the weekend, each student will be assigned three paradoxes and is to write 1.5 to 2 pages on each of them, (a) state succinctly what the paradox is, (b) offer evidence from their own group and the group they observed that supports or repudiates the value of the paradoxical conceptualization. These 4.5 to 6 pages will be called participants preliminary papers (PPP).
- All students will be placed into a group of 4 for the purpose of writing one overall group paper following Module 1.
- Each small group is to write together a 3-page synopsis of the major lessons they learned from this module. This is called the Group Paper part A.
- Finally, that same small group is to write together a 3 page Group Paper (labeled "part B") that discusses the link between what the group thinks are the three most salient of these 12 paradoxes and at least 2 of the inter-group paradoxes discussed in Chapter 9 of Smith and Berg.

- The small groups are to electronically present Group Paper Part A and Group Paper Part B (total length of 6 pages) along with the four 4.5 to 6 page PPPs (total length of Appendices should be 18-24 pages).
- These papers are due at 5pm approximately 3 weeks after the class ends. Please note that students who plan to take the March 2019 Power Lab will not be permitted to enter the lab unless their paper has been received. The papers are to be submitted as a word document attachment (**NOT a pdf**) to your particular instructor (e-mails are on page 1 of this syllabus).
 - 2/8 - 2/10 Due Friday, 3/1
 - 2/15 - 2/17 Due Friday, 3/8
 - 2/22 - 2/24 Due Thursday, 3/14
- These papers are to convey clear evidence that the salient lessons contained in the Paradox book have been absorbed and can be accurately applied.
- If the group has successfully completed the writing assignment, the members in that four-person group will receive the equivalent of a B grade for the paper. If it is inadequate all members of that group will do an individually based take-home, open-book exam on the Paradoxical material.
- **NO PAPER WILL BE DEEMED ADEQUATE UNLESS IT SHOWS EVIDENCE THAT THE MATERIAL IN *Paradoxes of Group Life* HAS BEEN ABSORBED AND MEANINGFULLY APPLIED.**
- Late submissions not accepted unless there is an extreme emergency.

1. **Grading Policy:** To receive credit for this course papers must demonstrate that the participant is achieving the major learning objectives for the course. Full involvement in all the experiential events of this module is required. The grading for NPLD 782 will be based on the following:

- If the paper submitted is deemed competent, all members of the 4-person group who wrote the paper will be given the baseline grade of a B.
- The Instructor will assign a grade for the collective learning that occurred in Group A & B of that weekend.
- The Professor will also assign a grade for the collective learning that took place in the course (both groups A & B).
- These three grades will be averaged together to get a final grade. For example if the four-person group submits an adequate paper they will start with a B. If the Professor determines the collective learning in Group A was a B+ and the collective learning in the course was a B+ each person in the Group A will receive a B+.
- Be aware that the emphasis on grading for this course is different than in other courses. Although your individual contribution is important (recall 'relational thinking'), it is important in relation to how you contribute to the collective learning of your group and the class. Please see the NPL grading policy (Appendix C)

1. **Attendance:** All participants must be fully present at all class sessions and be on time.

Readings and seminars will focus on topics relevant to what is occurring within the group at that time. These assignments are allocated according to the dynamics occurring in the experiential groups at that time.

Appendix B

COURSE CONTRACT FOR NPLD 782

This is to affirm that (1) I have been fully briefed on the educational objectives and the philosophy that undergirds this class, (2) I have completed the pre and post requirements for and attended the one day Primer, including the follow-up reading or video clip on Paradoxical thinking (3) I have been advised of the emotionally taxing nature of this learning.

I commit to be fully present, physically, intellectually and emotionally at ALL specified sessions for this class (NO EXCEPTIONS, unless prevented by serious illness or life crisis).

I have been advised not to take this class if I am currently undergoing any psychiatric/psychological treatment, or taking any prescribed medication for stress, unless cleared to do so by a physician or a counselor.

I have made a public commitment to the instructors and all class members to preserve the confidentiality of everything that occurs in this course.

I am of sound mind and body.

Signature of participant
.....

Date

Signature of Professor

Appendix C

Course evaluation in the NPL program

NPLD courses are given the grades of A, B, C and F

The criteria are as follows:

- Good, solid work (faithfully and competently did what was asked): B
- Good solid work PLUS displays creativity and originality: A
- Marginal work (student needs to produce higher quality work -- is skating on thin ice): C
- Incompetent work: F

Faculty may include + and – on any grade so as to give a greater evaluative spread.

The NPL program does not subscribe to grade-inflation practices and all points on the evaluative range from A+ to C- are treated as a passing grade.

Additional Readings

Listed below are additional readings that will provide you with more extensive understanding of the concepts and issues emphasized in the course.

Badger, E. (2016, Oct. 5). We're all a little biased, even if we don't know it. *New York Times*.

Bennis, W. G., & Shepard, H. A. (1974/1986). A theory of group development, in G. S. Gibbard, J. J. Hartman, & R. D. Mann (Eds.). *Analysis of groups* (pp. 127-153). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Berg, D. N. (1999). Chapter 7: Intergroup stories everywhere! In M. Edelson, & D. N. Berg, *Rediscovering groups: A psychoanalyst's journey beyond individual psychology*(pp. 86-90). Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Brazaitis, S. J. (2004). White women – Protectors of the status quo, positioned to disrupt it. In S. Cytrynbaum and D. Noumair (Eds.), *Group relations reader 3*(pp. 99-116). Washington, D.C.: A.K. Rice Institute.

