



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

School of Human Development and Organizational Studies in Education

Counselor Education Program

MHS 6705 – Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in

Marriage and Family Therapy

Spring 2024

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Office Hours: By appointment either in Gainesville (Norman 2-215) or Jacksonville. Please feel free to contact me via email, phone or text. Texting is the quickest way to find me.

Required Texts and Course Materials:

AAMFT, NASW, ACA, APA Codes of Ethics. Available on each agencies web sites.

Caldwell, B.E. (Ed.). (2015) *User's Guide to the 2015 AAMFT Code of Ethics*. Alexandria, VA: American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. .

Murphy, M. and Hecker, L. (2017) *Ethics and Professional Issues in Couple and Family Therapy (2nd Ed.)*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Florida Statute #491 and Rule Chapter 64B4, F.A.C. (Latest Edition). Florida Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy and Mental Health Counseling.

Law and Rules Study Book (containing F.S. 90.503, 394, 397, 415, 455, 491, and Rule Chapter 64B4), **F.A.C.** (Latest Edition). Florida Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy and Mental Health Counseling.

Legal Guidelines for Family Therapists. (2016) American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT).

Wheeler, A. M. & Bartram, B. (2019) *The Counselor and the Law: A Guide to Legal and Ethical Practice* (8th Ed.). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Recommended Texts:

Cottone, R. R & Tarvydas, V. M. (2007) *Counseling Ethics and Decision Making* (3rd Ed.). Upper Sadler River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc.

Pope, K.S., Sonne, J.L. & Greene, B. (2006) *What Therapists Don't Talk About and Why: Understanding the Taboos That Hurt Us and Our Clients* (2nd Ed.) Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Course Purpose:

This course will address ethical and legal concerns relevant to the practice of Marriage and Family Therapy and Mental Health Counseling from multiple perspectives. It is designed to assist students in the development of personal and professional guidelines for the ethical practice of marriage and family therapy within the context of governing laws. Throughout the course, students will be invited to analyze selected ethical, legal and professional case studies that will challenge them to confront dilemmas and issues pertinent to the responsible practice of therapy.

Course Objectives and Goals:

1. Increase awareness of how personal biases, experiences, paradigms and values influence one's perceptions, conceptualizations, intentions and interventions.
2. Facilitate the continued development of skills necessary in recognizing, analyzing and resolving (where possible) the ethical/moral dilemmas of professional practice.
3. Practice analyzing ethical dilemmas utilizing law, codes of ethics and personal perspective.
4. To explore ethical, legal and professional decision making within the context of diverse domains of influence.
5. Eliciting a sense of moral imperative and moral action in both personal and professional contexts.
6. Helping each student in recognizing the ambiguity common in conversations about ethical/moral aims and purposes and the uncertainty inherent within.
7. Advancing the likelihood of ethical and moral conduct in carrying out one's present and future personal and professional activities with the aim of reducing the likelihood of unethical and/or immoral conduct in the practice of marriage and family therapy.

Course Requirements:

1. Class Attendance and Participation:

Students are expected to be punctual and to come to each class having read all assigned material and be ready to engage in discussion and/or experiential activities generated from readings. I cannot express to you enough the importance of participation. ***Being a therapist is not a passive endeavor. You have to be able to make your presence known and felt in the consulting room. You also have to get used to talking about things that your clients***

may not wish to talk about. Now is your chance to practice openly expressing yourself – even if you may not be “right” or 100% certain. Much of therapy is sampling hypotheses with our clients – throwing things out there even if we might be wrong. My expectation is that you stretch yourselves in the safety of the classroom to openly express your opinions, concerns, objections and agreements. There have been students who have received a lesser grade because they chose throughout the semester to remain silent. They were disappointed. Please do not let that be you come the end of this semester.

2. **Attendance at a the 491 Florida Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy and Mental Health Counseling:**

Students are strongly encouraged to attend a public hearing of dealing with disciplinary issues. THE 491 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULED DURING THIS SEMESTER IS:

Thursday, February 8th. Attendance is STRONGLY ENCOURAGED since I cancel class to help you decide to attend. There will be a one to two page reaction paper required addressing what you witnessed and what you learned from the experience. This will be due the following week after the 491 meeting takes place.

This attendance is not a requirement. However, those that do not attend will be responsible for another written assignment in lieu of attendance and the reaction paper.

I will gladly take whoever attends out to lunch following the meeting.

3. **Ethical, Legal, and Professional Dilemmas Discussions:**

There is an open invitation and expectation that you are to share ethical, legal and professional dilemmas that concern you for class reflection and discussion. These may be issues you are facing or have faced in a clinical setting or simply issues you are curious about. See comments above regarding participation.

