



LEWIS & CLARK COLLEGE

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND COUNSELING

CPSY 566: LEGAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES IN MCFT FALL 2011

Time & Day: Tuesdays, 5:30 pm- 8:30 pm

Class Room: South Campus Conference Center (SCCC) 101

Instructor: Sebastian Perumbilly, Ph.D., LMFT

Office Hours: ROGERS HALL 424, Mondays 1:00-5:00 pm

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CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Survey of current issues relating to ethical practice and legal responsibilities in family therapy and counseling. Addresses issues such as confidentiality, informed consent, dual relationships, and therapist liability. Includes models for ethical decision making, working with the legal system, and relevant aspects of family law.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed specifically to meet the educational requirements for students in the Marriage, Couple and Family Therapy Program. Topics include major trends, legal considerations and ethical issues relative to the practice of relational therapy.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are in keeping with the AAMFT Core Competencies. At the end of this course, students are expected to:

1. Understand the ethical and legal considerations specifically related to the practice of family therapy (e.g., confidentiality & release of records in relational therapy). Know and follow the AAMFT Code of Ethics, standards of practice, and state laws and regulations for the practice of MCFT.
2. Understand the implications of professional issues unique to the practice of family therapy, including contemporary debates in the field (e.g., diagnosis and relational therapies, evidence-based & common factors movements).
3. Understand philosophies and best practices for ethical decision making. Learn to apply a model of ethical decision making appropriate for clinical work.
4. Become familiar with family law, family regulating agencies, and actions required of family therapists, (e.g., reporting child abuse & neglect, going to court, responding to subpoenas, working with child protection agencies).

5. Develop a beginning understanding of the behavioral health care delivery system, its impact on the services provided, the barriers and disparities in the system, and how institutional barriers prevent members of varying cultural and class groups from using/benefiting from mental health services.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY/SPECIAL ASSISTANCE

Lewis & Clark College adheres to a nondiscriminatory policy with respect to employment, enrollment, and program. The College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap or disability, sexual orientation, or marital status and has a firm commitment to promote the letter and spirit of all equal opportunity and civil rights laws.

PARTICIPATION IN THE LEARNING COMMUNITY

Students are required to attend and actively participate in all scheduled class meetings. This includes being on time, being prepared, following through on group projects, and otherwise engaging with colleagues as fellow professionals. Becoming a counselor/therapist involves looking closely at ourselves, our values, beliefs, and biases. This can be a very personal, and sometimes emotional, process. Treating colleagues with respect, listening deeply to their experiences, and being open to diverse world views encourages a collaborative milieu of care in which we can all challenge ourselves and each other to critically examine and develop our skills and perspectives. In order to prepare for each class, students should carefully read and study all assigned materials to be ready to discuss, debate, and apply the content of readings. Class discussion and interaction with colleagues are fundamental to the process of learning to be a therapist and all sessions include necessary information. Therefore, if you must miss a class, fellow students and the instructor may ask you to contribute to learning community in another way.

CPSY DEPARTMENTAL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Class attendance is expected and required. Any missed class time will be made up by completing extra assignments designed by the instructor. Missing more than ten percent of class time may result in failure to complete the class. This would be 4.5 hours of a 45 hour class (3 credits), 3.0 hours for a 30 hour class (2 credits) or 1.5 hours for a 15 hour class (1 credit.) In case of extreme hardship and also at the discretion of the instructor, a grade of incomplete may be given for an assignment or the entire course. In such cases, the work to be submitted in order to remove the incomplete must be documented appropriately and stated deadlines met. Students are expected to be on time to class and tardiness may be seen as an absence that requires make-up work.

