



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
SAN ANTONIO

College of Education and Human Development
Department of Counseling, Health & Kinesiology
EDCG 5313.801 Professional Orientation &
Ethics Fall, 2025 - Hybrid Course

Instructor: Sabina de Vries, PhD, LPC-S, NCC

Class Time & Location: Mondays, 5:30pm – 6:45pm, Classroom Hall 206

E-mail & Phone: sabina.devries@tamusa.edu; (210) 784-2513

Office Hours: Mondays 2-5pm, 7-8:00pm; Thursdays 3-7pm; and by appointment

Office Location: Classroom Hall 214L

Required Textbooks:

Neukrug, E. S. (2022). A brief orientation to counseling: Professional identity, history, and standards (3rd ed.). Cognella.

Remley, T. & Herlihy, B. (2020). *Ethical, legal, and professional issues in counseling* (6th ed.). Pearson.

Additional Readings:

American Counseling Association. (2014). *ACA code of ethics*.

<https://www.counseling.org/resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>

Darcy, M. G., & Abed-Faghri, N. M. (2013). The relationship between counselors and their state professional association: Exploring counselor professional identity. *Professional Counselor*, 3(3), 152-160. <https://doi.org/10.15241/mgd.3.3.152>

Health Resources and Services Administration (n.d.). Behavioral health workforce projections, 2020-2035. <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bureau-health-workforce/Behavioral-Health-Workforce-Projections-Factsheet.pdf>

Kertesz, K. (2021). Practicing self-compassion as a therapist. Retrieved from https://www.simplepractice.com/blog/practicing-self-compassion-as-a-therapist/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=sp-pollen&utm_campaign=20221008-paid-trial-leads-pollen-weekly-providers-mental-health-vB-SL1-resend

Lenz, A. S., & Smith, R. L. (2010). Integrating wellness concepts within a clinical supervision model. *The Clinical Supervisor*, 29, 228-245. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07325223.2010.518511>

Litam, S. D. A., & Hipolito-Delgado, C. P. (2021). When being “essential” illuminates disparities: Counseling clients affected by COVID-19. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 99(1), 3-10. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcad.12349>

Myers, J. E., & Sweeney, T. J. (2008). Wellness counseling: The evidence base for practice. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 86(4), 482-493.

- Forester-Miller, H., & Davis, T. E. (2016). *Practitioner's guide to ethical decision making*. The Center for Counseling Practice, Policy, and Research.
<http://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/ethics/practitioner's-guide-to-ethical-decision-making.pdf>
- Myer, R., Lewis, J., & James, R. (2013). The Introduction of a Task Model for Crisis Intervention. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 35(2), 95-107. <https://doi.org/10.17744/mehc.35.2.nh322x3547475154>
- Weist, M. D., Lowie, J. A., Flaherty, L., & Pruitt, D. (2001). Collaboration among the education, mental health, and public health systems to promote youth mental health. *Psychiatric Services*, 52(10), 1348-1351.
<https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ps.52.10.1348>

Course Description:

This course will function as an orientation to the professional identity and ethical standards of counseling professionals. Students will address professional and ethical issues that affect the practice of counseling and related professions. Varied points of view will be presented to stimulate discussion, exploration, and reflection. Prerequisites: EDCG 5310 or 5316 or 5308; EDCG 5311 or 5314; EDCG 5335; EDCG 5348; and EDCG 5333.

CACREP Standards:

Section 2: Professional Counseling Identity Counseling Curriculum

1. Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice

- a. History and Philosophy of the counseling profession and its specialty areas
- b. The multiple professional roles and functions of counselors across specialty areas, and their relationships with human service and integrated behavioral health care systems, including interagency and interorganizational collaboration and consultation
- c. Counselors' roles and responsibilities as members of interdisciplinary community outreach and emergency management response teams.
- d. The role and process of the professional counselor advocating on behalf of the profession
- e. Advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for clients
- f. Professional counseling organizations, including membership benefits, activities, services to members, and current issues
- g. Professional counseling credentialing, including certification, licensure, and accreditation practices and standards, and the effects of public policy on these issues
- h. Current labor market information relevant to opportunities for practice within the counseling profession
- i. Ethical standards of professional counseling organizations and credentialing bodies, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling
- j. Technology's impact on the counseling profession
- k. Strategies for personal and professional self-evaluation and implications for practice
- l. Self-care strategies appropriate to the counselor role
- m. the role of counseling supervision in the profession

