



## **MCC 530: Ethical, Legal and Professional Issues in the Practice of Professional Counseling**

3 Graduate Credit Hours, 12 week course syllabus

**TERM YEAR**

Instructor:

Office Phone:

Office Hours:

Email Address:

BEST way to reach me:

Required Course Texts:

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). American Psychological Association: Washington D.C.

Corey, G., Schneider-Corey, M., Corey, C. & Callanan, P. (2015). *Issues and Ethics in the Helping Professions* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

**Prerequisites:** Admission to the MCC/MAHS/MAHSA program

**Catalog Description:** This course addresses ethical, legal, and professional issues commonly associated with the practice of professional counseling consistent with Council on Accreditation for Counselor and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards and the American Counseling Association's (ACA) Code of Ethics. National, regional, state licensure, and credentialing issues are addressed. This course identifies the systematic processes of identifying, implementing, and resolving ethical dilemmas mindful of various stakeholder concerns, including acting in the best interests of the client. The course explores personal and professional value systems, standards of practice, and legal issues in terms of how they impact decision-making processes and professional behavior.

**Purpose:** This is a required foundational course and is required for the Master of Science in Clinical Counseling.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

|             | <b>Knowledge Standards</b>  | <b>How/where covered and measured</b>                   |
|-------------|---|---|
| II.G.1.b    | Understand professional roles, functions, and relationships with other human service providers, including strategies for interagency/interorganization collaboration and communication. | Readings, Discussions and Exams                         |
| II.G.1.e    | Explore counseling supervision models, practices, and processes.  | Readings, Discussions and Exams                         |
| II.G.1.f    | Identify professional counseling organizations, including membership benefits, activities, services to members, and current issues.   | Readings, Discussions and Exams                         |
| II.G.1.g    | Illustrate comprehension of professional credentialing, including certification, licensure and accreditation practices and standards, and the effects of public policy on these issues. | Readings, Discussions and Exams                         |
| CMHC<br>A.2 | Understands ethical and legal considerations specifically related to the practice of clinical mental health counseling.   | Readings, Discussion and Exams<br>Ethical Dilemma Paper |
|             | <b>Skills Standards</b>   |   |
| II.G.1.j    | Understand ethical standards of professional organizations and credentialing bodies, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling.                   | Readings, Discussion, Exams and Ethical Dilemma Paper   |
| CMHC<br>B.1 | Demonstrate the ability to apply and adhere to ethical and legal standards in clinical mental health counseling.  | Readings, Discussion, Exams and Ethical Dilemma Paper   |

|             |  |                             |
|-------------|--|-----------------------------|
| CMHC<br>E.6 | Knows public policies on the local, state and national levels that affect the quality and accessibility of mental health services. | Readings, Discussion, Exams |
|-------------|--|-----------------------------|

### Residential Class Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory. You are expected to attend every class meeting. If you are unable to attend you must contact me in advance for an alternative assignment. There may be points associated with class participation. If you do not notify me of your absence in advance, you will not be allowed to make up the points that you missed.

### Online Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory. Online students are required to routinely log-into Blackboard and submit their assignments as scheduled by the syllabus. The student will receive a letter of nonattendance if the student has not logged-in to their course or submitted any assignments for more than **seven** consecutive days per course. Nonattendance could impact a student's ability to receive financial aid. Online students encountering special situations which will prohibit them from accessing their course and meeting their course obligations should contact their instructor as soon as possible.

### Instructor Communication Policy:

I will make every effort to communicate with you within 48 hours (not including weekends or holidays). E-mail is the most efficient way to communicate with me. Additionally, please make sure to have your updated e-mail in the Bellevue University system, as that is how I will communicate with you. If you have multiple e-mails, you can go into the system to have e-mail automatically forwarded to other e-mails. I would suggest simply using your assigned Bellevue University e-mail. Regardless of what e-mail you choose, make sure to have it updated so you do not miss any correspondence related to the course.

### Student Expectations:

This program is designed to foster and develop effective and professional mental health counselors. Students are expected to embody and display professional interactions and behaviors in all aspects of this course. These behaviors and interactions reflect those commonly expected from professional counselors. This includes, but is not limited to, respectful dialogue and interactions with faculty, students, and staff. Students not maintaining professional behavior will be advised; and, this advisement will be part of the documentation of the student's progress and performance in the program. Additionally, if warranted, further action may be taken to address inappropriate or unacceptable behavior, which may include removal from the course and/or program.

