COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is intended to assist students at the advanced level of practice to assess their work with individuals, families, groups, and communities from an ethical perspective. While ethics is addressed in all areas of social work education, this course will provide the theory and framework for making sound ethical decision-making. The focus of this course begins with an overview of the values of social work practice, utilizing the NASW Code of Ethics as a framework. Students will become familiar with the challenges of negotiating value conflicts that emerge between the worker, professional standards, agency, and personal religious values versus professional values in the work environment.

The deontological, utilitarian, and moral theories will be the basis for ethical decision-making and justification models will be introduced through the use of concrete issues and cases, thus combining theoretical frameworks with practical analysis. Students will learn the difference between a value conflict and an ethical dilemma, how to apply theory, and a model for mediating ethical dilemmas in their work with individuals, families, and groups, in social policy, and in social welfare. The exploration of values and ethics reinforces the profession’s commitment to its standards and codes of practice. It is an in-depth exploration of values introduced in first-year courses, such as Foundations of Social Work Practice, Human Behavior and the Social Environment, Cultural Diversity, and Social Welfare Organization.

I. COURSE COMPETENCY OUTCOMES

This course will help students achieve the following competencies:

Competency 1 - Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values.
They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession’s history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers: • make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context; • use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations; • demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and oral, written, and electronic communication; • use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and • use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

MEASURE 1A - Recognize and mange personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice

MEASURE 1B – Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the NASW Code of Ethics

MEASURE 1C – Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts.

Competency 2 - Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Social workers: • apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels; • present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and • apply self-awareness and self-
regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

**MEASURE 2B – Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups**

II. **INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS**

Learning will occur through course readings, discussion groups, analysis of cases that reflect value conflicts and ethical dilemmas.

III. **COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING**

Students will be expected to be on time and attend classes. Class participation will be included in the assessment of the final grade, though the largest portion will be on demonstration of the acquisition of knowledge through written assignments. Each assignment will be weighted as follows: 30% for the first assignment, 50% for the final assignment, and 20% for class participation and attendance.

**Required Texts for the Course**


**Recommended Texts**


Note: All required readings are available on E-Reserves. The password to access these readings will be distributed by your instructor.

IV. **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Assignment I – Due Session 3**

Students will write a 2-3 page paper presenting an analysis of a practice situation that demonstrates the student’s understanding of the importance of utilizing values and knowledge in practice appropriately to avoid dysfunctional outcomes. Each student will present a short synopsis of a case where knowledge was
mistakenly used instead of values, or values were used instead of knowledge, and the possible dysfunctional outcome.


**Assignment II – Due Session 8**

Students will select a value conflict from practice that occurred between the student and a colleague, agency, parent or supervisor that revolved around a client or group. Describe the conflict in detail. Utilizing Levy's Values Classification model, provide the details of each of the three classifications from each position. As this classification model is not meant to provide resolution, enter any resolution or solution that occurred since the conflict, and how you understand the conflict as a result of using this classification model. This model does not apply to conflicts between you and the client. Please refer to the NASW Code of Ethics where applicable and course readings. (CSWE Advanced Competencies: 2.1.1, 2.1.2)

**ASSIGNMENT III – Due Final Session**

**Analysis of an ethical dilemma**

This assignment measures:

1. **Competency # 1**: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior;
   a. **Measure #1B** - Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the NASW Code of Ethics
   b. **Measure #1C** - Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts.

**Guidelines for completion of the Assignment**

Select a topic, preferably from your practice, that has general social importance. Obtain prior approval of the topic from your instructor.

1. Discuss the history or genesis of the ethical dilemma and, if applicable, the values underlying the topic from the perspectives of society, the profession, religion, the agency, the client, and your own.
2. Present a case in which the social worker is in conflict with the family, agency, colleagues, group, or community over this ethical dilemma. Describe the specific conflict situation.
3. Present the ethical dilemma in one or two sentences.
4. Utilizing the Ethical Justification Model of Beauchamp & Childress, apply the model to your case. Begin with the background information
   a. Identify any value conflicts that may be present in the ethical dilemma.
   b. Identify ethical principles and theories as they pertain to the ethical dilemma.
   c. Identify possible courses of action and the benefits/costs and possible
outcomes of each.

d. Make the decision/resolution and explain how and why you arrived at that decision.
e. Discuss how your personal values entered into the decision-making process.
5. Throughout the paper, cite at least 4-5 relevant sources from literature on the topic and on the value and ethical considerations.
6. Use APA style consistently. Proofread and use spell-check. Approximate length: 10-12 pages. Follow this outline accurately. Deviation will lead to a lower grade.

V. Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations are asked to make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services, Rochelle Kohn, Beren Campus, 917-326-4828, rkohn1@yu.edu, Abby Kelsen, Wilf Campus, 646-685-0118, akelsen@yu.edu, during the first week of class. After approval for accommodations is granted, please submit your accommodations letter to Disability Services Office immediately.

VI. E-Reserves

What is E-Reserve?

E-Reserve (Electronic Reserve) is Yeshiva University’s on-line web based system used to provide access to journal articles, book excerpts, and other course materials. Most articles listed in each syllabus are available on eReserve. You can access full text articles from your home or from a university computer.

