I. Course Description (3 semester hours)
This course offers in-depth consideration of ethical and legal issues that affect the practice of counseling in clinical mental health counseling; marital, couple, and family counseling; addictions counseling; and school counseling settings. The course will assist students in understanding and formulating sound positions on a variety of major issues related to the field of counseling. Students are expected to be familiar with a variety of ethical codes as well as laws regulating the profession. In addition students will demonstrate the ability to use ethical decision-making models to think critically about and resolve ethical issues in a variety of situations. There is no pre-requisite for this course.

II. Rational
This course meets a number of specific accreditation standards set forth by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) for clinical mental health counseling; marital, couple, and family counseling; addictions counseling; and school counseling. In addition, it fulfills specific content requirements set forth by the State of Texas for both the Licensed Professional Counselor and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist.

III. State Adopted Proficiencies for School Counselors
Standard VI Learner-Centered Professional Development: The certified school counselor continues professional development, demonstrating a commitment to learn to improve the profession, and to model professional ethics and personal integrity.

IV. TExES Competencies
Competency 010 (Professionalism): The school counselor understands and complies with ethical, legal, and professional standards relevant to the profession.

V. Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes
This course is designed to meet CACREP standards and enable students to demonstrate understanding of the following objectives. Standards shown in bold type will be specifically assessed in this course, and SLOs are provided for each.

A. Course Objectives (CACREP 2009 Standards)

1. CACREP Standard G1g: professional credentialing, including certification, licensure, and accreditation practices and standards, and the effects of public
policy on these issues

2. CACREP Standard G1j: ethical standards of professional organizations and credentialing bodies, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling

3. CACREP Standard G2f: counselors’ roles in eliminating biases, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination

4. CACREP Standard G8f: ethical and culturally relevant strategies for interpreting and reporting the results of research and/or program evaluation studies

In addition to the objectives listed above, students will satisfy the following objectives in accordance with appropriate program emphasis:

Addictions Counseling

1. CACREP Standard A2: understands ethical and legal considerations specifically related to the practice of addictions counseling

2. CACREP Standard B1: demonstrates the ability to apply and adhere to ethical and legal standards in addictions counseling

Clinical Mental Health Counseling

1. CACREP Standard A1: comprehends history, philosophy, and current trends in clinical mental health counseling

2. CACREP Standard A2: understands ethical and legal considerations specifically related to the practice of clinical mental health counseling

3. CACREP Standard A7: identifies professional issues that affect clinical mental health counselors (e.g., core provider status, expert witness status, access to and practice privileges within managed care systems)

4. CACREP Standard B1: demonstrates the ability to apply and adhere to ethical and legal standards in clinical mental health counseling

5. CACREP Standard C9: understands professional issues relevant to the practice of clinical mental health counseling

6. CACREP Standard E6: knows public policies on the local, state, and national levels that affect the quality and accessibility of mental health services

Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling

1. CACREP Standard A2: understands the ethical and legal considerations specifically related to the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling

2. CACREP Standard B1: demonstrates the ability to apply and adhere to ethical and legal standards in marriage, couple, and family counseling

School Counseling

1. CACREP Standard A2: understands ethical and legal considerations specifically related to the practice of school counseling
2. CACREP Standard B1: demonstrates the ability to apply and adhere to ethical and legal standards in school counseling

3. CACREP Standard E1: understands the cultural, ethical, economic, legal and political issues surrounding diversity, equity, and excellence in terms of student learning

B. Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of ethical standards of professional organizations and credentialing bodies, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling as evidenced by (a) responses to objective questions on the mid-term exam, (b) responses to case studies, (c) creation of informed consent document, and (d) performance on group presentation. Achievement of this SLO will be evaluated by an average of 70 or above on (a), (b), (c), and (d).

2. Students will demonstrate understanding of ethical and legal considerations specific to their program emphasis in addictions; clinical mental health counseling; marriage, couple, and family counseling; and school counseling as evidenced by a grade of 70 or above on the reflective research and literature paper.

VI. Course Topics
The major topics to be considered in this course are Codes of Ethics of professional organizations, ethical codes and rules of state licensure boards, state and national laws impacting the practice of counseling, current major issues in ethics, and ethical decision-making models.

VII. Instructional Methods and Activities
A. Traditional experiences, including lecture, discussion, on-line activities, and case studies

B. Clinical experiences, including student presentations

VIII. Evaluation and Grade Assignment
1. Examination: There is one examination at mid-term. Questions are objective, including multiple-choice, true and false, case scenarios, and definitions of key terms.

2. Three case studies: Case studies illustrating ethical dilemmas and potential legal issues will be provided. Students will submit a report for each in which potential dilemmas are identified. Students will then describe the thinking process used in making decisions about how the case might be handled, including the use of an ethical decision-making model. Recognition and identification of more than one decision that might be made using appropriate processes for identification of same are acceptable. Content from applicable codes used in thinking through the case must be identified. These case study reports do not have a set length, but should cover the material adequately. The reports may use bullet points; however, the information should be reported in such a way that I can follow the thinking without drawing inferences. In other words, connect the dots in your reports.
3. **Informed consent document:** Students will create an informed consent document that contains relevant elements required by the ACA Code of Ethics and the state regulatory boards.

