I. COURSE PURPOSE

This seminar is designed to help the student become more effective in dealing with ethical issues in social work practice and to contribute to knowledge building in this area. It provides a theoretical framework to examine value and ethical dilemmas in a systematic way and to contribute to the further development of social work ethics. It is intended not only to deepen awareness of new and emerging ethical issues but also to provide tools and methodologies drawn from philosophical ethics for reflection and analysis as well as ethics risk management. It seeks to widen the parameters of ethical dialogue and develop the logical coherence and factual accuracy essential to the dialectic. 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; client, third parties, and colleague issues; the ethics of indirect practice—management/administration and supervision; and, bioethics.

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

A. Knowledge Objectives

1. To broaden awareness of the range and subtleties of the value/ethical conflicts in social work practice.
2. To deepen understanding of ethical theory and methodology and its application to ethical conflicts in social work practice.

3. To develop a greater understanding of both individual ethics and the ethics of institutions and collectivities.

4. To develop a greater awareness of the impact of values on the major social institutions and structures in society.

5. To develop a greater understanding of how to integrate ethical practice in a conscious and systematic manner.

6. To further understand the need for knowledge building in professional social work ethics.

B. Affective Objectives

1. To further develop an appreciation for the value of philosophical reflection and its use in the variety of practice situations in which professional social workers function.

2. To appreciate the importance of further development of the Code of Ethics through the use of philosophical reflection and critique.

3. To deepen appreciation of the responsibility of the profession to utilize the philosophical tools of reflection and analysis in a systematic way to critique the underlying values of contemporary social institutions and social policies.

4. To appreciate the responsibility of the practitioner to contribute to the knowledge base of social work ethics.

C. Skill Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students will be able:

1. To demonstrate skill in identifying and articulating value and ethical dilemmas in a variety of practice experiences and organizational settings.

2. To analyzing ethical systems which inform social institutions and organizational structures within which social workers function.

3. To utilizing ethical theory and methodology in value and ethical conflicts in social work practice.

4. To identify and deal with ethical issues inherent in current practice models and interventions.
5. To contribute to the building of the knowledge base of the profession in the area of knowledge and values and particularly in the philosophical analysis of ethical dilemmas in social work practice.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Texts and Readings:

Required Readings


Recommended Books and Periodicals


**Other Recommended Resources and Media:**

**Journals**

*American Journal of Bioethics*

*Ethics. An interdisciplinary journal of social, political and legal philosophy.*

*Ethics and Behavior*


*The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy.*

*The Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*

**Websites:**

University of San Diego, Ethics Matters [http://ethics.sandiego.edu/](http://ethics.sandiego.edu/)


President’s Commission on Bioethics [www.bioethics.gov](http://www.bioethics.gov)

Ethics Resource Library—Free [www.ethicsshare.org](http://www.ethicsshare.org)
B. Course Assignments

1. **Mid-Term Exam** A closed book take-home examination that tests both the students' knowledge of ethical theory and central concepts of the social work code of ethics will be distributed in Class session #5. **Due session #6**

2. **Ethical Dilemma Paper:** A scholarly paper which utilizes philosophical reflection to analyze and evaluate an ethical issue in the area of clinical practice, indirect practice, institutional ethics, or social ethics is required. The issue must be framed as an ethical dilemma and the paper developed within the framework of the Model for ethical decision-making in social work unless otherwise negotiated with the instructor. The ethical model, attached to this course outline, provides a guide for the paper. Students are encouraged to work toward the publication of this paper. Several student papers have been published in refereed journals and these have contributed to the knowledge base of social work ethics.

   Preliminary Paper--the first half of the Ethical Dilemma Paper (section I-4 of The Ethical Model). See guidelines. **Due session # 8**

3. **The Final Paper**--The Ethical Dilemma Paper--the final portion of the paper is completed and the paper is submitted in its entirety. This final paper includes all sections of The Ethical Model, that is section I-4 (The Preliminary paper) as well as the ethical options (including rationale for each option), your position with its philosophical justification, and your critique of the ethical model; sections 5-8. **Due session # 12**

The APA Manual of Style (current edition) is required for all written assignments.