5. Counseling and Helping Relationships

- e. The impact of technology on the counseling process

7. Assessment and Testing

- d. Procedures for identifying trauma and abuse and for reporting abuse

Section 5: Entry – Level Specialty Areas

C. Clinical Mental Health Counseling

1. Foundations

- a. History and development of clinical mental health counseling

2. Contextual Dimensions

- a. Roles and settings of clinical mental health counselors
- c. Mental health service delivery modalities within the continuum of care, such as inpatient, outpatient, partial treatment and aftercare, and the mental health counseling services networks
- i. Legislation and government policy relevant to clinical mental health counseling
- k. Professional organizations, preparation standards, and credentials relevant to the practice of clinical mental health counseling
- l. Legal and ethical considerations specific to clinical mental health counseling

Section 5: Entry – Level Specialty Areas

G. School Counseling

2. Contextual Dimensions

- n. Legal and ethical considerations specific to school counseling

TEA School Counseling Standards:

Domain III – Collaboration, Consultation, and Professionalism

Competency 010 – Professionalism

The school counselor understands and complies with ethical, legal, and professional standards relevant to the profession.

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the successful completion of this course students will:

- Be able to demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the history, philosophy and credentialing related to the counseling profession and its specialty areas
- Be able to demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of various professional counseling organizations, including benefits, activities, services, and current issues
- Be able to identify and clearly communicate ethical standards of professional counseling organizations and credentialing bodies
- Be able to state and explain legal and ethical considerations specific to the counseling profession and its specialty areas
- Be able demonstrate their aptitude in working through ethical dilemmas while considering legal and ethical standards
- Be able to demonstrate the ability coordinate services through collaboration and consultation with other helping professionals
- Be able to demonstrate the capacity to explain the role and process of the professional counselor advocating on behalf of the profession and their clients
- Be able to demonstrate an understanding of technology's impact on the counseling process and profession
- Be able to define ethical issues related to assessment and testing

- Be able to identify and clearly communicate procedures for identifying crisis, trauma and abuse and for appropriate reporting
- Be able to identify and implement strategies for personal and professional self-evaluation, including implications for practice, self-care strategies and the role of counseling supervision

Key Performance Indicator:

CACREP CORE OR SPECIALTY AREA: Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practices. The **Ethical Dilemma Paper** is used to determine the level of student knowledge and skills related to the following CACREP Standards:

1. I. Ethical standards of professional counseling organizations and credentialing bodies, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling

Students who fail a summative assignment [receive a rating scale of 2 or below] will meet with the issuing faculty and schedule a Fitness to Practice Committee meeting. The Fitness to Practice Committee meeting will result in the student being placed on a developmental plan or dismissed from the program.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR:

Ethical Dilemma Paper

In this paper students will:

- 1) Identify an ethical problem or dilemma in counseling;
- 2) Consult with counseling professionals via professional counseling journal articles;
- 3) Research the ethical counseling concern and provide researched conclusions/contributions;
- 4) Connect the counseling concern to the ACA Code of Ethics.

The paper will be at least 4 full pages of text (not including cover page and reference page). Students will choose a topic related to ethical practice, and research that topic. Three professional counseling journal reference articles will be the minimum. Students may not use the NK or R&H text as references. The paper must be in APA style.

Submitted papers will include the following:

1. Cover Page
2. Description or Summary of the Ethical Problem/Dilemma/Concern/Topic including expert opinions on the topic.
3. Reference Page – APA style
4. Three professional counseling journal articles related to the dilemma. These three articles (printed or copied) are to be turned in with the paper.
5. ACA Code of Ethics that are related to the dilemma and any Applicable Laws pertaining to the dilemma.

