

**ETHICS & STANDARDS IN THE MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSION WITH  
PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION  
PSYC0641-501 (crn 31175), Spring 2015, ONLINE January 20-May 11**

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**Text: There will be no textbook for this course. Reading and viewing materials will be available for you online as part of your registration.**

Welcome to the on-line Ethics & Standards for Mental Health Professionals! This *preliminary* syllabus will give you some information on how the course is being structured, what you can expect from an online course, and what is expected from you. Our course will make use of a course management system called PLATO. If you haven't done so already, you might want to try the tutorial that is posted on the main web page for the on-line courses. You'll find it is really helpful for understanding how the system works and some of the features we'll be using.

**IMPORTANT:** Please note that this class begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of classes during spring 2015 at Westfield State University, which is Tuesday, January 20<sup>th</sup>. The material will be released (available to you), beginning at 8:00 a.m. on January 20<sup>th</sup>. There is not an option of beginning the coursework before January 20<sup>th</sup>. The course will formally end on May 11<sup>th</sup>. You will have five blocks of work. You should complete them consecutively. Due dates for each Block are included in this document. As each Block will require numerous hours of reading, viewing, contemplating, and writing, it will be not be possible to complete a Block successfully at the graduate level if you wait to begin near the due date. It is highly advised that you commit to a study schedule which allows you to be online “in the Block” across the time devoted to the Block, rather than only at the end of the Block's allotted time.

If you have a personal question, you may send me a message through the PLATO site or call my office at 413-572-5488 to leave a message. Email is the best way to contact me at [rhayes@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:rhayes@westfield.ma.edu). I will begin checking and responding to messages daily beginning on January 20<sup>th</sup>, and will check them only occasionally before January 20<sup>th</sup>.

### Class Overview

This course will review several professional Codes of Ethics and the standards of ethical practice involved in working with clients. With these codes as guidelines, students will develop their own ethical awareness, problem solving abilities using case studies, and a knowledge of the use and limitations of these ethical codes. The course will also include topics related to professional identity and orientation, human service's management of community programs, managed care, and the interaction and relationship of the mental health profession and public

policy.

### **What You Can Expect & What Is Expected Of You**

**You can expect that I will be available to you many times throughout the defined session, which is Jan 20 – May 11, 2015, however not 24/7.** There are a number of ways to be in touch with me. Online office hours are listed above. For online office hours, you can contact me through the email link on the course page in PLATO. I am also available to schedule an electronic, phone, or in-person conversation with you that meets the needs of both our schedules. If you email me (January 20<sup>th</sup> and after), I will typically get a response to you within 24 hours, but always within 48 hours. If you have a question related to the course, one in which the response would benefit the entire class, I ask that you pose the question in the “Ask Dr. B” link of the main course page. All class members will then have access to the dialogue. Of course, if you have a more private matter you may contact me by one of the means above.

**You can expect that you will have considerable freedom to structure your own time with considerable control over when you do the course work.** In this course, you will be working with a set a material (A MODULE) presented to you. There will be five “blocks” of material. Blocks will be released consecutively with Block 1 opening on January 20<sup>th</sup>. You can do the work at your own pace, spread it out, do it all at once – it’s up to you. Please keep in mind that while you have significant flexibility in scheduling your work and participation, your experience with your online colleagues in the course will be richer if you can spread your study and involvement over the breadth of the Block period.

**You can expect that you will need to be proactive in your participation as a student.** You will be joining in discussions, posting information, and finding many different ways to be a part of the class. You can expect that some discussions may extend over numerous days/weeks, as your student colleagues also engage in each module. Participation and discussions are done through “Threads” which are online. Since students will not be online all at the same time, it is possible that you can discuss an issue in real time with a student electronically, but also possible that you will have a delay in the discussion as you wait for student to sign in again.

**Feedback from you throughout the course is a necessity.** As you have enrolled in an on-line course, I won’t know if you are having a problem with material or with this learning format unless you tell me. If you have technical difficulties, there are supports that can address them right away. If you are having difficulty grasping some material, additional support from me or tutoring can also be arranged. Please let me know immediately if there is a problem with which I can help – the sooner you tell me, the sooner I can help you fix the problem.

**You will need to visit the course web page frequently.** If you are not checking PLATO (if only briefly) once every 48-72 hours, you are not engaged enough.

**You can expect that content will be presented to you in a variety of forms.** These include lectures, discussions both online and asynchronous, film, voiced-over Powerpoints, and reading files. It is important to note that this is not a correspondence course where you will only be sending me written material for a grade. You will be required to engage all formats provided

within a block of material, as well as engage in discussion with your online classmates. Granted, that discussion may not always be in real time.

