



College of Education and Human Development

Counseling & Development  
4400 University Drive, MS 1H1, Fairfax, Virginia 22030  
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<http://gse.gmu.edu/counseling/>

**EDCD 611.001: Intro to Ethical and Legal Issues in School Counseling**

**2 credit hours**

**Spring 2016**

**Wednesdays, 4:30 p.m. - 7:10 p.m.**

**Thompson Hall 2021**

**PROFESSOR:**

**Name:** Joseph M. Williams, PhD

**Office hours:** Wednesday or Thursday by Appointment (email to schedule)

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

**A. Prerequisites/Co-requisites**

Admission to CNDV program, and successful completion of EDCE 603: Counseling Theories and Practice and successful completion of or concurrently enrolled in EDCE 626: Principles and Practices of School Counseling.

**B. University Catalog Course Description**

Introduces principles, practices, and application of ethical and legal issues in school counseling.

**C. Expanded Course Description**

This course is designed for counseling students in the school counseling track. It is designed to be taken midway through the curriculum so students should be familiar with basic counseling skills and applications that can be used effectively across a diverse range of ethnic, socioeconomic, geographic, and cultural school communities. Students should also have an understanding of school counseling programs and the developmental needs of children at both the elementary and secondary level.

The course also addresses requirements for school counseling licensure that candidates understand the legal, ethical, and professional issues and standards of the counseling profession. The primary goal of the course is to help students become more ethical and culturally competent counselors.

**NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY:**

This course is taught through a combination of lectures, class discussions, small group discussions, group presentation, assigned readings, experiential exercises, research, multi-media presentations, guest speakers, examinations and online learning formats to advance and evaluate students' knowledge and skills.

**LEARNER OUTCOMES or OBJECTIVES:**

At successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the theory and practice of ethical principles and standards.
2. Describe differences between ethical principles and legal standards.
3. Demonstrate an awareness of the potential ethical dilemmas school counselors face.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between personal/cultural values, beliefs and ethical actions as professionals
5. Demonstrate an understanding of how racism, sexism, ageism, heterosexism, ability, and other forms of stereotyping are ethical issues.
6. Demonstrate a working knowledge of various Codes of Ethics to their daily practice.
7. Demonstrate an ethical decision-making process.
8. Demonstrate a working knowledge of the laws that pertain to school counseling in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
9. Demonstrate a working knowledge of the child abuse intervention and report laws that pertain to all educators in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
10. Become familiar with effective intervention strategies.
11. Demonstrate an understanding of the legal exceptions to confidentiality and privileged communication.
12. Demonstrate an understanding of the legal requirements and qualifiers for records, technology, and subpoenas.

**PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS (CACREP):**

At the end of this course, students will demonstrate the following CACREP specialty area requirements for school counseling programs.

Section II.K.a.           An understanding of all aspects of professional functioning, to include: Ethical standards of ACA/ASCA and related entities, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling

Section SCP.A.           An understanding of professional functioning in School Counseling.

## **ASCA SCHOOL COUNSELOR COMPETENCIES:**

At the end of this course, students will demonstrate the following ASCA School Counselor Competencies.

- II-B-4. Applies the ethical standards and principles of the school counseling profession and adheres to the legal aspects of the role of the school counselor.
- II-B-4a. Practices ethical principles of the school counseling profession in accordance with the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors.
- II-B-4b. Understands the legal and ethical nature of working in a pluralistic, multicultural, global, and technological society.
- II-B-4c. Understands and practices in accordance with school district policy and local, state and federal statutory requirements.
- II-B-4d. Understands the unique legal and ethical nature of working with minor students in a school setting.
- II-B-4e. Advocates responsibly for school board policy, local, state and federal statutory requirements that are in the best interests of students.
- II-B-4f. Resolves ethical dilemmas by employing an ethical decision-making model appropriate to work in schools.
- II-B-4g. Models ethical behavior.
- II-B-4h. Continuously engages in professional development and uses resources to inform and guide ethical and legal work.
- II-B-4i. Practices within the ethical and statutory limits of confidentiality.
- II-B-4j. Continually seeks consultation and supervision to guide legal and ethical decision-making and to recognize and resolve ethical dilemmas.
- II-B-4k. Understands and applies an ethical and legal obligation not only to students but to parents, administration and teachers as well.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS:**

Stone, C. B. (2013). *School counseling principles: Ethics and law* (3rd. ed.). Alexandria, VA: American School Counselor Association. ISBN: 978-1-929289-41-7

**\*Additional readings are available on the course's Blackboard page.**

## RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

Hermann, M. A., Remley, T. P., & Huey, W. C (Ed), (2010). *Ethical and legal issues in school counseling* (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: American School Counselor Association.

