

DC251M: Syllabus
Spring 2004, Mods Q1 & Q2
March 29 – June 7
Mondays 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. & 8:00-10:00 p.m.
Saturday, May 8

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SMALL GROUPS IN THE CHURCH

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course explores group development theory and its appropriate application to small groups in the church and other Christian organizations. It provides an opportunity for students to analyze their own styles of working with groups and to enhance their communication and leadership skills through direct work in class and in a church setting. Information and practice about starting, facilitating and completing group processes and tasks will be included.

LEARNING OUTCOMES : Students will:

1. Articulate their understanding of the purpose and place of small groups in the church.
2. Understand the value and place of different types and models of small groups.
3. Describe characteristics of healthy small groups, and suggest appropriate interventions for problematic situations.
4. Assess their personal functioning (styles, strengths, growth areas) as a participant and leader of a small group.
5. Write effective Bible study questions reflecting accurate biblical interpretation and small group theory and practice.
6. Analyze a small group according to group characteristics described in class discussions and required texts.
7. Construct a plan (including design and implementation processes) for the small group's ministry of a local church taking into consideration the congregation's mission, vision and/or goals.
8. Demonstrate leadership of small groups by planning for and leading a group Bible study of 4-9 people for four gatherings, each of two hours duration.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Bunch, Cindy, editor. *Small Group Idea Book*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996. ISBN: 0-8308-11672
- Donahue, Bill. *Leading Life-Changing Small Groups*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2002 Revised Edition. ISBN: 0-310-24750-0
- Donahue, Bill and Russ Robinson. *The Seven Deadly Sins of Small Group Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2002. ISBN: 0-310-24706-3
- Gorman, Julie A. *Community That Is Christian: A Handbook on Small Groups*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002. ISBN: 0-8010-9145-4
- Lencioni, Patrick. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2002. ISBN: 0-7879-6075-6

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

1. **READING OF REQUIRED TEXTS AND ARTICLES** (Approximately 1000 pages per hour @ 30 pages per hour = 34 hours—10% of grade) Submit reading report—see page 7.
2. **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN CLASS**— Since this class consists of group interaction/participation, regular attendance is mandatory for all sessions (24 contact hours). One prearranged absence is permitted without affect on your grade; however any additional absences or tardiness will lower the grade. Three tardies is equivalent to an absence. Each session missed will lower your grade ½ letters.
3. **INTERVIEW** two different small group ministry leaders who are presently coordinating and leading a small group ministry program in their church or ministry setting—do not use leaders that other class members have interviewed (4 hours—10% of grade). Take good notes, but do not write a formal paper. Use your notes for class discussion groups, and then submit them to the professor.
 - What is their philosophy of small group ministry?
 - What types of groups does their church provide?
 - What are the blessings and potential drawbacks?
 - How are new groups started?
 - How autonomous/controlled are the groups? Do they use report forms?
 - What are the top two principles we can learn vicariously from their experience?
4. **MEMORIZATION** of Scripture (5 hours—5% of grade).
5. **PREPARATION OF DISCUSSION GUIDE**—see daily assignment schedule (4 hours).
6. **SMALL GROUPS PHILOSOPHY PAPER**—this paper should explain your philosophy of small groups. Your rationale should include biblical, social, and learning foundations. It should answer the question, *why should we have small groups?* A thorough philosophy should also address the *How* of small groups, though not unpacking details such as specific curriculum, training topics, etc. (these issues are covered in the implementation plan assignment). A minimum of 1,500 words (approximately seven pages or more) typed and double-spaced (12 hours—25% of grade).
7. **SMALL GROUP IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**: Seven pages, 10 point font, and single-spaced (10 hours—25% of grade)
 - A. Identify the specific people groups that you would like to reach through small group ministries in your church or ministry setting.
 - B. Complete an assessment of the specific ministry needs of the specific people groups.
 - C. Design and delineate a **four-year** plan for cell groups in your church, [life-stage group in larger churches], or in your ministry setting to meet the ministry needs of the specific people groups. Utilize class discussion and resource samples, resources reviewed at a local bookstore and interaction with other leaders of cell group ministries to formulate your proposal.
 - 2 pages: description and demographics of the specific people groups
 - 1 page: description of proposal for small groups and implementation strategy for **each** year.