### **Policies**

#### Class Participation:

Participation is necessary for learning. Material will be linked and available to you when you need it. Personal emergencies (e.g., death in the family, sickness) are recognized as valid reasons for being absent for an extended period of time, however it is **your responsibility** to let me know if your personal circumstances are keeping you away from this online course in a manner to which you cannot make the closing date of Block. Participation includes reading, listening, **interacting in discussions, offering your own viewpoints** and feedback, and taking part in group exercises, if applicable. Your participation is tracked electronically by me, and I have access to read and “drop in” on any and all forums built within this class structure.

#### Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to demonstrate their own aptitudes when completing class assignments and examinations. Any student suspected of plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty will be dealt with as outlined under WSU guidelines.

<http://www.wsc.ma.edu/prospective-students/campus-life/student-handbook/academic-life/academic-honesty-policy/>

These policies are subject to change. In the event that policies are changed, you will be notified in advance.

### **Class Structure**

The course makes use of a set of subunits called “blocks.”

You can do the work at your own pace: you can do it all at once, finishing the block work well before the closure date, or you can do it at a slower pace. How you use your time is entirely up to you, so long as all the work is done for all five blocks, and the final exam is completed, by the end of the course.

### **What Will I Find In Each Block?**

Each block will have a clearly numbered set of activities so you’ll know what to do first, second, third, etc. The blocks will vary in content, but you can expect each of them to typically include:

*Instructor Guidance.* I will introduce you to each block and provide some guidance very early, i.e. “**a checklist**”. **It is important to follow the checklists as they are provided to you within the blocks.** You will likely have some kind of multimedia presentation from me, usually in the form of narrated PowerPoint presentations, and there occasionally may be a film or some other online modality.

*Reading.* Readings will be provided in each block. There is no text book. You will find the appropriate links to this additional material in each block.

*Participation.* You will have 15 Discussion Forums in this course. Contributions to discussion forums need not be lengthy, however should always be well-thought and address the prompted topic in the forum. Discussions online are asynchronous (we are not all online at the same time). You will be asked to post a message for the rest of the class. You will be asked to return to the forum and respond to at least two classmates' comments. A significant portion of your final grade (25%) will be based on this class participation, as evidenced through your contributions to the discussion forum. **Class participation** defined as all of the following:

**Active, substantive participation on the class web page through discussion.** By "active" I mean you regularly contribute to the course through the class discussions that will be offered with each block. By "substantive" I mean you do all these things based on the reading and other block materials.

**Active, substantive contributions to class participation by making contributions.** Recommending a link to everyone to a newspaper article relating to class discussions, recommending something you've found on television or the web that is interesting, showing an example from experiences (general life experience, observations of behavior, through a job, internship, volunteer work, and so on) relating to our work all count as class participation as well.

**Active, substantive contributions to class participation by feedback to classmate comments.** Feedback can be light-hearted, additive, complementary, but should always be respectful. Brief is fine.

Please note: Your grade for class participation will be assigned by me, based on my evaluation of your contribution through the criteria mentioned above (It will receive a point value between 0-3). I'll be happy to give you feedback at any time on this part of your grade. By remaining in the course, you are giving your consent to that evaluation.

"A" level participation means you are both active and substantial in each block (3 points);  
"B" level participation means you are active, but do so without substance from the material (2 points);  
"C" level participation means you do the same as "B" but with less regularity (1 point);  
Extremely low or non-participation will result in 0 points.

*Case Study Essays.* Each block will include a case study. You will apply a decision making model, introduced to you in the material in Block 1, to write the essay response. Essays should be organized according to the decision making model, word-processed and saved on your technology. You will have the ability to attach the completed essay in a "dropbox" and send it to me for scoring. Essays are scored on a 100 point scale.

### **Will There Be Examinations?**

*Examinations.* Yes. Exams will be multiple choice and essay. Exams will cover readings *and additional material presented online*. **A pretest will not be part of your grade.** It is used only as a baseline indicator of your knowledge. You will have a final examination. The examination may be completed "open book", i.e., you may use all material available to you.

However, you must not communicate with each other about examinations (honor system). As the exam is open-book, it is not weighted as much as course participation (measured through your contributions in discussion forums) or case assignment essays. **A part of the exam will have a time limit, therefore you should plan to complete that part in one sitting.**

If you have a learning need which requires untimed examinations, your circumstances should be registered with the Banacos Academic Center at Westfield State University. You should additionally notify me, in private, at the beginning of the course so we might discuss how any needed accommodation may be made for you.