Or

*American School Counselor Association*  
<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/>

*American Counseling Association*  
<http://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/ethics>

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS:

### **Assignment 1:** Participation and Attendance (*10% of total grade*)

As a skill-based class, we will spend a great deal of time processing information through class discussion, group work, and participating in experiential activities. Because the class will be so interactive and experiential, there is no way to “get the information” from a missed class—the class experience cannot be replicated. For these reasons, your class attendance and active participation is vital not only to your learning, but to your classmates’ learning as well. Several factors will go into your participation grade, including:

- a. **attendance** (every student is expected to be at every class),
- b. **punctuality** (every student is expected to be ready to go when class begins, and to stay for the duration of class time),
- c. **active participation** in class exercises (key is *active*, contributing ideas, giving feedback, participating in group discussions)
- d. **substantive contributions** to class discussions (not quantity of contributions, but contributions that demonstrate thoughtful analysis of information; comments that move discussion forward; comments based on knowledge and experience, not just opinion; and a demonstrated ability to propose new ideas and/or build on others’ ideas in a meaningful way). A rubric will be provided on Bb.

### **Assignment 2:** Weekly Reading Questions (*10% of total grade*)

In order to help students complete their reading assignments, students will hand in at least **one** multi-level question (typed) prior to each class meeting. The multi-level question will form the basis of class discussions. The professor will not accept late questions. Students will not be allowed to make up Weekly Reading Questions points under any circumstance (with the exception of an excused absence). Each set of questions not handed in on time will receive the score of zero (0). Each submission will be graded as very good (1.0 point), adequate (0.5point), or inadequate/not turned in (0 points).

**Assignment 3: Ethical Quizzes** (30% of total grade – 15% each)

Students are required to complete **two** quizzes during the course. In each ethics quiz you will be asked to answer true/false, multiple choice, or short answer essay questions and apply the concepts from the text, lectures and readings to a hypothetical ethical case studies. Ethics Quizzes will be in an open-book and open-note format. Quizzes' will be handed out in class or posted on Blackboard 1 week prior to the due date. Answers and responses to the essay questions must be more than a repeat and rewrite of the material contained in each chapter (recommended that you review the plagiarism policy). Students are expected to write responses that also capture their own thoughts and ideas about the content and thrust of each question.

Each quiz is worth a maximum of 15 points. The following evaluation criteria will be applied to cases:

- Understanding of how laws and ethical standards apply to the case
- Accurate interpretation of the facts of the case
- Knowledge of the relevant aspects of research and scholarship on the subject
- Capacity to apply standards and material from assigned readings to a specific case
- Ability to express ideas clearly...

**Assignment 4: Ethical Case Studies – Team Presentation** (25% of total grade)

Students will be assigned to a team of presenters (second day of class) that will be required to develop an ethics case and lead a discussion about this case that involves an ethical, legal and/or value issue in counseling. Your team can highlight an issue that emphasizes a particular professional practice area. The team is expected to present the case to the class using a prominent ethical decision making model, lead a class discussion of the issues involved, analyze at least two alternative responses, and provide your preferred response with your justification. You might consider making the presentation interactive (if time allows). Presenting through PowerPoint or a Prezi is encouraged. Finally, your team will provide a brief written analysis (2 - 3 pages) of the strengths and weaknesses of the model and the issues you would wish to consider in using it as a school counselor. Students will post their presentations, any handouts and written analysis on the strengths and weaknesses of the model on Blackboard prior to the start of class. A rubric will be provided on Blackboard.

**Assignment 5: Decision Making Model Final Examination** (25% of total grade)

Students are required to analyze an ethical/legal dilemma by applying a decision making model. You will be asked to apply the concepts from the text, lectures and readings to a hypothetical ethical case study. The Final will be in an open-book and open-note format. The Final exam will be posted on Blackboard 1 week prior to the due date. Answers and responses to the essay questions must be more than a repeat and rewrite of the material contained in each chapter. It is recommended that you review the GMU plagiarism policy and APA Publication Manual guidelines. Students are expected to write responses that also capture their own thoughts and ideas about the content and thrust of each question.