8. **SMALL GROUP PARTICIPATION REPORT:** (25% of grade)

- A. Lead a small group (4-9 people) for 4 weeks through a Bible study [you cannot use a student from class] (on the average of 2 hours of preparation and 2 hours of participation each week-16 hours)
- B. Write a 4-6 page paper (typed, double-spaced) answering the following questions (8 hours for reflection and writing):
- 1) Describe the group-size, participant's characteristics, purposes and goals of the group, and your own relationship to the group.
 - 2) Identify significant group characteristics and determine how they are incorporated within this particular group.
 - 3) Describe the factors that appear to enhance accomplishment of the group's goals and the factors that hinder accomplishment of group goals.
 - 4) Based on what you have been reading and experiencing, what "prescription" would you write to improve this group's functioning?
 - 5) Describe how you would design a similar group in order to try and avoid some of the pitfalls that this one has encountered.
 - 6) Assess your own competencies and deficiencies as group member/leader that was evident in this particular group experience. Utilize feedback from group members as you reflect on the experience (see form on pages 7 & 8).

The professor will ascribe:

- an "A" if the assignment is met with distinction.
- a "B" if the assignment is partially met, or in general above average.
- a "C" if the assignment is satisfactorily completed.

The student's course grade will be the total of all assignments, based on the scale below:

A	95%	B	85%	C	75%	D	65%
A-	92%	B-	82%	C-	72%	D-	62%
B+	88%	C+	78%	D+	68%	F	Below 62%

Accessibility: Please contact the instructor as soon as possible if disability-related accommodations are needed. Accommodations for students with documented disabilities are set up through the Office of Disability Services. Contact Kathy McGillivray, Director of Disability Services, at (651) 635-8759.

CLASS SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPICS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
March 29	Introduction to the Course Christian Community	
April 5	Biblical/Theological and Social Foundations Isolation vs. Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: <i>Community</i>, Part I & II • Read: <i>Life-Changing</i>, Part 1
April 12	Overview of Ministry Models Curricular Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: <i>Life-Changing</i>, Part 2-7 • Due: Interview Reports • Memorize: Romans 12:10, 13
April 19	Discipleship Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: <i>Community</i>, Part III • Memorize: Philippians 2:3-5
April 26	Leading/Facilitating Group Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due: Small Groups Philosophy Paper
May 3	Support and Recovery Groups Guest Presenter: Peter Kapsner, Church of the Open Door	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorize: Galatians 6:2, 10 • Read: <i>Community</i>, Part IV
May 8 Saturday	Team-Based Ministry service groups Guest Presenter: Brian Doten, Wooddale Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: <i>The Five Dysfunctions of a Team</i>
May 10	Leadership Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: All of <i>Seven Deadly Sins</i> • Memorize: Ephesians 3:20, 21
May 17	Group Life, Development, Life-Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: <i>Life-Changing</i>, Part 8 • Due: Small Group Implementation Plan
May 24	Assessing Leadership Competence Personal Development Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due: Small Group Participation Report
June 7	Facilitating Community Quiz on <i>Community</i> Scripture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorize: 1 John 3:16-18 • Read: All of <i>Small Group Idea Book</i> • Prepare: Answer the study guide on pp. 5-6; turn in after your discussion group

Study Guide

Small Group Idea Book

Community Resources.

1. Identify the idea you (or your group) would be most comfortable with, or that would be most beneficial to group life, under each category.