**All assignments in the course should be completed using the most recent publication of the APA manual, especially with regards to writing academic papers.**

**\*Note – all assignments are to be submitted electronically in Word format.**

### **Assignments:**

Assignments are designed to reflect the students' retention and synthesis of knowledge of counseling theories and models. Rubric for evaluation of the discussion board posting is available under the Rubrics tab.

### **Discussion:**

Discussion enhances learning as you share your ideas, perspectives, and experiences with the class. You develop and refine your thoughts through the writing process, plus broaden your classmates' understanding of the course content. You promote a professional, substantive discussion. Use the following feedback to improve the quality of your discussion contributions.

**Discussion will take place in both Residential and Online formats of the course.**

**In the Residential format,** students are expected to fully engage in class discussions as outlined in the Rubric below. Instructor guided peer to peer discussion facilitates deeper learning and your development as a professional.

**In the Online Discussion,** there will be two required original posts per week responding to assigned questions to deepen your learning. Students are expected to be thorough in their responses to these questions, using graduate-level writing, correct grammar, and APA format. Please refer to the rubric explaining how postings will be evaluated. Please note there may be multiple questions housed within one posting assignment; and, all questions posed must be addressed.

Discussion boards will have two discussion posts per week: the first will be due by 11:59 p.m. CST on the Wednesday of the week, and the second will be due by 11:59 p.m. CST on the Sunday of the week. Responses to other students' posts (to both discussion boards) are due by 11:59 p.m. CST on the Sunday of the week. All discussion boards are worth 20 points (up to 10 points for the primary post and up to 10 points for peer responses).

### **Masters of Clinical Counseling Residential Discussion Grading Rubric**

| <b>Criteria</b>                     | <b>Unacceptable</b>                    | <b>Needs Improvement</b>  | <b>Competent</b>   | <b>Excellent</b>   |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| <b>Content</b>                      | Does not address the assignment        | Addresses the assignment but response lacks detail and appropriate vocabulary or is incomplete      | Addresses the full assignment and uses appropriate detail and vocabulary                             | Addresses the full assignment and uses appropriate detail and vocabulary plus presents additional examples or resources.       |
| <b>Engagement in the Discussion</b> | Does not participate in the discussion | Responds to at least one peer in the discussion but comments are tangential or general to the topic | Responds to at least one peer and comments are directly related to the topic and assignment at hand. | Responds to multiple peers and comments are related to the topic and assignment at hand and expand the discussion in some way. |

Please note – discussions missed in class can only be made up if you notify the instructor in advance for an alternative assignment.

### **Masters of Clinical Counseling Online Discussion Grading Rubric** **Discussion Grading Rubric #1 – Primary post**

| <b>Criteria</b>                 | <b>Unacceptable</b>                                       | <b>Needs Improvement</b>  | <b>Competent</b>  | <b>Excellent</b>   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Content (up to 6 points)</b> | No post or does not address the assignment.<br>(0 points) | Addresses the assignment but response lacks detail and appropriate vocabulary or is incomplete.<br>(4 points) | Addresses the full assignment and uses appropriate detail and vocabulary.<br>(5 points) | Addresses the full assignment and uses appropriate detail and vocabulary plus presents additional examples or resources.<br>(6 points) |

|   |   |  |   |  |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| <b>References<br/>(up to 2 points)</b>                          | Does not cite appropriate references (if required). (including textbook) (0 points) | Includes reference citation but incomplete (if required). (1 point)                      | Includes complete reference information but APA format error (if required). (1.5 points)  | Includes complete reference information in proper APA format (if required). (2 points) |
| <b>Spelling, Grammar &amp; word choice<br/>(up to 2 points)</b> | Many spelling and Grammar errors or lacks clarity in vocabulary. (0 points)         | Uses vocabulary from the text but inappropriately or several spelling or grammar errors. | Uses vocabulary from the text appropriately, few spelling or grammar errors. (1.5 points) | Uses vocabulary from the text appropriately, no grammar or spelling errors. (2 points) |

### **Discussion Grading Rubric #2 – Peer Replies**

| <b>Criteria</b>                            | <b>Unacceptable</b>             | <b>Needs Improvement</b>  | <b>Competent</b>  | <b>Excellent</b>  |
|--|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Peer reply #1 (up to 5 points each)</b> | No peer reply posted (0 points) | Mostly Restates, compliments, or agrees with peers' posts. Excessive grammar and spelling errors (3 points) | Provides some additional insight to peers' post but largely restates own primary post. Minimal grammar and spelling errors (4 points) | Provides additional insight, example, resource, disagrees, or respectfully corrects an error. Corrects an error in peer's post. No grammar or spelling errors. (5 points) |

Please note: All discussions in this course are worth 20 points. You can earn up to 10 points for your primary post (grading rubric #1) and up to 10 points for your peer responses (grading rubric #2). All deadlines are clearly noted in each Discussion Board assignment. No posts outside the current week will be considered when computing your grade because the class discussion has ended.

