I. COURSE PURPOSE

There is an increasing concern about the ethical quality of professional life, evidenced in the growing interest in professional ethics; the revisions of the NASW Code of Ethics (2008); the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Ethics and Principles (2004); in national and international debates on policy issues, such as immigration, the economy, health care, discrimination, end of life care and global issues; and in the ethical issues that shape the direct practitioners ability to engage, assess, and intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. These include attention to informed consent, boundary issues, confidentiality, and self-determination.

The purpose of this course is to help students become more effective in identifying and dealing with the increasingly complex ethical questions in professional social work practice. Because of the multi-focused nature of social work practice, this course addresses the ethical issues in direct practice as well as social policy, managerial, and programmatic issues which confront social workers in various settings. Advances in technology and social networking, an environment of economic constraints, shifting social policies, changing organizational structures (managed care and practice in for-profit settings), and cultural diversity are creating complex moral issues that require special ethical competencies. Since direct practice is profoundly influenced by social and organizational policies, direct service workers need ethical sensitivity and knowledge to engage these issues; while managers, community developers, and policy practitioners need insight into micro level concerns in order to provide adequate leadership in these areas. That is, all social work practitioners have ethical responsibility and accountability not only for direct practice but also for influencing policies that affect direct client service. Increased emphasis on service outcomes, evidence-based practice as well as the use of social networking and information technology raises questions about the moral implications of the means selected to achieve targeted ends. The emergence of ethics review processes as a tool for risk management in both
for-profit and non-profit settings affirms the need for the profession to engage in ethics risk management at all levels of practice.

Class sessions are designed to increase student awareness of their personal value systems with respect to the ethical dimensions of policy, organizational, and practice issues. It provides ethical tools needed to translate ethical principles, including philosophical worldviews, contemporary social justice perspectives and human rights principles into social work practice behaviors. A model for ethical decision making, comprised of basic components for ethical reflection and analysis of conflict situations, is provided. Competency in ethical decision making is needed to deal with rapidly shifting social needs and practice requirements which call for social workers who are creative, self-directed and technically and ethically competent in professional practice yet able to tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts. Case studies, class dialogue and debate, and analysis of student experiences in the field of social work will be utilized.

II. COMPETENCIES AND PRACTICE BEHAVIORS

More specifically, the course prepares students with knowledge, values and skills needed to demonstrate an advanced understanding of the ethical dimensions of the following competencies identified as core by the Council on Social Work Education (2007).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Clinical Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>Combined Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>Social Change Practice Behaviors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competency #1</strong>&lt;br&gt;Professional Identity:&lt;br&gt;Identify as a clinical social worker &amp; conduct self accordingly.</td>
<td>Social workers demonstrate professional use of self across all practice settings. &lt;br&gt;Develop, manage, and maintain therapeutic relationships with clients within the person-in-environment and strengths perspectives.</td>
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<td><strong>Competency #2</strong>&lt;br&gt;Ethical Practice:&lt;br&gt;Apply social work ethical principles to guide clinical practice.</td>
<td>Social workers recognize and manage personal biases in practice settings. &lt;br&gt;Social workers recognize and negotiate the complexities that can arise when organizational policies/procedures interact with competing professional standards for</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competency #3</td>
<td>Competency #4: Diversity in Practice</td>
<td>Competency #5 Human Rights &amp; Justice</td>
<td>Competency #9 Practice Contexts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking: Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.</td>
<td>Social workers engage in reflective practice.</td>
<td>Social workers use their self-awareness to understand the influence of their personal biases and values in working with others.</td>
<td>Social workers assess the current political, economic, social, and cultural climate as it affects the most vulnerable members of society.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Social workers apply ethical principles through the use of an ethical decision making model that helps in the resolution of an ethical dilemma.</td>
<td>Social workers evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of multiple theoretical perspectives and differentially apply them to client situations.</td>
<td>Social workers practice with the understanding that societal structures and values may oppress, marginalize, and alienate, or create, enhance, and privilege different cultural groups within a society.</td>
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</table>
III. FURTHER EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. distinguish between the inter-related concepts of moral values, ethical principles, ethical theory, and ethical standards;
2. identify and clarify their own personal ethical orientation, and the process through which one’s ethical choices are made;
3. utilize ethical theories drawn from professional ethics, organizational ethics, social ethics, multi-cultural and trans-temporal ethics, and bioethics in reaching and justifying ethical positions in social work practice;
4. identify the uses and limitations of the Codes of Ethics with respect to ethical dilemmas involving clients, practitioners, professionals, and society; and,

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts and Readings: Required texts may be purchased at the CUA bookstore and can be accessed through the Mullen Library. Periodical readings can be accessed through the Electronic Journal Title Finder and the Electronic Journal Collections located on the WEB.


B. Recommended Readings (Use selectively based on Concentration and topical interest.)


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


C. Other Recommended Resources and Media:
D. **Course Assignments:** Assignments should be related to your concentration and field of practice. All assignments should be completed using the APA Style.

**Assignment #1: Ethical Dilemma**  
DUE: Class 4  
Describe the practice situation and the ethical dilemma that will be the focus of the paper.  
Sections 1 and 2 on the paper guideline.

