

DRAFT 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, Revised Edition, 1996. ISBN: 0-8308-1124-9
- Cloud, Henry and John Townsend. *Making Small Groups Work*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2003. ISBN 13: 978-0-310-25028-9
- Donahue, Bill and Greg Bowman. *Coaching Life-Changing Small Groups Leaders: A Practical Guide for Those Who Lead and Shepherd Small Group Leaders*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2006. ISBN: 13: 978-0-310-25179-8
- Gorman, Julie A. *Community That Is Christian: A Handbook on Small Groups*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002. ISBN: 0-8010-9145-4

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS:

Stanley, Andy and Bill Willits. *Creating Community*. Downers Grove, IL: Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2004. ISBN: 1-59052-396-2

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

1. **READING OF REQUIRED TEXTS AND ARTICLES** (Approximately 950 pages per hour @ 30 pages per hour. 35 hours allocated for reading and one application guide—10% of grade) Submit reading report—see page 9.
2. **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN CLASS**— Since this class consists of group interaction/participation, regular attendance is mandatory for all sessions (28 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 letter.
3. **INTERVIEW** two different small group ministry directors or coaches who are presently coordinating and leading a small group program in their church or ministry setting—do not use leaders that other class members have interviewed (5 hours—10% of grade). Limit the interview time to one hour. 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. **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).
6. **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 FACILITATION 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 8 & 9).

GRADING:

Reading, Viewing, Preparation Guide	10%
Interviews and Report	10%
Scripture Memorization	5%
Philosophy of Small Groups Paper	25%
Implementation Plan	25 %
Facilitation Report	25%

Total: 100%

ACADEMIC COURSE POLICIES (Please see catalog for full range of requirements.):

1. **Academic Integrity** (88-9): "Written material submitted must be the original work of the student. Academic dishonesty constitutes a serious violation of scholarship standards at Bethel and can result in denial of credit and possible dismissal from the school. Any act that involves misrepresentation regarding the student's academic work is forbidden. Academic dishonesty includes cheating on assignments or exams, plagiarism, fabrication of research, multiple submissions of work in different courses, misrepresentation of academic records, the facilitation of academic dishonesty, and depriving others of necessary academic resources."
2. **Course Papers** (90):

- “All assigned course and term papers in all degree programs (with the exception of those in Marriage and Family Studies) are to be submitted in thesis form in conformity with the most recent edition of Kate Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers*...Students submitting papers in the Marriage and Family Studies and Marital and Family Therapy programs should follow the requirements of the fifth edition of *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.”
 - “In addition, students are expected to use inclusive language.”
3. **Grades (91):** “Grades will be assigned using the full range of letter grades (A-F), representing the following levels of performance:
- A Excellent work submitted; evidence of outstanding ability to synthesize and use course knowledge; consistent evidence of creativity and originality; insightful contributions in class; consistent demonstration of integrative and critical thinking skills; regular class attendance; and respectful interaction.
 - B Good work submitted; evidence of substantial ability to analyze and use course knowledge; evidence of creativity and originality; thoughtful contributions in class; demonstration of integrative and critical thinking skills; regular class attendance; and respectful interaction.
 - C Acceptable work submitted; evidence of adequate ability to analyze and use course knowledge; appropriate contributions in class; attempts at integration and critique; regular class attendance; and respectful interaction.
 - D Poor work submitted; little evidence of ability to analyze and use course knowledge; inconsistent evidence of mastery of course content; few contributions in class; no attempts at integration and critique; inconsistent class attendance; and respectful interaction.
 - F Inadequate work submitted; insufficient evidence of ability to analyze and use course knowledge; inappropriate and/or disrespectful contributions in class; poor class attendance; or failure to complete course requirements.”
4. **Incomplete Course Work (92):** “Students are expected to submit all work by the dates set by the course instructors and complete all course requirements on or before the last day of the quarter. The grade ‘Incomplete’ is temporary and will be granted only in unusual circumstances (such as serious illness or critical emergencies) and will not be considered for a student who is simply behind in the assignments.”
5. **Harassment Policies (93):** “Bethel Seminary is committed to providing a Christ-centered community where students, faculty, and staff can work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of harassment, exploitation, or intimidation, including racial and sexual harassment. All members of the Bethel community are expected to educate themselves about sexual and racial harassment.”
6. **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 24	Introduction to the Course Biblical/Theological and Social Foundations Discipleship in Group Contexts	
March 31	Christian Community Study Groups Sermon-Based Small Groups	Read: <i>Community that is Christian</i> , Parts I, II & IV Memorize: Hebrews 10:24, 25
April 7	Group Development Leading/Facilitating Discussions Curricular Resources	Read: <i>Community</i> , Part III Read: <i>Making Small Groups Wk</i> , Parts 1-3 Due: Interview Reports Memorize: Romans 12:10, 13
April 14	Responsibilities of Facilitators Group Dynamics	Read: <i>Making Small Groups Work</i> , Part 4 Memorize: Philippians 2:3-5
April 21	Research and Readings Week—No Class	Due: Small Groups Philosophy Paper
April 28	Research and Readings Week—No Class	Due: Small Group Implementation Plan
May 5	Leadership Development Support and Recovery Groups	Read: <i>Coaching Life-Changing Small Groups Leaders</i> , Pages 1-81 Memorize: Galatians 6:2, 10
May 12	Leadership Development Service Groups and Ministry Teams	Read: <i>Coaching Life-Changing Small Groups Leaders</i> Pages 82-135 Memorize: Ephesians 3:20, 21
May 19	Facilitating Community Dealing with Problems in Groups Assessing Leadership Competence Quiz on <i>Community</i> Scripture	Read: Read: <i>Making Small Groups Work</i> , Part 5 & 6 Read: All of <i>Small Group Idea Book</i> Complete: Application guide on pages 6 & 7 of the syllabus Memorize: 1 John 3:16-18
May 30	Last Day of the Quarter	Due: Small Group Participation Report

