

Professional Issues and Ethics in Marriage and Family Therapy
PCf 305-3
Fall 2008

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General Course Information

This online syllabus should be used to gain a better understanding of the content and focus of a course. The syllabus given out in the class may differ from this online version and its content supersedes that of the online syllabus.

Description

This course contributes to the formation of a professional identity for the one who ministers as a marriage and family therapist. It addresses the ethical foundations for a professional conscience and an analysis of professional ethical codes and issues in the clinical practice and contractual arrangements of marriage and family therapy. Common recurrent problems, such as sexual misconduct, professional identity, clinical issues, administrative responsibilities, dual relationships, confidentiality, power differentials, boundaries, and scope of practice will also be discussed. Attention is given to the core competencies established by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT). These areas include family law and the legal system, the importance and procedures of reporting misconduct, and the value of ongoing supervision and consultation in a clinical practice. This is a formative as well as a summative process. The MAMFT candidate is expected to acquire knowledge of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC) and AAMFT ethical codes and to integrate this knowledge into a practical philosophy of clinical practice.

Course Goals and Objectives

- ✓ Address these AAMFT Core Competencies as they apply to ethical standards:
 - 5.1.1 Know state, federal, and provincial laws and regulations that apply to the practice of marriage and family therapy.
 - 5.1.2 Know professional ethics and standards of practice that apply to the practice of marriage and family therapy.
 - 5.1.3 Know policies and procedures of the practice setting.
 - 5.1.4 Understand the process of making an ethical decision.
 - 5.2.1 Recognize situations in which ethics, laws, professional liability, and standards of practice apply.
 - 5.2.2 Recognize ethical dilemmas in practice setting.

- 5.2.3 Recognize when a legal consultation is necessary.
 - 5.2.4 Recognize when clinical supervision or consultation is necessary.
 - 5.3.1 Monitor issues related to ethics, laws, regulations, and professional standards.
 - 5.3.2 Develop and assess policies, procedures, and forms for consistency with standards of practice to protect client confidentiality and to comply with relevant laws and regulations.
 - 5.3.3 Inform clients and legal guardian of limitations to confidentiality and parameters of mandatory reporting.
 - 5.3.4 Develop safety plan for clients who present with potential self-harm, suicide, abuse or violence.
 - 5.3.5 Take appropriate action when ethical and legal dilemmas emerge.
 - 5.3.6 Report information to appropriate authorities as required by law.
 - 5.3.7 Practice within defined scope of practice and competence.
 - 5.3.8 Obtain knowledge of advances and theory regarding effective clinical practice.
 - 5.3.9 Obtain license(s) and specialty credentials.
 - 5.3.10 Implement a personal program to maintain professional competence.
 - 5.4.1 Evaluate activities related to ethics, legal issues, and practice standards.
 - 5.4.2 Monitor attitudes, personal well-being, personal issues, and personal problems to insure they do not impact the therapy process adversely or create vulnerability for misconduct.
 - 5.5.1 Maintain client records with timely and accurate notes.
 - 5.5.2 Consult with peers and/or supervisors if personal issues, attitudes, or beliefs threaten to adversely impact clinical work.
 - 5.5.3 Pursue professional development through self-supervision, collegial consultation, professional reading, and continuing educational activities.
 - 5.5.4 Bill clients and third-party payers in accordance with professional ethics, relevant laws and policies, and seek reimbursement only for covered services.
- ✓ Know the AAPC Code of Ethics and the AAMFT Code of Ethics and procedures that apply to the practice of marriage and family therapy.
 - ✓ Know the state (Kentucky), federal, and provincial laws and regulations that apply to the practice of marriage and family therapy.
 - ✓ Recognize situations in which ethical problems and dilemmas arise and understand the process of making an ethical decision.
 - ✓ Know the policies and procedures of the practice of marriage and family therapy in the setting in which you are practicing.
 - ✓ Understand and demonstrate what it means to work within one's scope of practice.

