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PSYX 630.01: Ethics, Professional, and Cultural Issues

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Psychology 630: Ethics, Professional, and Cultural Issues

Spring, 2014

Monday, 1:30-4:30

CPC 119

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Office hours: By appointment

Introduction

This course is focused on familiarizing clinical and school psychology graduate students with their ethical, professional and legal responsibilities as they undertake professional functions. It is geared to increase awareness of the duty to protect the welfare of individuals and groups with whom psychologists and trainees work, as well as the ways that we can accomplish this.

Course summary

This course is designed to do four primary things: 1) Introduce you to standards and guidelines for ethical practice, and common ethical issues facing clinical and school psychologists; 2) provide you with ideas and strategies for approaching ethical dilemmas; 3) increase self-awareness of values, beliefs, biases and reactions that may affect your responses to ethically challenging situations; 4) provide an overview of some current ethical/professional issues facing psychologists. The course is intended to provide a balance of theory, application and personal exploration. We will spend time discussing ethical standards, then applying them to case examples. Students are expected to learn both the content of the ethical standards, as well as a process for detecting and then evaluating ethical dilemmas; in almost all cases, generating, considering, and evaluating alternatives is emphasized more than having the “right answer.” We will also spend time examining our own values and beliefs, reactions to various ethical dilemmas and potential areas of vulnerability in order to enhance self-awareness and understanding as it relates to ethical issues in practice. The assumption here is that all psychologists bring their own values, blind spots, and biases to their work, and that developing awareness of those issues will enhance ability to practice in a thoughtful, ethical way. Finally, we will explore some current professional issues that have ethical ramifications, such as psychologists’ roles in aid-in-dying, military psychology, “conversion therapy,” and others.

Specific course objectives

1. To familiarize the student with basic moral principles that serve as the foundation for ethical codes.
2. To give exposure to some of the many ethical conflicts and dilemmas that confront psychologists, and to sort through strategies for resolving them; to develop and be able to implement an ethical decision-making model; to be able to think through complex ethical

situations, to see multiple perspectives and principles involved in ethical quandaries and to generate and evaluate appropriate courses of action.

3. To familiarize students with the American Psychological Association's (APA) Ethical Principles and Codes of Conduct, the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) NASP 2010 Standards and other related codes and standards for providers of services and researchers.
4. To familiarize students with ethical and professional issues and standards involved in work in school settings, and in ethics and standards for School Psychologists.
5. To engage in ethical thinking processes and values clarification in order to increase professional competence and skill.
6. To review related readings and research in ethics and law and explore the frequent tensions that arise between ethics and law.
7. To understand legal and regulatory requirements involved in central areas of professional practice.
8. To examine cultural factors that affect our work, examine competence in the context of cultural issues and become more aware of one's own situation and identities that affect one's work.
9. To learn how to implement ethical attitudes and values in clinical situations, and to integrate one's own principles and values in one's practice.
10. To learn about some current professional practice issues in the field and consider their ethical implications.

Course expectations and evaluation

1. Assigned Readings: Complete all assigned readings prior to class. Come prepared to discuss.
2. Class Participation: Class participation (and thus attendance) is required. It is expected that all students will contribute to discussions, demonstrating a familiarity with the assigned readings and the ability to think creatively and independently. Class participation will be worth 15% of students' grades. If you must miss class (i.e. for a medical reason), please let me know in advance by e-mailing (if well in advance), texting or leaving a voice mail (370-0984). Because we will only be meeting once/week, missing one class means missing a large portion of material. Please do everything possible to make it to class. If you do miss, you will be expected to make up any in-class writing assignments or exercises, and to obtain notes from a colleague in the course. You will be responsible for insuring that you have made up the material missed; I will not be able to manage this for you.
3. Ethical Problem-solving ("consultation papers"): You will be provided with a "Steps for Effective Decision Making" outline to use as you work through actual ethical dilemmas presented by guest presenters. Over the course of the semester, you will complete 3 papers utilizing this format to evaluate ethical dilemmas. The precise time of each presentation will vary depending on presenters' schedules; the papers due dates are set for approximately ten days after each presentation. These three consultation papers will count as 30% of your total grade (10% each). Each paper should be three to four, typed, double-spaced pages. I am asking you to keep these papers brief by honing in on the most important ethical issues in a concise and focused way; however, if you require additional space to cover all relevant issues, you will not be penalized for writing a longer paper.

4. **Reaction Papers:** You will be writing two reaction or “special topics” papers in response to two of the special topics we cover this semester. These papers will count as 30% of your grade (15% each). More specific instructions will be given for each paper, but in general, you will be asked to describe what you see as the central ethical issues, what your own reactions to those issues are, how you would see yourself handling them. Each paper should be a maximum of four, typed, double-spaced pages. Again, there will be a lot to say on each of these topics. The expectation is that you will write in a concise, dense way, avoiding being repetitive, and making each sentence count.
5. **Final:** The final will be an in-class case consultation exercise in which I will present an ethical dilemma to you as a group. You will be given time to write down your questions for further assessment of the situation, and also to write out what you see as the central ethical issues and your thoughts about how to approach them. We will then discuss the dilemma as a group. You will hand in your notes and your grade will be based on a combination of your personal notes and your participation in the discussion. The Final will count as 25% of your grade. More detailed instructions to follow.

