

## **Ethical and Legal Issues in Professional Counseling**

**CPSY 580 - 02**

**Fall Semester, 2008**

### **Instructor:**

James Gurule, MA, LPC  
(503) 645-3581, ex. 2310 (office)  
[james@silentdragon.com](mailto:james@silentdragon.com) (home)

### **We meet:**

Mondays, 5:30 to 9:00 pm

### **Catalogue Description:**

“Consideration of the applicable ethical and legal issues for mental health and school settings. Students develop skills in writing reports, assignments, and treatment plans.”

### **Course credit:**

2 semester hours

### **Textbook required:**

The Ethical and Professional Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy,  
Len Sperry  
(2007)

### **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 to increase your professional development. You will be challenged to increase your awareness, sensitivity, and understanding of the ethical principles of counseling, and to developing skills in ethical decision-making. This class is designed to instill both a desire and diligence on your part as professional counselors and to develop a high degree of personal and professional ethics to enhance your clinical work in the coming years.

### **Readings:**

Our class discussions and assignments will be drawn from readings in your textbook. Your text 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 arena, understanding and recognizing the ethical dimensions of your work is critically important to provide competent counseling services. This class will help develop your professional ethics and thereby enhance your competency and the safety of your future clients. Of course, you are expected to keep up with the assigned readings in order to actively contribute to our class discussions.

## **Class assignments:**

In addition to the chapter readings, you will have the following class assignments:

**Question / Discussion Cards:** Each week, you will write two (2) discussion questions. These questions, written on 3 X 5 inch index cards (provided by your instructor), are due at the beginning of each class period, and will come from your assigned chapters. Your discussion questions **and their answers** will be evaluated on their accuracy, insight, thoughtfulness and creativity. These cards will be the foundation of our class discussions. You may (or may not) receive credit for late cards at the discretion of this instructor. These two cards will be worth up to **2** points each (maximum of **4** points per class), with a total of **16** cards equaling **32 points** during the semester.

**Informed Consent Forms:** The expectations for these documents will be discussed in detail before your assignment. Your forms will be evaluated on their completeness, readability, and informative content. They are expected to be **original** creations, not a copy of a previously existing form, and developed as if you were going to present them to counseling clients. These forms are due two weeks from assignment and will be eligible for a maximum of **25 points**.

**Participation in class discussions:** In this class, learning Ethics is participatory in nature. It is my expectation that **every** student will discuss a question or idea in **each** class session. Since there are only **9** class meetings, every class counts! This will be for a maximum of **2** points per class and a semester total of **18 points**.

**Chapter example discussions:** Each student will be part of a small team of students and be responsible for an extensive chapter presentation and discussion of the ethical issues illustrated in the assigned chapter. The teams are responsible to lead discussions, educate the class, and illuminate relevant points. Each student will earn up to **25 points** for their participation and the leading of these discussions.

**Final examination:** There is no final examination in this class.

**Grading:** These assignments will offer you the chance for a possible total of **100 points** toward your final grade. Class grading 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  
A grade of C minus (69 points or below) is considered failure 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 at the discretion of this instructor. Please inform me 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.

Of course, as a courtesy to your classmates and instructor, all computers, cell phones, or other electronic communication devices are to be rendered non-disruptive. The only exceptions will be that if you've informed me of a pending critical incoming communication, or if you require an educational accommodation based on ADA standards and you provide evidence of written approval by the Counseling Psychology Department.