

# NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

## COURSE SYLLABUS

- COURSE NUMBER:** PSY 627
- COURSE TITLE:** Legal & Ethical Issues In Marriage & Family Therapy
- PROFESSOR:** Edward Piece, M.S.W., L.C.S.W.  
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- TEXT:** Corey, G., Corey, M. S., & Callahan, P. (2006). *Issues and ethics in the helping profession* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth
- OTHER REQUIRED READINGS:** Board of Behavioral Sciences Publications (available online):  
[Statutes And Regulations Relating To The Practice Of: Marriage And Family Therapy](#)  
[A Guide to Supervision For MFT Interns and Trainees](#)  
["Professional Therapy Never Includes Sex"](#)
- CATALOG DESCRIPTION:** This course examines the professional laws and ethics pertaining to the practice of counseling and psychotherapy, with an emphasis on the laws and ethics pertaining to marriage and family therapy, the content of these legal and ethical codes, and the underlying principles involved.
- COURSE CONTENT AREAS:**
1. Analysis and discussion of ethical codes in the counseling profession.
  2. Values and the helping profession
  3. Legal issues and malpractice concerns.
  4. Managing boundaries and multiple relationships.
  5. Professional competence and training.
  6. Issues in supervision and consultation.
  7. Multicultural perspectives and diversity issues.
  8. Ethics in assessment, diagnosis and informed consent.
  9. Issues of confidentiality and mandated reporting.
  10. Ethics in marriage and family counseling.
- ABILITIES:** Abilities are tasks that therapists should be able to perform. In order to do so, therapists have to draw on relevant knowledge and skills. In this syllabus, abilities are listed as broad categories of performance that also function as class goals and that are further broken down into the sub-categories of knowledge and skills. The knowledge and skills sections are more specific in stating criteria for evaluation of these components.

Abilities to be demonstrated in class role-plays, exercises or written assignments.

Related to diagnosis, evaluation and outcomes assessment:

1. Identify relevant legal and ethical responsibilities (with respect to scope of practice, informed consent and training in the use of assessment instruments) within the practice of psychotherapy and marriage and family counseling.
2. Assess dangerousness to self or others and recommend appropriate interventions based on ethical and legal requirements.
3. Make reports to child and elder protective services.

Related to psychotherapeutic interventions:

1. Recognize relevant ethical and legal responsibilities (including professional competence and training, scope of practice, diversity issues and client needs and abilities) involved in use of therapeutic interventions in individual psychotherapy and marriage and family counseling.
2. Recognize and understand the laws pertaining to mandated reporting of suspected or known abuse (e.g. child, dependent adult, elder) and dangerousness.

Related to psychotherapeutic relationship and context:

1. Recognize and understand ethical and legal responsibilities (with respect to boundaries, dual relationships, informed consent, continuity of treatment and confidentiality) within practice of psychotherapy and marriage and family counseling.
2. Recognize and monitor issues of therapist's cognitive, emotional or physical limitations on the therapeutic process.
3. Recognize and manage issues of counter transference in the psychotherapeutic process.

Knowledge to be demonstrated using objective formats.

Related to diagnosis, evaluation and outcomes assessment:

1. Know ethical issues pertaining to confidentiality and HIPAA regulations.
2. Know ethical issues pertaining to diagnosis and treatment planning with respect to health insurance and managed care.
3. Understand ethical components of an initial therapeutic interview including discussion of fees, office policies, therapeutic process, confidentiality, and therapist responsibilities.
4. Know how to document clinical services, securely maintain client records and respond to client's request for records.

5. Know how to assess for issues of abuse and dangerousness.
6. Know the ethical issues regarding scope of practice and the use of assessment tools and testing within the practice of marriage and family counseling.

Related to psychotherapeutic interventions:

1. Understand the concepts of competence and scope of practice in choice of therapeutic interventions.
2. Understand the importance of recognizing the needs, abilities and cultural diversity of clients.
3. Know how to make a report documenting abuse and client dangerousness in compliance with laws mandating such reports.

Related to psychotherapeutic relationship and context:

1. Know how to define and maintain appropriate boundaries and relationships within the therapeutic context.
2. Know and understand laws and ethical standards regarding sexual contact between therapist and client.
3. Understand ethical concerns regarding dual relationships.
4. Understand legal and ethical standards pertaining to continuity of care and client abandonment.
5. Understand legal and ethical standards pertaining to confidentiality and privilege.
6. Know how to recognize cognitive, emotional and/or intellectual impairment in the therapist and what to do about it.
7. Know how to recognize counter transference issues and the necessity of consultation or referral as appropriate.

**REQUIREMENTS:** Students are expected to attend all class sessions. An absence is assessed each time a student is not in attendance during a regularly scheduled class period, whether or not it is an excused absence. An instructor may withdraw a student from class prior to the sixth session in graduate courses if there are more than two unexcused absences. Students who have more than three absences, excused or unexcused, cannot be given a satisfactory grade. There will be point deductions for not being here and for handing written work in late. Cell phones may not be used during class. Students should shut off or switch phones and pagers to silent mode.

**GRADING:** Grading will be in compliance with the National University grading system as outlined in your catalog. The plus and minus system will be utilized in compliance with the National University General Catalog. There are 100 points to be earned in the course.

