Summer Program 2014

Course Syllabus PSY 301G

The Psychology of Group Dynamics

Contact Details

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Office Hours and Location

Classes during the Summer Program 2014 will take place every Wednesday and Friday from 09.00 to 13.00 Hr. The designated class-room is The Hague (TBC).

Besides class-room meetings, there will be opportunity for questions and/or individual guidance during ‘office hour’. Office hour will be organized: ……………………………

Course Description

Groups matter and they are often the keys to the understanding of human behavior. Moreover, people spend their entire life being in groups, getting out of groups, and leading groups. The strange thing about human behavior in groups, however, is that people not only react according their own drives, characteristics, and emotions, but that they are also strongly influenced by their interactions with other individuals, groups, and organizations.

Accordingly, each person’s behavior influences, and is in turn affected by, everyone else’s behavior. The study of that interaction and human behavior in groups is called Group Dynamics. The World English Dictionary defines Group Dynamics as “[…] a field of social psychology concerned with the nature of human groups, their development, and their interactions.” As a consequence, Group Dynamics is a subdiscipline of Psychology and, more specifically, a subdiscipline of Social Psychology.
Human behavior in groups and dynamic interactions within and between groups are obviously extremely important and continue to generate a vast societal impact (Figure 1). Therefore, some of the questions that will be elaborated during the course are: “What is a group?”, “How are groups formed?”, “What makes a well structured, cohesive group?”, “How come along decision making processes in groups?”, and “What makes a (good) leader?”.

![Picture](image.png)

*Figure 1. About the dynamics of group support*

Obviously, there are many more issues related to the dynamics of groups and Table 1 provides an overview of the topics that will be studied during the course.

*Table 1. Schedule providing an overview of the course’s topics.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>28/05/2014</td>
<td>Introduction to Group Dynamics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>30/05/2014</td>
<td>Identity and formation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>04/06/2014</td>
<td>Cohesion and development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>06/06/2014</td>
<td>Power processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11/06/2014</td>
<td>Teams</td>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>13/06/2014</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>18/06/2014</td>
<td>Group performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>20/06/2014</td>
<td>Decision making</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>25/06/2014</td>
<td>Group conflicts</td>
<td>Quiz 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>27/06/2014</td>
<td>Intergroup relations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>02/07/2014</td>
<td>Crowds and collective behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>04/07/2014</td>
<td>Open topic *</td>
<td>Submit paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>09/06/2014</td>
<td>Exam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: * Open topic, related to the field of Group Dynamics. Study depends upon the overall progress of the course. If appropriate, students are cordially invited to suggest interesting themes.
Whenever possible, the topics’ academic elaboration will be supported with relevant case studies derived from emerging contemporary issues, incidents, and episodes.

**Course Prerequisites**

No enforcer prerequisites are applicable. To guarantee a fluent learning experience, students should ideally have followed an introductory course in Psychology or in Social Psychology. This, however, is merely an informer prerequisite and motivated students should be able to successfully attend the course, even as a stand-alone – provided some additional individual effort.

**General Learning Objectives**

After following this course Vesalius students should be able to:

- Explain what Group Dynamics is and how it is embedded within the general study of Psychology.
- Discuss the most important topics in Group Dynamics (see Table 1) and elaborate their emerging theories, models, and issues.
- Argue what practical steps you can take to gain knowledge or to apply the most appropriate theories and models.

**Course Materials**


Other materials: Per chapter, a portfolio of @-readers and/or assignments will be delivered. As the course progresses students are expected to use the portfolio according to the instructions provided.

Suggested reading: Scientific journals provide excellent means to deepen student’s knowledge. Accordingly, individual exploration of topic related scientific journals is highly recommended.

Examples of specialized journals in the field of Group Dynamics are:

- Group Dynamics and Group Processes
- Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice
- …
Course Assessment

Students will be evaluated on the basis of their performance as follows:

- Quiz 1 15%
- Quiz 2 15%
- Research paper 30%
- In-class participation 10%
- Final examination 30%

TOTAL 100%

Grading Scale of Vesalius College

Vesalius College’s grading policy, in line with the Flemish Educational norms, is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>Scale of 20</th>
<th>Scale of 100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>17.0-20.0</td>
<td>85-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>16.1-16.9</td>
<td>81-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>15.3-16.0</td>
<td>77-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>14.5-15.2</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>13.7-14.4</td>
<td>69-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>13.1-13.6</td>
<td>66-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>12.3-13.0</td>
<td>62-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>11.5-12.2</td>
<td>58-61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>10.7-11.4</td>
<td>54-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>10.0-10.6</td>
<td>50-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-9.9</td>
<td>0-49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further Description of Assessment Activities

The following criteria are important in assessing your written work:

- Evidence of understanding of the concepts, theories and ideas developed in the course provide the required content.
- A fluent writing style, correct orthography, and clear layout improve the quality of your written work – and they substantially increase the reading pleasure.
- Creativity in the subject’s choice, approach, and methodology are welcomed because they add ‘spice’ to a study.

Additional Course Policies

The course will be structured as an active learning journey. Therefore, students’ active participation and open sharing are essential. Students are encouraged to carefully listen to
each other and to articulate their individual perspectives in a civil and respectful manner. Students will learn through interaction with classmates and the success of this course relies heavily on all involved to create a supportive and safe learning environment.

Professor

The professor will teach, structure the processes, facilitate learning and discussions, accompany workshops, and give feedback. Class time will be maximally used for exchanging ideas and generating issues to be resolved.

Classes

Classes will be organized twice a week from 09.00 to 13.00 Hr. Because no student can be reasonably expected to remain attentive for four hours, the meeting of a specific day (X) will be structured as follows:

- Period 1: Review course X-1 & student presentations X-1
- Period 2: Elaboration topic meeting X
- Period 3: Elaboration topic meeting X
- Period 4: Assignment X+1 & supervised workshop

Students

We hold the expectation that participants to the course are mature students that are intrinsically motivated, independent learners with a positive attitude. Accordingly, students are expected to:

- Respect timings and deadlines for classes, assignments, and the paper.
- Independently source and read relevant information.
- Generate responses to issues.
- Evaluate and critique responses.

Academic Honesty Statement

Academic dishonesty is NOT tolerated in this course.

Academic honesty is not only an ethical issue but also the foundation of scholarship. Cheating and plagiarism are therefore serious breaches of academic integrity.

Following the College policy, cheating and plagiarism cases will be communicated in writing to the Associate Dean for Students and submitted to the Student Conduct Committee for disciplinary action.

If you refer to someone else’s work, appropriate references and citations must be provided. Grammar, spelling and punctuation count, so use the tools necessary to correct before handing in assignments.
Appendix

Paper assignment

Choose an existing group and study it – your group of choice could be a group you used to belong to, one you currently belong to, one you would like to belong to, or one that just interests you. Discuss your ideas with the professor until they are accepted and develop a problem statement.

Next, study the extant literature (see Figure 2). Then prepare yourself – under supervision during the workshops – to conduct a study, to execute the study, and to write a research paper. The paper should contain 2,500 ± 200 words (abstract and references excluded).

The paper should be written according to the norms provided by the American Psychological Association (APA). The deadline to submit the paper is July, 04 at 08.00 Hr!

Structure

0. Title & Abstract  
1. Introduction (resulting in a problem statement and a research question)  
2. Method  
3. Results  
4. Discussion  
5. Conclusions (optional)

Reference


Figure 2. Writing is hard work, start timely!