<u><b>Grading</b></u>	
<b>Examinations</b>	<b>15%</b>
<i>Pretest Exam</i>	<i>Not Graded</i>
<i>Final Exam</i>	<i>15%</i>
<b>Case Study Essays</b>	<b>60%</b>
<i>Case Study #1</i>	<i>12%</i>
<i>Case Study #2</i>	<i>12%</i>
<i>Case Study #3</i>	<i>12%</i>
<i>Case Study #4</i>	<i>12%</i>
<i>Case Study #5</i>	<i>12%</i>
<b>Class Participation through Discussion Forums</b>	<b>25%</b>
Total of 15 Discussion Forums	

### IMPORTANT BLOCK DATES & TOPICS

Block	Topics	Block OPENS	Block CLOSSES
1	<b>Introduction to Ethical Codes, Complaints, Issues, Dilemmas, &amp; Problem-Solving Models</b>	<b>Jan 20 (Tue) 8:00am</b>	<b>Feb 13 (Fri) 11:59pm</b>
2	<b>Privacy, Confidentiality &amp; Privilege</b>	<b>Feb 8 (Sun) 8:00am</b>	<b>Mar 1 (Sun) 11:59pm</b>
3	<b>Boundaries; Multiple Relationships</b>	<b>Feb 27 (Fri) 8:00am</b>	<b>Mar 29 (Sun) 11:59pm</b>
4	<b>Responsibilities in Therapy</b>	<b>Mar 27 (Fri) 8:00am</b>	<b>Apr 19 (Sun) 11:59pm</b>
5	<b>Record Keeping; Managed Care &amp; Advocacy</b>	<b>Apr 17 (Fri) 8:00am</b>	<b>May 11 (Mon) 11:59pm</b>
<b>Final Examination must be completed by 11:59pm May 11<sup>th</sup></b>			

**Block Checklists are attached here and will also be included as a first item in each “Block”.**

## CHECKLIST for Block 1:

- You should have completed the 20-question Pretest before beginning this work in Block 1. If you have not, please close this file and find the “Pretest” link to in the left marginal menu bar to complete the Pretest. It is scored only for you and is NOT part of your final grade in the course in any way.
- Listen and view** the 5-minute narrated PowerPoint in the file *Ethical Codes, Principles, & Making Ethical Decisions*.
- Read** the American Counseling Association’s (ACA) Code of Ethics, as well as the American Mental Health Counseling Association’s (AMHCA) Code of Ethics. As you will be continually referring to these document throughout the course, it may be helpful to print out a copy if you prefer.
- Read** the 1-page document **17 Ethical Principles & Values**.
- Enjoy a Movie!** . . .With paper and pen in hand, you will find *The Prince of Tides* streamed for your enjoyment. See how many ethical concerns you can identify. You’ll find an assignment box to send me your top 10.
- Read** *Ethical Dilemmas in Psychological Practice: Results of a National Survey*. After reading the research article, you’ll find a “discussion forum” created below it in the file (called **Discuss1**). **Contribute** to the class discussion for the question poised.
- Read** *Ethics of Practice: The Beliefs and Behaviors of Psychologists as Therapists*. After reading the research article, you’ll find a “discussion forum” created below it in the file (called **Discuss2**). **Contribute** to the class discussion for the question poised.
- Listen and view** the 10-minutes narrated PowerPoints in the file Processing Ethical Complaints. I overview the American Counseling Association’s process for handling ethical concerns.
- Read Case Study #1**. After thinking carefully about it, you will have a public discussion forum to join and re-visit (**Case Study #1 Discussion**), responding to others’ comments. You will also have an essay to write (**Essay Assn #1**). After you complete the essay as instructed, attach it as a file in Essay Assn #1for submission and grading. Your essay is seen only by me.
- Finally, I am providing you with the link to the Board of Allied Mental Health’s **262 CMR 2.00** requirements to become a Licensed Mental Health Counselor. You are responsible for orienting yourself to the Commonwealth’s requirements for your education during your M.A. Psychology program, as well as post-master’s experience hours and supervision. If you have questions about 262 CMR, it would be helpful to all if you are comfortable posting them in the public forum “Ask Dr. B.”

## CHECKLIST for Block 2:

### File *Informed Consent*:

- Read** *Seeking an Understanding of Informed Consent*. **Browse** the 22 items listed on the 1-page *Information to Include in Informed Consent*.
- Listen and view** the 10-minutes of narrated PowerPoints (Part 1 & 2) on Informed Consent.
- Contribute** to class discussion with the question poised for you in **Discuss3**.

### File *Privacy, Confidentiality & Privilege*:

- Read** the articles *Privacy, Confidentiality, and Privilege in Psychotherapeutic Relationships*, & *Privacy and Confidentiality in Psychotherapy*.
- Listen and view** the 5-minute narrated PowerPoint on *The Difference Between Privacy Confidentiality & Privilege*.
- Contribute** to class discussion with the questions poised for you in **Discuss4**.

### File *Risk Management with Minors and/or Duty to Warn*:

- Read** the article *Confidentiality With Minor Clients: Issues and Guidelines for Therapists*.
- Listen and view** the 5-minute narration *Confidentiality With Minors*.
- Peruse** the material in *Juvenile Rights Advocacy Project: Guide for Practitioners and Massachusetts Regulations Pertaining to Health Services to Minors*.
- Read** *Limiting Therapist Exposure to Tarasoff Liability: Guidelines for Risk Containment*.
- Contribute** to class discussion with the questions poised for you in **Discuss5**.

