

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Course Number:	SW 387R4/ 360K	Instructor:	M. Peterson Armour, Ph.D.
Unique Number:	61005	E-mail:	marmour@mail.utexas.edu
Semester:	Spring 2002	Phone:	471 3197
Meeting Time:	Thurs. 5:30-8:30	Office Room:	3.122C
Meeting Place:	2.130	Office Hours:	Tuesday 1:30-2:30, Thursday 4:30-5:30 or by appointment

**ETHICS AND SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE**

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed to help students become more effective in dealing with ethical issues in social work practice. It provides a theoretical framework to examine value and ethical dilemmas in a systematic manner. The course is intended to both deepen awareness of new and emerging ethical issues and to provide tools and methodologies for reflection and analysis. A model for ethical decision-making which incorporates the basic components of reflection, analysis, evaluation, and the justification of an ethical position is presented. The orienting frames which organize the content include: philosophical systems underlying major ethical theories; models for ethical choice; codes of ethics; social ethics; organizational ethics; human rights issues; client, third parties, and colleague issues; the ethics of indirect practice—administration and supervision; and bioethics.

**II. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Broaden awareness of the range of subtleties of the value/ethical conflicts in social work practice.
2. Deepen understanding of ethical theory and methodology and its application to ethical conflicts in social work practice.
3. Develop a greater understanding of both individual ethics and the ethics of institutions and collectivities.
4. Develop a greater understanding of how to practice in a conscious and ethical manner.

5. Further understanding of the need for knowledge building in professional social work ethics, including the concept of human rights as an integral component of ethical reasoning.
6. Further appreciation of the responsibility of the profession to utilize philosophical tools of reflections and analysis in a systematic way to critique the underlying values of contemporary social institutions and social policies.
7. Further develop skill in analyzing ethical systems which inform social institutions and organizational structures within which social workers function.

### **III. TEACHING METHODS AND CLASS ORGANIZATION**

This class uses lectures, discussion, small group exercises, guest speakers, videos, written assignments, and class presentations.

### **IV. REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL TEXTS/MATERIALS**

Corey, G., Corey, M.S. & Callanan, P. (1998). Issues and Ethics in the Helping Professions. Fifth Edition. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks-Cole.

Peterson, M. (1992). At Personal Risk: Boundary Violations in Professional Client Relationships. New York: W. W. Norton.

Readings are available in the LRC (in the basement of the School of Social Work). They are listed under "Armour" by title of the article. Readings are also available on electronic reserves. To access them, go to <http://www.utexas.edu/>. Click Libraries, click Library Services-Reserves, click Electronic Reserve, click Marilyn Armour on the drop-down menu under Instructor. The password for the class will be given at the first class. Check the Electronic Reserves frequently for important information about the class.

### **V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

The following course requirements will be completed during the semester, with points given for each course requirement. Grading will be based on total points accrued by the end of the semester. All papers should be typed and follow APA format. A handout about the APA format is available in the LRC.

#### **1. Power Dynamics Paper (8-10 pages)**

Each student will apply material from class readings, lectures, and discussions on power to their family of origin.

- a) Analyze the sociopolitical context for the power held or not held by different family members.
- b) What types of power did different family members hold?
- c) How did family members express their power?

- d) How did you react to the expression of power by different family members?
- e) Describe the boundaries that were present in the family to protect the vulnerability of family members relative to each other's power.
- f) What attitudes do you hold about power?
- g) Given your experiences in your family of origin, what difficulties might you have managing your power in relationships with clients?

Write a paper that a) summarizes the literature on power and b) applies the literature to your family of origin and your behavior as a professional.

### **20 Points Possible**

## **2. Boundary Violation Paper (10 pages)**

Each student will select a boundary violation that occurred at any point in his/her life with an authority figure. Describe the incident. Analyze the experience using the four characteristics of a boundary violation described in Chapter 4 of At Personal Risk. Describe and analyze the damage to you and/or others using the theory in Chapter 5 of At Personal Risk. Describe what you did (or might need to do) to heal from the violation.

### **30 Points Possible**

## **3. Ethics Presentation and Paper (20 pages)**

Each student will select an ethical standard or current topic that has ethical implications. The selection will be made from the list of ethical standards and current topics to be covered from week 7 to week 14. The student will read articles that address different aspects or manifestations of the ethical standard/topic. The articles for each standard/topic are available in the LRC. The student will present the standard/ topic to the class during the week appropriated in the course schedule, e.g. the presentation on "Assisted Suicide" would take place the 12<sup>th</sup> week of the course. The presentation will use the following outline:

- I. Overview of the standard/topic.
  - a) Application of the NASW Code of Ethics: What does the NASW Code of Ethics say about the standard? What standards apply to the topic?
  - b) Historical development of the standard/topic: What is known about the how this standard or interest in this topic develop? Where is it today?
- II. Manifestation of the standard/ topic.
  - a) Review of the articles: What is happening in the practice community that makes it necessary to address this ethical standard/topic? What are the variety of ways this

standard/ topic is manifesting itself? Are there pro and con positions on the standard/topic?