4. **Code of Ethics Group Project:** The class will divide into small groups. Each group will present to the class one specific ethical issue or topic that they will research. This should be an educational/didactic exercise. This presentation should include lecture, exercises, debate points and/or role playing (where appropriate). Any power point presentation, a bibliography of resources utilized, a brief description of the exercises and role plays employed and a critical analysis of the topic presented should be prepared to turn in. Should you be citing a code of ethics, that code must be AAMFT.

5. **Additional Assignments:**

a. **Questions based on readings**

Questions submitted based on the readings will be required. There will be **3** in total due.

b. **Reading Logs:**

There will be **3 Reading Logs due**. In the logs, the expectation is that you indicate what readings you are discussing; present a small (1 paragraph) summary; observations regarding what might be the potential impact of the material on your own practice; your own reactions to what was read; how you plan to either incorporate what you read into your practice or avoid what you read about. For example, should the reading be about

attraction between client and clinician, what will you put in place to help safeguard your practice.

c. Special Topic/Personal Stance Paper:

Each student will select one specific topic of personal interest as it relates to the Ethical, Legal and Professional Practice or Research of Marriage and Family Therapy. This paper should be a formal, APA style paper. The issue cannot be the same as your group project topic. The key to this paper is for you to research an ethical issue as best as possible, **take a stand on that issue and then support your stance using AAMFT Ethical guidelines, decision making models, law and personal moral guidelines. This is not to be a generic paper on legal and ethical issues in counseling but be specific to your practice of Marriage and Family Therapy. Your paper must delineate what you will do regarding the issue you have chosen. What is your opinion about your chosen topic.** The issue and discussion should also be referenced to the Marriage and Family Therapy literature and AAMFT code of ethics. The entire paper should be no more than 10 pages. After 10 pages, I quit reading.

d. Personal Mission Statement:

On the last day of class, I expect each student to hand in a hard copy of your **personal mission statement**; a paper reflecting on your moral foundations that guide your ethical decision making. This is a reflection piece. It does not have to be APA format. It is primarily a reflection piece – not an outline of your ethical decision making model. Instead, it is to be the description of what you personally use to guide your decision making (morals, character traits, lessons learned from childhood, what virtues you hold dear – integrity, honesty, forthrightness, etc. Include in your paper what you have learned through the semester on that topic as well as what may have shifted for you over the semester. This paper is to be no longer than 10 pages. I invite you to articulate what make up your guiding principles that influence your professional practice. Incorporate your personal values, decision making skills and ethics that are your personal divining rods.

e. Final Exam: There will only be one exam given at the end of the semester. See dates for scheduled exam date.

Evaluation Criteria:

A	=	934 – 1000	(4.00)
A-	=	900 – 933	(3.67)
B+	=	867 – 899	(3.33)
B	=	834 – 866	(3.00)
B-	=	800 – 833	(2.67)
C+	=	767 – 799	(2.33)
C	=	734 – 766	(2.00)
C-	=	700 – 733	(1.67)
D+	=	667 – 699	(1.33)
D	=	634 – 666	(1.00)
D-	=	600 – 633	(0.67)

E = Below 600 (0.00)

Assignments (based on 1000 point scale)

1. Class Attendance & Participation (150)
2. 491 State Regulatory Board Meeting (150)
3. Code of Ethics Group Project (100)
4. Questions Based on Readings (75)
5. Reading Logs (75)
6. Special Topic Paper (150)
7. Personal Mission Statement (150)
8. Final Exam (200)

ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TYPED

*** Assignments are due by the deadline. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that assignments are submitted on time. If you have any problems with assignments &/or due dates, please contact the instructor prior to the due date so possible accommodations may be made if necessary.**

Course Policies and Resources:

Requirements for class attendance, assignments, and other work in this course is consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=907#attendance>

ZOOM or Hyflex policy:

Hyflex may be used only if you are unable to attend to class in person due to illness or exposure to COVID or other viral infections *or* if you have a written letter from the disability office. Please know if you are ill or have written permission, you are not expected to attend class on Hyflex or in person. Should you need to use Hyflex, please let the professor know in advance in order to open the Zoom space. Given the UF Counselor Ed program is accredited as a face to face program and CACREP no longer allowing program delivery other than as accredited, all class delivery should now be face to face.

Professionalism (Confidentiality & Ethics):

In MHS 7610: *Practicum in Counseling Supervision*, you are required to participate in class discussion and give and receive feedback. In the course of discussions, students may disclose personal information and will also be sharing information about supervisees. It is your duty to maintain confidentiality. You are expected to abide by the American Counseling Association (2014) *Code of Ethics*, the American School Counselor Association (2004) *Ethical Standards*, and/or the International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors (2015) *Ethical Standards & Guidelines*. Also refer to the University of

Florida (2010) Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code:
<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

Professional Liability Insurance:

In accordance with CACREP (2016; Standard 6. C.7), doctoral students are required to have individual professional counseling liability insurance when they are enrolled in a counseling or supervision experience.

