ETHICS AND LEGAL ISSUES IN MENTAL HEALTHCARE
521:3-4

2. **Course Description**

The course focuses on ethical and legal issues specifically applied to the practice of mental health counseling and marriage and family therapy. Based on case studies students will explore contemporary application of ethics to practice within the managed care system, working with multidisciplinary teams, cross-cultural implications for practice and supervision, working with spirituality and religion, and the impact of the Internet on all facets of mental health care. Students will continue to develop skills at using Adlerian concepts in the application of ethics.

3. **Texts, Materials and Resources (required and optional)**

3.1 There is no required text for this course: You will be required to utilize current ethical journal articles relevant to the unit discussion postings.

3.2 Required Reading:


Richard S. Leslie, J.D. Managed care: Ethical and legal considerations in appealing adverse UR decisions *The Therapist* (March/April 1994).


ASERVIC (Association for the Study of Ethics, Religion, and Values in Counseling), *Competencies for Addressing Spiritual and Religious Issues in Counseling*.


Website : [http://kspope.com/](http://kspope.com/)

Websites :http://www.patheos.com/blogs/friendlyatheist/2012/12/12/christian-counseling-student-who-
refused-to-treat-lgbt-patients-receives-75000-in-settlement-with-former-school/

In-class case studies please ensure that you make reference to the ACA and AAMFT Code of Ethics. Please also make reference to your intended licensing board code of conduct and relevant statutes of the state in which you plan to practice.
4. **Competencies and Learning Outcomes**

1. Acquire an in-depth working knowledge of ethical principles as outlined in the ACA, AAMFT Codes and the Ethical Principles of Psychologist/Therapist and Counselors and Code of Conduct.
2. Demonstrate an advanced knowledge of ethical and legal standards specifically applied to the practice of mental health counseling (LPCC) and marriage and family therapy (LMFT).
3. Acquire knowledge of managed care systems and their ethical and legal implications.
5. Understand the legal and ethical implications of the use of technology such as Email, Texting, Facebook, Skype and Twitter.
6. Increase knowledge of Adlerian concepts and principles and the skills to use them to resolve dilemmas in an ethically sensitive manner.
7. Develop a commitment to ensure that ethical principles are adhered to and applied appropriately in all clinical situations.
8. Develop skills in identifying and resolving ethical dilemmas in working with religion and spirituality in counseling.
9. Increase skills at Recognizing and resolving ethical dilemmas unique to clinical supervision.
10. Develop increased skill at identifying and applying Adlerian principles in ethical decision-making.
11. Develop increased competence in conceptualizing ethical dilemmas in order to make sound ethical decisions.

5. **Course Overview**

5.1 AGS one credit residential courses in general have a total duration of 3 weeks (2 weeks of classroom coursework plus one week outside the classroom for completing final assignments). The weekend format consists of class meetings on a Saturday and Sunday from 8:30AM-4:30PM. You should expect to spend 45 hours on all course-related activities. Your instructor will be actively available for all class activities and individual consultations for the duration of the coursework and as needed until final paper grades are submitted.

5.2 **There is no book purchase necessary for this class.** The residential version of this class includes selected articles compiled in a manual which will be made available in advance of the class weekend.
## Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Number</th>
<th>Unit Topic</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Knowledge, awareness, and skills developed in each unit</th>
<th>Reading and other sources</th>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ethically sound practice relevant to managed care system, working with multidisciplinary teams, for practice and supervision</td>
<td>Students should develop in-depth knowledge of the managed care system and its implications for ethical and legal issues confronting professional practice</td>
<td>Ability to identify ethical issues and use appropriate ethical standards to ensure sound ethical decision making in the best interest of clients.</td>
<td>Richard S. Leslie, J.D. Managed care: Ethical and legal considerations in appealing adverse UR decisions <em>The Therapist</em> (March/April 1994) Bilynsky, Natalie Sufler; Vernaglia, Elizabeth Rudow ,The ethical practice of psychology in a managed-care framework. Vol. 35(1), 1998, 54-68.</td>
<td>Case Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The legal and ethical implications of the use of technology: Practicing in the age of Email, Texting, Facebook, Skype and Twitter.</td>
<td>Understand how to effectively use technology in an ethically sound manner</td>
<td>Knowledge of how these various technologies can be used to enhance practice but be aware of the ethical and legal implications</td>
<td>Scarton, D. (2010) Google and Facebook raise new issues for therapists and their clients. The Washington Post, March 30, 2010.</td>
<td>Case Analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Developing an understanding of the ethical use of spirituality and religion in counseling using the competencies identified by ASERVIC.

- Students will gain an understanding of the skills and ethics necessary to utilize spirituality and/or religion in counseling.

- Students will explore their own religious/spiritual orientation, and how to assess and ethically utilize the client’s.


ASERVIC, Competencies for Addressing Spiritual and Religious Issues in Counseling.