**Assignment #2: MID-TERM PAPER**  
DUE: Class 8  
Describe the background information, including literature, values, standards, ethical theories and perspectives. Sections 3, 4, and 5 on the paper guideline.

**Assignment #3: FINAL COMPLETED PAPER**  
DUE: Class 11  
Sections 1 through 5 of the Ethical Model Paper are corrected, edited, and/or revised based on mid-semester feedback and sections 6 through 8 of the paper are completed. The entire paper is submitted. Suggested length: 12 to 15 printed pages. The completed Ethical Model Paper may be submitted as one of the student’s Scholarly Papers required for graduation.

**N.B.** A Bibliography should be included in the preliminary paper as well as the final assignment.

**Class Participation:** Class sessions will be set into learning modules which will include lecture-discussion, group discussion, and experiential content drawn from student field experiences, case materials, class presentations, and role plays. Each participant is asked to share relevant knowledge, experience, and ideas. Students are encouraged to draw upon their experience and that of others in the field and to think creatively in terms of current problems and future directions.
**Class Presentation:** Students will participate in planning the class presentations—particularly the experiential component, with the instructor. This process allows for meaningful student participation and class content that has specific relevance to the group’s learning needs. Small groups of students will select a class session of interest to them. **The group should meet with the instructor at least one week in advance of their presentation** to structure the content of the session they will facilitate. Student facilitation will be considered an essential part of class participation. A sign-up sheet will be posted for this purpose.

**Learning Contract:** The student's goals for the course will be discussed and formulated in a brief written statement (See Learning Contract Form attached). The direction for the semester will be set within the framework of the learning needs of the students and course curriculum. It should be submitted to the instructor at the beginning of the second class session.

**E. Grading Policy:** The university grading system will be utilized (see policy in bulletin). The grade will be based upon the extent to which the student meets the course objectives as demonstrated by class participation and the two NCSSS required papers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Class Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation/Session Facilitation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #1: Ethical Dilemma</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #2: Midterm Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #3: Final Paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**F. Attendance and Participation**

1. Students are expected to attend all class sessions, to arrive at classes on time, 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. Students are responsible for obtaining any class notes or other materials distributed when they are absent. Unexcused or multiple absences may result in a reduction of the final grade.

2. The use of laptops or other devices should be used in such a manner that they do not disturb or distract other students. Recording devices should only be used with the permission of the instructor and should be turned off at the request of the instructor or class participants when requested in the event that personal or confidential information is being discussed.

3. Students are expected to read all required readings for each class session and be prepared to participate in classroom discussions and exercises.

4. 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.

G. **Course and Instructor Evaluation:**

NCSSS requires electronic evaluation of this course and the instructor. At the end of the semester, the evaluation form may be accessed at [http://evaluations.cua.edu/evaluations](http://evaluations.cua.edu/evaluations) using your CUA username and password. Additional informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to special requests. These evaluations will serve as a basis for ongoing course revisions.

V. **CLASS EXPECTATIONS**

**Scholastic Expectations:**

Please refer to NCSSS Announcements, or appropriate Program Handbook for Academic Requirements, including scholastic and behavioral requirements. All written work should demonstrate communication ability consistent with graduate level performance, reflect the original thinking of the writer, cite references where material is quoted or adapted from existing sources, adhere to APA format, and be carefully proofread by the student before submission to the instructor for grading.

**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.
CLASS SCHEDULE

Class  COURSE OVERVIEW AND PLANNING
1 Overview of the course and planning
   State of the art in social work ethics
   The social context and the ethical imperative
   General ethics, social ethics, organizational ethics, and social work ethics.

Required Readings


THE ROLE OF VALUES IN THE TRANSACTIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WORKER AND THE CLIENT SYSTEM

Values and ethical principles differentiated
Value typologies; Value exercise
Framing ethical dilemmas: conflicts of values, rights, responsibilities
Examining a social work ethical dilemma

Required Readings:


THEORIES, WORLD VIEWS, AND SOCIAL WORK ETHICS

2 Orientation to the person and the universe
Western perspectives
   Consequentialist and Principle-based approaches
   Virtue Ethics
Eastern perspectives
Introduction to Multi-cultural and trans-temporal ethics

Required Readings


Visit: U. of San Diego, Ethics Matters—http://ethics.sandiego.edu

CODES OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM

3 The professionalization of social work
The significance of codes of ethics and essential components
NASW Social Work Code of Ethics (Revised 2008): purpose and limitations
The International Code of Social Work Ethics
   http://www.ifsw.org/f38000032.html
Malpractice issues
NASW adjudication process

Required Readings


NASW Adjudication Process can be found on the WEB at:


Class  A PROCESS MODEL FOR ETHICAL DECISION MAKING
4 Rationale for a model for ethical decision making
Phases in the Process of ethical decision making
Justification of an Ethical Decision
Discussion of the process used in the Applewhite & Joseph article

Required Readings:


Pearson/Prentice Hall. Chapter 10. Theory of implementation: The best means,
pp. 288-319.