If you miss a class, you will be asked to make a class presentation. This involves the following:

- ❑ Complete all the required readings assigned for the class that you missed, and choose two extra readings related to the topic from peer reviewed journals.
- ❑ You will make an oral presentation to the entire class for 10 minutes about your findings from the readings. During the presentation, you will make references to all the readings (both the assigned and the ones you chose to read further about).
- ❑ At the end of your presentation, you will answer any questions that the class may have. Finally, before the class disperses that evening, you will turn in a two-page paper to the

instructor. This paper will succinctly and clearly state what your findings are in light of your readings and personal reflection.

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability and/or you have emergency medical information to share please make an appointment with the instructor as soon as possible.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Reaction paper (20 points):**

In order to become more familiar with community agencies and resources, you are required to engage in two field experiences (e.g., observing proceedings in adult or juvenile court, spending time in the waiting area of an Oregon DHS office). After your field experiences, you are to write a 2-3 page reaction paper **for each**, describing your experience. This reaction paper should include a brief description of the setting, patterns of interaction that you identified during your observation, and how you think the social location (e.g., race, class, social position, gender, sexual orientation, age) of those involved shaped the interaction.

Final Paper Due: December 6th

Two Papers

Total: 20 points

2. **Position paper (70 points):**

Write a ten page (plus references) manuscript concerning an ethical issue, legal topic, or professional practice debate related to the practice of family therapy. This builds on the paper you began drafting in CPSY 569. Your ideas should be well synthesized, clearly presented, and carefully referenced using APA 6 format. This is an opportunity to practice professional writing while researching an important topic/debate in the field. Your final paper is due on December 6th.

This paper has two stages:

Rough Draft Due: October 25th (Not graded)

Final Paper Due: December 6th (Graded: Total 70 points)

On December 6th, you will be asked to spend 10-15 minutes talking to your peers in class about the topic.

Your papers (both draft and final papers) should include the following sections:

Abstract stating in 50 words or less what your paper will be covering and offering the reader and overview of your position/argument.

Introduction describing why your topic is of importance to the practice of family therapy and presenting a preliminary idea of your position/view.

Literature review drawing from the MFT and related literature, reflecting a comprehensive, inclusive, integrated overview of current field knowledge of the topic you have chosen. The literature review must include a search through relevant books and

journal articles on your topic as it relates to the practice of marriage, couple and family therapy.

Original contribution based on the literature and your own thoughts. This should be a well thought out, single thesis. Your thesis must rest on knowledge of the relevant literature, follow a logical flow of ideas, and make a contribution to the understanding of the professional practice of family therapy.

Strive to achieve superior work. This means that your paper will be innovative, well thought out, concise, well organized and well written. You can take advantage of the Writing Center.

Examples of topics include:

- Therapy as social control v/s a source of liberation
- Seeing couples together: The domestic violence debates
- Touch or no touch: Cultural considerations
- Dual relationships: Pros, cons and the boundaries between
- Keeping secrets in family and couple therapy
- Ethical issues relative to treating families in divorce
- Family therapy across nations: Sharing expertise and/or intellectual imperialism?

There are many other important topics from which to choose. Please see me in class to discuss your particular interests. Make sure that you get my consent before finalize on the topic for your research.

Your paper will be graded on the following criteria:

Comprehensiveness and relevancy of literature review	30 points
Clarity and relevance of thesis	10 points
Organization of ideas	10 points
Creativity/originality	10 points
Professional writing and referencing	10 points
Final Paper Due: December 6 th	Total: 70 points

3. Class Participation (10 points):

What Does Participation Mean in this Class?

1. Payin attention to the instructor and/or other students when they are making a presentation.
2. Demonstrating ability to recognize and use subtle non-verbal communication cues to assess your impact on your peers and participate in class.
3. Demonstrating ability to be open about discussing the impact of your comments on your peers.
4. Coming to class prepared (having read the assignment for the day)
5. Contributing to in-class discussion based on the topics of discussion and the readings assigned. Contributions may include how you feel about the material but merely articulating

your feelings is not sufficient. You are expected to put those feelings in context of your thoughts and analysis of the material.

