ETHICS & LAW IN PSYCHOLOGY (SPS 6815, Section 051B)

Syllabus: Spring Semester, 2015

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General Course Objectives

The primary objectives of this course are for student to: (a) acquire an understanding of the ethical standards and federal and state laws that impact psychological practice, with an emphasis on children and schools; (b) develop the ability to analyze and critically evaluate ethical dilemmas; and (c) effectively articulate how you might deal with ethical issues involved in specific case vignettes.

Required Texts (also see additional assigned readings by week)


In addition to the textbook, other required reading (e.g., journal articles) is listed below in the weekly assigned reading.

Grading

Grades for this course will be based on one ethics autobiography (10%), one “strengths and weaknesses” exercise (10%), one critique and response to an ethical/legal dilemma (25%), one in-class group presentation on a federal/state law (20%), one brief summary of experiences observing a trial (10%), and class participation (25%). Class participation is broadly defined to include class attendance (absences & tardiness), participation in discussions during class and on the on-line electronic bulletin board, and professional conduct. Students are expected to read and contribute to the electronic bulletin board each week the class meets. Contributions include analyses of weekly ethical/legal dilemmas, as well as questions and/or comments that are relevant to ethics and law in psychology. Please note that a semester grade of Incomplete (“I”) will only be given under special circumstances (e.g., medical emergencies).
**Campus-wide Honor Code**

“We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.”

As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement:

“I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.”

Students are expected to conform to all policies of the University of Florida and work within the honor code. One of the goals of the University of Florida is to ensure that students are honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. All students are required to abide by the Academic Honesty Guidelines of the University of Florida. Those students adjudged to have committed a violation of the Academic Honesty Guidelines (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, bribery, misrepresentation, conspiracy, or fabrication) shall be subject to the sanctions listed in Paragraph XI of the Student Conduct Code. For additional information about the University of Florida Student Judicial Process or Academic Honesty Guidelines, contact the Office for Student Services, P202 Peabody Hall (phone #: 392-1261). For a copy of the Graduate Student Handbook for 2010-11, please visit: [http://gradschool.ufl.edu/downloads/handbook-2010-2011.pdf](http://gradschool.ufl.edu/downloads/handbook-2010-2011.pdf).

**Course Policies**

- Regular attendance is expected. If you have to miss class, please notify the instructor in advance.
- You are expected to have read the assigned readings, be prepared to discuss them, and participate in class activities.
- Assignments must be completed in a professional manner. Please take time to look over spelling, grammar, and other matters concerning the overall appearance of your work. All written assignments should be typed using standard fonts and margins, according to APA style (6th Ed.).
- Cell phones, Blackberries, beepers, laptops, etc., are a big distraction. PLEASE turn them off before coming to class as a common courtesy to all.
- Please follow UF policy regarding food and drink.
- If you have need for accommodations due to a disability, please meet with the instructor during office hours or by appointment.
Attendance and Make-up Exams and Assignments

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and be on time for class. Much of the work in this course occurs during class sessions and cannot be repeated outside class in an equivalent manner. Students who have difficulty meeting this expectation should speak with the instructor to determine whether make-up assignments or exams are possible. Absence for permitted religious reasons, documented medical concerns, and other reasons as documented in University policy will be handled accordingly. See this website for more details: http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalogarchive/01-02-catalog/academic_regulations/academic_regulations_013_.htm

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you require classroom accommodation because of a disability, you must first register with the Dean of Students Office (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to you, which you then give to the instructor when requesting accommodation. The College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to assist students in their coursework.

Counseling and Student Health

Students with academic concerns related to this course should contact the instructor in person or via email. Students also may occasionally have personal issues that arise in the course of pursuing higher education or that may interfere with their academic performance. If you find yourself facing problems affecting your coursework, you are encouraged to talk with an instructor and to seek confidential assistance at the UF Counseling & Wellness Center, 352-392-1575. Visit their web site for more information: http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/. Also, crisis intervention is always available 24/7 from: Alachua County Crisis Center: (352) 264-6789.

E-mail/Gatorlink Account

You are required to have a Gatorlink computer account through the University, a service that is free to all students. With this account, you will be able to send and receive e-mail, and access the World Wide Web from home or school. You will also need a Gatorlink account to access the course website. Instructions for obtaining a Gatorlink account can be found at http://www.gatorlink.ufl.edu/. In addition, please review the College of Education’s computer requirements at http://www.coe.ufl.edu/web/?pid=50 and make sure that you have the necessary computer software and hardware.

All students at the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

Course Website
After you have obtained a Gatorlink username and password, you will be able to access to the course website at http://online.education.ufl.edu with the Canvas login. Your username and password for login on the site is the same as your Gatorlink account. You will be able to access the website from off-campus. The website is for general class use. It can be used to share information (e.g., articles, calendar events, Web links), hold electronic discussions (e.g., bulletin board), and much more. You must log in at least once per week to participate in the required virtual class discussions. All class announcements will be posted on the website. If you are registered for the course and do not see it listed on the “My Courses” screen, please contact onlinesupport@coe.ufl.edu.