ETHICAL DILEMMA PAPER GRADING RUBRIC:

Criteria	Ratings				Total
	0-1 Points	2 Point	3 Point	4 Points	
Ethical Dilemma Identified	Paper is not centered on a counseling related ethical dilemma.	Paper is minimally centered on a counseling related ethical dilemma.	Paper is somewhat centered on a counseling related ethical dilemma.	Ethical dilemma is clearly presented and well developed.	
Counseling Journal References	No or marginal quality peer reviewed counseling journal articles used.	Fewer than 2 quality peer reviewed counseling journals articles used.	At least 2 quality peer reviewed counseling journals articles used.	Includes at least 3 Quality peer reviewed counseling journals used.	
<i>ACA Code of Ethics</i>	<i>ACA Code of Ethics</i> not is not referenced/ pertinent codes are not identified.	<i>ACA Code of Ethics</i> pertaining to topic marginally referenced/significant lack of scope.	<i>ACA Code of Ethics</i> pertaining to topic referenced but discussion is limited in scope.	<i>ACA Code of Ethics</i> is clearly referenced and codes/standards pertaining to topic are identified and thoroughly explored.	
Content	Content does not adequately address the ethical dilemma.	Content marginally addresses the ethical dilemma.	Content somewhat addressed ethical dilemma.	Content is appropriate and supports the ethical dilemma topic adequately.	
APA Style formatting and Quality of Writing	Fails to demonstrate quality fo writing and proper use of APA Style.	Many APA Style errors; considerable problems with quality of writing.	Few APA Style errors; few quality of writing problems.	The paper is free of APA Style errors and quality of writing problems.	
Total/Notes:					

EVALUATION PROCESS: The professor will complete the following rubric to assess Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practices. Points correspond to the rating scale.

Points	Overall Rating	Rating Scale	Description
19-20	Mastery	4	Able to perform at a high level without supervision on a consistent basis
16-18	Proficient	3	Able to perform without supervision on a consistent basis
14-15	Developing	2	Able to perform with supervision on a consistent basis
11-13	Beginning	1	Able to perform with supervision on an inconsistent basis
0-10	Inadequate	0	Unable to perform with supervision.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR SCORE: _____

Graduate Class Policies

A student has the right to expect competent, well-organized instruction for the full number of clock hours allotted for a course; to sufficient written assignments, graded fairly and with reasonable promptness to show the student's academic standing in the course at least before mid-semester; to have ample opportunity to confer with the instructor at published office hours and to review graded written work; to freedom from ridicule, discrimination, harassment or accusations in the presence of other students or faculty members; and to an avenue for appealing to higher academic authority in case of alleged unfairness by an instructor.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

As members of the University community, all enrolled students assume full responsibility for adhering to the university's values and goals. Students are held responsible for staying abreast of their rights as students and for being cognizant on what is deemed proper conduct as outlined in the Student Handbook. The Student Handbook is available through the Student Rights and Responsibilities webpage: <http://www.tamusa.edu/uploadFile/folders/fcestrad/Pdf/Pdf-635767864704349879-10.100.150.124.pdf>

Cheating and Plagiarism

Students are expected to do their own course work. Simple cases of first offense cheating or plagiarism by an individual student may be handled by the instructor after consultation with the department chair. For more serious cases, such as those involving repeated offenses, conspiracy with other students or the theft and selling of examination questions, a report should be made by the instructor via the department chair and college dean to the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs for disciplinary action. Expulsion from the University is a normal penalty for such offenses.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity, and students who engage in plagiarism are subject to disciplinary action. The type of disciplinary action will depend on the severity of the plagiarism but may ultimately lead to the student's expulsion from the program and/or revocation of a student's degree, if the student has already graduated. Please review the Student Handbook for a complete description of the process.

Class Attendance

A vital part of every student's education is regular attendance of class meetings. Any absences tend to lower the quality of a student's work in a course.