6. Engaging in group discussions with attention and energy.
7. Asking questions of the instructor and/or other students regarding the material examined in that class.
8. Providing examples to support or challenge the issues talked about in class.
9. Making comments or giving observations about topics in the course, especially those that tie in the classroom material to "real world" problems, or try to integrate the content of the course.
10. Dealing with other students and/or the instructor in a respectful fashion.
11. Active listening. Students will be asked questions related to the course's readings randomly in class by other students and by the instructor. Your participation in small group discussions is also required.

GRADING

93-100 = A	83-87 = B	73-77 = C
90-92 = A-	80-82 = B-	70-72 = C-
88-89 = B+	78-79 = C+	

“A” grades will be reserved for particularly outstanding work. Grades on the border may be determined by attendance and demonstration of completing readings prior to each class session.

TEXTBOOK

Wilcoxon, S.A., Remley, T.P., & Gladding, S. T. (2012). Ethical, Legal, and professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy. Boston: Pearson.

Additional readings may be assigned throughout the course and will be available on Moodle.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: Topics may vary slightly from what is outlined for each week.

WEEK 1 – October 18: Ethical Decision Making in Relational Therapy

Model of ethical decision making
Human rights principles & ethical decision making
AAMFT Code of Ethics

Reading:

- **Text, Wilcoxon, Remley, Jr. & Gladding (2012).** Chapter 3: Promoting Ethical Practice.

WEEK 2– October 25: Unique Considerations for Family Therapy Practice

Family secrets
Use of paradox
Diagnosis

Reading:

- Denton, W. (1990). A family systems analysis of DSM III-R. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 16(2), 113-135.
- Denton, W. (2007). Issues for the DSM; Relational Diagnosis. Editorial, *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 164(8), 1146-1147.

DRAFT OF FINAL PAPER DUE TODAY (Instuctor will give feedback on the draft by November 8th. Final Paper will be due on December 6th).

WEEK 3 – November 1: More Unique Considerations for Family Therapy Practice

Confidentiality
Informed consent
Release of records
Court procedures

Guest Speaker: Attorney Paul Cooney, LLP

Reading:

- **Text, Wilcoxon, Remley, Jr. & Gladding (2012).** Chapters 4 & 5: Principle and practical distinctions

WEEK 4 – November 8: Contemporary Ethical Issues

Dual relationships
Managed care & other health care trends
HIPPA
Power dynamics in the therapy room

Readings:

- **Text, Wilcoxon, Remley, Jr. & Gladding (2012).** Chapters 7 & 8

RESEARCH PAPER DRAFTS WILL BE RETURNED BY THE INSTRUCTOR

WEEK 5 – November 15: Legal Obligations in the Practice of Family Therapy

Child custody & Support

Divorce

Parental rights

Duty to warn – potential harm to self or other

Reporting requirements – child/vulnerable adult abuse or neglect

Record keeping

Writing report

Readings:

- **Text, Wilcoxon, Remley, Jr. & Gladding (2012).** Chapters 10, 11 & 12

WEEK 6 – November 22: Power Dynamics and Social Inequalities: Intimate Partner violence

CLASSES COMBINED (two sections of CPSY 566)

Assessing domestic violence

Decisions about seeing partners separately and together

Therapist's ethical considerations relative to power imbalances and relationship

Equality in families and broader society

Reading:

Text, Wilcoxon, Remley, Jr. & Gladding (2012). Chapter 6.

WEEK 7– November 29: Ethical Accountability & Contemporary Professional Issues

Reporting ethical violations

Case review

Additional professional issues

Reading:

Text, Wilcoxon, Remley, Jr. & Gladding (2012). Chapters 9 & 15

WEEK 8– December 6: Sharing Papers, Wrap up & Course Evaluation

This week you will share with others in the class about what you learned from writing your final research paper.

FINAL PAPERS (3 PAPERS) DUE IN CLASS TODAY.

LATE PAPERS WILL RECEIVE LOWER GRADES