Letter Grade	Points	Letter Grade	Points
A	95 to 100	C	73 to 75
A-	90 to 94	C-	70 to 72
B+	86 to 89	D+	66 to 69
B	83 to 85	D	63 to 65
B-	80 to 82	D-	60 to 62
C+	76 to 79	F	Below 60

Definition of Grades (Graduate Level):

- A: Outstanding Achievement: Significantly exceeds standards
- B: Commendable Achievement: Exceeds standards
- C: Marginal Achievement: Does not meet standards
- D: Unsatisfactory Achievement: Below standards
- F: Failing
- I: Incomplete: A grade given when a student has completed at least 2/3 of the course class sessions and is unable to complete the course requirements due to uncontrollable and unforeseen circumstances. The student must convey (preferably in writing) these circumstances to the instructor prior to the final day of the course. If the instructor decides that an "Incomplete" is warranted, the instructor must convey the conditions for removal of the "Incomplete" to the student in writing. A copy must also be placed on file with the Office of the Registrar until the Incomplete is removed or the time limit for removal has passed.

**ASSIGNMENTS:** Assignments for this course and the due dates appear below. Assignments submitted after the due date will be reduced in point score. No assignments will be accepted after the last class.

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Quiz 1, 2 & 3	July 14,21 & 28	15
Presentation	July 28, 2009	30
Final Exam	August 1, 2009	40
Participation & attendance		15
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

## EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS / GRADING

- Quiz 1, 2 & 3**            These brief quizzes will cover material discussed in class or assigned. They will rely strongly on the readings assigned. They will not include information any video shown in class. All quizzes will be multiple choice.
- Presentation**            In small groups or individually, students will research a specific ethical/legal issue of their choice and approved by the instructor, and give a 6-18 minute presentation of issues to the class. (The larger the group, the longer the presentation.) Prepare a one-page outline for the class. Creativity and innovation are encouraged.
- Final Exam**              This will cover all material in this course.
- Participation**            Students are expected to a) attend each class having read assigned material and prepared out of class assignments, as required; 2) be prepared to actively and respectfully participate in class discussions and exercises.
- The format of this class lends to greater emphasis on student commentary and questions, as well as class exercises. Participation or lack thereof, will likely influence your understanding of the material. Points will be deducted for lack of attendance, not being present or late arrival/early departure.

## Class Schedule and Readings

Class Date	Material Covered	Readings
7/7/2009	Introduction, Overview, Course Requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What distinguishes Law &amp; Ethics</li> <li>• What distinguishes psychotherapy &amp; counseling</li> <li>• BBS &amp; California Licensing Law</li> <li>• Professional Associations</li> <li>• Scope of Practice</li> <li>• Scope of Competence</li> </ul>	
7/9/2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transference/Counter-transference/Personal Awareness</li> <li>• Therapist Values</li> <li>• Confidentiality</li> <li>• Psychotherapist/Patient Privilege</li> <li>• Duty to Warn</li> <li>• Dual Relationships</li> </ul>	BBS Online:  Statutes And Regulations Relating To The Practice Of: Marriage And Family Therapy

7/14/2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treatment of Minors</li> <li>    Confidentiality</li> <li>    Privilege</li> <li>    Consent to Treat</li> <li>    Treating Without Parental Consent</li> <li>    Emancipated Minors</li> <li>    Child Abuse Reporting</li> <li>• Elder/Dependent Adult Abuse Reporting</li> </ul>	<p>BBS Online:</p> <p>A Guide to Supervision For MFT Interns and Trainees</p> <p>“Professional Therapy Never Includes Sex”</p>
7/16/2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unprofessional Conduct</li> <li>• Child Abuse Reporting</li> <li>• Termination</li> <li>• Insurance/Managed Care/HIPAA</li> <li>• Advertising</li> </ul>	Corey, Corey & Callahan - Chapter 1, 2 & 3
7/21/2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity/Multi Cultural</li> <li>• On-Line Therapy</li> <li>• Technology &amp; Telemedicine</li> <li>• HITECH</li> <li>• Recordkeeping</li> <li>• Ethical Issues - Couples &amp; Family Therapy</li> <li>• Crisis Assessment &amp; Intervention</li> </ul>	Corey, Corey & Callahan - Chapter 6, 7 & 11
7/23/2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision/Consultation</li> <li>• Civil Liability/Disciplinary Actions/Ethics Complaints</li> <li>• How to Avoid Trouble</li> <li>• Other Ethical and Legal Concerns</li> </ul>	Corey, Corey & Callahan - Chapter 8 & 9
7/28/2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63)</li> <li>• Informed Consent</li> <li>• Standard of Care</li> <li>• Vignette Practice</li> </ul>	Corey, Corey & Callahan - Chapter 5
7/30/2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations</li> <li>• Review</li> <li>• Video</li> </ul>	
8/1/2009	Final Exam	

**Bibliography:** See [http://www.edwardpierce.net/PSY627\\_bibliography.htm](http://www.edwardpierce.net/PSY627_bibliography.htm)

**Links:** Links can be found at [http://www.edwardpierce.net/PSY627\\_links.htm](http://www.edwardpierce.net/PSY627_links.htm)