Use of Inclusive Language

Learning is fundamentally concerned with communication, self-expression, and personal and social transformation. Learning respects individuals, their feelings, their value and worth, and their particular potential for contribution to common knowledge and community virtue. Learning is fundamentally and intentionally inclusive.

Since all learning is inherently ethical and political, and theological discourse has been traditionally patriarchal and gender exclusive, the Seminary has established a policy, in the interest of constructing an inclusive and egalitarian community, that the language (symbols, metaphors) used in our class discussions and written work shall be gender inclusive and respectful of all persons and groups as valued human creatures of God.

Racism also permeates our society and is detrimental to any learning environment. We need to use language, symbols, and metaphors that honor our commitment to racial inclusiveness.

Academic Honesty

Be careful to fully document any information included in your papers that is not original. Also be aware when you summarize information, even when you give the complete documentation information, your summaries should be in your own words and not retain too much of the original author's style. Presenting the ideas or writing of someone else as if they were your own is considered plagiarism. Seminary and MFT Program policies on academic honesty will be followed.

Evaluation of Written Assignments

Graduate level writing is expected in this course. LPTS has adopted the Chicago/Turabian style for all written work.

ASC (Academic Support Center) is available Monday & Wednesday, 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Tuesday & Thursday, 9:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m., and Friday, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Please call or stop by to make an appointment, or visit their website at http://lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/Online_Writing_Lab.asp.

Attendance

In line with Seminary policy, prompt attendance at class sessions is expected out of respect for your fellow classmates as well as the instructor. Late arrival for a class affects the learning environment. Learning is a complex activity that requires conceptual and experiential participation by those who wish to learn. While circumstances may require an adult learner to miss class occasionally, absences from more than 10% of the classroom experience will affect student learning and, consequently, the student's grade. Extreme circumstances, such as major health problems, family concerns, etc., must be discussed with the professor **prior** to multiple missed classes. Students unable to attend at least 75% of classes are advised to drop the class prior to the Registrar's WP deadline or receive a failing grade.

When absent, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor for directions, handouts, reading assignments, etc.

Required and Recommended Materials

Required Texts.

- Code of Ethics.* Fairfax, VA: American Association of Pastoral Counselors.
- Code of Ethics and Procedures.* Washington, DC: American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Publications.
- Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. **(Available on Blackboard)**
- Code of Ethics.* Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association. **(Available on Blackboard)**
- Gladding, S.T., Huber, C., Wilcoxon, A., & Remley, T. (2006) *Ethical, Legal and Professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy.* Prentice Hall.
- Lebacqz, K. (1985). *Professional Ethics: Power and Paradox.* Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
- Louisville Seminary Counseling Training Center Operating Manual.* Louisville, KY: Louisville Seminary Counseling Ministry.
- Woody, R. H. & Woody, J. D. (Eds). (2001). *Ethics in Marriage and Family Therapy.* Washington, DC: American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Publications.

Recommended Texts. (on library reserve)

- Bucky, S., Callan, J., & Stricker, G. (2005). *Ethical and Legal Issues for Mental Health Professionals.* New York: Haworth Press.
- Lebacqz, K. & Driskill, J. (2004). *Ethics and Spiritual Care.* Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
- McClendon, J. W., Jr. (1990). *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today's Theology.* Philadelphia: Trinity Press.
- Ragsdale, K.H. (Ed.). (1996). *Boundary Wars: Intimacy and Distance in Healing Relationships.* Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press.
- Rave, E. J. & Larsen, C. C. (Eds). (1995). *Ethical Decision Making in Therapy: Feminist Perspectives.* New York: Guilford Press.
- Spong, J. (2005). *The Sins of the Scripture.* San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Visotzky, B. L. (1996). *The Genesis of Ethics.* New York: Crown Publishers.
- Woodruff, P. (2002). *Reverence: A Forgotten Virtue.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Journals and Periodicals.

You will be given a number of journal articles or chapters throughout the semester. Please refer to the bibliography for up-to-date articles on ethical issues.

