

Ethical and Legal Issues in Professional Counseling

MHC 532-01

Summer Semester, 2015

Instructors:

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We meet:

Mondays, 5:30 to 8:30 pm

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Course credit:

2 semester hours

Textbook required:

Ethics in Counseling and Psychotherapy; Standards, Research, and Emerging Issues, 5th Edition,
Elizabeth Reynolds Welfel
(2013)

Overview:

This course is designed to develop a wide knowledge base, critical thinking and ethical decision-making skills for your professional counseling practice. In our class, you will learn about specific ethical and legal issues and ways of thinking that enhance your professional development. You will be challenged to increase awareness, sensitivity, and understanding of the ethical principles of counseling, and to developing skills in ethical decision-making. The goals for this class are to instill both a desire and diligence on your part as practicing counselors and to develop a high level of personal and professional ethics for your future counseling work.

Course Objectives:

- Knowledge of state and federal laws and regulations that apply to the practice of counseling and marriage & family therapy.
- Knowledge of professional ethics and standards of practice that apply to counseling and the practice of marriage & family therapy.
- Knowledge of policies and procedures of the practice setting.

- Understanding of the process of making ethical decisions.
- Ability to recognize ethical dilemmas in practice settings.
- Ability to recognize when a legal consultation is necessary.
- Ability to recognize when clinical supervision or legal consultation is necessary.
- Ability to recognize when and how to effectively utilize consultation.
- Ability to recognize issues related to ethics, laws, regulations, and professional standards.
- Understand the limitations to confidentiality and parameters of mandatory reporting.
- Understanding the need for and how to create a safety plan for clients who present with potential self-harm, suicide, abuse, or violence.
- Understand how to take action when ethical and legal dilemmas emerge.
- Know how to report information to appropriate authorities as required by law.
- Understand how to practice within your defined scope of practice and competence and how to obtain knowledge of advances and theory regarding effective clinical practice.
- How to obtain license(s) and specialty credentials.
- Understand the necessity of self-care, and monitoring personal issues and problems to insure they do not impact the therapy process adversely or create vulnerability for misconduct.
- Understand how to maintain client records with timely and accurate notes.
- When (and how) to consult with peers and/or supervisors if personal issues threaten to adversely impact clinical work.
- The importance of pursuing professional development through self-supervision, collegial consultation, professional reading, and continuing educational activities.

Readings:

Our class discussions and assignments will mainly come from readings in our textbook. This book offers a wide scope and broad understanding of ethical thinking as illustrated in the assigned chapters. As soon-to-be professionals entering a complex, highly ambiguous field, recognizing and understanding the ethical dimensions of your work is critically important. Strong ethics are the foundation for competent counseling services. This class will help develop your professional ethics and thereby enhance your competence and help insure the safety of your future clients. In this course, you are expected to keep up with the assigned readings and to actively contribute to our class discussions each evening.

Class assignments:

Discussion Questions: Each week, you will write two (2) discussion questions. These questions, written on 3 X 5 inch index cards (provided by your instructors), will come from your assigned chapters. Your questions and their answers will be the foundation of our class discussions. You may (or may not) receive credit for late cards at the discretion of the instructors. The cards will be worth up to **2 points** each (maximum of **4 points** per class), for a total of **18 cards** (up to **36 points**) in the semester.

Participation in weekly class discussions: Learning Ethics is participatory in nature. It is our expectation that every student will discuss a question or an idea in each class session. After our first class, there are only 9 class meetings remaining. We want you to find your voice and express your ideas. Students may earn **1 point** per class and a semester total of **9 points**.

Important Influences exercise: Everyone's ethics are inspired and influenced by many events, places and people in our lives. You will create a presentation, from a variety of formats, showing some of the most important influences on your professional ethics. Students can earn up to **10 points** for the construction and presentation of this exercise. Your class presentations will be limited to a maximum of 10 minutes per student.

Quizzes: For selected chapters, we will have a brief quiz at the end of our class discussions. There will be 9 quizzes worth **5 points** each for a total of up to **45 points** for the semester.

Final examination: There will be **no** Final examination for this class.

Grading: For a total of up to **100 points** on your final grade, scoring will proceed as follows:

A = 100 to 93 points	A - = 92 to 90 points	
B + = 89 to 87 points	B = 86 to 83 points	B - = 82 to 80 points
C + = 79 to 77 points	C = 76 to 73 points	C - = 72 to 70 points

Please note: A score of 69 points or below is registered as a failing grade for this class.

Attendance and courtesy: Class attendance is expected and required. If you are going to miss a class, you will be given a make-up assignment. Please inform your instructor(s) as soon as possible if you anticipate missing any classes. More than one missed class (3.5 hours) will be considered by the Counseling Psychology Department as a failure to complete our class. (See CPSY Department Attendance Policy for further details)

Of course, as a professional courtesy to your classmates and instructors, please restrict the use of computers and any other electronic devices in our class. We can make exceptions if you have informed us of a pending critical incoming communication. If you require any educational accommodation based on ADA standards, please provide your instructors with evidence of written approval by the Counseling Psychology Department as early in the semester as possible.

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Date	Topic	Readings	Pages	Assignments & expectations
May 11, 2015	Class Introductions	Chapters 1 and 2	Pages 2 to 26 And Pages 27 to 57	Attendance (every class)
May 18, 2015	Ethical Practice in a Multicultural Society	Chapter 3	Pages 58 to 82	Discussion cards Quiz 1 (5 points)
June 1, 2015	Competence to Practice	Chapter 4	Pages 84 to 109	Discussion cards Quiz 2 (5 points)
June 8, 2015	Confidentiality	Chapter 5	Pages 110 to 161	Discussion cards Quiz 3 (5 points)
June 15, 2015	Informed Consent	Chapter 6	Pages 162 to 187	Discussion cards Quiz 4 (5 points)
June 22, 2015	Multiple relationships	Chapter 7	Pages 188 to 221	Discussion cards Quiz 5 (5 points)
June 29, 2015	Boundary Issues	Chapter 8	Pages 222 to 253	Discussion cards Quiz 6 (5 points)
July 6, 2015	Group and Family Interventions	Chapter 9	Pages 254 to 280	Discussion cards Presentations for Group 1 (10 points) Quiz 7 (5 points)
July 13, 2015	Responsibilities for Self and Colleagues	Chapter 11	Pages 316 to 337	Discussion cards Presentations for Group 2 (10 points) Quiz 8 (5 points)
July 20, 2015	The Ethics of Supervision	Chapter 14	Pages 412 to 441	Discussion cards Presentations for Group 3 (10 points) Quiz 9 (5 points)

Textbook: Ethics in Counseling and Psychotherapy; Standards, Research and Emerging Issues, 5th Edition, Welfel, 2013.