

Ethical and Legal Issues in Professional Counseling

CPSY 510

Spring Semester, 2010

Instructor:

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We meet:

Mondays, 5:30 to 8:45 pm

Catalogue Description:

“Consideration of the applicable ethical and legal issues for mental health 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 of thinking that will 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. This class will hopefully instill both desire and diligence on your part as practicing counselors and to develop a high degree of personal and professional ethics to enhance your clinical work in the years ahead.

Course Objectives:

- Knowledge of state, federal, and provincial 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 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, recognizing and understanding the ethical dimensions of your work is critically important to help you provide competent counseling services. This class will help develop your professional ethics and thereby enhance your competency and 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:

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 and the Final exam. 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 for up to **32** points during the semester.

Participation in class discussions: 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.

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

Ethical Genograms: Each student will be asked to construct and present your own “ethical genogram,” described on pages 291 – 293 of our text. Each student can earn up to **10** points for the construction and presentation of these genograms. Your in-class presentation will be limited to a maximum of 10 minutes.

Final examination: The Final examination for this class will be composed of selected questions from students from throughout the semester. The Final will be worth **15** points.

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, the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices are **not allowed** in our class. 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.

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Date	Topic	Readings	Pages	Assignments Due Points (up to #)
February 22, 2010	Class Introductions	As announced		Attendance
March 1, 2010	Ethical Thinking Overview	Chapters 1, 2 and 3	pages 1 to 52	Discussion cards (4)
March 8, 2010	Confidentiality	Chapter 6	pages 91 to 108	Discussion cards (4)
March 15, 2010	Informed Consent	Chapter 7	pages 109 to 125	Informed consent forms <u>assigned</u> Discussion cards (4)
March 22, 2010	Spring Break	None	None	Enjoy yourself
March 29, 2010	Boundary Issues and Multiple relationships	Chapter 8	pages 126 to 144	Discussion cards (4)
April 5, 2010	Competency, Professional Responsibility and Malpractice	Chapter 9	pages 145 to 165	Discussion cards (4) Informed consent forms <u>due</u> (25)
April 12, 2010	Couples and Family Counseling and Therapy	Chapter 12	pages 285 to 351	Discussion cards (4) Presentations for group one (10)
April 19, 2010	Ethical and Legal Issues in Supervision	Chapter 14	pages 403 to 454	Discussion and Final cards (8) Presentations for group two (10)
April 26, 2010	Ethical theories	Appendix A	Pages 472 to 482	Final Exam (15) Presentations for group three (10)

Textbook: The Ethical and Professional Practice of counseling and psychotherapy
Len Sperry (2007)