- (1) Attendance is considered mandatory and will be taken at each class meeting.
- (2) Non-attendance of class will be the basis for a grade adjustment. TWO absences are allowed (excused or unexcused). With further absences, one letter grade per missed class day will be deducted from the final grade. This means if a student has more than one absence, the highest grade that can be attained is a 'B'. Students absent three class sessions or more will receive a failing grade. Consult with your professor concerning any questions about absences. If you decide not to attend this class or find yourself doing poorly, it is your responsibility to drop the class. Faculty is not responsible for dropping students from a course. If the course is not dropped in a timely manner, a failing will be assigned at the end of the semester.
- (3) A student will be considered tardy if he/she arrives more than fifteen minutes after class is scheduled to begin. Three tardies equal one absence. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class period.

Absences for Religious Holidays

The university will allow students who are absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence if, not later than the fifteenth day after the first day of the semester, that student has notified the instructor of each class to be missed. The instructor may appropriately respond if a student fails to complete the assignment or examination within a reasonable time after the absence.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disability. Disability Support Services (DSS) provides services, auxiliary aids and accommodations for students at Texas A&M University- San Antonio (A&M-SA) who have self-identified, registered and provided DSS with documentation supporting their disability. Students may access additional information on the Disability Support Services webpage:

<http://www.tamusa.edu/studentengagementsuccess/dss/AccessDSS/index.html>

Incomplete Course Status

The spirit of the "Incomplete" is to give a student an opportunity to complete a course after the end of the semester. An Incomplete will only be considered under specific circumstances: 1. 70% of the class has been completed and student is passing with a "C" or better 2. The circumstance for which the "I" is requested is supported with documentation 3. Student has been attending class on a regular basis Incompletes are not to be used to remedy excessive absences. Unforeseen circumstances precipitating the request for an "I", should occur near the end of the semester. Students who are experiencing difficulties at the beginning or midway through the course should contact their professor immediately to discuss options. When a professor agrees to grant an "I", a contract between the student and professor that outlines a specific timeline for completion

of the course will be generated. Topics such as highest possible grade will also be outlined. If the contract is not fulfilled, the professor will submit a change of grade form with earned letter grade. All “I”s will automatically revert to an “F” after one year.

Dropping a Course

Each student is responsible for knowing the drop date for any given semester. Professors are not responsible, under any circumstances, for “dropping” a student from a course. Please be aware that if you do not formally drop a course and fail to fulfill the academic requirements, the professor will submit the earned grade.

Course Requirements:

Preparation and Participation. The learning, application, and growth activities associated with a graduate program of study is a qualitatively different in comparison to obtaining an undergraduate degree. In some ways, the consequences of non-preparation and participation may impact your future clients more than they do yourself at this time. With those considerations in mind, it is your professional responsibility to actively and intentionally prepare for class through readings, making notations, identifying the presence of content in your natural environment, exploring content on your own, and bringing your reflections grounded in the intersections of these areas into course conversations. Furthermore, the counseling profession is one grounded in support and communication. Thus, it is imperative to contribute to class experiences through respectful, supported dialogue. There is no credit or point values assigned to these activities. Instead, they represent the baseline expectations for all graduate coursework.

Quizzes (40%): The first half of this course will evaluate content knowledge associated with Orientation to Professional Counseling. The second half of this course will evaluate content knowledge associated with Ethics in Counseling. The quizzes will be using a multiple choice/true-false examination format delivered via BlackBoard. Students are allowed 2 attempts to complete each quiz. The highest grade will be logged in the course gradebook.

Blackboard Discussion Post (30%): Students are to respond weekly to discussion topics as indicated in the class schedule. Main discussion board posts should be substantial in length (a minimum of 5 paragraphs) and are due by Monday (midnight or earlier) of each week.

Students are to respond to one or two of their classmates' posts and elaborate on their topic/main discussion post, offer additional information, or alternative viewpoints. If a post already has two responses, students must choose another post. Peer responses are due by Wednesday (midnight or earlier) of each week and a minimum of two paragraphs are required.

