CO 790 PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS FOR COUNSELORS
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary–Charlotte
Professor: Maria L Boccia
Fall, 2011
Thursdays, 6:30-9:30 PM, Sept 8 - Dec 1
There will be no class on October 20 or November 17

COURSE OBJECTIVES
The primary objective of the course is to introduce the student to the professional dimensions of counseling and psychotherapy in several pertinent areas:
1. Develop knowledge and understanding of Christian ethics and how it serves as a foundation for professional standards
2. Develop knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities, limits, and liabilities of professional counseling.
3. Become conversant with the central legal, ethical, and professional issues, in addition to the dilemmas that confront practitioners in counseling.
4. Integrate acquired knowledge and understanding, and apply to practical situations that arise in practicum and professional experience, with a view to the specific principles of biblical Christian ethics.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Textbooks

If you are in the MFT or dual track, the following text is also required:

Recommended Reading (On Reserve in the Library)

READING REQUIREMENTS
The student will be expected to read the required textbooks in their entirety. Also, the student will be expected to begin initial but extensive library research in the professional standards and ethics field. By becoming familiar with the available relevant literature on legal, ethical, and professional issues, the student will be equipped to participate knowledgeably in class discussions. Likewise, the student will demonstrate competency to integrate the core concepts into required written assignments.

READING GUIDELINES
To become conversant with the pertinent ethical issues in the counseling field, students are expected to read from a variety of sources to complement areas of understanding and be aware of current ethical questions and
conversations. Books may be chosen from the bibliography attached to this syllabus. The student may select other scholarly and clinical sources as long as they are professional references and clearly fall into the categories and issues that are relevant to the course. All readings should be recorded in a log that will become an annotated bibliography. Readings should be selected from the following sources:

1. The three required textbooks
2. The recommended reading books
3. The brief bibliography attached to this syllabus or the more extended bibliographies found in the textbooks and the required reading books.
4. Journals and periodicals in the fields of professional, clinical, or Christian counseling as well as marriage and family therapy.
5. Literature of relevant, functional, and applicable value, provided these sources reflect obvious significance to professional, ethical, and legal issues in counseling.

READING LOG
The student will keep account of these readings by means of a log that shall include the following components, using APA style format:

1. Author(s), Title of the book, chapter, or journal article, Publisher and year of publication
2. Number of pages read by source (total pages read should also be tallied on first page)
3. Brief summary of the central ideas and concept presented. Journal articles can be summarized in a paragraph (at least 200 words), and books can be summarized in one-half to one page, typed single spaced.

Grading will be as follows:
A = 2000+ pages read
B = 1600-1999 pages read
C = 1200-1599 pages read
D = 800-1199 pages read

Due date: December 22, 2011 submitted electronically in the Sakai course assignments area

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

All writing assignments should be submitted electronically in the Sakai course assignments area.

File names of submitted assignments should include the student’s name.

1. CASE STUDY

Students are assumed to be deeply immersed in the practicum training experience or to have completed all internship rotations. Each student will present a (25 min.) detailed case study from personal practicum/internship experience, which represents an ethical question or challenge. If uncertain that the issue is an ethical dilemma, the student is encouraged to discuss it with the professor well in advance of the class presentation. Care should be taken to disguise all distinguishing details in order to protect fully the identity of the clients discussed. Use creativity in the presentation and include the elements below.

- State clearly the ethical dilemma
- Give history and details of its context
- Facilitate class discussion (using a few carefully crafted questions)
- Present the group’s decision and rationale

A written, 5 page summary of the case, in APA format, including the first two components above, references to at least 5 sources (beyond references to professional codes of ethics) of your thinking about the ethical issues involved, and summary of insights and conclusions from the class discussion.
Due Date: two weeks after the student presents their case study in class, submitted electronically in the Sakai course assignments area.

Grading of this case study will be based on:
1. Appropriateness of the case as an ethical dilemma (as opposed to a treatment dilemma) - 3 pts
2. Clarity of description and identification of relevant issues - 7 pts
3. Orderly and logical presentation of history relevant to the ethical dilemma - 10 pts
4. Summary of both positive and negative aspects of class discussion - 10 pts
5. Impact of class discussion on your ethical conceptualization and clear explanation of whether or not you agreed with the class decision and why - 5 pts
6. Clear statement of your own conclusion about the ethical dilemma, clearly justified- 10 pts
7. Use of 5 appropriate resources from the literature - 5 pts

2. SELF CARE PLAN

In as much as ethical practice and professional standards require every therapist to attend to their own personal well-being and ensure that they do not suffer from “burnout”, it is essential that every therapist develop a self-care plan. This assignment, therefore, is being assigned to permit each student the opportunity to consider, reflect on and develop a plan for self-care that will carry them forward into their career with the best possible preparation for ensuring a successful career.

After reading The Resilient Clinician, and utilizing the resources therein, students will evaluate their strengths and vulnerabilities, sources of stress and renewal, and prepare a self-care plan. This paper will include discussion of the causes, prevention and resolution of burnout, and identify your own personal vulnerabilities.