### Case Study:

- Read Case Study #2**. After thinking carefully about it, you will have a public discussion forum to join and re-visit (**Case Study #2 Discussion**), responding to others' comments. You will also have an essay to write (**Essay Assn #2**). After you complete the essay as instructed, attach it as a file in Essay Assn #2 for submission and grading. Your essay is seen only by me.

## CHECKLIST for Block 3:

### DO THIS FIRST!

- Complete the Surveys:** (1) *Boundaries of Physical Touch*, and (2) *Statements of Verbal Intimacy*. Your opinions are not graded and will only be reported in group format after every class member finishes them.

### File *Boundaries in Psychotherapy*:

- Read** *The Concept of Boundaries in Clinical Practice: Theoretical and Risk Management Dimensions*.
- Listen and view** the 14-minutes of narrated PowerPoints (Parts 1, 2, & 3) on Boundaries.
- Listen and view** the 4-minute narrated PowerPoint on *Dual Relationships*.

### File *Boundary Violations in Other Relationships*:

- View** the 35-minute news documentary (Primetime Basic Instincts Series) *Obeying or Resisting Authority: A Psychological Retrospective*.
- Contribute** to class discussion with the questions poised for you in **Discuss6**.

### Case Study:

- Read Case Study #3**. After thinking carefully about it, you will have a public discussion forum to join and re-visit (**Case Study #3 Discussion**), responding to others' comments. You will also have an essay to write (**Essay Assn #3**). After you complete the essay as instructed, attach it as a file in Essay Assn #3 for submission and grading. Your essay is seen only by me.



## **CHECKLIST for Block 4:**

File *An Eclectic Mix of Articles*:

- Read** *Ethical and Legal Considerations in Marital and Family Therapy*.
- Read** *Guidelines for Providers of Psychological Services to Ethnic, Linguistic, and Culturally Diverse Populations*.
- Read** *increasingly Informed Consent: Discussing Distinct aspects of Psychotherapy at Different Points in Time*.
- Contribute** to class discussion with your selected option poised for you in **Discuss7**.

File *How to handle Court Requests & Demands*:

- Read** *Strategies for Private Practitioners Coping with Subpoenas or Compelled Testimony for Client Records or Test Data*.
- Listen and view** the 10-minutes of narrated PowerPoints (Parts 1 & 2) titled *Help, I've been Subpoena'd!*

File *The Suicidal Client*:

- Listen and view** the 10-minutes of narrated PowerPoints (Parts 1 & 2) titled *Suicidality*.

File *Ethical Dilemmas Related to Diagnosing &/or Medicating*:

- Listen and view** the very brief pre-instruction I have recorded for you titled *Medicated Child Pre-Viewing Instructions*.
- View** the 55-minute news documentary (Frontline) *The Medicated Child*.
- Contribute** to class discussion with your response to my prompt in **Discuss8**.

Case Study:

- Read Case Study #4**. After thinking carefully about it, you will have a public discussion forum to join and re-visit (**Case Study #4 Discussion**), responding to others' comments. You will also have an essay to write (**Essay Assn #4**). After you complete the essay as instructed, attach it as a file in Essay Assn #4 for submission and grading. Your essay is seen only by me.

## **CHECKLIST for Block 5:**

### File *Record Keeping Guidelines*:

- Read** *Record Keeping Guidelines*.
- Read** *HIPPA Federal Regulations of Health Care Records*.
- Read** *Massachusetts General Laws: Record-Keeping for Victims of Rape & Domestic Violence*.
- Listen and view** the 8-minutes of narrated PowerPoints (Parts 1 & 2) titled *Record Keeping*.
- Listen and view** the 5-minutes of narrated PowerPoint on *HIPPA*.

### File *Managed Care & Advocacy*:

- Read** *Considerations for Ethical Practice in Managed Care*.
- Read** *Legal Liability & Managed Care*.
- View** the very brief Previewing Instructions to *Minds on the Edge*
- View** the 56-minute Fred Friendly Seminar titled *Minds on the Edge: Facing Mental Illness*.
- Contribute** to class discussion with your response to my prompt in **Discuss9**.

### Case Study:

- Read Case Study #5**. After thinking carefully about it, you will have a public discussion forum to join and re-visit (**Case Study #5 Discussion**), responding to others' comments. You will also have an essay to write (**Essay Assn #5**). After you complete the essay as instructed, attach it as a file in Essay Assn #5 for submission and grading. Your essay is seen only by me.
- Contribute** to a concluding class discussion with your response to my prompt in **Discuss10**.
- When rested, open and complete the **Final Examination**.