Advanced Practice with Groups

Prerequisite: Completion of Generalist Practice
Co-requisite: SOCW 5335; SOCW 5325; SOCW 5317; SOCW 5320, SOCW 5549 (part-time)
and elective

SFASU values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students' mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

On-campus Resources:
SFASU Counseling Services
www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices
3rd Floor Rusk Building
936-468-2401

SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp

COURSE SYLLABUS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Advanced Practice with groups is one of three advanced practice courses. This course focuses on social group work with an emphasis on people impacted by rural lifestyles. Group formation and membership; assessing member problems; group purpose, goals and culture; phases of group development; leadership roles and decision-making; enabling problem solving processes; evaluating individual and group change; and terminating the group are examined. The course emphasizes theories, models, culturally competent skills and techniques of effective group work with diverse at-risk populations of different sizes to promote social, economic and environmental justice through empowerment. Students will develop a holistic view and will be able to demonstrate competence of knowledge, values, skills and cognitive and affective processes specific to group practice on an advanced level. This includes the application of critical thinking, identification of affective reactions and ability to exercise judgement related policy practice.

Approaching practice through a mezzo perspective, students will learn how to apply ethical, empirically-based interventions related to practice with groups at an advanced level. Horizontal integration occurs with concurrent advanced policy and research courses. The continuation and integration of these specialized practice courses with the generalist practice prepares students for their block field placement.
Linking with SOCW 5335 (focusing on organizations and communities) and SOCW 5325 (focus on individuals and families) that is taught concurrently, students gain integration and mastery across advanced generalist levels of practice. Horizontal integration also occurs with concurrent advanced policy and research courses.

REQUIRED TEXT


II. CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION

The MSW program of SFASU features a generalist practice and a single specialization/specialized practice: Advanced Generalist Practice in a Rural Context. Both are defined below. It is important to note here that the BSW program and the MSW program have developed a shared definition of generalist practice, given below.

Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice.

Briefly, generalist social work practice:

- Is multi-level to include individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.
- Is multi-theory, allowing for the free selection of theories as appropriate.
- Utilizes problem identification and solving focus that follows a problem-solving framework.
- Addresses the complexity of individual, family, group, organizational and community system interactions.
- Requires and integration of awareness, competence, and professional response to issues of values, ethics, diversity, culture, social justice and populations-at-risk.

Advanced generalist practice builds on the generalist practice, incorporating the elements listed above, but characterized by a greater depth, breadth, and autonomy as demonstrated through specialized knowledge across problem areas, populations-at-risk and practice settings, with a greater selection of diverse interactions across practice levels.

Briefly, advanced generalist practice requires:
• The ability to engage and differentially assess complex problems with systems of all sizes, with a variety of advanced assessment skills.
• Specialized evidence-based interventions with systems of all sizes.
• Differential evaluation techniques with systems of all sizes.
• Strategies to advocate for clients and constituencies influenced by rural lifestyles.
• Readiness for leadership in a variety of areas including: program development, coordination and administration; clinical and organizational supervision; policy creation, reform and implementation; leadership in research development and utilization, particularly in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary practice settings; professional development.

The specialized practice for the MSW program is advanced generalist practice for rural contexts. Theories that describe and predict rural ecological systems and rural strengths, including the incredibly rich interactions, simple and complex, formal and informal, wholesome and debilitating are emphasized. On this basis, the curriculum of the MSW Program emphasizes the ecological systems approach, the strengths perspective, and the social capital and social exchange theories.

Rural context refers to social work practice with people with rural lifestyles and systems of all sizes within and outside of rural communities. There is no single accepted definition of rural. In fact, just as generalist practice in social work draws on multiple theories, generalist practice in rural contexts recognizes the many definitions currently in use and their advantages and disadvantages for research, practice, and advocacy. The School of Social Work at SFA utilizes several of these definitions within the United States and globally including:

The United States Census Bureau (urbanized areas, urban clusters, and rural populations); Office of Management and Budget (metropolitan, micropolitan, and non-core), Economic Research Service (rural urban continuum codes); and the United Nations that defines urban and rural according to the census definition for each nation, but suggests a definition of rural areas as having a population of less than 2,000 for international comparisons.

III. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES (CSWE CORE COMPETENCIES)

1. Demonstrate Ethical & Professional Behavior (Competency 1)
2. Engage Diversity & Difference in Practice (Competency 2)
3. Advance Human Rights & Social, Economic, & Environmental Justice (Competency 3)
4. Engage in Practice-informed Research & Research-informed Practice (Competency 4)
5. Engage in Policy Practice (Competency 5)
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, & Communities (Competency 6)
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, & Communities (Competency 7)
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, & Communities (Competency 8)
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, & Communities (Competency 9)

IV. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (CSWE BEHAVIORS)
1. Students will apply ethical decision-making and critical thinking to analyze and implement multiple codes of ethics with the purpose to enhance advanced generalist practice with rural people and communities. (Competency 1)
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to recognize and manage personal and professional values in order to engage in advanced rural practice with multiple systems. (Competency 1)
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to identify, analyze and apply social constructions of rurality within and across diverse groups (e.g. gender, ethnicity/race, age, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation) and across multiple system levels. (Competency 2)
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to supervise the integration of awareness, self-regulation, sensitivity and professional response to issues of values, ethics, diversity, social justice and populations at risk. (Competency 2)
5. Students will demonstrate leadership skills to promote social, economic and environmental justice to systems of all sizes within and outside of rural communities. (Competency 3)
6. Students will provide leadership in specialized practices related to oppression and human rights violations at multiple levels advancing social, economic and environmental justice in rural environments. (Competency 3)
7. Students will demonstrate the ability to identify, evaluate, and implement multidisciplinary research and practice strategies with rural systems and social networks. (Competency 4)
8. Students will demonstrate leadership skills to design, develop and implement research and technological advances to enhance social work practice in a rural context. (Competency 4)
9. Students will demonstrate the ability to develop, prepare, implement, analyze and evaluate social welfare and economic policies to improve the well-being of rural populations and communities. (Competency 5)
10. Students will demonstrate leadership skills specific to advocacy with the purpose to advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice to deliver services to multiple systems in rural areas. (Competency 5)
11. Students will demonstrate leadership skills to engage multiple systems (individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations) and constituencies in rural environments. (Competency 6)
12. Students will demonstrate their ability to supervise the integration of knowledge, skills and values specific to human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment and appropriate theoretical frameworks. (Competency 6)
13. Students will select, implement and evaluate appropriate assessment instruments to assess diverse client systems on multiple levels in a rural context. (Competency 7)
14. Students will provide leadership to adapt, modify, develop, and implement differential assessment strategies, tools and approaches with diverse client systems and constituencies on multiple levels in a rural context. (Competency 7)
15. Students will design, identify, analyze, and implement advanced intervention strategies based on appropriate theories, models, and research across multiple system levels in a rural context. (Competency 8)
16. Students will demonstrate the ability to manage, supervise, monitor, coordinate and improve human service networks and service agencies in delivering services to rural clients. (Competency 8)
17. Students will apply leadership skills to supervise the design and implementation of advanced intervention strategies. (Competency 8)
18. Students will apply leadership skills to enhance interventions through interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational strategies. (Competency 8)
19. Students will demonstrate the ability to identify, develop, apply and monitor differential evaluation strategies in advanced social work interventions with systems of all sizes in rural communities. (Competency 9)
20. Students will develop leadership in the communication and dissemination of evaluation results to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. (Competency 9)

V. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

The course will be taught as a face to face, a hybrid, or online course. It will incorporate the following instructional strategies: lecture, extensive class discussion, group exercises, online activities, assigned readings, and individual projects. You are encouraged to actively participate in activities, ask questions, and contribute comments for discussion. You are also encouraged to offer input regarding instructional strategies and assignments. Most importantly, you are expected to be an active learner and to ask for clarification when you have questions. To be successful in the class, it is important that you attend regularly, sign in to D2L, read the assigned material, and come to class prepared to discuss what you have read. You will be expected to not only know the material presented, but to be able to apply it in experiential activities. Lectures will not duplicate the reading material except to clarify or to expand upon it and to review material covered in prerequisite courses. The goal of this approach is to develop a safe learning environment that addresses a variety of learning styles, promotes critical thinking, and fosters creativity.