C. **Seminar Participation**

In view of the range of social work roles, the complexity of ethical issues, and the lack of scholarly literature in this area, students are encouraged to draw upon their experiences and related literature to think creatively and analytically about current problems and future directions. Each participant is expected to share relevant knowledge, experience, and ideas. Participation in the further development of this curriculum is built into the course as is contributions to social work knowledge in this area of competence. Each student is expected to serve as a special resource for seminar members in planning a class session with the instructor. Early on, class topics are negotiated within the context of the course objectives so as to meet the learning needs, interests, and experiences of the participants.
D. **Grading Policy**

The University grading system will be utilized (see Policy in NCSSS Bulletin). The grade will be based upon the extent to which the student meets the course objectives as demonstrated by seminar participation and the assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and constructive class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class presentation/discussion facilitation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student's goals for the course will be discussed and formulated in a brief written statement (form attached). The direction for the semester will be set within the framework of the learning needs of the students and the course curriculum.

E. **Learning Contract**

The student's goals for the course will be discussed and formulated in a brief written Statement (form attached). The direction for the semester will be set within the framework for the learning needs of the students and the course curriculum.

F. **Course Expectations**

1. Students are expected to attend all class sessions and to conduct themselves in an ethical and scholarly fashion. In the event that it is necessary for a participant to miss a class session or come late, s/he is expected to notify the instructor in advance. Assigned readings and completion of assigned tasks are expected prior to each class session.

2. The course combines the formats of didactic lectures and participatory seminars. Students and the instructor will endeavor to draw on their own experience including professional practice experience, relevant literature and analytic thinking about the course content. Each student is expected to participate actively in class discussions and to come prepared to share current knowledge, ideas, and relevant experiences as appropriate. Students and the instructor will view each other as resource persons.

3. See the NCSSS Bulletin and student handbook for other expectations relative to student responsibilities and comportment.

**Academic Honesty:**

Joining the community of scholars at CUA entails accepting the standards, living by those standards, and upholding them. Please refer to University Policy and Appropriate Program Handbooks.
**Accommodations:**

Students with physical, learning, psychological or other challenges wishing to request accommodations must identify themselves with the Disability Support Services (DSS) and submit documentation of a disability. Once you have documented a disability, DSS will establish whether any accommodations or academic adjustments are required. If so, please arrange a meeting with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.

G. **Course Evaluation**

Participants and instructor are mutually responsible for on-going, shared, verbal evaluation of the course in order that it may serve the learning needs of the students. At the end of the semester, each participant will have the opportunity to make a written evaluation of the course and the instructor. These are given to the Dean of the School first for perusal and then, after grades have been turned in, to the instructor. There will also be an oral discussion on the students' perspectives and critique of the seminar and the instructor. These evaluations will serve as guidelines for course revisions.
CLASS SCHEDULE

Class 1  OVERVIEW AND PLANNING

Overview of the course organization
Course planning
Orientation to social work ethics: Perspective of philosophical ethics, general ethics, social ethics, professional ethics, philosophical ethics and moral theology differentiated

Required Readings

http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp


Recommended Readings


Class 2  PHILosophical ORIENTATION: ETHICAL METHODOLOGY

World views of the person
The major ethical systems--deontology, teleology, utilitarianism Values and ethics
Virtue ethics
Feminist Ethics
Multi-cultural and multi-temporal ethics

(Learning Goals Due)

Required Readings


Recommended Readings


Class 3  

**ETHICAL THEORIES IN SOCIAL WORK**

Ethical theories (further clarified)  
Philosophical base of social work  
Values and ethical principles differentiated  
Values typologies

**MODELS FOR ETHICAL ANALYSIS**

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


**Class 4 THE CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALIZATION**

Generic principles and essential components in constructing professional ethical codes
The social work Code of Ethics and related social work codes of ethics
The uses and limitations of the professional code
NASW Adjudication Process

**Required Readings**

*Code of ethics*. NASW (Revised 2008).


*NASW adjudication process*. (See NASW WEB site)


**Recommended Readings**


NASW. (2009). *Current controversies in social work ethics: Case examples*. DC: NASW.