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**COURSE OUTLINE\(^1\)**

**Week 1 (January 5)**

No Class

**Week 2 (January 12)**

Course Introduction & Overview  
Reading: Goforth & Hayter*; Tryon*

**Week 3 (January 19)**

Martin Luther King Holiday – No Class

**Week 4 (January 26)**

General Principles of the APA Ethics Code  
Reading: Koocher & Keith-Spiegel (Preface, Chapters 1-2)  
Due: Ethics Autobiography (Part I)

**Week 5 (February 2)**

Resolving Ethical Issues & Competence  
Reading: Koocher & Keith-Spiegel (Chapters 3-4)

**Week 6 (February 9)**

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\(^1\) The course outline is tentative and subject to change. Changes will be announced in class and posted on the course website.
Human Relations, Privacy, & Confidentiality
Reading: Koocher & Keith-Spiegel (Chapters 8, 10-13); FASP Best Practices*
Due: “Strengths & Weaknesses” Exercise

**Week 7 (February 16)**

Class Cancelled – NASP

**Week 8 (February 23)**

Advertising, Record Keeping, & Fees
Reading: Koocher & Keith-Spiegel (Chapters 7, 14-15)

**Week 9 (March 2)**

Class Cancelled – Spring Break

**Week 10 (March 9)**

Education & Training, Research & Publication
Reading: Koocher & Keith-Spiegel (Chapters 16, 19)

**Week 11 (March 16)**

Assessment & Computer-related Technology
Reading: Koocher & Keith-Spiegel (Chapter 9); Harvey & Carlson*; Burns et al.*; FASP & NASP Best Practices*
Due: Selection of Federal/State Law Presentation Topic and Presentation Date

**Week 12 (March 23)**

Therapy, Interventions, & Consultation
Reading: Koocher & Keith-Spiegel (Chapters 5-6, 17-18)

**Week 13 (March 30)**

Ethics Code of the National Association of School Psychologists
Reading: NASP Principles for Professional Ethics

**Week 14 (April 6)**

Federal Laws Impacting Psychology & Education – Part I
Reading: TBA
Due: Instructor Approval of Ethical/Legal Dilemma Topic
**Week 15 (April 13)**

Federal Laws Impacting Psychology & Education – Part II
Reading: TBA

**Week 16 (April 20)**

State Laws Impacting Psychology & Education – Part III
Reading: TBA
ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

1. **Ethics Autobiography** – For this assignment, you are asked to reflect on your personal ethics of origin and your ethnic and religious background, as well as what you have already learned about psychology ethics, at the beginning and end of the course. In Part I of the ethics autobiography respond to the following questions: What is your idea of right and wrong personal behavior, and where does this conception come from? What formative experiences account for how you live your life? What morals are most important to you, and where do they come from? How do your own personal values, background, and traditions interact or conflict with professional ethics principles and rules in psychology? In Part II, you are to respond to the following questions: What are some of the ethical issues you are more aware of now? What do you think has changed for you in becoming more aware of these issues? What do you think you still need some clarity on, and how do you think you will go about getting this? What are some of the conversations or comments in class that you think will stay with you a long time? Why will these stay with you?

2. **“Strengths and Weaknesses” Exercise** – For this assignment, write down, with a sentence or two explanation, the three characteristics, values, motivations, principles, behaviors, or skills that you believe will be your greatest assets as an ethical psychologist. After you have done that, discuss the following question: How, or under what circumstances, might these attributes become your greatest weaknesses?

3. **Response to an Ethical/Legal Dilemma** – For this assignment, you will write a paper that discusses the resolution of an ethical/legal dilemma. You may propose a specific legal and/or ethical dilemma you have encountered in practicum or select from a list of dilemmas developed by the instructor. All ethical/legal dilemmas must be approved by the instructor no later than March 16, 2015 (Week 11). After you have chosen an ethical/legal dilemma, in the paper you will:
   
   a. describe the context for the dilemma (i.e. the events that occurred leading to the dilemma);
   
   b. identify the ethical issues and principles involved in the dilemma;
   
   c. identify the relevant sections of the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA, 2002) and the NASP Principles for Professional Ethics to the dilemma;
   
   d. describe your use of the step-wise decision-making process;
   
   e. describe how this dilemma may have been avoided; and
   
   f. describe how similar dilemmas may be prevented in the future.

Your paper should be at least 12 typed pages in length (double-spaced, 12-point font, 1” margins), references included. Editorial Style of the American Psychological Association (6th Edition) is required. Grading will be based on the quality of the written paper and on adherence to APA style. Completed papers are due at the beginning of class on April 20, 2015 (Week 16). Please note that successful completion of this assignment meets the requirements for the
ethical/legal dilemma portion of the portfolio of the School Psychology Program (if using the “old” requirements) and Accomplished Practice 6.

4. **Attend and Observe a Trial** – For this assignment, you will attend a city or state court to observe a trial (or portions of one). To find a trial, go to the master calendar at this link: [http://www.circuit8.org/calendars](http://www.circuit8.org/calendars). Find a case that interests you, then go to the courthouse and find the appropriate room. After you have observed a trial, you will write a brief 1-2 page paper that contains the name(s) of the case(s), the issues involved, your impressions of the proceedings, and other issues you believe are germane to the experience.