Plus and minus grades are used as follows: 93 and above = A, 90-92 = B, 87-89 = B+, 83-86 = B, 80-82 = B-, below 80 = C+ etc. Note that grades of C+ and below are not considered passing grades for this course. Please talk to the professor if you have any questions or concerns about how you are doing in the course.

Texts

Koocher, G.P. & Keith-Spiegel, P. (2007). *Ethics in Psychology: Professional Standards and Cases* (3rd ed.). New York: Oxford.

Knapp, S., Younggren, J.N., VanderCreek, L., Harris, E., & Martin, J.N. (2013). *Assessing and Managing Risk in Psychological Practice: An individualized approach* (2nd ed.).

Note: This book is available to be purchased or downloaded directly from the APA Insurance Trust if you insured through The Trust Sponsored Professional Liability Insurance Program, you can download the free eBook through your account at The Trust’s Online Service Center.

Additional readings (available on Moodle or emailed from instructor)

Selections from Bersoff, D.N. (2008). *Ethical Conflicts in Psychology* (4th ed.). Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association, and from Bersoff, D.N. (2003). *Ethical Conflicts in Psychology* (3rd ed.). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Selections from Pope, K.S. & Vasquez, M.J.T. (2010). *Ethics In Psychotherapy and Counseling Psychology* (4rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Wiley & Sons.

Selections from Johnson, W.B. & Koocher, G.P. (Eds.) (2011). *Ethical Conundrums, Quandaries, and Predicaments in Mental Health Practice: A Casebook from the Files of Experts*. New York: Oxford University Press.

CPC Policy and Procedures Manual (Revised 1/20/10). This will be handed out.

Important and useful links

[The Montana Code Annotated \(MCA\)](#)

[The Administrative Rules of Montana \(ARM\)](#)

[APA Ethics Code](#)

[The Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards \(ASPPB\) Code of Conduct](#)

[Information on HIPAA](#) and other privacy law

APA brochures on [Moodle](#) that provide a better brief introduction to the HIPAA requirements

Course materials will be on the [Moodle](#) site.

Schedule

Week	Topic	Readings
Week 1 January 26	Introduction and overview of the course, Introduction to the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct; Discussion of individual histories and values as they relate to ethics in psychological practice	
Week 2 February 2	History, principles & codes, governing bodies, risk management introduction; record keeping Special Presentation: Board of Psychologists: Dr. Stuart Hall	1) K & K Chaps. 1-3 2) P & V Chaps. 7,8 3) APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists & Code of Conduct 4) NASP (2010) Principles for Professional Ethics 5) APA guidelines on record keeping and A Matter of Law: Patient Record Keeping Part 1
Week 3 February 9	Informed consent, competence, impaired professionals	1) K & K Chap. 4 2) P & V Chaps. 4, 11 3) Risk Management, Sect. 3, Chap. 1 Relevant MCA
Week 4 February 16	NO CLASS	

Week	Topic	Readings
Week 5 February 23	Confidentiality, limits of confidentiality, breaking confidentiality when a client is suicidal Special Presentation: Competence to Stand Trial: Dr. Susan Day	1) K & K Chap. 8 2) P & V Chaps. 16, 17 3) J & K Chap. 4 4) Risk mgt., Sect. 3, Chap. 4 and Sect. 3, Chap. 4 and Chap. 7, pp 155-171 Relevant MCA
Week 6 March 2	Confidentiality (cont.): Duty to warn, Tarasoff Special Presentation: Involuntary Hospitalization in Montana: Dr. Jay Palmatier	1) J & K Chap. 7 2) Risk mgt., Sect. 3, Chap. 7, pp 171-177 3) Fischer (2008) 4) Monahan in Bersoff (4 th) 180-186 5) Appelbaum on Tarasoff Relevant MCA
Week 7 March 9	Limits to confidentiality: Reporting child abuse & neglect Case Presentation: Dr. Jennifer Robohm Special Presentation: Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting in Montana: Mr. Eden Roberts	J & K Chap. 27 Relevant MCA
Week 8 March 16	Business Issues	K & K Chaps. 7, 14, 15 Risk mgt., Sect. 3, Chap. 9
Week 9 March 23	Multiple relationships; sexuality and attraction Case Presentation: Meghan Gill, M.A.	K & K Chaps. 10, 11, 12 P & V Chap. 14 J & K Chaps. 1 & 2 Risk mgt., Sect. 3, Chap. 2 Schank & Skovholt in Bersoff (3 rd ed). Pp. 347-352
Week 10 March 30	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK	
Week 11 April 6	Psychotherapy: Specific therapeutic modalities and difficult clinical situations; Special topic: Aid in Dying; Dr. Victor Lieberman	K & K Chaps. 13, 16, 19 J & K Chap. 3 Gabbard, Kassaw & Perez-Garcia (Extra reading on internet issues) Harris & Youngren (2011) Risk management in the digital world APA Guidelines for the practice of telepsychology (2013)

