PSYCHOLOGY
3045
GROUP DYNAMICS
Spring 2026

Professor: Dr. Diana Sjostrom
Office: Culbertson Hall, Room 106
Phone: (619) 443-4588
Meetings Times: TR 9:30-10:45 am
Final Exam: NA
Reserved Final Exam Time: Tuesday May 5th 10:30-1pm

I. Catalog Description:
A laboratory learning experience in the analysis of small group behavior with emphasis on understanding the effects of group processes.
Prerequisites:Consent of Instructor

II. Course Learning Outcomes
Students will be able to…

- Describe your personal experience with regard to small group dynamics
- Summarize at least one aspect of self as well as how you relate to others
- Produce an environment of confidentiality where people feel free to share
- Identify ways to personally grow

III. Assigned Reading:[redacted]y Francine Rivers
Occasionally there may be other readings put on reserve in the library. Professor will alert students to this at the appropriate time. These will be mandatory readings and students will be required to reflect on them in their weekly reflection papers. Points will be deducted if students do not reflect on the readings assigned.

IV. Grading:
Grading will be determined by a combination of written assignments, group attendance, and personal and peer evaluation. Final grade will be determined by professor.

Grades will be based on the following:

A	B	C	D	F
A 93-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F Less than 59
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

V. Assignments:

Students will submit written Group Summaries for each week (approximately two pages). These will be due in my box by Friday of each week. No credit is given for late summaries. Summaries will be graded for depth of effort and insight (10 points). Each summary will consist of two sections: a) Group Analysis (e.g.,what the individual thought was happening in the group that day);and b) Individual Analysis (e.g.,what feelings, thoughts behaviors were stirred up in you and why, what did you learn about yourself in relationship to others?).

Introductory Comments:

The title of the class "Group Dynamics" is slightly misleading. A more appropriate title might be something like "Individuals in Group Settings." Group dynamics cannot be understood apart from the makeup of the individuals within the group. Therefore,this class offers you the unique opportunity to understand how groups of individuals interact as a function of the individual makeup of each person. Stated simply, to understand the group you have to understand yourself and others.

People experience feelings,thoughts,and exhibit behaviors and problems for a variety of reasons (e.g., cultural,gender-related,childhood upbringing). Yet,all people are embedded in a matrix of social relationships. We are social animals that become persons through relationships,develop problems and. idiosyncrasies in and through relationships, and learn, grow and develop in relationships. Perhaps the greatest task of the human person is to develop and maintain close meaningful relationships. We have probably all longed, at one time or another,to clarify a relationship,to be really honest about our positive and negative feelings toward someone. We have probably also desired to receive honest reciprocal feedback about how we affect the other. In society this open communication is rarely engaged in due to fear of hurting others and losing friends. In the social laboratory of this class these kinds of honest exchanges are not only allowed but are encouraged. You can learn an incredible amount about yourself and your-self-in-relation by honest interpersonal exploration. This may not be easy and at times may actually be very stressful,but if you can understand and work out your relationships with the members of the group,it often has significant reward in carry over to the outside world.

The way you can best help yourself and the group is to be honest and direct about your feelings in the group at the moment (in the here-and-now)-especially feelings toward other group members and the professor. This is the core of the group! This is not a forced confessional as all individuals have different rates for developing trust and openness.

At first the group may seem strange and frustrating. You may develop feelings of annoyance with the professor wanting him to supply you with answers. I urge you not to give up on the process too early. Help will come as you discuss your feelings and from other group members. Your two major tasks are to discuss your thoughts and feelings about anything and everything that comes to mind (especially as these relate to other members of the group),and to consistently attend and be on time. My role is group facilitator (this is different from "professor' who supplies you with information which you passively receive). I will assist you to understand the group and yourself I will not,however, do the work · of the group. This can only come as your risk and strive to be genuine with your feelings and experiences and present with your self

Confidentiality:

It is essential that all members enter into a verbal contract of confidentiality. This means that no one discusses anything that is discussed in the group when outside the group. The professor will also abide by this principle except in cases where is he required to report by law (e.g.,child,elder,dependent adult,spouse abuse,or risk to hurt self or someone else). You may share your experience of group (what you are learning about groups and yourself) with others outside the group, but never disclose the names

or experiences of other members. It is also best if group members not discuss the group together outside the group,but if you we ask that you take responsibility to discuss the salient aspects of the conversation inside the group.

To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Course Credit Hour Information

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 3 unit class delivered over 15 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. For this course, students will spend an estimated 112.5 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes. The time estimations are provided in the Canvas modules.

Final Examination Policy

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the Class Schedules site. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

State Authorization

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on State Authorization to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

PLNU Copyright Policy

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU Academic Honesty Policy

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See Academic Policies for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities. Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will issue an academic accommodation plan ("AP") to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not wish to utilize some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC.

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an "F" grade.