COURSE TITLE: Group Dynamics

COURSE CODE: PSY 231

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 45

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

This course blends theory and application of the principles of group interaction and development. This is not a lecture course. Through actively participating in class exercises, students will have an opportunity to develop their sense of self in relation to others and to develop skill in effective group functioning. The general content of the course involves group formation, communication, leadership, decision-making, problem solving, goal setting, power and influence, conflict and conflict resolution, cohesion norms, and stages of group development. Prerequisite(s): PSY 101. Credits: 3 (3,0)

PREREQUISITES: PSY 101, PSY 130, or PSY 131 or permission from Department Chairperson.

REQUIRED FOR: None

ELECTIVE FOR: All curricula with a social science elective.

TEXTS CURRENTLY IN USE:

Groups: Theory and Experience, 5th Edition,
Napier/Gershenfeld, Houghton Mifflin Pub., 1992
COURSE OUTLINE

UNIT 1: Introduction to Group Dynamics.
This unit will present the administrative details of the class including requirements, how this class differs from more traditional classes, etc. The primary goal is to communicate through words and actions that in this class students will be learning experientially about groups, they will be learning from the process of being in groups, learning that each group is different, and learning theory in relation to personal questions and observed phenomena. Several different group ice breakers may be appropriate.

Unit 2: Perception and Communication. This unit will cover how individuals learn to perceive their world - including both conscious and unconscious variables. Topics to be explored will range from selective perception and the individual, culture, stereotypes, group behavior, and communication. This unit will also address factors that inhibit and influence communication in groups.

Unit 3: Group Membership. This unit addresses the different definitions and types of memberships and how they affect the way a person functions within a particular group. Also include are topics of why people join groups, multiple memberships, reference groups, and factors increasing and decreasing the attractiveness of membership.

Unit 4: Norms, Roles, and Group Pressures. This unit addresses the concepts of norms and different theories of norm development are explored. This unit also covers different types of norms, forces that induce acceptance or deviance from norms, the power of group norms, and how to change group norms. Within this context roles concepts are included.

Unit 5: Goals. This unit distinguishes individual goals from group goals, hidden agendas, and operational versus non-operational goals. The relationship between group goals and group activities are explored, as are factors affecting group productivity, mission and objectives, and the influence of group goals on the individual.

Unit 6: Leadership. This unit present theories of leadership including trait, behavior, situational, power, and position. Contemporary theories are also explored that concentrate on the influence process of leadership. Concepts of power and influence are introduced and the affects on group functioning are explored.

Unit 7: Group Problem Solving. This unit addresses group problem solving, conflict, and tension. Different theories of decision making are explored, as are techniques of problem solving (e.g., nominal group technique, brainstorming, etc.). The positive and negative aspects of conflict and tension are presented and critiqued.

Unit 8: The Evolution of Groups. This unit presents the concept that all groups go through stage
transformations and are qualitatively different in each stage of development. Models of group development are presented and critiqued regarding elements that enhance or detract from effective functioning and group health.