Each discussion session is worth 20 point; 13 for the main discussion post, and 7 for responses to classmates.

Ethical Dilemma Paper (30%):

In this paper students will demonstrate the ability to:

- 1) Identify an ethical problem or dilemma in counseling;
- 2) Consult with counseling professionals via professional counseling journal articles;
- 3) Research an ethical counseling concern and provide researched conclusions/contributions;
- 4) Connect the counseling concern to the *ACA Code of Ethics* and any applicable laws.

While the paper may include a discussion of possible approaches to the dilemma, the assignment will not include a “suggested action” because the goal is for students to consult with other professionals. Remember, most ethical dilemmas do not offer easy answers or conclusions.

The paper should be at least 4 pages (not including cover page and reference page). Choose a topic related to ethical practice, and research that topic. Three professional counseling journal reference articles will be the minimum. Do not use the R&H text as a reference. Your paper must be prepared using in APA formatting and style conventions.

One suggested format for your paper is:

1. Cover Page
2. General Intro to Topic/Description/Definition/Review of the Ethical Problem (Dilemma, Concern, Topic) including expert opinions on the topic. (use appropriate headings for better readability)
3. Ethical Codes Pertaining to the Dilemma (competing ethics? applicable laws?)
4. Discussion/Conclusion
5. Reference Page
6. Three professional counseling journal articles related to the dilemma. These three articles (electronic copies – must be pdf format) are to be turned in with the paper.
7. *ACA Code of Ethics* standards that are related to the dilemma.

Grading criteria for the assignment include:

- 1) On Time
- 2) Cover Page
- 3) Ethical dilemma identified
- 4) Length (4 Page Minimum)
- 5) References (minimum of 3 Counseling Journal Articles)
- 6) References – APA Style, 7th edition
- 7) 3 Counseling articles attached
- 8) Pertinent ACA Code of Ethics identified and cited
- 9) Paraphrased and cited appropriately (do not use direct quotes unless citing ACA Code of Ethics)
- 10) APA Style Paper with appropriate content and quality of writing

Students will submit all journal articles utilized for the Ethical Dilemma Paper to a link located in the Assignments folder. Not submitting the supporting documentation for the Ethical Dilemma Paper will result in a failing grade. Be sure to follow the instructions. If any problems with Blackboard are encountered, please email me ASAP.

EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES

You will have 2 opportunities to earn extra credit toward your final course grade for this course.

- 1) **Attend a Professional Counseling Meeting or Continuing Education Event (2-hour minimum).** One opportunity for extra credit during this course is attending a professional meeting that is associated with counseling or counselor education such as an honor society meeting, local, state, or national counseling association meeting or conference. Provide documentation verifying attendance with a 1-page synopsis of the event in order to receive 3 points toward the overall course grade.
- 2) **No Absences and all work turned in on time.** Students who attend all classes and who completed all discussion board activities and quizzes on time, will receive 3 points toward the overall course grade.

GRADING POLICY

Assignment	Points (%)
Quizzes	40%
Discussion Board Posts	30%
Ethical Dilemma Paper	30%

Grades will be assigned on the following point ranges:

100 – 90 = A; 89 – 80 = B; 79 – 70 = C; 69 – 60 = D; < 60 = F

Class Schedule

DATE	TOPICS & ACTIVITIES	ASSIGNED READINGS
8/25/25 Week 1 [2.F.1.b]	Introduction to Course Review of Syllabus & Policies Chpt 1: What is Counseling, and Who is the Counselor? Blackboard Discussion Board: Introduce Yourself and Netiquette Assignment due by Friday - 8/29, and Tuesday – 8/31 by 11:59pm	NK Ch. 1
	9/1/25 – Labor Day No Class!	
9/8/25 Week 2 [2.F.1.f; 2.F.1.h; 2.F.1.i]	Chpt 2: Professional Associations in Counseling and Related Fields Chpt 3: Characteristics of Effective Counselors Article: Wellness Counseling: The Evidence Base for Practice Activity – Informal Self Assessment chpt 3 p. 40-43 Blackboard Discussion Board: Wellness Activity due by Friday – 9/12 , and Tuesday – 9/14 at 11:59pm	NK Ch. 2&3 Myers & Sweeney (2008) Kertesz (2021)
9/15/25 Week 3 [2.F.1.a]	Chpt 4: Predecessors to the Counseling Profession Chpt 5: The History of the Counseling Profession Quiz 1 – NK chapters 1, 2, 3 due by Sunday – 9/21 at 11:59pm	NK Ch. 4&5
9/22/25 Week 4 [2.F.1.c]	Chpt 6: Current Issues and Future Trends in the Counseling Profession Allied Mental Health Professions & Related Workforce Projections Article: The Introduction of a Task Model for Crisis Intervention Blackboard Discussion Board: Professional Vision & Development Part 1 due by Friday – 9/26, and Tuesday – 9/28 at 11:59pm	NK Ch. 6 HRSA (n.d.) Myer et al. (2013)
9/29/25 Week 5 [2.F.1.g; 2.F.1.d]	Chpt 7: Accreditation in Counseling and Related Fields Chpt 8: Credentialing in Counseling and Related Fields Article: The Relationship Between Counselors and Their State Professional Association Quiz 2 – NK Chapters 4, 5, 6 due on Sunday – 10/5 at 11:59pm	NK Ch. 7&8 Darcy & Abed-Faghri (2013)

10/6/25 Week 6 [2.F.1.e]	Chpt 3: Multiculturalism, Values, Social Justice, and Advocacy	R&H Ch. 3 Litam & Hipolito-Delgado (2020)
10/13/25 Week 7 [2.F.1.i; 2.F.1.k]	Chpt 1: Introduction Blackboard Discussion Board: Professional Vision & Development Plan Part 2 due on Friday – 10/17, and Sunday – 10/19 at 11:59pm	R&H Ch. 1 <i>ACA Code of Ethics</i>
10/20/25 Week 8 [2.F.1.i]	Chpt 4: Client Rights & Counselor Responsibilities Informed Consent	R&H Ch. 4 <i>ACA Code of Ethics</i>
10/27/25 Week 9 [2.F.1.i]	Chpt 5: Confidentiality and Privileged Communication Blackboard Discussion Board activity due Friday – 10/24, and Sunday – 10/26 at 11:59pm	R&H Ch. 5 <i>ACA Code of Ethics</i>
11/3/25 Week 10 [2.F.1.i]	Chpt 6: Records and Subpoenas Quiz 3 – R&H chapters 3, 1, 4, & 5 due on Sunday – 11/9 at 11:59pm	R&H Ch. 6 <i>ACA Code of Ethics</i>
11/10/25 Week 11 [2.F.1.i]	Chpt 7: Competence, Assessment, and Diagnosis	R&H Ch. 7 <i>ACA Code of Ethics</i>
11/17/25 Week 12 [2.F.1.i]	Chpt 8: Malpractice and Resolving Legal and Ethical Challenges Quiz 4 – R&H chapters 6, 7, & 8 due on Sunday, – 11/23 at 11:59pm	R&H Ch. 8 <i>ACA Code of Ethics</i>
11/24/25 Week 13 [2.F.1.i]	Ch. 9: Boundary Issues Ch. 15: Supervision & Consultation	R&H Ch. 9 R&H Ch. 15 <i>ACA Code of Ethics</i>
12/1/25 Week 14 [2.F.1.j]	Chp. 10: Technology & Counseling Lecture: Telehealth & Credentialing <i>DUE: Ethical Dilemma Paper to be submitted to Turnitin/Blackboard on Monday, 12/1 at 11:59pm</i> <i>DUE: Extra Credit Activity Summaries</i>	R&H Ch. 10 Lecture <i>ACA Code of Ethics</i>
12/8/24 Finals Week [2.F.1.m]	NO CLASS! Quiz 5 – R&H chapters 9, 10, 15 due on 12/8 at 11:59pm	<i>ACA Code of Ethics</i>

*subject to change with one week advance notice