### **Writing Assignments**

There are two brief writing assignments, each worth 30 points. One involves a personal assessment of ethical issues and the other involves looking at state laws that might create ethical dilemmas for you. Grading for these two assignments are based on the following rubric:

| Criteria  | Needs Improvement<br>(Less than 12 Points)   | Competent<br>(12-24 Points)                               | Excellent<br>(25-30 Points)  |
|---|--|---|--|
| Completeness of Response (Up to 12 Points)  | Doesn't address issues raised in the question.                                     | Addresses only part of the question.                      | Addresses all questions asked.   |
| Grammar, Spelling structure<br>(Up to 3 Points)                                     | Multiple grammar and spelling errors.  | A few grammar and spelling errors.                        | Excellent proofreading. No errors with grammar or spelling.                    |
| Use of references and assignment resources (including textbook)<br>(Up to 6 Points) | Relies on personal knowledge. No references or information from the textbook used. | Incorporates information from the textbook only.          | Incorporates information from the textbook and other resources as appropriate. |
| Self Assessment<br>(Up to 9 Points)   | Few insightful comments.   | Utilizes the assignment to share new learning about self. | Demonstrates keen insight into self.   |

## **Exams**

Two exams will be administered throughout the course to assess your understanding, comprehension, and application of the counseling profession, functions and roles of mental health counselors, and basic counseling skills. The exams will contain 100 multiple choice questions that were generated by the author of your textbook.

**Exam One: Covers Chapters 1-8. Available during Week 8 of the course**

**Exam Two: Covers Chapter 9-15. Available during Week 12 of the course.**

## **Ethical Dilemma Paper:**

### **ASSESSMENT PROBE: MEETS CMHC A.2 AND CMHC B.1**

You will develop an ethical dilemma of a situation likely encountered by a counseling professional. This situation must be approved by the instructor by the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> week of class; otherwise, the paper will receive no credit. The situation involves the analysis and application of appropriate and applicable ethical codes, laws, and/or practice standards. This is simply not an analysis of a difficult situation, especially when there are clear directives on how to manage said situation. Rather, the scenario developed must have two or more ethical codes, laws, and/or practice standards that are equally applicable, but in opposition to each other.

The paper will use Corey's eight step model (pages 20-24 in your textbook) in systematically analyzing the situation. All sections of the paper need to be clearly labeled using the most recent edition of the APA manual, using term paper format. A minimum of 3 peer-reviewed empirical journal articles not older than 5 years must be incorporated into the discussion - supporting the rationale of decision making in the paper. The paper will illustrate the pertinent issues to consider in the eight steps on all applicable ethical codes, laws, and professional practice standards. Finally, the paper will demonstrate a clear course of action to take regarding resolving the ethical dilemma, along with a clear rationale supporting the decision.

The paper should be no longer than 12 pages, not including title pages and references cited. The font needs to be in 12 point and in an APA acceptable format for term papers, such as *Arial* or *New Times Roman*. The paper is to be double spaced, with appropriate headings and formatting reflective of an APA term paper. Organization is essential. It must be clearly labeled and easily understood, or significant points will be deducted. I strongly encourage you to not use colloquial language; and, if you are concerned about your writing skills, then use the writing center to assist you in the development of this assignment. This is a service to assist you in being successful.

Your paper should address the issues associated with thorough decision making discussed in your readings and materials for this course. This would include, but not limited to, issues such as how do your own issues or background play a role in the way you conceptualize this issue and how do issues specifically related to the client/patient impact the process.

**\*The topic must be approved by the instructor before any work can begin on the assignment, and must be approved by the 5<sup>th</sup> week of class; otherwise, no credit will be awarded.**