VI. COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS

This course will utilize D2L/Brightspace to support the delivery of course content - go to Client Portal Home (sfasu.edu)

VII. COURSE SCHEDULE *changes may be made as needed

Week 1 Course Introduction
- Defining Social Work with Groups
- Classifying Groups
- Group vs. Individual Efforts
- Social Work Values and Ethics in Group work (US and International Principles)
- History of Social Work with Groups
- Group work in Rural Environments (Populations at Risk, Rural Context, Social justice)
- Grand Challenges for Social Work
- Diversity and Difference in Practice
- Human Rights, Social, Environmental and Economic Justice
- Knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes

Readings:
Shulman, L. (2011). Chapters 1, 2, 8, 10, 14 - 19
Reamer, (2014)
Malekoff, (2007)
NASW- Code of Ethics

Week 2  Influential Theories in Social Group Work
Evidence-based Group Work Practice

Readings:
Folgheraiter & Pasini
Fouché & Lun
Weller, Huan & Cherubin
Scales, Streeter & Cooper: Chapter 3
Toseland & Rivas: Ch.2

Week 3  Understanding Group Dynamics
Interaction Patterns
Group Cohesion
Therapeutic Factors
Social Integration & Influence
Group Culture
Spirituality

Readings:
Folgheraiter & Pasini
Fouché & Lun
Weller, Huan & Cherubin
Scales, Streeter & Cooper: Chapter 3
Toseland & Rivas Chapter 2

Week 4  Advanced Group Leadership
Leadership and Power
Leadership and Diversity
Supervision in Groups
Leadership skills
Impact of Diversity on Group Participation
Developing Cultural Competence
Leading with Sensitivity to Diversity and Difference in Practice
Inter-professional Teams
Advocacy in Group Practice

Readings:
Sweifach, & Heft-LaPorte
Boehm & Staples

Weeks 5  Planning the Group
Group Preparation and Proposals
A Planning Model for Group work
Creation of the Group
Using Research-informed Practice to Plan and Design Groups

Readings:
Corey, Corey & Corey - Chapter 4
Clements; Garland, Myers, & Wolfer
Toseland & Rivas – appendixes d,e,f.

Weeks 6 Planning the Group (continued)
Group Preparation and Proposals
A Planning Model for Group work
Creation of the Group

Readings:
Corey, Corey & Corey - Chapter 4
Clements; Garland
Myers, & Wolfer
Toseland & Rivas – appendixes d,e,f.

Week 7 Beginning the Group
Introducing New Members
Defining the Purpose
Developing Group Rules & Expectations
Goal Setting and Contracting
Facilitating the Work of the Group
Anticipating Obstacles

Readings:
Shulman, L. (2011). Chapter 4
Ingersoll-Dayton, Campbell, & Ha Garrett.

Week 8 Assessment
Defining Assessment
The Assessment Process
Assessing Individual Change
Assessing Group Change
Assessing Group Process
Linking Assessment to Intervention
Assessing Cultural Influences on Group Dynamics

Readings:
Shulman, L. (2011). Chapter 4
Ingersoll-Dayton,
Campbell, & Ha Garrett
Week 9  MID TERM EXAM

Week 10  Intervention
Middle Stage: Treatment Groups
Generalist Practice Methods
Specialized Methods
Use of Technology in Group work
Groups with Diverse Ages
Problem Solving

Readings:
Shulman, L. (2011). Chapters 5 and 6
Oliphant and Roestenburg
Scales, Streeter and Cooper – Chapters 13, 16, 19
Fuchsel

Week 11  Intervention (continued)
Special Populations
Aging
Multi-Cultural Populations
LGBTQ
Veterans/PTSD
People with Disabilities
Immigrants

Readings:
Shulman, L. (2011). Chapter 5 and 6
Oliphant and Roestenburg
Scales, Cooper, Streeter – Chapters 6, 7, 8, 12,14 and 15
Fuchsel
Córdova

Week 12  Intervention (continued)
Middle Stage: Task Groups
Generalist Practice Methods
Specialized Methods
Problem Solving
Special Populations

Readings:
Shulman, L. (2011). Chapter 5 and 6
Powell & Blanchet-Cohen
Carbajal & Aguirre
Clemans
Frost, Ware & Boer