Cushman, P. (1990). Why the self is empty: Toward a historically situated psychology. *American Psychologist*, 45(5), 599-611.

Diamond, M. A. (1998). The symbiotic lure: Organizations as defective containers. *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, 20(3), 315-325.

Dumas, R. G. (1979). Dilemmas of Black females in leadership. *Journal of Personality and Social Systems*, 2(1).

Dunning, G., James, C., & Jones, N. (2005). Splitting and projection at work in schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 43(3).

Gemmill, G. (1986). The dynamics of the group shadow in intergroup relations. *Small Group Behavior*, 17(2), 229-240.

Gemmill, G. (1989). The dynamics of scapegoating in small groups. *Small Group Behavior*, 20(4), 407-418.

Green, Z. G., & Molenkamp, R. J., (2005). The BART System of Group and Organizational Analysis: Boundary, Authority, Role and Task. Accessible at: www.academy.umd.edu/tle/BART (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

Harvey, J. B. (1974). The Abilene paradox: The management of agreement. *Organizational Dynamics*, 3(1), 63-80.

Hayden, C., & Molenkamp, R. J. (2004). Tavistock primer II. In S. Cytrynbaum & D. A. Noumair (Eds.), *Group dynamics, organizational irrationality, and social complexity: Group relations reader 3*. Jupiter, FL: A. K. Rice Institute.

Horwitz, L. (1983). Projective identification in dyads and groups. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 33(3).

Hyun, J. (2005). But I didn't mean it that way: How cultural values can help or hinder you at work. In *Breaking the bamboo ceiling: Career strategies for Asians*(pp. 27-54). New York: Harper Collins.

Janis, I. L. (1972). The groupthink syndrome. In *Groupthink: Psychological studies of policy decisions and fiascoes (2ndEd.)*(pp. 174-197). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Kaminstein, D. (2017). Reflections on beginning a course in small group processes. Unpublished manuscript.

Kay, K., & Shipman, C. (2014, May). The confidence gap. *The Atlantic*.

LaFarge, V. (1995). Termination in groups. In J. Gillette & M. McCollom (Eds.), *Groups in context: A new perspective on group dynamics*(pp. 171-185). University Press of America.

Markus, H. R. & Kitayama, S. (1991) Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation. *Psychological Review*, Vol. 98 (2), pp 224-253

Marshak, R. J., & Katz, J. H. (1997). Diagnosing covert processes in groups and organizations. *OD Practitioner*, 33-42.

McCollom, M. (1995). Group formation: Boundaries, leadership, and culture. In J. Gillette & M. McCollom (Eds.), *Groups in context: A new perspective on group dynamics* (35-47). University Press of America

McRae, M.B. & Short, E.L. (2010). Social roles in groups. In *Racial and cultural dynamics in group and organizational life: Crossing Boundaries* (pp. 79- 92). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Moxnes, P. (1999). Understanding roles: A psychodynamic model for role differentiation

in groups. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 3(2), 99-113.

Moxnes, P. (2006). Learning group psychology, leadership and anxiety coping by use of fairy tales as an educational guide. *Nordic Psychology*, 58(1), 5-21.

Napier, R. W., & Gershenfeld, M. K. (2004). Norms, group pressures and deviancy. In *Groups: Theory and experience (7th Ed.)* (pp. 114-163). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Obholzer, A. (1994). Authority, power and leadership: Contributions from group relations training. In A. Obholzer & Z. G. Roberts (Eds.), *The unconscious at work: Individual and organizational stress in the human services*(pp. 39-47). New York: Routledge.

Ronson, J. (2015, Feb. 12). How one stupid tweet blew up Justine Sacco's life. *New York Times*.

Schein, E. (1989). Group and intergroup relationships. In S. J. Ott (Ed.) *Classic reading in organizational behavior* (pp. 216-222). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Smith, K. K., Miller, R. & Kaminstein, D. (2004). Consultant as container: Assisting organizational rebirth in Mandela's South Africa. In S. Cytrynbaum and D. Noumair (Eds.), *Group Relations Reader 3*(pp. 243-266). Washington, D.C.: A.K. Rice Institute.

Taylor, F., Smith, K. K., & Kuriloff, P. (2004). Anatomy of a casualty, In S. Cytrynbaum and D. Noumair (Eds.), *Group Relations Reader 3*(pp. 183-207). Washington, D.C.: A.K. Rice Institute.

Tillich, P. (1952). Being, nonbeing, and anxiety. In *The courage to be*(pp. 32-63). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Viswanath, R. (2009). Identity, leadership, and authority: Experiences in application of group relations concepts for Dalit empowerment in India. In E. Aram, & R. Baxter (Eds.), *Adaptation and Innovation: Theory, Design and Role-Taking in Group Relations Conferences and their Applications*(pp.179 – 195). Karnac Books Ltd.

Wheelan, S. (2013). From groups to teams: The stages of group development. In *Creating Effective Teams: A Guide for Members and Leaders*, 4th Ed. (pp. 7-20). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.