Course Outline

I. 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.

Course Objectives
By the end of this course, students will be able to demonstrate:
1. Their appreciation and understanding of the history and evolution of values and ethics in the social work profession (CSWE advanced competency 2.1.2).
2. Knowledge and skills to relevant ethics concepts and theories of ethics in social work practice (CSWE advanced competency 2.1.2).
3. Knowledge about professional values and ethical standards of practice and their role in competent, ethical social work (CSWE advanced competency 2.1.1, 21.3).
4. Recognize the value conflicts that may arise in professional practice (CSWE advanced competency 2.1.3).
5. Increased self-awareness and develop an awareness of the interplay of personal values on their professional behavior (2.1.2, 2.1.3).
6. Their ability to recognize ethical dilemmas in social work practice and to apply ethical decision-making frameworks and protocols through enhanced use of critical thinking skills (2.1.3).
7. Recognize and embrace the unique values of social work: service, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, competence (professional and cultural), integrity, and fairness and social justice when addressing value conflicts and
ethics dilemmas 2.1.4, 2.1.5).

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**
There will be two assignments for this course, a mid-term describing a value conflict and a final paper presenting an ethical dilemma, the theoretical framework that applies to it, and the ethical justification model. The specific requirements of each written assignment can be found later in this outline. Late papers will be accepted at the discretion of your professor and may result in lower grades. Attendance is required and will be adhered to, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**Required Texts:**


Suggested Texts:


VII. Assignments
First Assignment
Select a situation from your practice where there is a conflict between you and a colleague, agency, parent or supervisor, over a client or group. This model does not apply to conflicts between you and the client. 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. (CSWE Advanced Competencies: 2.1.1, 2.1.2)

Final Paper: An Ethical Dilemma
The purpose of this paper is to achieve the main objectives of the course: to identify an ethical dilemma and detail the process of its resolution and justification.
Select a topic, preferably from your practice, that has wider social import. 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 relevant 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.
(CSWE Advanced Competencies: 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.1.5)

Course Outline

- Indicates available on E-RES

I. Values Theoretical Framework (Sessions 1-3)
   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

II. Value Conflicts Between Social Worker and Client (Session 4)

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)

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:

### IV. Ethics (Session 6-8)

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)

Readings:


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


Suggested Reading:

In Levine, C., (2010). *Taking sides: Clashing views in biomedical ethics*
VI. Ethics In Policy and Criminal Justice, End of Life Issues (Session 12)

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)

Readings:


Suggested Reading:

Bibliography