Spring, Maryland: National Association of Social Workers, pp. 207-217.

Traditions and tools to develop ethical wisdom and action, pp. 152-173.

Class  SOCIAL ETHICS: Global Issues and Human Rights
5 Human rights and the global community
Competing theories of social justice
Poverty and other economic and social issues

Required Readings

biomedical ethics, pp. 240-287.

the Future: Contributions to the Common Good, pp. 257-300.


Class ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT OF SOCIAL WORK: PRACTICE AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Organizational context of agency- institutional practice
Bureaucratic-professional systems' tensions
Ethical considerations of policy practice, managerial ethics, and programmatic responsibility and accountability
Malpractice and risk management

Required Readings


ETHICS REVIEW PROCESSES IN ORGANIZATIONS

Ethical issues in multi-disciplinary settings
Ethical processes: case consultation, policy formulation, education
**Required Reading**


**THE ETHICS OF SUPERVISION**

Ethical issues in supervisory practice
Worker and supervisory responsibility
The principles of direct and vicarious liability

**Required Reading**


**COMPASSION FATIGUE AND BURNOUT: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SOCIAL WORKER TO SELF AND OF THE AGENCY/ORGANIZATION TO SOCIAL WORKERS**

Compassion fatigue and burnout defined; sources of burnout: multiple roles and organizational pressures
Ethical responsibility for supports: personal and programmic to prevent and/or intervene in staff burnout

**Required Reading:**

NASW Policy Statement on Self Care

Class 7

**THE DIRECT SERVICE SITUATION: BALANCING ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES: THE CLIENT SYSTEM AND THE AGENCY**

Worker competency and ethical consideration for responsible practice
Dual Relationships, boundary blurring, and boundary violations

**Required Readings:**

Select at least two readings from the references below.

**DUAL RELATIONSHIPS/BOUNDARY ISSUES**


**THEORIES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICE APPROACHES**

Kohlberg's and Gilligan's theories of moral development
Selected practice models and related ethical issues
The ethics of power and manipulation
Case illustrations and group discussions

**Required Readings**


**Practice Situations**

Managed care
Private and public agencies: Ethical issues around policies and procedures
Ethical issues around practice models

**Select at least two readings from the references below.**


**SELF-DETERMINATION**

**Select at least two readings from the references below.**


**INFORMED CONSENT**
Select at least two readings from the references below.


Class 8

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SOCIAL WORKER TO THIRD PARTIES

Responsibility to significant others in the client's social environment
Third party liability: Agency and practitioner considerations
Consideration of specific ethical conflicts in responsibilities to third parties--protective service, marriage counseling, etc.
The doctrine of informed consent and implications for social work

REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES AND THE DUTY TO WARN

Required Readings:


**CONFIDENTIALITY**

The right to privacy and the principle of confidentiality:
The ethics of secrets
Student case situations

**Required Reading**


**Select at least two readings from the references below.**


**PRIVATE PRACTICE** **MANAGED CARE**

Private practice defined
Ethical issues identified and clarified
Private practice versus agency-based practice
Managed care issues

**Required Reading**

Class 9
THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN
Human Rights
Children’s rights: Well being vs. autonomy
Considerations of the limits and boundaries of the rights of children
Child welfare policy issues, such as transracial issues, family preservation, family rights vs. best interests of the child

Required Readings


RIGHTS OF OLDER ADULTS

Class 10
BIO-ETHICAL ISSUES AND PRINCIPLES
Overview of life and death issues
Life sustaining technology at the beginning and later stages of life
Issues related to suicide, AIDS, and genetics

Required Readings

Beauchamp, T. L. and Childress, J. F. (2009). Chapter 4, Respect for autonomy (pp. 99-148); Chapter 5, Nonmaleficence (pp. 149-196); Chapter 6, Beneficence (pp. 197-239). In Principles of Bio-Medical Ethics. NY: Oxford University Press


Class  **SOCIAL MEDIA, CULTURAL, SPIRITUALITY**

11  Multicultural and trans-temporal ethics
    Religion/spirituality and social work practice in social policy, organizational, and clinical 
    social work contexts
    Functional and dysfunctional aspects of religion in practice
    Ethical issues related to faith-based communities

**Required Reading**

NASW Standards for Cultural Competence.  See NASW Website


*Ethics and Behavior, 12* (2), 143-157.

Revised 5/15: 1
LEARNING GOALS

Purpose:

A very brief statement of the following information will help the instructor to understand your practice background, your professional interests, and your learning expectations for this course. It is due to the instructor by the second class session.

1. Name ____________________________________________________________
   Address ______________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________
   Telephone: (home) _______ (cell) _______ (field) ______________
   e-Mail: ___________________________________________________
   (please print clearly)

2. Concentration:

3. Field Placement Experience:

   Foundation Placement (please include the types of practice experience you have had)

   Concentration Placement (please include the types of practice experience you have had)

4. Learning Goals (Briefly discuss your areas of interest in relation to this course, your specific learning goals, and your expectations of the course)

5. Learning Style (Provide an indication of your learning style, the ways you seem to learn best.)