**PLEASE NOTE: Because this is an assessment probe, you must score 80% or better (at least 160 points out of 200) on the paper in order to pass the course. If you do not score at least 80%, you will be given one opportunity to revise your paper. If you still do not score 80% on the paper, you will fail the course and will need to retake it. You cannot pass the course unless you earn a minimum of 80% on the probe.**

|                       |  |   |   |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|
| FORMAT<br>(15 Points) | 0-5 Points<br>Typing errors, does not demonstrate use of APA format; no page numbers, unable to open document in submitted format. | 5-10 Points<br>Follows APA format but paper does not follow proper format in terms of page numbers, spacing, and margins. | 10-15 Points<br>Neatly typed; double spaced, one inch margins; page numbers included; submitted as a word document; APA format. |
| GRAMMAR,<br>SPELLING  | 0-5 Points<br>Multiple grammar and spelling errors.  | 5-10 points<br>Some spelling and grammar errors; needs better proofreading,   | 10-15 points<br>Paper demonstrates pride of ownership and professionalism; proofreading is obvious.                             |



|                                |  |  |   |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| ORIENTATION<br>(20 Points)     | 0-8 Points<br>Poorly organized;<br>Difficult to follow the<br>transition of the<br>paper; Introduction<br>and/or Conclusion are<br>missing.  | 8-15 Points<br>Some organization is<br>apparent but<br>introduction and/or<br>conclusion are poorly<br>written or missing;<br>weak transitions.  | 15-20 Points<br>Paper is well<br>organized and easy to<br>read and understand;<br>Includes introduction<br>and conclusion; each<br>section of the paper<br>builds upon the<br>previous section; good<br>transition.   |
| Ethical Dilemma<br>(75 Points) | 0-25 Points<br>Incomplete;<br>application of<br>researched material is<br>poorly explained;<br>questionable or partial<br>explanation of ethical<br>dilemma.                             | 25-50 Points<br>Partial or unclear<br>explanation of the<br>ethical dilemma; fails<br>to use the language of<br>the profession; only<br>some of the<br>researched material is<br>applied to the<br>dilemma.        | 50-75 Points<br>Clear and professional<br>explanation of ethical<br>dilemma; student uses<br>professional language<br>and applies researched<br>material.   |
| COMPLETENESS<br>(75 Points)    | 0-25 Points<br>Few, if any,<br>objectives of the<br>assignment are met;<br>no extra resources<br>used or inadequate<br>resources used. Most<br>questions are not<br>answered completely. | 25-50 Points<br>Only some of the<br>stated objectives of<br>the assignment are<br>met; not enough or<br>not current resources<br>used; nonprofessional<br>research sites used;<br>some questions go<br>unanswered. | 50-75 Points<br>Paper meets all of the<br>stated objectives of<br>the assignment;<br>thorough definitions<br>of the theories, use of<br>additional sources as<br>outlined; no use of<br>nonprofessional<br>research sites;<br>answers all questions<br>asked. |

### Discussion Board Question 12.2

#### ASSESSMENT PROBE: MEETS CMHC E.6

#### Assignment: Discussion Board 12.2

Identify one mental health public policy issue that you feel passionate about on the local, state or national level. (1) Identify the issue, (2) Explain your interest or passion, and (3) How would you stay informed about this issue/ What resources would you access on a regular basis to remain informed?

Respond to a minimum of two peers' by 11:59 PM CST Saturday.

**PLEASE NOTE: Because this is an assessment probe, you must score 80% or better (at least 16 points out of 20) on this discussion board in order to pass the course. If you do not**

**score at least 80%, you will be given one opportunity to revise your discussion board. If you still do not score 80% on the discussion board, you will fail the course and will need to retake it. You cannot pass the course unless you earn a minimum of 80% on the probe.**

**Points for the entire course include:**

|                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Discussion Boards     | 520 Points        |
| Writing Assignments   | 60 Points         |
| Exam I                | 100 Points        |
| Exam II               | 100 Points        |
| Ethical Dilemma Paper | <u>200 Points</u> |
| Total Points:         | 980 Points        |

**Final course grades** will be computed as a total percentage of points earned; as follows:

|                |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 93% - 100% = A | 80% - 82% = B- | 68% - 69% = D+ |
| 90% - 92% = A- | 78% - 79% = C+ | 63% - 67% = D  |
| 88% - 89% = B+ | 73% - 77% = C  | 60% - 62% = D- |
| 83% - 87% = B  | 70% - 72% = C- | 0% - 59% = F   |

Please note per Bellevue University policy, students must earn a letter grade of C or above to pass a course without being required to retake the class. Earning a letter grade of C- or below necessitates retaking the course, which is at the student's expense. Additionally, regardless of grades in individual courses, students are required to maintain an overall cumulative GPA of 3.0. If a student falls below this threshold they will be placed on academic probation, and may subsequently be dismissed from the program.

**Assignment Grading and Feedback**

Normally feedback on assignments will be provided within one week of the due date – for all assignments submitted on time. This means, for instance, that grading for week one will typically be complete by the end of week 2. If you have any questions about feedback, please reach out to your instructor.