Course Requirements

1. Theological Reflection Paper

Write a theological reflection paper (4-6 pages) on how selected course required readings, recommended readings, and your own not assigned selected readings in the field of ethics informs your clinical practice of marriage and family therapy. This paper needs to include an integration of your readings in preparing yourself with an entry level practitioner's understanding of ethical conduct and professional practice. **(Due November 3)**

2. Ethics Committee Participation

Class members will form an Ethics Committee, functioning as a review panel. An ethical violation complaint will be presented to the class. Analysis of the AAPC/AAMFT Codes and Procedures for Handling Ethical Matters will guide the Ethics Committee as they deliberate the merits of the case and make a decision. The Committee will meet and deliberate in class. An analysis will be developed by the committee participants. Theological reflections under-girding the Committee's decision should be explicitly identified.

3. Small Group Presentations

Class members in small groups will receive an article or book chapter from required or recommended reading list relevant to ethical issues or therapeutic themes with ethical implications. Each group will make a 40 minute presentation to the class addressing the issue and demonstrating critical thinking by integrating a theological perspective.

4. Reflective Questions

On assigned days, you are to submit three reflective questions drawn from your assigned readings. These questions need to reflect your critical thinking and a challenge to look beyond the author's viewpoint.

5. Final Exam

Due by noon, December 10

a. Brochure and Disclosure Statement

Within the context of your proposed clinical setting, develop a brochure for the practice of marriage and family therapy you plan to do. A Professional Disclosure Statement and policies should be included (see AAMFT Code of Ethics), as well as an ethical narrative on your context of ministry. Policies should indicate your awareness of the ethical codes of AAPC/AAMFT that inform them.

Assistance: You are encouraged to begin work on your brochure and professional disclosure statement at the beginning of the semester and improve it as the semester progresses. (See LSCTC Policy and Procedure Manual Appendix for form samples. Also see LSCTC publicity brochure.) I will review and offer suggestions on your materials at the mid-point of the semester. **Submit your first draft materials by Monday, October 20.**

b. Critique and Code of Ethics

Using the lens of the Woody text, Lebacqz text, the AAMFT, AAPC, ACA, and APA Codes of Ethics, and the work you have done in class, develop a pastoral code of ethics for your clinical practice as an MFT. This should include a brief summary and critique of Lebacqz’s book, plus one other specific reference from required or recommended readings, or articles provided to the class, and an application of your understanding of these readings to your ethical framework for the practice of marriage and family therapy.

Grading

Your grade will be assessed based on the following:

Class attendance and demonstration of how reading informs discussion	10%
Reading, small group presentation, and written assignments (quality of written reports and complexity of reading materials taken into consideration)	25%
Ethics Committee Participation	25%
Reflective Questions	5%
Final Exam (your brochure and code of ethics)	35%

Grading Scale:	A 93-100	C+ 77-79
	A- 90-92	C 73-76
	B+ 87-89	C- 70-72
	B 83-86	D 60-69
	B- 80-82	F Below 60

Class Schedule

We may, on occasion, have a guest join us for our class discussion.

- September 8 Meditation
Ethical Discussion
Topics:
- a. Introduction: Review of syllabus and course requirements
 - b. Making Moral and Ethical Decisions: What are “ethics?” What are ethical principles, procedures and processes? What are the domains of ethical concerns?
 - c. Problems and Dilemmas in Ethical Decisions: “The Bridge,” An Ethical Exercise.
 - d. Beginning ethical and critical thinking of self as therapist
 - e. Decision tree: AAMFT ethics case
 - f. Code of Ethics: AAMFT & AAPC
- Readings: These readings are also for September 15
Required - Woody, pp 1-11; Lebacqz, *Professional Ethics*, pp 9-92
Recommended - McClendon, pp 1-23; Pope and Vasquez, Chpts 1, 3, 4.
Assignment: Prepare 3 reflective questions derived from challenges and critical thinking of your readings.
- September 15 Meditation
Ethical Discussion
Topics:
- a. Making Moral and Ethical Decisions
 - b. Ethical Foundation for Starting a Practice; AAMFT, APA and AAPC Codes: Review, Analyze and Compare
 - c. Discussion and review of readings
- Readings:
Required - Woody, pp 1-11, 83-102; Lebacqz, *Professional Ethics*, pp 9-92; AAMFT and AAPC Codes of Ethics; Gladding, et.al., chapter 8
Recommended - Rave & Larsen, chapters 1, 2, 3 (library reserve); Ragsdale, pp 137-145
Assignment: Prepare 3 reflective questions
- September 22 Meditation
Ethical Discussion
Topics:
- a. Responsibility to Clients: Understanding Power Differential – Administrative/Clinical. Bowen, “Differentiated Self Scale”
 - b. Practice Guidelines for Safeguarding Clients Confidentiality – Attending to the context and model of therapy: limitations to confidentiality, forms/record keeping and correspondence (HIPPA Regulations)