**Class 5**

**SOCIAL ETHICS--MACRO ETHICAL ISSUES**

Value and ethical systems inherent in macro social arrangements
Theories of justice: Comparison of Utilitarian, Egalitarian, Libertarian, Communitarian and Feminist approaches
Private enterprise in human service

*(Brief Theory Exam Distributed)*

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**

Gewirth, A. Chapter 1: The basis and content of human rights, pp. 41-66.


**Class 6**

**ORGANIZATIONAL AND INTERPROFESSIONAL ETHICS**

Bureaucratic-professional tension systems--underlying value/ethical orientations Institutional ethics--the moral obligations of institutions Team ethics: theories of team obligations--the ethics of collectivities Emerging ethics’ review processes and ethics risk management

*(Brief Theory Exam Due)*

**Required Readings**


Recommended Readings


Compassion Fatigue and Burnout: Ethical Considerations of the Responsibility of the Social Worker to Self and of the Agency/Organization to Social Workers

Concepts defined; organizational and personalistic predictors of burnout
Ethical responsibility for burnout prevention and mediation

Required Reading

NASW Policy Statement on Self Care


Recommended Readings


**Class 7  **ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO THE CLIENT SYSTEM: MICRO ETHICS

Ethical implications of worker competence  
Moral development theories: Kohlberg and Gilligan  
A feminist perspective  
Ethical issues related to practice models: e.g. family therapy, short/long term models; behavior modification  
Ethical issues in the use and conduct of research

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Readings**


**Class 8  **ETHICS RELATED TO CLIENT SYSTEMS AND THIRD PARTIES

Confidentiality: Bases of the principle--right to privacy, ethics of secrets, legal issues; duty to warn  
Privileged communication: definition and criteria, legal issues, licensure  
The doctrine of informed consent  
Dual relationships/boundary issue

*(Preliminary Scholarly Paper Due)*
Required Readings


Recommended Readings


Class 9  THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Children's rights: history
Family rights vs. children's rights: ethical and legal considerations; confidentiality, self-determination
Special issues: e.g. adolescent services, adoption record controversy

Required Readings


**Recommended Readings**


**Class 10**

**BIOMEDICAL ETHICS**
The sanctity of life vs. the quality of life
Self-determination vs. duty to preserve life
Life sustaining technology: ordinary and extraordinary means; The living will
Issues related to genetics, aids, rational suicide
Active and passive euthanasia
Accountable care organizations
Required Readings

Beauchamp, T.L. & Childress, J. F (2009). Ch. 4: Respect for autonomy; Ch.5: Principle of non-maleficence; Ch.6: Principle of beneficence.


Recommended Readings


NASW. (1993). *Client self-determination in end-life decisions.* DC: Author. also, see NASW Website


Class 11  ETHICS AND AGING

Philosophy of aging
Macro and micro issues of long term care and disability
Filial responsibility

Required readings


Recommended Readings


Class 12 THE ETHICS OF INDIRECT PRACTICE

Ethical Issues in Administrative Practice
Ethical Issues in Supervisory Practice
NASW Adjudication Process: personnel standards
Burnout: Supervisory and organizational implications

*(Final Scholarly Paper Due)*

Required Readings


*NASW Guidelines for Supervision.*

*NASW Adjudication Process.*


Recommended Readings


**PRIVATE PRACTICE**

Issues related to social work process: e.g. informed consent--contract; fees; assessment and termination issues
Responsibility to poor, society
Agency vs. private practice

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


**Class 13**

**RELIGION/SPRITUALITY AND CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE: ETHICAL ISSUES**
Religious and spiritual dimensions of social work practice: Clinical and policy issues
Functional and dysfunctions aspects of religion in practice Counter-transference considerations
Informed Consent
Boundary Issues

Required Readings


*NASW Guidelines on Culturally Sensitive Practice*

Recommended Readings


Environmental Ethics

Required Readings


Recommended Readings


Course Summary/Evaluation

Revised: 7/14 apc/lmm
LEARNING GOALS

Focus

A brief statement of your overall learning goals and your learning style.

1. Name: ________________________________

2. Address: ______________________________

   CUA e-mail ____________________________

3. Telephone: home__________ office_________ cell ______________

4. Expectations for course: (Please discuss your areas of interest in relation to this course and your expectations).

5. Learning style: (Please give an indication of your learning style, the ways you seem to learn best).