**Late Work Policy:**

Because of the nature of an online learning environment, no late discussion board posts or exams will be accepted. Other late assignments will receive a penalty deduction of 10%. Assignments more than two weeks late will not be accepted. At the instructor's discretion, exceptions can be made to this policy; however, exceptions would typically constitute *documented* illnesses or

emergencies. Having heavy workloads, both with school and work commitments, family functions, and vacations are examples of non-approved exceptions. Students who foresee issues with their schedules and plans should be proactive and plan to accommodate for these issues by completing assignments prior to the due date or working with the instructor for alternative arrangements.

### MSCC Academic Honesty Policy:

The Master of Science in Clinical Counseling of Bellevue University Academic Honesty Policy is in addition to the overall University Policy. Any time students commit academic dishonesty they show little concern for their own personal sense of integrity, and they infringe on the rights of all other members of the academic community. The following definitions and examples are forms of academic integrity violations:

**Cheating.** No student shall use or attempt to use materials, notes, or information from another student for normal course work that is intended to be done on an individual basis, either in class or out of class. Examples include, but are not limited to: (1) copying from another person's research, paper, test or quiz, (2) using testing aids during a test where no permission has been given by the Instructor, (3) copying another's work, (4) collaborating on any written work, without specific permission by the Instructor, or (5) allowing another person to do your work, (6) taking an exam for another student or (7) allowing another person to take an exam for you.

**Multiple Submissions.** No students shall submit a paper (in part or in whole) or any other assignment (in part or in whole) which was submitted for academic credit for any other course.

**Plagiarism.** No student shall present the work of another person as their own without the specific citation of the original author. Examples include, but are not limited to: (1) the use of another's complete sentences or key words without quotation marks and accurate citations, (2) graphs and charts, or (3) ideas and information provided by another. Computer programs, files, and web pages must also be utilized only with the inclusion of a citation referencing or indicating the original source of the file and/or program.

**Consequences of Academic Dishonesty.** The first violation of the academic policy will result in a score of zero for the assignment, paper, exam, etc. The incident (including supporting documentation) will be reported to the Program Director who will keep the record of the incident on file until the student graduates from the program. The program director will forward the information about the violation to the office of Student Affairs. If a second violation of the academic honesty policy occurs, the student will receive a failing grade in the course in which the violation occurred. The incident (with supporting documentation) will again be reported to the Program Director who will keep the record of the incident on file until the student graduates from the program. This incident will be reported to the office of Student Affairs. If a third incident occurs, the student will be removed from MCCC program with no opportunity to return

to the program. The student may appeal decisions regarding Academic Dishonesty as per the university policy.

#### Need to Change Assignments and Requirements:

While not typical, the instructor reserves the right to make any necessary changes to the course as needed, which may include but is not limited to, readings, point values, assignments, grading criteria, due dates, exams, and corrections to unforeseen errors in any aspect of the course. The instructor will provide students with notifications of any changes, and will provide students an opportunity to adjust to these changes in a timely and reasonable manner determined by the instructor.

#### Course Topics and Corresponding Readings

| Date     | Topic   | Corey et al Chapter(s) | Major Assignments   |
|----------|---|------------------------|---|
| Week #1  | Introduction to Professional Ethics               | Chapter 1              | Models of ethical decision making: Self Assessment of Ethics    |
| Week #2  | Counselor as a Person & Professional              | Chapter 2              | Competency  |
| Week #3  | Values and the Helping Relationship               | Chapter 3              | Examination of personal values vs. the law                      |
| Week #4  | Multicultural Perspectives & Diversity Issues     | Chapter 4              | Individualistic and collectivistic values                       |
| Week #5  | Client Rights and Counselor Responsibilities      | Chapter 5              | Ethical dilemma topic due; Malpractice                          |
| Week #6  | Confidentiality: Ethical and Legal Issues; Exam 1 | Chapter 6              | Professional duty to warn and to protect                        |
| Week #7  | Managing Boundaries and Multiple Relationships    | Chapter 7              | Defining relationships; Bartering                               |
| Week #8  | Professional Competence and Training              | Chapter 8              | Exam I; Review of state standards                               |
| Week #9  | Issues in Supervision and Consultation            | Chapter 9              | Role definitions  |
| Week #10 | Issues in Theory and Practice                     | Chapter 10             | Ethical Dilemma paper due; Ethical situations                   |
| Week #11 | Ethical Issues in Couples and Family Therapy      | Chapter 11             | Informed Consent and Release of Information                     |
| Week #12 | Ethical Issues in Group and Community Work        | Chapters 12-13         | Exam II, Influencing change on a local, state or national level |