The following evaluation criteria will be applied to cases:

- Understanding of how laws and ethical standards apply to the case
- Accurate interpretation of the facts of the case
- Knowledge of the relevant aspects of research and scholarship on the subject
- Capacity to apply standards and material from assigned readings to a specific case
- Ability to express ideas clearly

## **EVALUATION:**

### **Assignment weights**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Participation and Attendance            | 10% |
| Weekly Reading Questions                | 10% |
| Ethical Quiz #1                         | 15% |
| Ethical Quiz #2                         | 15% |
| Ethical Case Study – Team Presentation  | 25% |
| Decision Making Model Final Examination | 25% |

### **Grades**

George Mason University policies prohibit instructors from issuing a grade of A+. The following grading scale will be used for this course:

|    |        |
|----|--------|
| A  | 97—100 |
| A- | 94—96  |
| B+ | 91—93  |
| B  | 87—90  |
| B- | 84—86  |
| C  | 80—83  |
| F  | 0—79   |

## **COURSE EXPECTATIONS:**

### **Electronic Devices**

Turn off and put away all electronic communication devices during class. Cell phones, pagers, and other communicative devices are not allowed in this class. Please keep them stowed away and out of sight. Laptops or tablets (e.g. iPads) may be permitted for the purpose of taking notes only, but **you must submit a request in writing to do so**. Engaging in activities not related to the course (e.g. gaming, email, chat, text, etc.) will result in a significant reduction in your participation grade. Notify the instructor prior to class if you have an emergency situation that requires accommodation.

### **Attendance**

In accordance with the policies of the Counseling and Development Program, on-time attendance at every class meeting is expected. **Any unexcused absence will result in failing the course** (<http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/counseling/resources/>). Excused absences can only be arranged with instructor on a case by case basis. If you must miss a class or arrive late, please call and notify the professor before the class meeting. A rubric will be provided on Blackboard. Contacting the instructor for absences, late arrivals or early dismissals is a courtesy and does not necessarily mean exemption from attendance and participation responsibility; this means points may be deducted as stated in the syllabus. **If there is a scheduling conflict that interferes with your attendance during any portion of the class; students should see the instructor in the first class to discuss continuing in the class this semester or taking the course during another semester.**

### **Assignment Policy**

As a graduate student, it is expected that all of your work will be turned in on the assigned dates. If an assignment is accepted at a later date, it is subject to a penalty of 10% of the award for every day it is overdue. Assignments are considered late after 15 minutes of the class session in which they are due. When you are absent, you are responsible for the information missed in class, including but not limited to assignments, change in due dates, content of discussion and/or lecture, and handouts. All assignment should be uploaded via Blackboard, as well as turned into class via hard copy on the day the assignment is due.

Students must have their own audio/digital recording equipment. Digital recorders are recommended. Students are expected to be able to use a computer, send and retrieve email, open attachments, access to the internet, participate in online discussions, use Blackboard, and conduct a library search on line. In addition, students should check Blackboard and their GMU email for course updates on a daily basis. All course documents will be available on Blackboard. Email messages sent using Blackboard need to be forwarded to your GMU email.

For more information on checking-out audio/digital recording equipment, please visit STAR-Multimedia ([http://doit.gmu.edu/staffSection.asp?page=video\\_checkout](http://doit.gmu.edu/staffSection.asp?page=video_checkout)) or call (703) 993-8990. The STAR lab is located on the second floor of the Johnson Center, Room 229. Please note that the C&D program has video equipment available for check-out. Please speak with the instructor for more information.

### **TK20 PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT SUBMISSION REQUIREMENT:**

Not applicable to this course

### **GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS**

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>].
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].

- c. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- d. The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- e. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- g. The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].

### **Professional Dispositions**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

### **Core Values Commitment**

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles [<http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>].

