

MHS 6705
Spring 2015

Ethical, Legal and Professional Issues in Marriage and Family Therapy

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Dates and Times: January 8th – April 16th
8:30 A.M. – 11:15 A.M.

Office Hours: By appointment either in Gainesville or Jacksonville. Please feel free to contact me via e-mail or cell phone.

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. ***Attendance and participation*** at all scheduled classes is essential. 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.
2. Students are strongly encouraged to attend a public hearing of **the 491 Florida Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy and Mental Health Counseling** dealing with disciplinary issues. Meetings are scheduled for **January 28 – 30th in Orlando**. There will be a one to two page reaction paper required addressing what you witnessed and what you learned from the experience. This 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.
3. 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.
4. **Group project**: The class will divide into small groups. Each group will present to the class one specific topic that they will research. 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.
5. **Written Assignments**:
 - a. **Reading Logs**: You will be required to turn in 5 reading logs throughout the semester. You can choose which readings you will respond to. In your reading logs please address what stands out for you from the readings; what you glean from the readings – personal reactions, etc.; and how you will use the information from the readings in your practice.
 - b. Each student will select one specific topic of 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 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. 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.
 - c. On the last day of class I expect each student to present to in hard copy or via e-mail your **personal mission statement** or a paper reflecting on your moral foundations that guide your ethical decision making. 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.

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

Required Texts:

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

Wheeler, A. M. & Bartram, B. (2012) *The Counselor and the Law: A Guide to Legal and Ethical Practice* (6th Ed.). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

AAMFT (2007). *Legal Guidelines for Family Therapists with Selected Ethical Opinions*. Washington, DC: Author.

AAMFT (2013). Users Guide to the AAMFT Code of Ethics. Washington, DC: Author.

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.

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

Recommended Text

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

This course is designed to address the professional standards listed below:

The following Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) (2001) do apply:

Subsection A FOUNDATIONS OF MARITAL, COUPLE, AND FAMILY COUNSELING AND THERAPY

2. Structure and operations of professional organizations, preparation standards and credentialing bodies pertaining to the practice of marital, couple and family counseling/therapy (e.g. the International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors);
3. ethical and legal considerations specifically related to the practice of marital, couple and family counseling/therapy (e.g. ACA and IAMPFC Code of Ethics);
4. implications of professional issues unique to marital, couple and family counseling/therapy including recognition, reimbursement and right to practice.
5. the role of equity issues in marital, couple and family counseling/therapy.

Subsection C KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL REQUIREMENTS FOR MARITAL, COUPLE AND FAMILY COUNSELOR/THERAPISTS

5. specific problems that impede family functioning, including issues related to socioeconomic disadvantage and discrimination bias.

Portions of this course also fulfill *in part* the following CACREP Standards:

Subsection A: FOUNDATIONS OF MARITAL, COUPLE AND FAMILY COUNSELING/THERAPY

1. philosophical and etiological premises that define the practice of marital, couple and family counseling/therapy;
2. the role of marital, couple and family counselors/therapists in a variety of practice settings and in relation to the other helping professionals.

Subsection B: CONTEXTUAL DIMENSIONS OF MARITAL, COUPLE AND FAMILY COUNSELING/THERAPY

2. treatment issues related to working with diverse family systems (e.g. families in transition, dual-career couples, and blended families).

Subsection C: KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL REQUIREMENTS FOR MARITAL, COUPLE AND FAMILY COUNSELOR/THERAPISTS

1. family system theories and other relevant theories and their application in working with couples and families and with other systems (e.g. legal, legislative, school and community systems).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: There will be guest speakers scheduled throughout the semester. Therefore, the following schedule may be revised.

Week 1	8	January	Introduction and Course Overview
Week 2	15	January	Readings: CCC: Ch. 1 WB: Ch. 1 & 2 CT: Ch. 1
Week 3	22	January	Introduction to legalese and ethics Readings: Users Guide to AAMFT Code of Ethics AAMFT Marriage and Family Guide to Ethical and Legal Procedures
Week 4	29	January	No Class – 491 Board Meeting Readings: AAMFT Code of Ethics NASW Code of Ethics APA Ethical Principles ACA Ethical Code
Week 5	5	February	Readings: CCC: Ch. 2 & 3 CT: Ch. 3
Week 6	12	February	Readings: WB: Ch. 3 & 5 CT: Ch. 4 & 5
Week 7	19	February	Readings: CT: Ch. 6 & 7
Week 8	26	February	Class Debate Readings: CT: Ch. 10 WB: Ch. 6 & 7
Week 9	5	March	Spring Break

Week 10	12	March	Group Presentations Readings: CT: Ch. 7
Week 11	19	March	Earl Googe, Esq. Legal Issues in Marriage and Family Therapy Readings: CCC: Ch. 4 CT: Ch. 11
Week 12	26	March	Group Presentations Marriage and Family Therapy in Florida Read: Florida Statute #491 and Rule Chapter 64B4, F.A.C., Laws and Rules Study Book
Week 13	2	April	Readings: WB: Ch. 9 CCC: Ch. 7
Week 14	9	April	Readings: CT: Ch. 20
Week 15	16	April	Exam