

COU 618
Mental Health Ethics, Law and Professional Practice

Course Syllabus

3 Semester Credits

Purpose:

Professional counselors and therapists are obliged to practice ethically. This course has been developed to assure that counseling students become aware of their responsibility in the therapeutic relationship. The ability to ask oneself critical questions and to reason ethically is of prime importance. Therapists must “*do not harm to the client*” and in addition must assist their clients to have an increased quality of life. The general focus of the course is to develop a personal ethical decision model that incorporates the five moral principals, the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics, laws and regulations that apply to the practice of counseling. Students must have the knowledge to think critically as an ethically conscientious practitioner, and will discuss legal issues, client welfare as a primary concern, responsibility for professional competence and development, responsibility for personal wellness, distinguish between values and value conflicts

Course Description:

This course examines the mission, goals and objectives of professional practice. Students will learn and apply codes of ethics, laws, and regulations applicable to counseling, and professional standards of performance; client welfare; professional competence, professional development, personal wellness, establishing limits and boundaries with clients and colleagues. Ensuring client confidentiality, responding to subpoenas, ensuring cultural sensitivity and credentialing, using model agreements that can be adapted to practice in a variety of service settings, and establishing professional relationships will be explored.

Contact Hours:

The course will be held during the regular semester meeting schedule.

Course Objectives:

1. Heighten self-awareness by giving attention to personal assumptions, values, biases, strengths and limitations.
2. Examine the pervasive nature of ethical issues in therapeutic relationships.
3. Explore ethical decision models that lead to professional practice.
4. Examine the ACA ethical standards and five moral principals as applied to selected case studies.

5. Explore legal point of view and history of selected legal concepts from therapeutic practice.
6. Apply laws, regulations, ACA ethical code, moral principals, and client rights to a professional standard of care. (Do no harm to the client).
7. Discuss the difference between mandatory ethics and aspirational ethics.
8. Make application regarding confidentiality and privilege.
9. Develop a personal model of ethical behavior including personal values, choices, assumptions, and moral convictions.
10. Explore personal theoretical orientation and how it relates to ethics.

Course Materials - Required Texts:

1. *Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in Counseling*, Theodore Remley, Jr., and Barbara Herlihy
2. *The Counselor and the Law, Fourth Edition*, Barbara Anderson

Course Requirements:

All students are required to attend course meetings; complete all course readings; be prepared and participate in course discussions; develop assigned course projects, and participate in course quizzes.

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on attendance; course participation; course projects; presentation materials and handouts

Course Format:

This will be an interactive course that includes an elevated level of classroom participation, including lecture and instruction, guest speakers, videos, case studies, and student presentations.

Grading

Class Attendance and Participation	25 pts
Presentation and Materials	50 pts
Informed Consent Document	20 pts
Critical Questions	5 pts

A+ 98-100	C+ 82 – 80
A 97 - 95	C 70 - 77
A- 94 - 92	C- 76 - 74
B+ 91 - 89	D+ 73 - 71
B 88 - 86	D 70 - 68
B- 85 – 83	D- 67 – 65

Course Projects

1. Mission Statement and Informed Consent Form – DUE WEEK 4

These will be presented to the class

- A. Create your own Mission Statement as if you were setting up a private practice as Licensed Mental Health Practitioner. Refer to the ACA Code of Ethics. If you have previously created a personal philosophy of counseling statement, integrate this with your Mission Statement
(A mission statement is no longer than 2 sentences – it is a concise embodiment of your beliefs and assumptions about what you will do as a practitioner).
- B. Create an Informed Consent document - refer to *The Counselor and the Law* pp147 -149 that you will use with clients.

2. Collaborative Learning Project

Students will work in partnership with each other to present on a relevant topic. It is expected that the presentation include a learning activity for the class that focuses on an ethical dilemma.

POSSIBLE TOPICS:

1. The suicidal client
2. Managed Care and Confidentiality in Counseling
3. Sexual feelings in the counseling relationship
4. Aftermath of the Tarasoff Case
5. Feminist perspectives of ethical decision making in therapy
6. HIC/AIDS: Confidentiality vs. public right to know
7. Dual relationships
8. Multicultural Counseling and ethical issues.
9. Special laws/problems in minor aged clients
10. Other ideas generated by the course participants

3. Research Article

Review a selected research article related to ethics and summarize in a 2 page document. This will be discussed and distributed to the course participants.