Week 13  Evaluation in Group work
Evaluation Methods
Evaluation Measures

**Readings:**
- Harris & Franklin
- Khoury-Kassabri, Sharvet, Braver, & Livneh
- Pooler, Quals, Rogers & Johnston
- Oliphant and Roestenburg
- Chovanec

**Week 14**  
**THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

**Week 15** Termination
- Factors Influencing Group Endings
- Ending Group Meetings
- Ending the Group as a Whole
- Planned and Unplanned Termination
- Group Transitions
- Exploring Opportunities for Social Group work Professional Membership & Continuing Education
- Groups Manual Presentations

**Readings:**
- Jacobson & Rugeley
- Skudrzyk, Zera, McMahon, Schmidt, Boyne, & Spannaus.

**Week 16** FINAL EXAM

**VIII. COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

A. **Class Attendance and Participation:** In order for the class to discuss the readings, it is essential for you to read assigned material before coming to class, to attend class regularly, and to participate in class discussion. You are responsible for all material covered in class and assigned in the syllabus, whether or not you have attended class.

B. **Cell Phones/Pagers/Electronic Devices:** Because such devices are disruptive to the classroom environment, I ask that you refrain from using them during class. I also ask that you either place such devices on silent mode or turn them off during class. Repeated interruptions may result in a deduction of points from the final average.

C. **Readings:** The course outline provides a list of required readings for each week (you will receive a detailed schedule the first full week of class that will outline the readings to be covered each class). Since lectures and class discussions are designed to answer questions about the material and expand upon the basic concepts, you are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to class. Furthermore, you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the information, as evidenced by active participation in class discussion. For example, you should present well formulated questions and comments that demonstrate prior preparation.
D. **Exams:** There will be one final exam. Students are required to take the exam at the scheduled time. Makeup exams will be scheduled according to university policy with a university-approved excuse.

E. **Quizzes/Exercises:** There will be unannounced class exercises. Students are required to participate in the exercises at the scheduled time. Makeup exercises will be scheduled according to university policy with a university-approved excuse.

F. **Assignments/Presentations:** See Assignments for a listing of all assignments for this course. All assignments are due at the beginning of each class, unless the assignment is a class presentation which will be due in class. For all late assignments, one letter grade will be deducted after the beginning of class when the assignment is due, with an additional letter grade deduction for each day for which the assignment is late.

G. **Social Media Policy:** Student will follow policy related to social media as outlined in the Student Handbook.

**GRADING:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment I: Development of a group program, Part 1</th>
<th>75</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment II: Development of a group program, Part 2</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Presentation of Group Program</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes/mini assignments/class exercises</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>500 Points</strong></td>
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**GRADING SCALE:**

- A = 450 - 500
- B = 400 - 450
- C = 350 - 400
- *D = 300 - 350
- *F = Below 300

*Not applicable as credit toward graduate degree*

**IX. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Abiding by university policy on academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members must promote the components of academic integrity in their instruction, and course syllabi are required to provide information about penalties for cheating and plagiarism, as well as the appeal process.

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- using or attempting to use unauthorized materials on any class assignment or exam;
- falsifying or inventing of any information, including citations, on an assignment;

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• helping or attempting to help other student(s) in an act of cheating or plagiarism.

Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were one’s own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

• submitting an assignment as one's own work when it is at least partly the work of another person;
• submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another source;
• incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper or presentation without giving the author credit.

Penalties for Academic Dishonesty

Penalties may include, but are not limited to, reprimand, no credit for the assignment or exam, resubmission of the work, make-up exam, failure of the course, or expulsion from the university.

Procedure for Addressing Student Academic Dishonesty

A faculty member who has evidence and/or suspects that academic dishonesty has occurred will gather all pertinent information and initiate the following procedure:

1. The faculty member will discuss all evidence of cheating or plagiarism directly with the student(s) involved.
2. After consideration of the explanation provided by the student(s), the faculty member will determine whether academic dishonesty has occurred. The faculty member may consult with the academic unit head and/or dean in making a decision.
3. After a determination of academic dishonesty, the faculty member will inform the academic unit head and submit a Report of Academic Dishonesty with supporting documentation to the office of the dean of the student’s major. This report will become part of the student's record and will remain on file with the dean's office for at least four years even if the student withdraws prior to receiving a grade.
4. For a serious first offense or subsequent offenses, the dean of the student’s major will determine a course of action, which may include dismissal from the university. The dean may refer the case to the college council for review and recommendations before making this determination.

