



LEWIS & CLARK COLLEGE

**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND COUNSELING
CPSY 566: LEGAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES IN MCFT
FALL 2009**

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

Place: SCCC 107

Instructor: Teresa McDowell, Ed.D.

Office Hours: Mondays 4:15-8:00pm

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. According to the Lewis & Clark Counseling Psychology attendance policy, missing 3 or more hours of a 1 credit course may result in a failing grade. For this course, any absence of more than one hour requires a make up assignment. If you must be absent or late, please email the instructor at least several hours prior to class.

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. Liberation Based Healing Conference or alternative field experiences:

You are asked to attend the Liberation Based Healing Conference on October 16th and 17th. To find out more about the conference and to register, please visit the conference

website:

http://www.lclark.edu/graduate/programs/continuing_education/news/story/?id=1280

No written assignment is required. Simply verify that you attended and we will discuss the learning experience in class.

If you are unable to attend the conference, please complete the following alternative assignment:

Alternative assignment: 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. Due December 8th

20 points

2. Position paper: 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 5 format. This is an opportunity to practice professional writing while researching an important topic/debate in the field. Your paper is due on December 9th. You will be asked to spend 10-15 minutes talking to your colleagues about the topic on that date. Your paper 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 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 and are welcome to turn in a draft for comments several weeks before the deadline.

Examples of topics include:

- Therapy as social control v. 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.

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
Sharing your ideas in class	10 points

Due December 9th

80 points

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.

TEXT

Wilcoxon, S., Remley, T., Gladding, S. & Huber, C. (2007). Ethical, Legal, and professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy. Part II- Ch.3-7, & Part III- Ch. 8-10). (The remainder of the book was covered in CPSY 503.)

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 14: Ethical Decision Making in Relational Therapy:

Topics:

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

Reading: Text, Ch. 3

WEEK 2 – October 21: Unique Considerations for Family Therapy Practice:

Topics:

Confidentiality
Informed consent
Release of records

Reading: Text, Ch. 4

WEEK 3 – October 28: More Unique Considerations for Family Therapy Practice

Topics:

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.

WEEK 4 – November 4: Contemporary Ethical Issues

Topics:

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

Reading: Text, Ch. 6

WEEK 5 – November 14: OAMFT Meeting 10-12 at Lewis & Clark – Room TBA
Note: This is in lieu of class on Wed, November 11th

WEEK 6 – November 18: Legal Obligations in the Practice of Family Therapy

Topics:

- Child custody & Support
- Divorce
- Parental rights
- Reporting requirements – child/vulnerable adult abuse or neglect
- Duty to warn – potential harm to self or other

Readings: Text, Ch. 8, 9 & 10

November 25: Fall Break

WEEK 7 – December 2: Power Dynamics and Social Inequalities: Intimate Partner Abuse as a Case in Point

Topics:

- 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, Ch. 5

WEEK 8 – December 9: Sharing Papers & Wrap up

This week you will share what you learned from writing your papers with others in the class.

WEEK 9 – December 16: Ethical Accountability & Contemporary Professional Issues

Topics:

- Reporting ethical violations
- Case review
- Additional professional issues

Reading: Text, Ch. 7 & 12

****The following evaluation of objectives must be filled out and turned in on the last day of class.**

COURSE OBJECTIVES-MCFT CORE COMPETENCIES EVALUATION SHEET
CPSY 566: LEGAL ISSUES IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY

TERM:_____Fall 2009_____

INSTRUCTOR:_____McDowell_____

Please rate each item according to how much you learned about the competency listed. Circle:
1=objective not met 2=objective somewhat met 3=objective adequately met 4=objective more than met

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.

1 2 3 4

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1 2 3 4

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1 2 3 4

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.

1 2 3 4