Activity for any phase of a group's life _____

Idea for the first few meetings _____

Idea for start up (5-15 minutes) _____

Idea for start up (20-30 minutes) _____

Idea for start up (35-60 minutes) _____

Idea for shake-up _____

Idea for live-it up _____

Idea for wrap-up _____

2. Complete the "Coat of Arms" exercise. Be prepared to explain to your group.

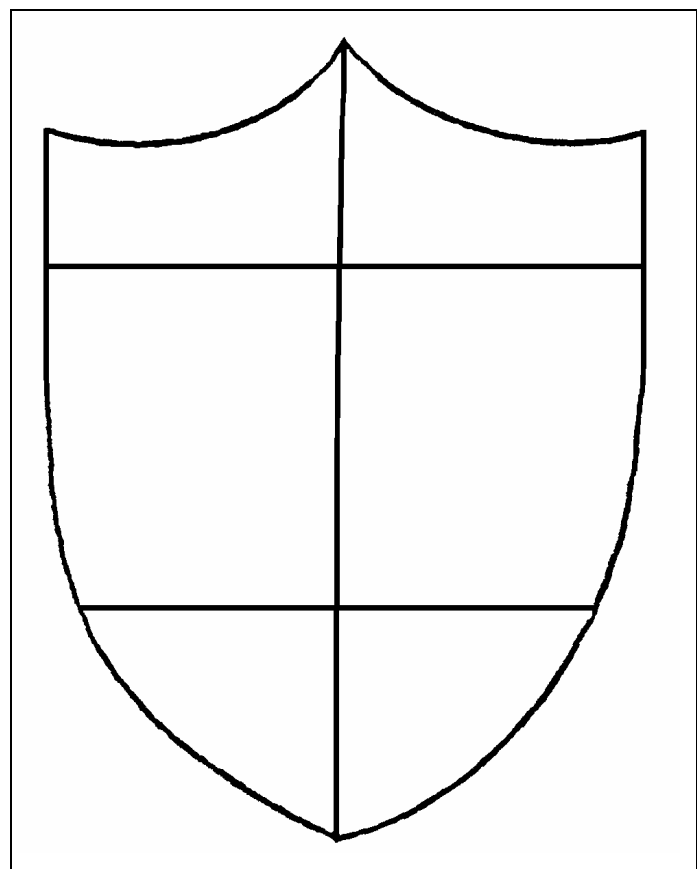
A coat of arms in the past, used signs and symbols to tell something about a person or family.

Make your own coat of arms, describing things about yourself. Write your answers in the appropriate spaces, or for those creative people, feel free to draw.

- ◆ Upper left: Two things you do well.
- ◆ Middle left: Your greatest success in life.
- ◆ Lower left: What you would do with one year left to live?
- ◆ Upper right: "Psychological home" or place where you feel most at home.
- ◆ Middle right: Three people most influential in your life or who mean the most to you.
- ◆ Lower right: Three words you would like said about you.

Talk about your coat of arms with the group.

Alternate questions for each section by University of Illinois staff: What animal represents you best? If time or money were not barriers, what is the job that you would like to do most in the future? What kind of home would you like to live in? What person has had the



most influence on your life? What do you like to look at the most?

Worship & Prayer Resources.

- 3. Rank order the five ideas you would like to try with a small group.

Nurture Resources.

- 4. Be prepared to discuss in your group, your experience with any/several of the ideas/resources in the chapter.

Outreach Resources.

- 5. Which of the ideas/suggestions in this chapter would you and your group be most likely to try? Rank order the top three per category.

General Suggestions

Witnessing to Seekers

World Mission

Social Awareness/Action

GROUP FACILITATOR FEEDBACK FORM

Leadership Feedback and Development (Part 1)

From: _____

Please note: This tool is designed to evaluate for the purpose of encouragement, not to judge for the purpose of condemnation.

Leadership during meetings

1. On a continuum, how would you rate the leader's style of communication during the meetings?
Mark with an "X":

Pure lecture

Pure discussion

On the scale above, mark with an "O" where you would like the leader to be.

2. On a continuum, how would you rate the leader's control of the flow of the meetings? Mark with an "X":

Autocratic/Control

Collaboration/Relaxed

On the same scale above, mark with an "O" where you would like the leader to be.

3. On a continuum, how would you rate the group members' overall participation in discussions?
Mark with an "X":

A vocal minority

Balanced participation

What if, anything, could the leader do about the balance of participation?