4. **Group presentation:** Students will work in groups to identify a current topic in the profession that constitutes an ethical issue or concern. Groups will develop a presentation that explains the issue, identifies why it is an ethical concern, and addresses current thinking in the field. Presentations will be provided in class.

5. **Reflective research paper:** Students will review the code of ethics of their regulatory bodies and primary professional association (ACA, ASCA, and additional associations as appropriate). Papers should note similarities and differences in the codes and identify ways in which they might experience some conflict arising from personal values and that might spur growth. Students should include at least three journal articles concerning ethical issues relevant to their reflections. The paper should be no more than 10 pages long, including title and references pages. Students are required to appropriately use APA’s *Publication Manual* (6th ed.).

6. **Participation:** Students will be expected to actively participate in class and on-line discussions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Evaluation</th>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term Examination</td>
<td>90 – 100 pts. = A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Studies</td>
<td>80 – 89 pts. = B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed Consent Document</td>
<td>70 – 79 pts. = C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>60 – 69 pts. = D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Research Paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IX. Course Schedule and Policies**

**A. Tentative Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments and Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 1</td>
<td>Orientation to the course. Introduction to Professional Ethics.</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Texas Board Rules.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 8</td>
<td>The Counselor as a Person and as a Professional.</td>
<td>Chapters 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Values and the Helping Relationship.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 15</td>
<td>Multicultural Perspectives and Diversity Issues.</td>
<td>Case Study 1 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Online Discussion</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 22</td>
<td>Client Rights and Counselor Responsibilities.</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Online Discussion</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 29</td>
<td>Confidentiality: Ethical and Legal Issues.</td>
<td>Case Study 2 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Texas Occupations Code.</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Online Discussion</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 6</td>
<td>Ethical Issues in Couples and Family Therapy</td>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Online Discussion</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 13</td>
<td>Managing Boundaries and Multiple Relationships.</td>
<td>Informed Consent Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 20</td>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>Chapters 8, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 27</td>
<td>Professional Competence and Training. Issues in Supervision and Consultation.</td>
<td>Online Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 3</td>
<td>Issues in Theory, Practice and Research. Ethical Issues in Group Work</td>
<td>Case Study 3 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 10</td>
<td>Ethical Issues in Community Work</td>
<td>Chapter 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 17</td>
<td>Reflection, seminar-style discussion</td>
<td>Reflective Research Paper Due Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 1</td>
<td>Reflection, seminar-style discussion</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### B. Policies

**Class Attendance, Participation, and Late Work**

Attendance is required, and instructor must be notified and approve of excused or unavoidable absences. Reading assignments are to be completed prior to class, and students are expected to be prepared and participate in seminar-style discussions of material and other class activities as well as online discussions via BlackBoard. Out of class work will be typed in APA format (12 pt. font, Times New Roman, double spaced, 1 inch margins, and title page). Learning objectives must be met in order to pass the course. Excessive absences (more than 3) will result in semester grade being lowered by one letter grade. Assignments are due during the periods designated for the course to meet. Late work will result in 10% deduction of points. No late work will be accepted beyond the last class day for the semester.

**Cell Phone/Electronic Device Usage**

Electronic devices may not be used in class unless express permission is obtained from the instructor. Students who must have cell phones on are required to set them to silent/vibrate, and shall not accept calls or respond to texts unless there is an emergency.

**Academic Integrity**

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic integrity. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, and complicity or plagiarism. Students should familiarize themselves with University policy concerning academic integrity and academic misconduct by reading the Student Handbook. In this class, any academic misconduct will result in a grade of 0 for that work and a report submitted to Student Affairs. In addition, a grade of 0 in the course or departmental action may be initiated. Incomplete grade requests are granted only in extraordinary circumstances and must be requested in advance by the student.

**Syllabus Disclaimer**

While the provisions of this syllabus are as accurate and complete as possible, the instructor reserves the right to change any portions of the syllabus. If changes are made to the syllabus, the instructor will inform students regarding such changes. It is also the
responsibility of each student to know what changes have been made to the provisions of this syllabus and to successfully complete the requirements of this course. Students are encouraged to ask questions regarding information on the syllabus and course requirements when they receive the syllabus.