III. Discussion of two fact situations that illustrate the standard/topic.

- a) Select two case studies for discussion and present them to the class.
- b) Facilitate a discussion (and/or create an exercise) to help students understand the issues and think through how they might approach each situation.

Students will write a paper on the standard/topic. The paper should parallel the presentation but also include a critique of the standard/topic relative to how it is being manifested or portrayed in the current literature. The paper will be due two weeks after the presentation. Students who present during weeks 7 and 8 may request an additional week to complete the paper.

**30 Points Possible for the Presentation  
60 Points Possible for the Paper**

#### **4. Personal Code of Ethics (2 to 3 pages)**

Students will write a personal code of ethics at two points in time. The first code of ethics will be due the second week of class. It will detail the students values, at this time, based on the student's history and self professed convictions about helping others.

The second code of ethics will be due the last class. It will detail changes in the student's awareness, values, and self professed convictions about helping others.

**10 Points Possible**

### **VI. COURSE GRADING CRITERIA**

Power Dynamics Paper	20 points
Boundary Violation Paper	30 points
Ethics Presentation	30 points
Ethics Paper	60 points
<u>Personal Code of Ethics</u>	<u>10 points</u>

TOTAL 150 points

## **GRADING SCALE**

A total of 150 points may be earned for the above assignments. Grades will be assigned as follows.

150-135 points	=	A
134-120 points	=	B
119-105 points	=	C
104-90 points	=	D
89 and below	=	F

Graduate students must earn a minimum grade of C in the course for credit; also, graduate students must maintain an overall B average.

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

January 24	Personal Code of Ethics
February 7	Power Dynamics Paper
February 28	Boundary Violation Paper
May 2	Personal Code of Ethics

## VI. CLASS POLICIES

1. It is important for social work practitioners to be punctual in both attendance and in meeting deadlines. Class attendance and participation is expected, as is handing in assignments on time. Role will be taken each class period and students are expected to attend the full class. If a student leaves class early, the absence will be treated as unexcused. Students are also expected to complete assigned readings prior to each class. Except in case of extreme emergencies, and then only with the permission of the professor, late assignments will not be accepted without penalty. Students are expected to turn in all required assignments on the agreed upon due date at the beginning of class. Students will lose 3 points for each day that an assignment is late. If the due date is a problem, then the student must see the professor and negotiate another due date at least 24 hours PRIOR to the regularly scheduled date.
2. Students who fail to attend class on a regular basis (missing more than one class without a valid excuse, e.g. medical documentation) may receive one course grade lower than their final grade when points are totaled. Students who are one or two points below the cut-off for a letter grade may receive the higher grade at the end of the semester based on attendance/participation.
3. Social work practitioners assume responsibility for themselves. Therefore, it is expected that the work handed in will be your own. Scholastic dishonesty, including plagiarism and cheating during examinations, violates social work values and will result in recommendation for dismissal from the social work program and a referral to the Dean of Student's Office.
4. Social work practitioners are assertive and function as team members. Therefore, feedback about the course is welcome and the course will be viewed as a joint effort between students and the instructor. Students are encouraged to provide feedback during office hours and by appointment if they desire.
5. In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act, the instructor will make herself available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations with students with a disability. Students with disabilities who need special accommodations should notify the instructor, prior to the end of the first week of class, by presenting a letter prepared by the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office. To ensure that the most appropriate accommodations can be provided, students should contact the SSD office at 471-6259 or 471-4641 TTY.
6. At times, the instructor may ask students for a copy of their papers to use as a sample paper for students in future classes. If asked, students have the right to decline without fear of reprisal. They will be asked to sign a form indicating that they have freely given the instructor permission to use their paper as a sample.

This class may use Electronic Reserves and Eudora for exchanging e-mail, engaging in class discussions and chats and exchanging files. Also, the instructor may send e-mail to members of the class (as a group) about assignments or to answer questions. If a web site is used, your name will appear on an electric class roster. If e-mail is sent to you and other class members, your name and e-mail address will be known by other class members.

## Course Schedule

Date	Description	Text/Readings
Week 1 1/17/02	Introductions and Overview  Personal Values, Attitudes, & Beliefs Professional Codes of Ethics  Values Exercise Video: Ethics in Action	Reamer: "The Evolution of Social Work Ethics"  Hill, Glaser, & Harden: "A Feminist Model for Ethical Decision Making"  Corey, Chapt 1  Codes of Ethics: NASW & Texas
Week 2 1/24/02	The Professional-Client Relationship: Contract or Covenant  Code of Ethics Exercise <b>Personal Code of Ethics Due</b>	Croxton: "Caveats on Contracts"  Kutchins: "The Fiduciary Relationship"  Noddings: "An Ethic of Caring"  Peterson Chapt 1
Week 3 1/31/02	Power, the Power Differential and the Professional's Struggle with Power  Handout on Family of Origin and Power for Power Dynamics Paper	Peterson, Chapters 2&3  French & Raven: "The Bases of Social Power"  Gitterman: "Testing Professional Authority & Boundaries"
Week 4 2/7/02	Boundary Violations: The 4 Characteristics  Video: Case Study <b>Power Dynamics Paper Due</b>	Peterson: Chapter 4  Corey: Chapter 2  Strom-Gottfried: "An Analysis of Violations by Social Workers"
Week 5 2/14/02	Boundary Violations: Practicum Video: Clinical Vignettes	
Week 6 2/21/02	Boundary Violations: Damage, Recovery, & Accountability  Video: Client Harm	Peterson: Chapters 5-7  Milgrom: "Advocacy"  Brown: "Confronting Ethically Problematic Behaviors in Feminist Therapist Colleagues"