Grading of this case study will be based on:
1. Identification of own strengths and vulnerabilities - 5 pts
2. Identification of personal and professional stressors - 5 pts
3. Understanding causes, prevention and resolution of burnout - 5 pts
4. Thoughtfulness and completeness of self-care plan - 5 pts

Due date: November 22, 2011 submitted electronically in the Sakai course assignments area

3. FINAL PAPER

A research paper is required, presenting a carefully crafted framework for ethical decision-making. This synthesized approach to challenges inherent within helping should address consideration of how to utilize the Christian faith perspective along with the professional ethical commitments within the practice of counseling. The paper should demonstrate a thorough grasp of the dilemmas, challenges, premises, and principles within the context of the broadly relevant cultural issues. A substantial bibliography and extensive reflective thought are assumed in this assignment. This paper will be evaluated as a final senior paper and should reflect that level of integration and scholarship.

Grading for this paper will be based on:
1. Understanding of ethical principles undergirding professional ethical standards and the proposed decision-making model - 10 pts
2. Consideration of issues related to integration of counseling theory and ethics, and personal faith commitment and theology - 15 pts
3. Understanding potential challenges and areas of conflict, both within professional ethical standards of practice and between counseling profession and faith commitments - 10 pts
4. Clear framework for decision making model for handling ethical dilemmas in practice - 10 pts
5. Use of appropriate resources from the literature - 5 pts

FORMAT: Ten to twelve (10-12) pages, plus a bibliography presented in the APA style

Due date: December 22, 2011 submitted electronically in the Sakai course assignments area

GRADING OF WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Lateness will be penalized 1 point for each day an assignment is late. Excessive or insufficient length will be penalized ½ letter grade per page over/under limits. Failure to use APA format will be penalized ½ to 1 letter grade, depending on the errors. Assistance with correct APA format is available online in Counseling Central, under Program Documents (see also http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/). Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offense at GCTS. Please note the guidelines at http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html.

ATTENDANCE

The style and format of this course is essentially that of a senior seminar that anticipates maximum class input and reflective discussion from the student. The student is expected to attend all class sessions and participate fully in the classroom experience. Case study presentations and class discussions will be a significant part of the final grade.

GRADING CRITERIA

The final grade will reflect the combined efforts of the student as derived from the following sources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Assignment</th>
<th>Expected Time Commitment (hrs)</th>
<th>Student’s actual time on task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study preparation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additional research &amp; writing self-care plan</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additional researching and writing decision making final paper</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total time spent on course</td>
<td>135</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students will keep a record of time spent on each course-related task, and will submit a final report, as above, with their actual hours spent on each task listed in the last column of the table.
COURSE OUTLINE

SESSION #1
- Introduction to the course
- Assignment of case presentations
- Ethical theories
- Review of comparative codes of ethics
- Responsibility to clients and agencies

SESSION #2
- Foundational theory of ethics
- Christian ethics & theology
- Values and psychotherapy
- Religious values and secular therapies

SESSION #3
- Ethical theory and Biblical standards
- Determination of professional competence
- Evaluating education, training, experience, and capacity
- Informed consent to treatment
- Limits of confidentiality, Tarasoff, and the ethical dilemma

SESSION #4
- Confidentiality, privilege, and privacy
- Family law and child custody issues
- Marital law and ethical conflicts
- Development of ethical reasoning

SESSION #5
- Supervision and training
- Requirements for supervisors
- Complex supervisory relationships
- Distinguishing supervision from therapy

SESSION #6
- Multiple relationships
- Multicultural issues
- Boundaries in counseling and therapy
- Values and belief systems: the client's and the counselor's
- Gaining clarity about the potential for exploitation
- Ethical issues in pastoral counseling
- Sexual issues and reasonable prudence

SESSION #7
- Financial issues and disclosure
- Advertising, promotion, and marketing
- Ethics in research, education, and the marketplace
- Decision-making processes

SESSION #8
♦ Legal issues and roles within forensic settings
♦ Legal responsibilities of therapists
♦ Judicial system and expert testimony
♦ Legal ramifications of professional associations and groups
♦ Malpractice and common risk factors

SESSION #9
♦ Referral and termination
♦ Models for ethical decision-making
♦ Ethical rationalizations
♦ Development of a truly Christian code of ethics

SESSION #10
♦ Professional development and continuing education
♦ Being professional in a professional community
♦ Professional identity and involvement in local issues
♦ Research on Christian Counseling
♦ Review and evaluation of the course

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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CO 790 PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS FOR COUNSELORS

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Lebacqz, K and Driskill, J.D. *Ethics and spiritual care : a guide for pastors, chaplains, and spiritual directors*.


http://www.division42.org/IPfiles/Winter08/practitioners/self-care.php
http://www.sfpa.net/newsletters/SFPA04-July.pdf
Electronic Books Available Through Gcts Library Elibrary:

Aslett, D. & Cartaino, C. *Keeping work simple: 500 times, rules and tools.*

Bodger, C. *Smart guide to relieving stress*

Fishel, R. *Time for joy: Daily affirmations*

Giacobello, J. *Everything you need to know about the dangers of overachieving: A guide for relieving pressure and anxiety*

Gilman, J.E. *Fidelity of heart: An ethic of Christian virtue*

Leyden-Rubenstein, L.A. *The stress management handbook: Strategies for health and inner peace*

Morreall, J. *Taking laughter seriously*

Roach, M.S. *The human act of caring: A blueprint for the health professions*

Stackhouse, J.G. *Making the best of it: Following Christ in the real world*