5. **Class Presentation on State/Federal Law** – For this collaborative assignment, you and your partners are to become proficient in a major federal or state law that impacts the delivery of school psychological services. After you have been assigned a topic, each team will review the assigned law and relevant literature and create a PowerPoint presentation that will be formally presented in class (during Weeks 14-16) and lead a discussion following the presentation (~30 minutes total). In addition, students will select one article or chapter to be assigned reading for all other students for the assigned presentation day (limit one article or chapter per topic). Assigned reading must be approved by the instructor no later than two weeks before the presentation, and disseminated to others one week beforehand. To facilitate dissemination, students must provide the instructor with a hard copy or an e-copy (e.g., PDF file) of the approved reading assignment no later than one week before their scheduled presentation. Topics will be approved on a first come, first served basis. The following is a list of topics from which teams may select:

- IDEIA
- Baker Act
- Child Custody
- No Child Left Behind Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Florida DOE rules and regulations
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Family Education Rights and Privacy Act
- Civil Rights Act of 1871 (and its revisions)
- Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- Florida’s legal provisions for children’s mental health services
- Social Security eligibility as well as Medicaid and its impact on services for children
- Legal and ethical issues regarding mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect

*Note: Other topics may be possible with approval of the instructor.*
**Grading**

Please do your assignments carefully and on time. If you are having difficulty meeting assignment time lines, you must contact the instructor prior to the due date.

- Papers submitted late will not receive a grade higher than “B,” although a note is made of the quality.
- Poorly written and/or carelessly proofread papers are sometimes returned ungraded until spelling, punctuation, or mechanical errors are corrected. Such papers ordinarily receive a grade of "B" or lower.
- All students must demonstrate competence in writing. Ability to write will be a part of all assignments. Papers should be double-spaced, 12-point font, 1” margins. Editorial Style of the American Psychological Association (6th Edition) is required.

The following summarizes the weight assigned to each graded component of the course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethics Autobiography – Parts I &amp; II</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths &amp; Weakness Exercise</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Court Observation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation on a federal/state law</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response to Ethical/Legal Dilemma</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Points earned on all assignments, the exam, and class participation will be totaled and a final grade will be assigned based on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93 or above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 - 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 – 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 – 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73 – 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 – 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67 – 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63 – 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60 – 62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>59 or below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this course, one or more assignments have been selected as “Key Tasks” that will assess your mastery of knowledge, skills, and/or dispositions that the State of Florida requires of all entry-level educators. These assignments were specifically selected as Key Tasks because they align with the [Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPs), Reading Competencies, ESOL Standards, etc.].

Your mastery of each Indicator will be measured by your performance on a Key Task. To pass this course, you must successfully complete all Key Tasks and receive a rating of either “Exceptional” or “Accomplished.” No exceptions will be made to this rule, even if you do not plan to practice in Florida after graduation or apply for state certification.

Students who receive a “Developing” or “Unsatisfactory” rating will be offered a chance to redo the Key Task or, in some cases, to complete a comparable task assigned by the instructor. Students who do not complete their makeup work satisfactorily (with a “Developing” or higher rating) will receive either “an Incomplete” or “a failing grade” at the instructor’s discretion.

**Accomplished Practices:**

(6a) Professional Responsibility and Conduct: Understanding that educators are held to a high moral standard in a community, the effective educator adheres to the Code of Ethics and the Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession of Florida

**Key Task/Assignments: Legal/Ethical Dilemma Paper and Federal/State Law Presentation**

Student demonstrates that educators are held to a high moral standard and adheres to the Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct by writing a paper that describes an event in her/his professional service that posed an ethical dilemma, identifies ethical issues that apply to this event, and discusses how the event was resolved within the parameters established by the Code. Student demonstrates proficiency by creating and presenting a PowerPoint presentation on the topic.
**Indicators & Rating Guide:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator Number &amp; Description</th>
<th>EVALUATION OUTCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.a.</strong> Understanding that educators are held to a high moral standard in a community, the effective educator adheres to the Code of Ethics and the Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession of Florida</td>
<td><strong>Exceptional</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper discusses in depth an issue that poses an ethical dilemma, identifies all applicable sections of the Code, and extensively describes its resolution within the parameters established by the Code.</td>
<td>Paper discusses an issue that poses an ethical dilemma, identifies applicable sections of the Code, and describes its resolution within the parameters established by the Code.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **6.a.** Understanding that educators are held to a high moral standard in a community, the effective educator adheres to the Code of Ethics and the Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession of Florida | **The presentation provides a comprehensive review of an important federal statute, state board of education rule, or case law.** | **The presentation accurately reflects an important federal or state statute, any state board of education rules, as well as case law.** | **The presentation accurately reflects an important federal or state statute yet is inadequate in addressing either any state board of education rules or case law.** | **The presentation discusses an important federal statute superficially and is inadequate in addressing either any state board of education rules or case law.** |