Student Conduct & Academic Integrity:

UF students are bound by the Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the UF community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at UF, the following pledge is either required or implied, “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obliged to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

Accommodating Students with Special Learning Needs:

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Disability Resource Center: www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/. The DRC will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodations.

Other Considerations:

- As part of your professional development, the program encourages you to join professional organizations like the American Counseling Association (ACA), the Florida Counseling Association (FCA), or the Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT). Since most of you are studying to be Couples and Family Therapists, it is strongly encouraged you join AAMFT since it caters to and specializes in Systemic thinking modalities. This may also include specialty divisions like ASCA, AMHCA, and IAMFC.

Helpful Websites:

American Counseling Association (ACA)	www.counseling.org
American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT)	https://www.aamft.org/
Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES)	https://www.acesonline.net/
American School Counselor Association (ASCA)	www.schoolcounselor.org
American Mental Health Counselor Association (AMHCA)	www.amhca.org
Florida Counseling Association (FCA)	https://www.flacounseling.org/

Florida Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (FACES)

<http://www.flacounseling.org/default.asp?page=174>

www.flacounseling.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=18

School Counselors of Florida (SCF)

<http://schoolcounselorsfla.org/>

National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC)

<http://www.nbcc.org/>

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP) www.cacrep.org

Chi Sigma Iota (Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International) www.csi-net.org

Student Assistance and Emergencies:

University support services are available to students who are experiencing significant distress and/or personal emergencies. As appropriate please contact:

UF Counseling & Wellness Center: www.counseling.ufl.edu or 352-392-1575

University Police Department: 352-392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies

Online Course Evaluation Process:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at

<https://evaluations.ufl.edu> .

Appendix A

CACREP (2016) Specialty Standards Covered in this Course

Standard	How Standard is Covered (lecture, assignment, etc.)
Specialty Standard (MFC)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. n. professional organizations, preparation standards, and credentials relevant to the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling 	Attendance at 491 Florida Board Meeting; Questions based on Readings; Reading Logs (based on Specific Lectures)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. o. ethical and legal considerations and family law issues unique to the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling 	Code of Ethics Group Project; Special Topic Paper; Guest Lecture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. p. record keeping, third party reimbursement, and other practice and management considerations in marriage, couple, and family counseling 	Lectures and Readings; Personal Mission Statement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. e. strategies for interfacing with the legal system relevant to marriage, couple, and family counseling 	Guest Lecture; Ethical, Legal, and Professional Dilemmas Discussion

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: There will be guest speakers scheduled throughout the semester. Therefore, the following schedule may be revised. I also reserve the right to add more readings at a later date.

Week 1	16	January	Introduction and Course Overview
Week 2	23	January	Decision Making; Legal Issues; The Profession Readings: MH: Ch.2 & 3 WB: Ch. 1 & 2 K: Ch. 1 & 2
Week 3	30	January	Introduction to legalese and ethics Readings: WB: Ch. 3 & 4 K: Ch 3 & 4 Users Guide to 2015 AAMFT Code of Ethics
Week 4	6	February	Professions Ethical Guidelines Readings: AAMFT Code of Ethics NASW Code of Ethics APA Ethical Principles ACA Ethical Code K: Ch 5 & 6
Week 5	13	February	NO CLASS: 491 BOARD MEETING Held in St. Augustine, Florida (specifics to come) Readings: MH: Ch. 5 & 6 K: Ch. 7 & 8
Week 6	20	February	Confidentiality and Reporting Readings: WB: Ch. 5 & 6 K: Ch. 9 & 10
Week 7	27	February	Boundaries and Risk Management Readings:

MH: Ch. 7 & 8
K: Ch 11 & 12

Week 8	6	March	Possible Guest Speaker Readings: MH: Ch. 10 & 11 WB: Ch. 7 & 8 K: Ch 13 & 14
Week 9	13	March	Group Presentations Readings: MH: Ch. 12 & 13
Week 10	20	March	Spring Break
Week 11	27	March	Group Presentations Review: Florida Statute #491 and Rule Chapter 64B4, F.A.C.
Week 12	3	April	Class Debate Readings: WB: Ch. 10
Week 13	10	April	Lab Work Legal Issues in Marriage and Family Therapy Readings: MH: Ch. 14, 15 & 16 WB: Ch. 9
Week 14	17	April	Final Exam

Personal Mission Statement Due