How do I use EReserve?
1. Go to the library’s online resources page: http://www.yu.edu/libraries/
2. Click on online resources.
3. Click on EReserves
4. If you are off-campus, at this point you will be prompted for your Off Campus Access Service login and password (obtain this from the library).
5. In the ‘search for Courses' box, type in the name of your course.
6. Click on the link to your course.
7. Enter the password given to you by your instructor (ALL UPPERCASE).
8. Locate and click on the item you wish to view. Titles beginning with "A", "An", or "The" are alphabetized under "A" and "T" respectively.
9. When the article text or book record appears on the screen, you can print, email, or save it to disk.
10. If you have any problems, please contact John Moryl at Moryl@yu.edu

VII. PLAGIARISM:
Students should remember that the School will not condone plagiarism in any form and will sanction acts of plagiarism. A student who presents someone else’s
work as his or her own work is stealing from the authors or persons who did the original thinking and writing. Plagiarism occurs when a student directly copies another's work without citation; when a student paraphrases major aspects of another's work without citation; and when a student combines the work of different authors into a new statement without reference to those authors. It is also plagiarism to use the ideas and/or work of another student and present them as your own. It is not plagiarism to formulate your own presentation of an idea or concept as a reaction to someone else's work; however, the work to which you are reacting should be discussed and appropriately cited. Any student who can be shown to have plagiarized any part of any assignment in this course will automatically FAIL the course and will be referred to the Associate Dean for disciplinary action, which may include expulsion.

VIII. HIPAA ALERT:
In line with the new HIPAA regulations concerning protected health information, it is important that you understand that any case information you present from your work will need to be de-identified. What this means is that any information that would allow another to identify the person needs to be changed or eliminated. This includes obvious things like names and birth dates but may also contain other information that is so unique to the person that it will allow for identification, including diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender. If diagnosis, race/ethnicity, gender is directly related to the case presentation it can be included if it will not allow for identification.

IX. COURSE OUTLINE

- Indicates available on E-RES

I. Values Theoretical Framework (Sessions 1-3) Competency 1 & 2
1. The nature of values
2. Definition of values
3. Values in contrast to preferences
4. The functions of values
5. Values classification model

Readings:
Reamer, F.G. (2006). Social work values and ethics, Chapter 1&2
UNIT II. Value Conflicts Between Social Worker and Client (Session 4 - 5)
Competency 1 & 2

Moving from the nature and function of values, this unit focuses on the nature of value conflicts between social worker and client.
1. Value conflicts and Cultural Competence
2. Informed Consent
3. Confidentiality/Duty to Warn
4. Paternalism vs. Autonomy

Readings


Beauchamp, T.L. and Childress, J.F. Principles of Biomedical Ethics. Chapter 3: Respect for autonomy, Chapter 5: Beneficence

Suggested Readings:


III. Conflict Between Personal and Professional Values (Session 5)
Competencies 1 & 2

1. What is the social worker to do with personal values in the professional context?
2. Factors that influence personal values, with a particular emphasis on religion.
3. Dealing with personal values and ethics and their interface with professional values and ethics.
Readings:
  • Levy, C. (1976) Personal vs. professional values: The practitioner’s
  • Danzig, R. (1986) Religious values vs. professional values: Dichotomy or
work: A survey of Israeli social work professionals. Families in Society 84:3, 359-
366.
  • Reamer, F. (1982) Conflicts of professional duty in social work. Social
  Casework, 63, (10), 579-585.

IV. Ethics (Session 6-8)
Competency 1
Session #6
  1. The intersection of values and ethics
  2. Nature of ethics
  3. Sources of ethics

Readings:
  • Linzer, N., (1999) Resolving ethical dilemmas in social work practice,
    Chapter 4
Reamer, F. (2006) Social work values and ethics, chapter 3

Session #7
  1. Identifying ethical dilemmas
  2. Ethical Theories - deontology, utilitarianism.

Beauchamp & Childress (2012) Principles in Biomedical Ethics (7th edition),
Chapter 8

Session #8
  1. The process of ethical decision-making
  2. Ethical Justification models justification.

Beauchamp, T.L. and Childress, J.F. Principles of Biomedical Ethics. Chapter 4:
Non-Maleficence

V. Ethical Dilemmas in Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups,
Organizations, and Communities (Session 9-11)
Competency 1 & 2
Readings:


Reamer, F. (2006). *Social work values and ethics*, Chapter 4

[http://mftcourses.net/documents/zygmond%20borhem%2089.pdf](http://mftcourses.net/documents/zygmond%20borhem%2089.pdf)

Suggested Reading:


VI. Ethics In Policy and Criminal Justice, End of Life Issues (Session 12)  
Competency 1 & 2

Readings:

Beauchamp, T.L. and Childress, J.F. *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, Chapter 6: Justice


Suggested Readings:

VII. Ethics in Research, Supervision, and Administration (Session 13,14)

Competency 1

Readings:


Suggested Reading:
In Levine, C. Taking sides: Clashing views in biomedical ethics
Bibliography


Finn, J. (2002). MSW student perceptions of the efficacy and ethics of Internet-
based therapy. *Journal of Social Work Education* 38, 403–419.