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.

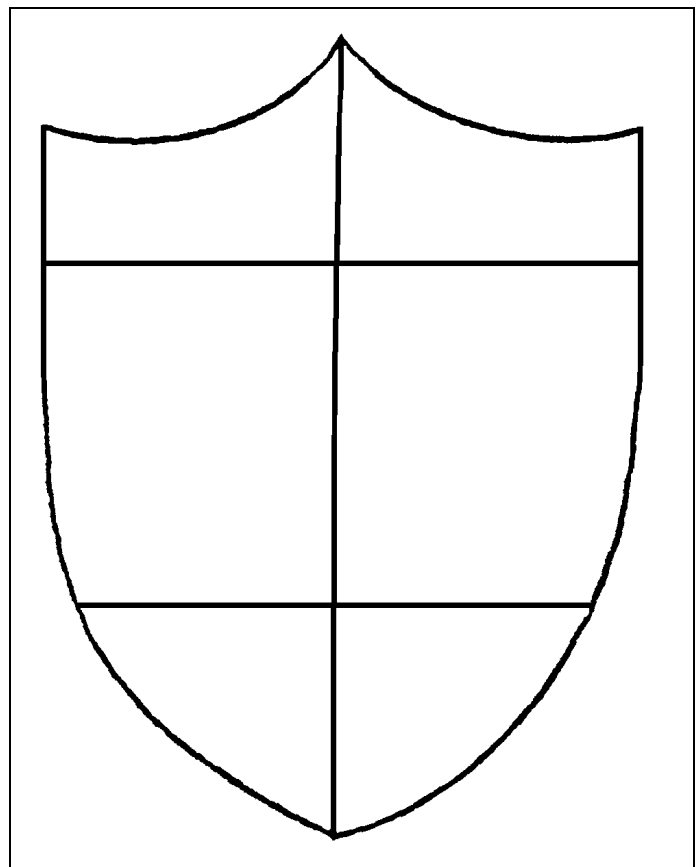
A coat of arms in the past, used signs and symbols to tell something about a person or family.