c. Contract for Service: What is the agreement for therapy? Limits of scope of your professional therapy model (Legal)

Readings:

Required - Woody, pp 13-82; Lebacqz, *Professional ethics*, pp 109-137;

Gladding, et.al., pp 3-39

Assignment: Prepare 3 reflective questions

September 29

Meditation

Ethical Discussion

Topics:

Understanding the Power Differential:

1. Dual Relationships – What are they?
2. Responsibility to students, employees, supervisees, and clients
3. Responsibility to profession, organization, and colleagues

Readings:

Required - Woody, review pp 43-82, read pp 83-124; Gladding, et.al, pp 90-104.

Assignment: Prepare 3 reflective questions

October 6

Meditation

Ethical Discussion

Topics:

Understanding the Power Differential:

1. Administration: Financial Arrangements; Advertising
2. Clinical Scope of Practice: Diagnosis, Treatment Plan, Prognosis, and Evaluation of Process (Informed Consent)

Readings:

Required - Gladding, et.al., pp 40-71; Woody, review pp 83-102

Recommended - Bucky, et.al., 101-143 (on library reserve)

Assignment: Prepare 3 reflective questions

October 13

Research and Study Week

October 20

First draft of brochure and Professional Disclosure Statement due.

Meditation

Ethical Discussion

Topics:

Understanding the Power Differential:

1. Trustworthiness and Integrity in the Clinical Relationship
2. Moral Responsibility: Truthfulness, Justice in Therapy (Wm. Doherty)
3. Scope of Practice: DSM and Psychopathology

Readings:

Required - Woody, review pp 83-102; Gladding, et.al, review pp 49-62;
Lebacqz, *Professional ethics*, pp 107-151

Assignment: Prepare 3 reflective questions

October 27

Meditation

Ethical Discussion

Topics:

- a. Borderline Personality Disorder, and Other Personality Disorders
- b. "Star Factor," L. Rediger

Readings:

Required - Woody, review pp 43-60; Lebacqz, *Professional ethics*, review pp 109-123; class handouts

Assignment: Prepare 3 reflective questions

November 3

Meditation

Ethical Discussion

Topics:

- a. Family Law and the Legal System: Kentucky Statutes and the Practice of MFT; Subpoenas – Request for records, court appearance, divorce laws, abuse reporting
- b. HIPPA Regulations
- c. Confidentiality

Readings:

Required - Gladding, et.al., pp 119-227; Lebacqz, *Professional ethics*, pp 63-77

Assignment: Prepare 3 reflective questions

November 10

Guest speakers:

Mike Rankin, LMFT - Executive Director, KAMFT

Tony Watkins, LMFT - Kentucky Licensure Board

Meditation

Ethical Discussion

Topics:

- a. Kentucky MFT Licensure Procedure (refer to MAMFT Manual)
 1. Associate Status/Supervision
 2. Licensure/Consultation
- b. Justice Issues: MFTs as Agents of Change in Competing Systems

Readings:

Woody, pp 153-196; Gladding, et.al., pp 104-107 (Principle #3)

