



Professional Issues and Ethics in Psychology (PSY 541-400)
Western Kentucky University
College of Education and Behavioral Sciences
Department of Psychology
Course Syllabus - Summer 2020



This syllabus is subject to change, but you will be notified of such changes as early as possible

Instructor: Tim Thornberry, Ph.D.
Class days/times: TBA
Classroom: TBA
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Office: 3020 Gary Ransdell Hall
Office hours: Available by appointment – please email me to schedule.

Required Textbooks:

American Psychological Association (2017). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct.
Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code/>.

Knapp, S., Younggren, J. N., VandeCreek, L., Harris, E., & Martin, J. N. (2013). Assessing and managing risk in psychological practice: An individualized approach (2nd edition). Rockville, MD: The Trust.

Recommended Text:

Cohen, E. D., & Cohen, G. S. (2003). *The virtuous therapist: Ethical practice of counseling and psychotherapy*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Students will also need to acquire copies of the Code of Ethics from the American Psychological Association, the American Counseling Association and the National Association of School Psychologists.

Course Description:

Ethics codes, professional behaviors, and legal issues in applied psychology.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- 1) Develop an understanding of the APA Ethics Code;
- 2) Develop an ability to think through ethical dilemma by applying appropriate ethical and legal standards to the dilemma;
- 3) Develop an understanding of how ethics and legal guidelines guide the practice of psychology;
- 4) Develop an understanding of other codes of ethical conduct, such as ACA and NASP, that will affect students' practice.
- 5) ***Add your own personal objective for this class here.**

These objectives will be achieved via several activities. These include completing the assigned readings, critically and intentionally thinking about the material, participating in class discussions, and participating in learning activities in and out of the classroom. The more you can tie the course objectives into your personal life and make the material personally meaningful to you, the more likely you will learn, retain, and recall it. These objectives will be assessed via course examinations, reaction papers, in-class participation, and a presentation.

Teaching Philosophy:

“It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.”

-Albert Einstein

It is my belief that a teacher’s primary task is to awaken a passion for learning within the student. Not only should this passion be for the content of the course, but for all learning endeavors. It is my primary responsibility to present content in such a way as to make it meaningful to each student’s individual life. Also, it is my responsibility to present content and create assignments in multiple modalities to cater to the strengths and challenge the weaknesses of each student. I will give students opportunities to take an active role in their education through discussion, collaborative tasks with fellow students, creative thinking, and expressive writing. I believe it is your responsibility to be prepared for every class (i.e., complete assigned readings, prepare questions for class, carefully consider what the content means to you). Also, you should be responsible for completing work on time, attending every class, and accepting the consequences of failing to do so with maturity. I believe that our mutual experiences and thoughts will result in an exciting semester that will broaden not only your views of mental health but mine, as well. Furthermore, I hope this course challenges yours and my perceptions of mental health so that we may perpetually re-evaluate our perceptions in the pursuit of tolerance, ethics, wisdom, and understanding.

Checking Your WKU Email Account:

I will from time to time send course announcements by email. Please be sure to check your WKU email account at least twice per day. I will do the same for you – if you have any questions about the class, feel free to email me or stop by my office during office hours, and I’d be happy to answer them. Due to FERPA legislation, I am not permitted to email information about grades to students, so do not ask. You may ask me at the beginning or end of class for grade information or during my office hours.

Getting Help:

If you are having difficulties with any aspect of this course, **please come to my office hours**, and I will do my best to help you. If you are unable to come to my office hours, you can contact me to make an appointment for a different time. If you have just a short question, feel free to ask me after class or send it via e-mail. I can’t help you improve your performance in class if you do not ask for it! Also, be sure to ask for help earlier rather than later – research shows that earlier intervention leads to the best outcomes. If I am too scary to approach, feel free to ask for help from the Graduate Assistant – that is their job!

Academic Dishonesty

Students are expected to complete their own work. As stated in the university catalog, “students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the coursework in which the act is detected or a failing grade in the course without possibility of withdrawal.” In other words, **do your own work and do not cheat**. I will use electronic software to assess writing assignments for plagiarism as needed.

Student Accommodations:

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. The phone number is 270-745-5004 [270.745.5121 V/TDD] or email at sarc@wku.edu. **Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation (LOA) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.**

Title IX Statement:

“Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU’s Title IX Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy (#0.2070) at <https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf>. Under this policy, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex-gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, **WKU faculty are “Responsible Employees” of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU’s Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.** If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU’s Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.”

*****Additional information about Title IX, academic dishonesty, and campus safety can be found at:**
<https://www.wku.edu/syllabusinfo/>

Your Grade:

Your grade will be determined by your performance on an exam, take-home quizzes, completion of reflection papers, and a presentation.

Exam (100 points – 25%):

There will be one multiple choice/essay exam covering the APA Ethics Code worth 100 points. Students will have to pass the exam at 80% proficiency to progress through the program. Those failing to achieve 80% proficiency will be required to re-take the exam.

Exam Policies:

If you are late to the exam, you will be required to finish the exam at the scheduled end-time. If another student has exited the exam room, you will not be permitted to take the exam. Turn off your cell phone and other electronic devices and leave them out of sight during exams. If I see you looking at an electronic device during an exam, I will assume you are cheating.

*NO make-up exams will be given without a **University Excused Absence** and **advanced notice** that you will need a make-up exam.

Take-Home Quizzes (100 points – 25%):

There will be five take-home quizzes assigned throughout the course. Each quiz will be worth 20 points. Research shows that frequent, low-stakes quizzing helps retention of course information.