X. **Textbook**

*Required:*

*The textbook adopted for this course is:*


*Web resources for this course include but are not limited to:*

- Ethical Standards for School Counselors [available from https://www.schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors-members/legal-ethical]
- Texas LPC Board Rules, 22 TAC §681 (I expect you to locate and download these.)
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) [available from www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/administrative/statute/hipaastatutepdf.pdf as well as other web addresses]
- Mental Health Rules and Statutes (Texas): 18th Edition Texas Laws Relating to Mental Health, describing changes made to laws during the 81st legislative session. See specific sections and chapters [available from www.dshs.state.tx.us/mhrules/]

XI. **Bibliography**


**XII. Grade Appeals**

As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules web site at [http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.
XIII. Disabilities Accommodations

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

XIV. Emergency Contingencies Plan

In the event of a campus evacuation, I will make every effort to continue teaching your course. Should such an event occur, I will continue to interact with you by using the Blackboard Announcement, Bb Messages, Email, Collaboration, Discussions, Blogs, Journals, and/or Wikis tools. If you have access to the Internet, you will be able to continue your coursework by posting assignments and interacting with me as well as each other online. You will also be able to take your tests online using the Assessments tool and see your grades on assignments, quizzes, and tests using the My Grades tool.

XV. Rubrics

Note: For all rubrics below, elements of description for B or lower grades should be considered as “or” conditions rather than “and” conditions. That is, any of the factors listed could earn a grade at that level.

Case Studies

A Paper (90-100 pts.): Dilemmas are correctly identified, as are the relevant ethical codes from both national association(s) and state regulatory boards. Thinking process is clearly identified. A decision-making model from the counseling literature is identified, with steps followed being explained in such a way that inferences about meaning need not be made. Writing follows APA (6th ed.) format where applicable, and correct spelling and grammar is used.

B Paper (80-89 pts.): Dilemmas are correctly identified, as are the relevant ethical codes from both national association(s) and state regulatory boards, though perhaps less clearly than in the A paper. A decision-making model from the counseling literature is identified, though steps followed in making a decision may not be clearly explained. Some APA and writing issues may be evident.

C Paper (70-79 pts.): All elements are present; however, writing may be confusing or may evidence lack of clarity in thought. Significant APA issues may be present. There may be failure to adequately or logically explain the thinking in the decision-making process, or there may be lack of evidence of clear understanding of the relevant codes.
**Failing Paper (69 and below):** Dilemmas are not clearly identified. Relevant ethical codes are not cited, or either state or national codes are omitted. Thinking is not detailed in the decision-making model. Understanding of the codes is not displayed or is clearly erroneous. Writing is significantly below expected graduate-level work.

**Group Presentation**

* A presentation (90-100 pts.): Group members followed the directions for the presentation. The current topic chosen clearly constitutes an ethical issue or concern. The issue is clearly identified and the relationship of ethics to the topic is explained. Current thinking in the field is outlined. The poster-board presentation is neat with a professional look.

* B presentation (80-89 pts.): Group members followed the directions for the presentation. The current topic chosen constitutes an ethical concern or issue; however the relationship between the topic and ethics may be less clearly articulated. Explanation of current thinking in the field may be limited. The poster-board presentation is neat.

* C presentation (70-79 pts.): Group members followed the directions for the presentation. The topic chosen is not really related to ethical concerns or the connection may not be explained. Current thinking in the field may be presented in a way that is confusing. The poster-board presentation has the appearance of being put together at the last minute.

* Failing presentation (69 and below):* Group members failed to follow directions. The topic chosen is clearly inappropriate, with no compelling connection to ethics demonstrated. Current thinking presented is outdated or lacking. The poster-board presentation appears to have been put together at the last minute.

**Reflective Research Paper**

* A paper (90-100 pts.): All elements of the paper are present as described in the assignment. The paper reflects clear understanding of the codes considered. Areas of similarity and difference in professional association and regulatory board codes are discussed. Personal values that could be challenged by the codes are thoughtfully discussed. References from professional journals regarding personal values material or specific elements of the codes are included. Within text citations and the reference page follow APA (6th ed.) format, as does the rest of the paper. Spelling and grammatical errors are absent or minimal.

* B paper (80-89 pts.):* All elements described in the assignment are present; however, the material may not be clearly articulated or reflect lack of depth of understanding. The paper reflects understanding of the codes considered, but discussion may not be as clearly articulated as in the A paper. Discussion of personal values that might be challenged may be superficial. References may be tangential. Within text citations and the reference page follow APA (6th ed.) format, as does the rest of the paper, with only minor errors. Spelling and grammatical errors are minor.
C paper (70-79 pts.): While all elements are present, the paper may have the appearance of last-minute work, and reflect lack of serious consideration of the topic. Minimal understanding of the codes considered is reflected. References may be tangential. Personal reflections may be superficial. Within text citations and the reference page do not follow APA (6th ed.), and other APA style errors are present. Spelling and grammatical errors may appear or be frequent.

Failing paper (69 and below): Paper may not contain all elements. Paper may fail to identify any similarities or find differences in the codes. Paper may reflect limited or no understanding of the codes being considered. Personal reflections are not evident or are superficial. Professional journal references are lacking. Significant and repeated errors in the use of APA style are present.