PY 611: Professional Orientation and Ethics
Fall Semester 1998
Mondays, 4-7 PM

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Office hours: Monday 1-4 PM; Wednesday 10 AM to 12 Noon

Description:
This course provides an introduction to the history, the role, and the organizational structure of the field of counseling psychology, as well as regulatory procedures such as state and federal certification and licensure. It also focuses on professional ethical standards, guidelines, and codes, as well as the theoretical underpinnings of ethical decision making, ethical practice, and emerging issues. Students will learn about the process of ethical decision making and have an increased awareness of the complexities in practice.

Goals and Objectives:
The main goal of this course is to stimulate you to think about major issues related to sound, professional, ethical counseling practices and challenge you to formulate a position on key issues. You are expected to become familiar with the ethical codes of counseling psychology and apply them to a variety of specific problems.

Required Reading:
(1) Ethics in Psychotherapy and Counseling: A Practical Guide
(2) Various handouts, including ethical codes and licensing laws.

Grading Practices and Policies:
Attendance, class participation, and level of involvement will be 50% of your grade. Each paper will count as 20% of your grade. This adds up to 110%, which is what I expect from each of you and from myself, as well. Because this course is organized as a seminar and not a lecture course, you are expected to participate in class discussions and activities. Attendance is expected at each class meeting, unless you have an emergency. In case of an emergency, please notify me or a classmate ahead of time, and be responsible for finding out if there are any assignments not on the syllabus. Expect to arrive on time and stay for the entire class. My intention, in turn, is to begin and end classes on time.
Calendar

August 31  Ethics self-inventory (Corey); discussion
Introduction to the mental health field
Overview of licensing laws in Alaska and elsewhere

September 7  Labor Day. No Class

September 14  Ellen will present several models for ethical decision-making
Ch. 1: Helping without Hurting: Enhancing Ethical Awareness
Ch. 2: Ethical and Legal Codes and Complaints
Also read Appendices A and B and handouts on other ethical codes. To what degree are they complete? To what degree do they provide you with the needed guidelines for ethical practice? What are the values of such codes? What limitations do you see in them? What do various codes have in common? How do they differ?
Guest: Maureen Suttman, South Central Foundation

September 21  Chs. 3, 4, 5: Trust, Power, Caring; Misperceptions; the Human Therapist
“Standards”—from Chapter 1

September 28  Ch. 13: Confidentiality: Appendix C
Guest: Alice Sullivan, Citheroe Center. “Substance Abuse Counseling”
Paper #1 Due

October 5  Ch. 6: The Recovered Memory Controversy

October 12  Ch. 7: Beginnings/Endings/Absences/Accessibility
Guest: Marla Greenstein, J.D.,
“Connecting Applied and Theoretical Ethics”

October 19  Ch. 8: Informed Consent, Informed Refusal: Appendix D

October 26  Ch. 9: Assessment, Testing, Diagnosis

November 2  Ch. 10: Sexual Relationships with Clients

November 9  Ch. 11: Nonsexual Multiple Relationships
Paper #2 Due

November 16  Ch. 12: Cultural, Contextual, and Individual Differences

November 23  Ch. 14: Suicidal Risk

November 30  Ch. 15: The Supervisory Relationship
Retake the Self-Inventory. Circle those items in which you’ve noticed a change in your way of thinking. Bring in a few items you’d most like to talk about in a small group.

December 7  Discussion topic for class: impact of course and key issues.
Paper #3 Due

During the week of December 14 I will schedule individual meetings to review your final paper and determine a grade.
Papers should be typed, double-spaced, carefully proofread, and should give evidence of considerable thought, careful and thoughtful reading, and a development of your positions in a coherent, logical, and organized way. I hope you will, at the same time, write in a personal style. I am less interested in your actual viewpoints per se, than I am in your ability to fully and clearly express them. I will be looking for depth of thinking, originality, ability to apply theories to practical situations, and above all, your willingness to draw your own conclusions and think for yourself. Let your papers demonstrate that you are doing the reading and reflecting deeply on what you have read. These are to be thought papers, not merely a summary of information or a series of opinions. Take a specific position, show why you take such a position, and then develop your viewpoints by giving reasons for the statements you make.

Paper #1: Write a two-page essay on each of the following, for a total of ten pages:
1. Describe an ethical dilemma and show how you would resolve this dilemma using the ethical decision-making model of your choice (e.g. Elizabeth Welfel).
2. Reflect on how your values might affect your counseling.
3. Write about a Client Rights issue that particularly interests you.
4. Write about a dimension of Confidentiality.
5. Write about some topic from chapters 1-5, other than any of the topics you’ve written about above.

Paper #2: Write a two-page essay on each of five topics from chapters 6-11, for a total of ten pages. This time you select the topics or questions. Select topics that are challenging to you and ones that will help you think through your position. Take a specific position, show why you take it, and then develop your viewpoint by giving reasons for the statements you make.

Paper #3: Self-Evaluation
1. What do you consider to be the most significant learnings for you that grew out of this course? List them in order. Then select a few and discuss how they were of significance and why.
2. What questions have you raised this semester? What questions have particularly stood out for you with the readings, speakers, films, and class discussions?
3. What are your current plans for seeking or not seeking certification or licensure as a mental health professional? On what basis have you made this decision?
4. How would you evaluate yourself as a learner in this course? Specifically, assess yourself on as many dimensions as you can think of, e.g. What was the quality of your papers? How much of yourself did you invest in this course? How would you assess your class participation? How involved were you? How much did you risk? What did you contribute to the class? How critically and thoughtfully did you do the assigned reading? What, if anything, do you wish you had done differently?