Reflection Papers/Discussion Questions (100 points – 25%):

To encourage thoughtful, active participation in class and retention of information, you will submit **five** reflective papers. Each reflection paper will be worth 20 points. These reflection papers will be emailed to me and will address the following:

1. What was the topic presented in class on which you are reflecting? (5 points)
2. What was something new that you learned or found interesting? (5 points)
3. How will course info be used in your future work with clients/patients? (5 points)
4. What questions do you have about this topic going forward that you hope to answer yourself? (5 points)

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. If it is determined that plagiarism has occurred in your work, you will be given a score of 0 on the assignment (see academic honesty policy above) and possibly reported for

further disciplinary measures up to and including dismissal from WKU. **Maintain multiple electronic copies in case of computer failure, file corruption, etc.** Computer problems is **NOT** a university-approved excuse for late work.

Class Presentation (100 points – 25%):

Students will create a class presentation with accompanying PowerPoint slides. These slides are to be emailed to me. Presentations should be professional presentations styled after a workshop or continuing education seminar. Students will each select one topic area from the list provided below. It is possible to present on other topics, but students need to clear this with me ahead of time. This will allow students to learn about a topic area in more detail. Presentations should last 45 minutes and include the following (10 points each):

1. Accurate spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
2. The chosen topic and why we as psychologists should care about this topic (the “who cares?”); this may include prevalence rates, costs to society, etc.
3. An illustrative case for this ethical topic – this can be based on a true case (deidentified) or can be based on a fictitious character. Video clips, news stories, etc. or in-class acting performances are encouraged!
4. Cultural and developmental considerations for this topic.
5. Supporting empirical literature related to this topic with correct, APA-style citations
6. Suggestions for how to navigate this ethical dilemma should it occur in practice and/or tips for preventing this ethical situation from occurring in practice based on your review of the literature
7. Selected, high-quality readings for the class related to the topic – these will be provided to classmates at least 24 hours prior to your presentation.
8. A handout for classmates that summarizes provided information and tips for handling this ethical situation.
9. Two short-answer questions and 5 multiple-choice questions for the class (sent in the body of the email to me).
10. Presentation quality

Course Points Breakdown:

Exam = 100 points (25% of your grade)

Take-home quizzes = 5 X 20 points each = 100 points (25% of your grade)

Reflection Papers = 5 X 20 points each = 100 points (25% of your grade)

Class presentation = 100 points (25% of your grade)

Course Total Points = 400 points

Final course grades will be based on the scale below:

A = 358 – 400 points (89.5-100%)

B = 318– 357 points (79.5-89.4%)

C = 278 – 317 points (69.5-79.4%)

D = 238 – 277 points (59.5-69.4%)

E = less than 238 points (< 59.4%)

Tentative Course Schedule

<u>Lecture Topic</u>	<u>Assigned Readings</u>
Welcome, syllabus, intro to the course, APA Ethics Code General Principles,	Dixon & Mahaffey, 2015 Hayes, 1998 Jennings et al., 2005

Standard 4: Privacy and Confidentiality	
Risk Management, Ethics, and Virtue; APA Ethics Code Standard 2: Competence, Standard 5: Advertising and Other Public Statements	APA 2014 Knapp et al. Sec. 2 Cohen & Cohen Ch.1 Ethics Rounds #10 Ethics Rounds #13 Tjeltveit, 2004
Ethical Systems/ Resolving Ethical Dilemmas/Dual Relationships APA Ethics Code Standard 1: Resolving Ethical Issues; Standard 3: Human Relations	Knapp et al. Sec 3 Ch 1 Knapp et al. Sec 3 Ch 2 Ethics Rounds #1 Ethics Rounds #3 Ethics Rounds #4 Johnson et al., 2012 Moleski & Kiselica, 2005 Pipes et al., 2005 Rogerson et al., 2011 Tjelveit & Gottlieb, 2012
Confidentiality & Record Keeping APA Ethics Code Standard 6: Record Keeping and Fees, Standard 7: Education and Training	APA, 2007 Knapp et al. Sec 3 Ch 4 Bersoff, 2014 Ethics Rounds #8 Fisher, 2008 Sturm, 2012
Research Ethics/ HSRB APA Ethics Code Standard 8: Research and Publication	Blecker-Blease & Freyd, 2006 Ethically Speaking #1 Kazdin, 2011 Pentz et al., 2007 Price, 2010
Exam Date Professional Day	
Therapy & Assessment APA Ethics Code Standard 9: Assessment, Standard 10: Therapy	APAPO, 2015 Barlow, 2010 Knapp et al. Sec 3 Ch 3 Knapp et al Sec 3 Ch 6 Beutler, 2009 Davis & Hayes, 2012 Dimidjian & Hollon, 2010 Heck et al., 2013 Hermann & Herlihy, 2006 Schwartz & Feisthamel, 2009
Professional Issues	APA, 2005

Part 1	APA, 2007 APA Committee on Legal Issues, 2016 APA Practice Management, 2012 Knapp et al. Sec 3 Ch5 Knapp et al. Sec 3 Ch8 Knapp et al. Sec 3 Ch 9 Knapp et al. Sec 3 Ch 11 Braun & Cox, 2005 Clay, 2011 Ethics Rounds #14
Professional Issues Part 2	Good Practice, 2013 Johnson & Barnett, 2012 Lannin & Scott, 2015 Miller & Brengelman, 2013 Novotney, 2016 Rehm & DeMers, 2006 Richardson et al., 2009 Roberto, 2016 Rosenhan, 1973 Shallcross, 2011 Smith & Moss, 2009 Sue et al., 2007 Walsh & Dasenbrook, 2011
Involuntary Commitment/ Suicidality	Knapp et al., Sec. 3 Ch. 7 Cohen & Cohen Ch. 10 Deemer, 2004 Hydahl & Richardson, 2011 Morse, 2003 Werth & Roberts, 2005
Student Presentation	TBA