Week 6 cont.		Reiker: "The Victim-to-Patient Process"  Van der Kolk et al: "Pierre Janet & the Breakdown of Adaptation in Psychological Trauma"
Week 7 2/28/02	Confidentiality  <b>Boundary Violation Paper Due</b>	Corey: Chapter 5
Week 8 3/7/02	Informed Consent & Duty to Warn	Corey: Chapter 4
	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
Week 9 3/21/02	Dual/ Multiple Relationships	Corey: Chapter 7
Week 10 3/28/02	Record Keeping & Mandated Reporting	Eberlein: "Client Records"
Week 11 4/4/02	Touch & Assisted Suicide	Corey: 88-97
Week 12 4/11/02	Sphere of Competence (inclusive of multicultural practice) & Empirically Based Practice	Corey: Chapter 8 & 10
Week 13 4/18/02	Rural Communities, Self Disclosure, & Gift Giving	Catalano: "The Challenges of Clinical Practice in Small or Rural Communities"  Reamer: "Altruism"
Week 14 4/25/02	Electronics and Research	Woody: "Domestic Violations of Confidentiality"
Week 15 5/2/02	Supervision & Self Care  <b>Personal Code of Ethics Due</b>	Faunce: "Self-Care and Wellness of Feminist Therapists"  Landau: "Ethical Judgment, Code of Ethics & Supervision"  Thompson et al: "Supervision Strategies to Prevent..."

## Readings:

Brown, L.S. (1990). Confronting ethically problematic behaviors in feminist therapist colleagues. In H. Lerman & N. Porter, Feminist ethics in psychotherapy in psychotherapy. New York: Springer. Pp. 147-159.

Catalano, S. (1997). The challenges of clinical practice in small or rural communities: Case studies in managing dual relationships in and outside of therapy. Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy 27(1): 23-35.

Croxtan, T.A. (1988). Caveats on contract. Social Work: 169-171.

Faunce, P. (1990). Self-care and wellness of feminist therapist. In H. Lerman & N. Porter. Feminist ethics in psychotherapy. New York: Springer. Pp. 123-131.

French, J.R.P. & Raven, B. (1959). The bases of social power. In D. Cartwright, Studies in social power. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. Pp. 150-167.

Gitterman, A. (1989). Testing professional authority and boundaries. Social Casework pp. 165-171.

Hill, M. Glaser, K. & Harden, J. (1995). A feminist model for ethical decision making. In E. J. Rave & C.C. Larsen, Ethical decision making in therapy: Feminist perspectives. New York: Guilford Press. Pp. 18-37.

Kutchins, H. (1991). The fiduciary relationship: The legal basis for social workers' responsibilities to clients. Social Work 36(2): 106-113.

Landau, R. (1999). Ethical judgment, code of ethics, and supervision in ethical decision making in social work: Findings from an Israeli sample. The Journal of Applied Social Sciences 23(2): 29.

Milgrom, J. (1989). Advocacy: Assisting sexually exploited clients through the complaint process. In G. Schoener, Psychotherapists' sexual involvement with clients: Intervention and prevention. Minneapolis, MN: Walk-In Counseling Center. Pp. 305-312.

National Association of Social Workers (1996). Code of ethics. Washington, D.C.: National Association of Social Workers.

Noddings, N. (1984). An ethic of caring. In N. Noddings, Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 79-103.

Reamer, R.G. (2000). The social work ethics audit: A risk management strategy. Social Work 45(4): 355-366.

Reamer, F. (2001). Altruism. In F. Reamer, Tangled relationships: Managing boundary issues in the human services. New York: Columbia University Press.

Reiker, P.P. & Hilberman, C.E. (1986). The victim-to-patient process: The disconfirmation and transformation of abuse. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry 56(3): 360-370.

Strom-Gottfried, K. (1999). An analysis of violations by social workers. Families in Society 80(5): 439-449.

Thompson, P., Shapiro, M., Nielson, L., Peterson, M. (1989). Supervision strategies to prevent sexual abuse by therapists and counselors. In B. Sanderson (ed.), *It's never okay: A handbook for professionals on sexual exploitation by counselors and therapists*. St. Paul: Department of Corrections. Pp. 19-25.

Van der Kolk, B.A. & van der Hart, Onno. (1989). Pierre Janet and the Breakdown of Adaptation in Psychological Trauma. American Journal of Psychiatry 146(12): 1530-1540.

Woody, R.H. (1999). Domestic violations of confidentiality. Professional Psychology 30(6): 607-610.