4. How did the leader handle the different elements of the meeting?

- Starting on time
- Homework review (if applicable)
- Scripture explanation or teaching
- Discussion portions
- Helping to make personal applications

- Ending on time

Leadership Outside the Meetings (Part 2)

1. What experiences with the leader outside the regular meeting times have been especially valuable to you?
2. What aspects of the leader's life do you most need (want) to observe so you can see a godly example?
3. What steps could your leader take beyond leading the regular group meetings to help you grow (be specific)?
4. Comment on the leader in the following areas:
 - Availability outside of group times
 - Approachability outside of group times
 - Keeping me accountable and being firm if necessary
 - Sensitivity and compassion
5. Is there any other feedback you would like to give the leader?
6. Are there issues that are unresolved or require attention?
7. What affirmation can you give the leader—what aspect of the whole small group experience has been especially meaningful to you?
8. How will you pray for the leader?

From: Donahue, Bill. *Leading Life-Changing Small Groups*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2002
Revised Edition. ISBN: 0-310-24750-0

DC251: SMALL GROUPS IN THE CHURCH

READING REPORT

Circle **each** chapter/part **completed** for the assigned reading:

Community that is Christian: A Handbook on Small Groups

1 2 3 4 Conclusion

Leading Life-Changing Small Groups

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

The Fable: 1 2 3 4

The Model: 1 2 3

The Seven Deadly Sins of Small Group Ministry

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

10 11 12 13 14 Conclusion

Small Group Idea Book

1 2 3 4

SMALL GROUP BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Barrett, Lois. *Building the House Church*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1986. ISBN 0-8361-3415-X
- Beekman, Sharon Thomas. *Caring Together: Creating and Guiding a Safe, Christian Support Group*. Mpls./St. Paul: Church Innovations Publishing, Inc., 1994.
- Birkey, Del. *The House Church: A Model for Renewing the Church*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1988. ISBN 0-8361-3467-2
- Bruce, Alexander Balmain. *The Training of the Twelve*. New Canaan, CT: Keats Publishing, Inc. 1979. ISBN 0-87983-206-1
- Bunch, Cindy, ed. *Small Group Idea Book*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996. ISBN 0-8308-1167-2
- Cousin, Don and Judson Poling. *Leader's Guide 1: Friendship with God, The Incomparable Jesus, "Follow Me!"* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992. ISBN 0-310-59213-5
- _____. *Leader's Guide 2: Discovering the Church, Building Your church, Impacting Your World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992. ISBN 0-310-59213-5
- David, Deena. *Discipleship Journal's 101 Best Small Group Ideas*. Colorado Springs, CO: New Press, 1996. ISBN 0-89109-950-6
- Davis, Ron Lee. *Mentoring: The Strategy of the Master*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991. ISBN 0-8407-7195-9
- DeVries, Mark and Nan Russell. *Bridges: 15 Sessions to Connect Teenagers and Adults*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996. ISBN 0-8308-1168-0
- Donahue, Bill and Russ Robinson. *Building a Church of Small Groups*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2001. ISBN: 0-310-24035-2
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- Engstrom, Ted. *The Fine Art of Mentoring*. Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, Publishers, Inc. 1989. ISBN 0-943497-63-9
- Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982. ISBN 0-310-37361-1
- Frazer, Randy. *The Connecting Church and Beyond Small Groups to Authentic Community*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001. ISBN: 0-310-23308-9
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- Getz, Gene. *Building Up One Another*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1976. ISBN 0-88207-744-9
- Good Things Come in Small Groups*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985. ISBN 0-87784-917-X
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- How to Lead Small Group Bible Studies*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1982. ISBN 08910-91246
- Hull, Bill. *Jesus Christ Disciple-Maker*. Minneapolis: Free Church Publications, 1984. ISBN 0-911802-65-7 (previously under NavPress as ISBN 0-89109-516-0)
- Job, John B., ed. *How to Study the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973. ISBN 0-87784-480-1
- Jones, Jerry D. *201 Great Questions*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1988.
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