Assignment: Prepare 3 reflective questions

- November 17 Meditation
Ethical Discussion
Topics:
a. Professional Formation: The Pastoral Context and MFT. Who are we?
How do we relate? Integral Ethics
b. Clinical: Termination and Referral as an Ethical Decision
c. Model for self-care
Readings:
Required - Gladding, et.al., pp 229-287; Handout, "Termination"
Recommended - McClendon, Chp 7 (library reserve)
Assignment: Prepare 3 reflective questions
- November 24 Meditation
Ethical Discussion
Topics:
a. Professional Formation: Competence and Confidence.
b. Systemic Awareness and Clear Boundaries: Who is the client? When you
are one of many, what do you do?
Readings:
Required - Woody, pp 125-152 & 169-196; Gladding, et.al., pp 251-287;
selected articles
Assignment: Prepare 3 reflective questions
- December 1 Meditation
Ethical Discussion
Topics:
a. Are You Ready for the Future? Life long learning agenda. Where do we
go from here? Ethics case study (handout)
b. Participation in Professional Organizations – Leadership and
Contributions to the field of MFT
c. Research, Professional Growth in the Field, Ethical Concerns
Readings:
Woody, pp 197-218; Lebacqz, *Professional Ethics*, pp 124-165.
Assignment: Prepare 3 reflective questions
- December 8-9 Research and Study Days
- December 10 **Final Exam (parts a & b) due by noon (MFT Office)**
a. Brochure and Professional Disclosure Statement
b. Critique and pastoral Code of Ethics

Bibliography

Books

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- Ewing, C. P. (1985). *Psychology, psychiatry and the law: A clinical and forensic handbook* [Tape included: "Ten Commandments for the Expert Witness"]. Sarasota, FL: Professional Resource Exchange, Inc.
- Fletcher, J. (1966). *Situation ethics: The new morality*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press.
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- Guide to ethical and legal practice.* Washington, DC: American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Publications.
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- McClendon, J. W., Jr. (1986). *Systematic theology ethics.* Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
- McClendon, J. W., Jr. (1990). *Biography as theology: How life stories can remake today's theology.* Philadelphia: Trinity Press.
- Meyer, R. G., Hayes, J. R. & E. Landis. (1988). *Law for the psychotherapist.* New York: W. W. Norton & Co.
- Meyers, E. B. J. (1992). *Legal issues in child abuse and neglect.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
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- Noyce, G. B. (1988). *Pastoral ethics: Professional responsibilities of the clergy.* Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
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- Woody, R. H. (1988). *Fifty ways to avoid malpractice*. Sarasota, FL: Professional Resource Exchange, Inc.
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Periodicals

- Behavior Today* [Weekly newsletter]. New York: Mental Health & Family Relations Professionals.
- Brock, G. W. & Coufal, J. *Ethical Behavior Index for Marriage and Family Therapists*. Washington, DC: American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Publications.
- Directory of Clinical Members & Approved Supervisors* (2006 ed.). Washington, DC: American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Publications.

Journal of Counseling and Development [Published 10 times yearly]. Alexandria, VA:
American Association for Counseling and Development.

Journal of Divorce [Published quarterly]. New York: Haworth Press, Inc.

Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy (2006 ed.) [Published quarterly]. Washington, DC:
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Publications.

Journeys Magazine. Fairfax, VA: American Association of Pastoral Counselors.

Psychotherapy Finances [Published monthly]. Ridgewood, NJ.

Psychotherapy Networker Magazine [Published bi-monthly]. Washington, DC: Psychotherapy
Networker, Inc.

Family Therapy Magazine [Published bi-monthly]. Washington, DC: American Association for
Marriage and Family Therapy Publications.

Codes of ethics

AAMFT - The American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy

ACA – American Counseling Association

APA - American Psychological Association

NASW - National Association of Social Workers

AACD - American Association for Counseling and Development

AAPC - American Association of Pastoral Counselors

IAMFC - International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors

On-line resources

Kentucky laws

<http://finance.ky.gov/ourcabinet/caboff/OAS/op/marrfamth/>

AAMFT Legal Risk Management Plan

http://www.aamft.org/resources/LRMPlan/index_nm.asp