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

I II III IV Conclusion

Making Small Groups Work

Part 1 Part 2 Part 3 Part 4 Part 5 Part 6

Coaching Life-Changing Small Group Leaders

1 2 3 4 5 6

Small Group Idea Book

1 2 3 4

SMALL GROUP BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arnold, Jeffery. *The Big Book on Small Groups*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992. ISBN 0-8308-1377-2
- Banks, Robert. *The Church Comes Home: Building Community and Mission through Home Churches*. Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998. ISBN 156563179X
- _____. *Going to Church in the First Century*. Jacksonville, Florida: Seedsowers, 1999. ISBN 0940232375
- 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
- Donahue, Bill and Greg Bowman. *Coaching Life-Changing Small Group Leaders*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2006. ISBN: 013 978-0-310-25179-6
- Donahue, Bill. *Leading Life Changing Small Groups*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996. ISBN 0-310-20595-6
- Donahue, Bill and Russ Robinson. *The Seven Deadly Sins of Small Group Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002. ISBN 0-310-24706-3
- Edwards, Gene. *How to Meet in Homes*. Jacksonville, Florida: Seedsowers, 1999. ISBN 0940232537
- Ellison, Pat Taylor and David Stark. *Learning Together: Educational Ministry through Small Groups*. Mpls./St. Paul: Church Innovations Publishing, Inc., 1995.
- 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
- Galloway, Dale. *The Small Group book: A Practical Guide to Nurturing Christians and Building Churches*. Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H, Revell, 1995.
- 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

- Gorman, Julie A. *Community that is Christian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002. ISBN 0-8010-9145-4
- Hamlin, Judy. *The Small Group Leaders Training Course*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1990. ISBN 0-89109-308-7
- 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.
- Kleissler, Thomas A., Margo A. LeBert and Mary C. McGuinness. *Small Christian Communities and a Vision of Hope for the 21st Century*. New York: Paulist Press, 1997. ISBN 0-8091-3757-7
- Kreider, Larry. *House Church Networks: A Church for a New Generation*. Ephrata, PA: House to House Publications, 2001. ISBN 1886973482
- McBride, Neal F. *How to Build a Small Groups Ministry*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1995. ISBN 0-8910-9769-4
- McBride, Neal F. *Real Groups Don't Just Happen*. Colorado Springs, CO: New Press, 1998. ISBN 1-57683-103-5
- Neighbour, Ralph W., Jr. *Where Do We Go From Here? A Guide Book for the Cell Group Church, Revised Edition*. Houston, TX: Touch Publications, 2000. ISBN 1-880828-17-0
- Nyquist, James F. and Jack Kuhatschek. *Leading Bible Discussions*. In the *Lifeguide Bible Study Series*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1985. ISBN 0-8308-1000-5
- Osborne, Grant R. and Stephen B. Woodward. *Handbook for Bible Study*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979. ISBN 0-8010-6665-4
- Patterson, Ben. *Work: Serving God by What We Do*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994, ISBN 0-8308-2008-6
- Peterson, Jim. *Living Proof*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1989.
- Poffenberger, Dan, Judy Stack Nelson and Patrick Keifert. *Working Together: Leading a Task-Oriented Small Group*. Mpls./St. Paul: Church Innovations Publishing, Inc., 1995.
- Roberts, Sr. Fitts. *The Church in the House: A Return to Simplicity*. Salem, OR: Preparing the Way Publishers, 2001. ISBN 1929451075
- Sikora, Pat J. *Small Group Bible Studies*. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1991 ISBN 0-87403-858-8
- Small Group Leaders' Handbook: The Next Generation*. (Referred to as *Handbook* in assignment schedule) Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995. ISBN 0-8308-1139-7
- Smith, James Bryan. *A Spiritual Formation Workbook*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers. 1991. ISBN 0-06-066965-9
- Stark, David and Patrick Keifert. *Design and Launch a Successful Small Group*. Mpls./St. Paul: Church Innovations Publishing, Inc., 1994.
- _____. *7 Steps to Successful Small Group Ministry*. Mpls./St. Paul: Church Innovations Publishing, Inc., 1994.
- _____. *Step by Step Small Group Leader Training*. Mpls./St. Paul: Church Innovations Publishing, Inc., 1994.
- Stark, David and Pat Taylor Ellison. *Being Together: Hosting a Relationship-Building Small Group*. Mpls./St Paul: Church Innovations Publishing, Inc., 1995.
- The NIV Serendipity Bible for Study Groups*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971.

- Viola, Frank. *So You Want to Start a House Church*. Present Testimony Ministry, September 2003.
ISBN 0966665759
- Williams, Dan. *Starting (& Ending) A Small Group*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.
ISBN 0-8308-1075-7