Case Analysis
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Project Time (SPT)</th>
<th>THERE WILL BE NO SPECIAL PROJECT IN THIS COURSE, BUT A FINAL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT IS</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Course Assignment</td>
<td>FINAL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT IS AN 8-PAGE ANALYSIS OF FOUR SELF-SELECTED CASE STUDIES DUE TWO WEEKS AFTER THE LAST DAY OF THE CLASS.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Final paper: Case Conceptualizations and Analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other assignments (if applicable)</td>
<td>NONE.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. **Assessment/Evaluation Procedures**

1. **7.1 Assignment Overview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment or Activity</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
<th>Course Outcome Addressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active class participation in case analysis, small group, and audio-visual activities.</td>
<td>During class</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-page written case analysis paper.</td>
<td>Due two weeks after last class meeting.</td>
<td>50% per course outline above.</td>
<td>Per course outline above.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **7.2 Grading:** [Based on total points for the class]

- **A** 90-100 percent of a grade
- **B** 80-89 percent of a grade
- **C** 70-79 percent of a grade
- **R** Retake- Needs more time or instruction to master the requirements of the class
- **NC** Quality of work or participation falls below minimum expectations, including:
  - ¥ Not attending class.
  - ¥ Not properly notifying registrar of a withdrawal
  - ¥ Missing class periods in excess of the number allowed by AGS’s course attendance policy
  - ¥ Not resolving a grade of incomplete within 45 days after the last class meeting (not the assignment due date) and an agreed upon extension has not been arranged by the student and instructor. The Incomplete turns to No Credit (NC) and the course must be repeated at full price.

1. **7.3 Final course written assignment, due date, and assessment**

For the final written assignment select and write about four case scenarios illustrating ethical dilemmas in the areas of (1) managed care, (2) the use of technology in counseling, (3) cross-cultural counseling, and (4) Religion and spirituality in counseling or special populations (deaf, learning disabled, low-functioning, court-ordered or related groups). In each case analysis include at least one Adlerian concept and its application to the case.

1. **7.4 Other assignments: None.**

1. **7.5 Summary of points: 50 (class participation) + 50 (final paper) = 100**

8. **8. Online Discussions or Activities**

This is an OL class. See Moodle for discussion topics.
9. **Special Project Time (SPT)**

There is no SPT. There is an 8-page final paper.

10. **Writing Guidelines including APA Format**

10.1 All written assignments in courses at the Adler Graduate School, including those submitted in online courses, must be in APA format unless specifically noted by the course instructor (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition), 2009, American Psychological Association. ISBN 1-4338-0561-8).

10.2 Strict APA publication rules in Online Peer Discussions might prove difficult, if not impossible, to maintain. Following the “letter” of the Manual (i.e., not using “I”, or passive voice, keeping proper margins, or complying with headings requirements) may be either difficult or counterproductive in forums such as peer discussions. However, it is still important to adhere to the “spirit” of the APA Manual (i.e., grammar, orderly presentation of ideas, reducing bias in language, and presenting scholarly statements and arguments).

10.3 Prior to submitting a response, please proofread carefully. Grammar and spelling errors may make your response difficult for other students to appreciate.

10.4 Please keep in mind that, while the internet offers a lot of exciting and up-to-date information, not all internet sources are considered scholarly. For example, Wikipedia is not an academically peer-reviewed source. Rather, it is an “anybody-reviewed” source and, therefore, can’t be used in presenting your argument in AGS classes-related tasks.

11. **Attendance and Participation Policy**

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. When a student is unable to attend class, it is a courtesy to notify the course instructor in advance using the e-mail or phone information provided at the end of this syllabus. Excusals will only be considered for emergencies or illness.

This class consists of two weekend days and is divided into 4 Units and a final assignment. If a student misses more than 1 class unit, the decision as to whether or not to allow a grade or issue a retake is left to the discretion of the instructor. Students who miss two class sessions will automatically receive a grade of NC (No credit) for the class and are expected to retake the class at full price.

It is the instructor’s prerogative to allow or not allow make up work or to deduct points or issue a lower grade based on missed class sessions.

Specific courses may have additional attendance requirements based on the structure of the course. Those specifics are listed here: None.

12. **Participation Disclaimer**

Active participation in class discussions/exercises/demonstrations is expected.

As with other AGS courses, in this course, individual students must determine for themselves the level of personal disclosure/intimacy that is appropriate for them.
Faculty members and students do not disclose confidential, personally identifiable information concerning their clients, students, research participants, organizational clients, or other recipients of their services.

Whenever confidential information/material is used in any AGS course, students and faculty members are expected to observe AGS policy concerning the handling of confidential information/material. Full descriptions of these policies are readily available on Moodle main page.

13. **Academic Integrity Policy**

Honesty and trust among students and between students and faculty are essential for a strong, functioning academic community. Consequently, students are expected to do their own work on all academic assignments, tests, projects, and research/term papers. Academic dishonesty, whether cheating, plagiarism, or some other form of dishonest conduct may result in failure for the work involved. Academic dishonesty could also result in failure for the course and, in the event of a second incident of academic dishonesty, suspension from the Adler Graduate School. Here are examples of academic dishonesty:

- **Cheating** - Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit.

- **Fabrication** - Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

- **Facilitating academic dishonesty** - Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of academic integrity.

- **Plagiarism** - The deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statements of another person as one’s own without acknowledgment.

14. **Nondiscrimination Clause**

The Adler Graduate School is an equal opportunity educator and employer. The Adler Graduate School does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, or physical disability in the employment of faculty or staff, the admission or treatment of students, or in the operation of its educational programs and activities. The institution is committed to providing equal education and employment opportunities in accordance with all applicable State and federal laws.

15. **Learning Accommodations (including students with disabilities)**

If a student in this course has a documented learning disability, tell the instructor during the first week of class. The instructor needs to know on the front end so that he or she can work with you. The Adler Graduate School is committed to helping all students be successful, as best as can be reasonably accommodated. Documenting a learning disability occurs at the student’s expense. When documented appropriately, the Adler Graduate School makes all reasonable accommodations.
16. **Instructor Contact Information**

Richard E. Close, DMin, LPCC, LMFT, ACS  
Adler Graduate School  
1550 East 78th Street  
Richfield, MN  55423  
Office Phone:  651-319-6308  
Cell Phone:  651-319-6308  
Office Email:  richard.close@alfredadler.edu  

Updated: 10/15