**For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].**

**GMU's Professional Dispositions** GMU students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions as stated:

*The Virginia Department of Education and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education promote standards of professional competence and dispositions. Dispositions are values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors towards students, families, colleagues, and all members of the learning community. The Graduate School of Education expects students, faculty, and staff to exhibit professional dispositions through a:*

- *Commitment to the profession;*
- *Commitment to honoring profession ethical standards;*
- *Commitment to key elements of professional practice;*
- *Commitment to being a member of a learning community;*
- *Commitment to democratic values and social justice.*

**C & D's Professional Performance Criteria:**

As counselor trainees, students have additional professional performance standards. The codes of conduct for the American Counseling Association require counselors and counselor trainees to maintain standards of professional competence and possess good moral character.

Therefore, the Counseling and Development Program in the Graduate School of Education at George Mason University requires its students to adhere to GMU University and C&D's Professional Dispositions while in the C&D program, to include their conduct and behavior while doing their field experiences.

**Ethical Obligations:**

All counselors, to include University Supervisors, Students, and On-Site Supervisors, are bound by the professional ethical standards and practices of the American Counseling Association (ACA). University and On-Site Supervisors must also adhere to *ACA's Code of Ethics, Section F: Supervision, Training and Teaching*. See the ACA Ethical Codes (2014) for detailed information.

**PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE: EDCD 611–001 Tentative Class Schedule**

| <b>Week</b> | <b>Date</b>                      | <b>Topic(s)</b>   | <b>Reading(s) Due</b> | <b>Assignment(s) Due</b>  |
|-------------|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| 1           | January 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2016  | Introduction to Legal and Ethical Issues                              | Stone, Ch. 1          | <b>Bring:</b> ASCA code of ethics<br><b>Bring:</b> ACA code of ethics |
| 2           | January 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2016  | Professionalism<br>Negligence   | Stone, Ch. 2 & 5      |   |
| 3           | February 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2016  | Cyberspace<br>Individual and Group Counseling                         | Stone, Ch. 3 & 8      |   |
| 4           | February 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2016 | Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act<br>Obligations to the Court | Stone, Ch. 4 & 6      | <b>Ethics Quiz #1</b>   |
| 5           | February 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2016 | Child Abuse<br>Sexual Harassment                                      | Stone, Ch. 7 & 11     |   |
| 6           | February 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2016 | Sexually Active Students<br>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender       | Stone, Ch. 9 & 10     |   |
| 7           | March 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2016     | Bullying, etc.<br>Violence and Criminal Activity                      | Stone, Ch. 12 & 13    |   |
|             | March 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2016     | <b>No Class<br/>Spring Break</b>                                      |                       |   |
| 8           | March 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2016    | Values and Ethics Conflict:   | Article Readings      | <b>Ethics Quiz #2</b>   |
| 9           | March 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2016    | The Ethics of Advocacy  | Stone, Ch. 14         |   |
| 10          | March 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2016    | <b>Course Wrap Up</b>   |                       | <b>Team - Ethical Decision Making Model Presentation</b>              |
| 11          | April 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2016     | <b>TBA</b>  |                       | <b>Final Decision Making Model Exam</b>                               |

\*\* Deviations may occur to support student learning and unique circumstances.

**ASSESSMENT RUBRIC(S):**

**EDCD 611 – Class Attendance and Participation Rubric**

| <b>CATEGORY</b>             | <b>5</b>  | <b>4</b>   | <b>3-2</b>  | <b>0-1</b>   |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| <b>Attendance</b>           | Attends all classes, arrives on time and stays for the entire class. Student has perfect attendance and punctuality in class                          | Attends all classes, arrives 10-15 minutes late or leaves 10-15 minutes early for 1 classes  | Misses more than 1 class with an excused absence. Or arrives 10-15 minutes late or leaves 10-15 minutes early for 2 or more classes | Misses 1 class with unexcused absence and must withdraw from the course.                                     |
| <b>Participation</b>        | Regularly asks/answers questions and/or makes observations that indicate reflection and analysis appropriate to topic, lecture, or assigned readings. | Occasionally asks/answers questions and/or makes observations that indicate reflection and analysis appropriate to topic, lecture, or assigned readings. | Rarely asks/answers questions or makes comments that indicate familiarity with topic, lecture, or assigned readings.                | Never asks/answers or makes comments that indicate familiarity with the topic, lecture, or assigned readings |
| <b>TOTAL POINTS:<br/>10</b> |   |  |   |  |