A student's record of academic dishonesty will not be available to faculty members. The purpose of the record is for the dean to track a pattern of academic dishonesty during a student's academic career at Stephen F. Austin State University.

Student Appeals

A student who wishes to appeal decisions related to academic dishonesty should follow procedures outlined in Final Course Grade Appeals by Students (6.3). 

student-academic-dishonesty-4.1.pdf (sfasu.edu)
Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (SFA Policy 5.5)

At the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic unit head, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work by the deadline set by the instructor of record, not to exceed one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade 5.5 Course Grades Page 2 of 3 automatically becomes an F, except as allowed through policy [i.e., Military Service Activation (6.14)]. If students register for the same course in future semesters, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average. course-grades-5.5.pdf (sfasu.edu)

Acceptable Student Behavior

The MSW Student Handbook and Academic and MSW Professional Integrity Code outline acceptable student behavior. Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct of Conduct (SFA Policy 10.4)). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, visits to agencies, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate or inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed. Please see the following link for the complete policy: student-code-of-conduct-10.4.pdf (sfasu.edu)

X. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to: academic-accommodation-for-students-with-disabilities-6.1.pdf (sfasu.edu)
Assignments
The development of a group program for a specific population in a rural area. This group program consists of 2 assignments.

Assignment I: Development of a Group Program, Part 1
Develop a comprehensive group program for one population at risk in a rural area. The assignment has to be completed in the format of a group manual. The group program should include all elements of the group process and should be based on the group planning model that will be presented in class and also reviewed in the text. Examples will be discussed in class. Part I will include your choice of population, references that will be used and a basic outline taken from materials presented in class.

The manual should be between 15 and 20 full pages, APA format, typewritten, 12 in font, double-spaced with one-inch margins. The paper will reflect your critical thinking and examination of course topics. Each student is expected to apply professional writing competencies in the preparation of the paper. Your group program manual should reflect creativity as it applies to specific topics in the group program for the population you select. You need to research and include 8 references on the specific population at risk, 2 references on rural issues related to the population, if available, and 2 references on social work with groups, preferably group interventions related to the population and intervention that is being proposed. All references need to be within the last 10 years and from peer reviewed journal publications.

Assignment II: Development of a group program, Part 2
Building upon the work done in the first part of Assignment 1, Assignment 2 will include the fully developed group program module including a beginning, middle and end of the group program process. Examples and readings for this assignment will be based on classroom instruction and materials presented in class. You should include separate pages for 10-12 sessions including the first and last session.

Class Presentation of Group Program (Assign 1 & 2)
Key elements of the group program intervention that is developed will need to be synthesized and presented to the class as an overview. The format for this will be outlined in class and can include power point, hand-outs, class demonstration or other presentation methods as approved.

Midterm Exam
The midterm exam will include all material from readings, class discussions, lectures and special assignments covered for the class through mid-semester. Exams will be in a combined multiple choice, short answer and essay format.

Final Exam
The final exam will test your ability to apply the knowledge and competencies acquired to a group case study. The exam will take place in the form of (1) a written exam or (2) presentations. The exam will focus on (1) critical analysis (2) integration of theory and practice and (3) scientific reasoning.
Reading Quizzes and Mini Assignments
Throughout the semester there will be a series of reading quizzes, mini assignments and class exercises. These mini assignments will enable you to develop knowledge and skills and to understand the application of social work with groups within a rural context. It is suggested that you keep all assignments and class exercises in a folder. These will be valuable in preparation for mid-term and final exams.
References


Specialists in Group Work, 35:2, 160-168.


Websites:

International Association of Schools of Social Work: International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) (iassw-aiets.org)

International Federation of Social Workers: International Federation of Social Workers – Global Online conference (ifsw.org)

American Group Psychotherapy Association: home (agpa.org)

Society of Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy (APA); Society of Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy (Division 49) (apadivisions.org)