CO 790 PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND
CHRISTIAN ETHICS FOR COUNSELORS
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary-Charlotte
Professor: Maria L Boccia
January 26-30, 2009

COURSE OBJECTIVES
The primary objective of the course is to introduce the student to the professional dimensions of counseling and psychotherapy in several pertinent areas:

1. Develop knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities, limits, and liabilities of professional counseling.
2. Become conversant with the central legal, ethical, and professional issues, in addition to the dilemmas that confront practitioners in counseling.
3. Integrate acquired knowledge and understanding, and apply to practical situations that arise in practicum and professional experience, with a view to the specific principles of biblical Christian ethics.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Textbooks

Recommended Reading (On Reserve in the Library)

READING REQUIREMENTS

PLEASE READ AT LEAST SANDERS, RANDOLPH K. CHRISTIAN COUNSELING ETHICS BEFORE THE START OF CLASS.

The student will be expected to read all three required textbooks in entirety. Also, the student will be expected to begin initial but extensive library research in the professional standards and ethics field. By becoming familiar with the available relevant literature on legal, ethical, and professional issues, the student will be equipped to participate knowledgeably in class discussions. Likewise, the student will demonstrate competency to integrate the core concepts into required written assignments.

READING GUIDELINES
To become conversant with the pertinent ethical issues in the counseling field, students are expected to read from a variety of sources to complement areas of understanding and be aware of current ethical questions and conversations. Books may be chosen from the bibliography attached to this syllabus. The student may select other scholarly and clinical sources as long as they clearly fall into the categories and issues that are relevant to
the course. All readings should be recorded in a log that will become an annotated bibliography. Readings should be selected from the following sources:

1. The three required textbooks
2. The three recommended reading books
3. The brief bibliography attached to this syllabus or the more extended bibliographies found in the textbooks and the required reading books.
4. Journals and periodicals in the fields of professional, clinical, or Christian counseling as well as marriage and family therapy.
5. Literature of relevant, functional, and applicable value, provided these sources reflect obvious significance to professional, ethical, and legal issues in counseling.

**READING LOG**
The student will keep account of these readings by means of a log that shall include the following components:

1. Date of the reading
2. Author(s) and source
3. Title of the book, chapter, or journal article
4. Publisher and year of publication
5. Number of pages read by source (also tallied on a summary sheet)

**Due date:** March 30, 2009

**CASE STUDY**
Students are assumed to be deeply immersed in the practicum training experience or to have completed all internship rotations. Each student will present a (25 min.) detailed case study from personal practicum/internship experience, which represents an ethical question or challenge. A copy of the presentation should be provided to the professor via email before the start of class. Care should be taken to disguise all distinguishing details in order to protect fully the identity of the clients discussed. Use creativity in the presentation and include the suggested format below.

- State clearly the ethical dilemma
- Give history and details of its context
- Facilitate class discussion (using a few carefully crafted questions)
- Present the group=s decision and rationale

**Due date:** Dates are assigned in class for presentations later in the week.

**FINAL PAPER**
A research paper is required, presenting a carefully crafted framework for ethical decision-making. This synthesized approach to challenges inherent within helping should address consideration of how to utilize the Christian faith perspective along with the professional ethical commitments within the practice of counseling. The paper should demonstrate a thorough grasp of the dilemmas, challenges, premises, and principles within the context of the broadly relevant cultural issues. A substantial bibliography and extensive reflective thought are assumed in this assignment. This paper will be evaluated as a final senior paper and should reflect that level of integration and scholarship.

FORMAT: Ten to twelve (10-12) pages, plus a bibliography presented in the APA style.

**Due date:** March 30, 2009

**ATTENDANCE**
The style and format of this course is essentially that of a senior seminar that anticipates maximum class input
and reflective discussion from the student. The student is expected to attend all class sessions and participate fully in the classroom experience. Case study presentations and class discussions will be a significant part of the final grade.

GRADING CRITERIA

The final grade will reflect the combined efforts of the student as derived from the following sources:

1. Final Paper  40%
2. Case Study Presentation  30%
3. Contributions / Participation in Class Discussions  15%
4. Annotated Reading Log  15%
   Total  100%
SESSION #1
- Introduction to the course
- Assignment of case presentations
- Review of comparative codes of ethics
- Responsibility to clients and agencies

SESSION #2
- Ethics versus Christian ethics
- Values and psychotherapy
- Religious values and secular therapies
- Family law and child custody issues
- Marital law and ethical conflicts

SESSION #3
- Ethical theory and Biblical standards
- Ethical accountability and the learning of ethics
- Determination of professional competence
- Evaluating education, training, experience, and capacity
- Issues in assessment

SESSION #4
- Confidentiality, privilege, and privacy
- Informed consent to treatment
- Limits of confidentiality, Tarasoff, and the ethical dilemma
- Principles and guidelines for decision-making

SESSION #5
- Supervision and training
- Requirements for supervisors
- Complex supervisory relationships
- Distinguishing supervision from therapy

SESSION #6
- Multiple relationships
- Intimacy and integrity
- Boundaries in counseling and therapy
- Values and belief systems: the client's and the counselor's
- Gaining clarity about the potential for exploitation
- Sexual issues and reasonable prudence

SESSION #7
- Financial issues and disclosure
- Advertising, promotion, and marketing
- Ethics in research, education, and the marketplace
- Decision-making processes
SESSION #8
- Legal issues and roles within forensic settings
- Legal responsibilities of therapists
- Judicial system and expert testimony
- Legal ramifications of professional associations and groups
- Malpractice and common risk factors

SESSION #9
- Referral and termination
- Models for ethical decision-making
- Development of a truly Christian code of ethics

SESSION #10
- Professional development and continuing education
- Being professional in a professional community
- Professional identity and involvement in local issues
- Review and evaluation of the course


Laacqz, K and Driskill, J.D. *Ethics and spiritual care: a guide for pastors, chaplains, and spiritual directors.


Can a Christian therapist working in a government agency talk with a client about faith? A young couple with two children asks a
Christian counselor to help them negotiate an end to their marriage. What responsibility does the counselor have to try to repair the
relationship? A youth group member confidentially reveals to the pastor that he is taking drugs. Should the pastor tell the boy's parents?
A counselor who teaches a college course has a client show up for class. What should she do? These are just a few of the complex
dilemmas that therapists. Additional Ethical Standards for Licensed and Professional Christian Counselors . 45 ES3-000: Fees, Client
Billing and Financial Relationships . 45 ES3-010: Setting Fees .Â ethics; and 3. the vitality and growing maturity of Christian
counselingincluding its many theories and approachesindicating the need for an overarching ethical-legal template to guide the ongoing
development of biblical and empirically-sound Christian counseling models.Â Ethical standards I. ethical standards for all christian
counselors The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is a professional organization supporting school counselors, school
counseling students/interns, school counseling program direc-tors/supervisors and school counselor educators. School coun-selors have
unique qualifications and skills to address preKâ€“12 studentsâ€™ academic, career and social/emotional development needs.Â In this
document, ASCA specifies the obligation to the principles of ethical behavior necessary to maintain the high standards of integrity,
leadership and professionalism.