Week	Topic	Readings
Week 12 April 13	Ethical Issues in Working with Children and Families Religion, Spirituality and Psychology: Class Discussion	J & K Chap. 5 P & V Chap. 10 Risk mgt. Sect. 3, Chap. 3 Sullivan et. al in Bersoff, pp. 197-202 Koocher & Keith-Spiegel (1990) Children, ethics and the law: Professional issues and cases (pp 1-46) Special Topics Readings; TBA
Week 13 April 20	Ethical Issues in School Psychology Case consultation: Dr. Nadine Wisniewski	National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Professional conduct manual, principles of professional ethics, and guidelines for the provision of school psychological services Bersoff & Hofer in Bersoff, pp. 276-278 Bersoff in Bersoff, pp 299-302
Week 14 April 27	Assessment; Release of test data/records; Forensics Special Presentation: Ethics in Forensic Psychology: Dr. Laura Kirsch	K & K Chaps. 9, 17 J & K Chap. 11 Risk mgt. Sect. 3, Chaps. 5 & 6
Week 15 May 4	Diversity issues; Closing Special Presentation: Conversion therapy: Dr. Bryan Cochran	J & K Chap. 35 P & V Chap. 15 APA practice guidelines: 1) Guidelines for providers of psychological services to ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diverse populations; 2) Guidelines for psychotherapy with lesbian, gay and bisexual clients; 3) Guidelines for therapy with women; 4) Guidelines for psychological practice with older adults; Chapter from Sue & Sue (2003)

Additional requirements and information

1. Note that case material will be presented and discussed in this class by the instructor, guest presenters and students. This case material should in all cases be de-identified. In addition, students in the course are expected to treat this material as confidential, as you would with any case material discussed at the Clinical Psychology Center.
2. We are very fortunate to have a number of outside experts, faculty affiliates, faculty and others coming to present to this course on a variety of topics. These presenters are all offering their time, energy and resources out of generosity and a desire to contribute; they are not otherwise compensated. Please be respectful, prepared and professional with the speakers. You will be expected to approach each presentation prepared to engage in discussion so that we can all get the most out of the wonderful opportunity we have to learn from experts.

3. I will occasionally make announcements and share information via email. These emails will be addressed to your university email account. I will assume that you receive my email communication in a timely way, so please check your university email account regularly.
4. The schedule in this syllabus is subject to change. This is particularly so given that we must work around the schedules of guest presenters. Students are responsible for knowing about changes in assignments and schedules that may be announced in class or via email.
5. Through the first 15 instructional days of the semester, students may use [CyberBear](#) to drop courses. For courses dropped by the 15th instructional day, no fees are charged and courses are not recorded.
6. Friday, February 13 at 5 pm is the last day to drop the class without a drop/add form and with no fee. After this date, a “WP” (withdraw passing) or “WF” (withdraw failing) will appear on the transcript and there will be a \$10 fee and advisor/instructor signature required to drop.
7. Petitions to drop will be granted only in documentable emergency cases. Note that course failure, in and of itself, does not constitute an emergency. There will be no exceptions, so please plan accordingly and communicate with me as early as possible if you anticipate a problem.
8. Students with disabilities have the responsibility to declare their disability to the instructor at the beginning of the course if they require accommodations, and they also have the responsibility to arrange for such accommodations with Disability Services for Students (Lommasson Center 154). The instructor will work collaboratively with the student and DSS to provide these accommodations. If examination accommodations are arranged, please advise the professor and confirm the arrangements before the exam.
9. Departmental and University policies regarding incompletes do not allow changing “incomplete” grades beyond one year after an “I” has been granted.
10. Plagiarism or cheating of any kind will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is stealing or passing off the ideas or words of another as one’s own without properly crediting the source. This behavior is unethical and a violation of the Student Conduct Code. The instructor also reserves the right to assign an “F” as a final grade if either cheating or plagiarism occurs.
11. All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University.
12. All work in this class is to be carried out in accordance with the APA Ethical Standards and associated documents, as well as the [UM Student Conduct Code](#).

Paper Topics

Case consultations and Special Topics papers

Case consultations: Dr. Jennifer Robohm (3/9/15), Meghan Gill, M.A. (3/23/15); Dr. Nadine Wisniewski (4/20/15)

Special topics: Competence to stand trial/forced treatment to become competent: Dr. Susan Day (2/23/15); Aid in Dying: Dr. Victor Lieberman (4/6/15); Religion, Spirituality and Psychology: Class discussion (4/13/15); “Conversion Therapy”: Dr. Bryan Cochran (5/4/14)