



# EXTENDED CAMPUS

COLLEGE *of* PROFESSIONAL  
*and* CONTINUING STUDIES

## HR 5453-101: Ethical Issues in Human Relations Counseling

### Course Description:

Counselors and other professionals need to operate under personal and professional codes of ethics. However, these guidelines leave many questions unanswered as there is no single "right" answer that exists for many ethical dilemmas. It is critical to develop an understanding of ethics and ethical reasoning, and to know current professional, ethical, and legal issues that confront counselors in a variety of settings.

### Class Dates, Location and Hours:

Dates: March 9 – 15, 2020

Location: Washington, D.C. Liaison Office - 2189 Crystal Plaza Arcade, Arlington, VA, 22202.

Hours: Monday - Friday 6:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m.; Saturday 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sunday 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: February 9, 2020

### Site Director:

Email: [apwashington@ou.edu](mailto:apwashington@ou.edu). Phone: 703-418-4800.

### Professor Contact Information:

Course Professor: Thom D. Balmer, Ph.D., LPC, LMFT

Mailing Address: University of Oklahoma  
601 Elm Avenue, Room 701  
Norman, OK 73019

Telephone Number: 580-504-0643

Email Address: [tbalmer@ou.edu](mailto:tbalmer@ou.edu)

Virtual Office Hours: Contact professor for this information.

Professor availability: The professor will be available via email to students during the above listed Virtual Office Hours and other methods by arrangement.

### Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:

Student materials are available at the OU Bookstore Website at <https://ou.textbookx.com/institutional/index.php>. There is no longer a physical bookstore, the store will remain, but textbooks will not be stocked. The website has book selling, renting, buying, returning, and order tracking capabilities. If you need help with an order, or if you have any questions contact the toll-free phone at 1-(855)-790-6637, agents are available from 9a – 5p (EST) Monday – Friday. For more information or questions about textbooks, feel free to contact [apsyllabi@ou.edu](mailto:apsyllabi@ou.edu). Text prices are available online

1. Corey, Corey, Corey & Callahan (2015) Issues and Ethics in the Helping Professions. Stamford: Cengage Learning; ISBN-13-978-1-305-38945-8.
2. Materials posted on the OU Canvas learning management system: Access Canvas at <https://canvas.ou.edu>, enter your OU NetID and password, and select course to access material. If

you require assistance with Canvas, please click on the Help icon. You can search the Canvas guides, chat with Canvas support, or contact OU IT.

### **Course Objectives:**

A main objective of this course is to challenge you to formulate your own position on ethical issues and to develop your ability to think critically and creatively about cases, and to help you articulate how you might deal with ethical issues using state and national ethical codes with specific case vignettes. This course will also familiarize you with feminist, multicultural and social justice perspectives on ethics, and to examine ethical and professional issues related to these perspectives.

### **Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:**

#### **Ethical Dilemmas Assignment:**

There are three (3) ethical dilemmas for this course. The dilemma assignment will require the student to use a minimum of **three resources** per individual dilemma solution. **ONE (1) of the resources must be an article from a peer-reviewed journal, ONE (1) resource from your textbook and the ONE (1) resource will be from either the Oklahoma State Licensing Codes or a local agency human resources code, or one of the National Codes (ACA,SHRM) which ever helps you best answer the dilemma.**

Prepare your response in a question, answer format by including a reprint of the question(s) you are answering.

Thoroughly respond to each dilemma and demonstrate graduate level functioning through the use of grammar, technical, and professional writing skills.

Apply relevant course concepts and materials as well as those from the journal articles and licensure, state, or organizational codes. **Support all arguments/positions through the literature and codes. Be sure to apply the correct code to the dilemma to correctly resolve the issues.**

Utilize APA style, (e.g. typed, double-spaced, one-inch margins on top, bottom, and both sides); there will be a cover page, text, and a reference page. Refer to the APA Publication Manual for questions regarding APA style.

#### **The three Dilemmas will be due based on the following schedule:**

Dilemma 1 is due the second day of class

(For counselors) You have recently completed the requirements to be a Licensed Professional Counselor in the state of Oklahoma. You are working for a private therapy agency when one of your clients requests a copy of his records be sent to his attorney. He has been seeing you for marriage therapy and his spouse has attended each of the sessions with him.

1. What are the ethical guidelines regarding release of confidential information when treating couples and families?
2. What steps would you need to go through in order to determine what you can/cannot release?
3. What can you release to your client's attorney?

(For Human Resource professionals) You are interviewing a new hire to work the overnight shift at your agency. This shift runs from 11:00 p.m. – 7:30 a.m. The new hire uses a wheel chair for mobility and reports that they do not have personal transportation and will be relying on public transit to get to and from work. Due to recent cut backs your town no longer has buses that run between 9:30 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

1. What is your ethical responsibility to inform this new hire about public transportation changes?
2. What reasonable accommodations are you required to provide the new hire?
3. Do these dilemmas bar the new hire from taking this position?

Dilemma 2 is due the fourth day of class

(For counselors) You are a LPC in a private practice setting. During a session, your 43 year old male client tells you that he has been thinking about killing himself. He tells you he has a plan to kill himself

because his estranged wife has refused to reconcile with him. The plan is lethal; the client has access to the method; and you believe he intends to carry out his plan.

1. What code of ethics applies in this situation?
2. Who would you contact?
3. List each of the mandatory reporting requirements LPCs are required to follow.

(For human resource professionals) You are the HR director for a local hospital, a nurse from 3<sup>rd</sup> floor has been referred to your office on a mandatory supervisory referral. The report you have is that the nurse smelled of alcohol, was slurring her speech, and fell asleep at the nursing station this morning during her morning shift. The nurse has worked at the hospital for 17 years.

1. What ethical guidelines apply to this situation?
2. What course of remediation would you offer this nurse?
3. What will you do if the nurse denies any alcohol issues after her blood level shows a .16 alcohol level and her background check shows a recent DUI?

Dilemma 3 is due two days after the last day of class

(For counselors) While working in a mental health outpatient setting, you notice one of your colleagues appears to be dating one of his female clients. You have seen him leave the office following her appointment and they have both gotten into his car and left the building. Upon returning to the office the following day, he tells you that they have begun seeing one another romantically. He plans to terminate her care as soon as her authorized sessions have ended. He tells you it will only be about two more sessions. Use the Oklahoma LPC or LMFT code of ethics, to answer the following questions.

1. What is the ethical dilemma in this situation for the male counselor?
2. What would you do?
3. Why would it be important to address or not address this situation?

(For human resource professionals) You are the HR director for an international company based in Holland. Your site is based in Oklahoma City. Your company provides free health insurance and coverage to employees and the families that live in the employees home 51% of the calendar year. You are informed by another employee that a member of the engineering staff has claimed two of their cousins on their insurance. These cousins do not live with the employee, the employee has no legal oversight of the cousins, and the cousins live with their mom next door to the employee.

1. What is the ethical dilemma in this situation?
2. What would you do?
3. Why would it be important to address or not address this situation?

**Each dilemma is worth 50 points, for a total of 150 pts.**

The Dilemma Assignments allow the student to consider possible real-life scenarios in which application of knowledge learned during this course can be utilized. This helps the student to develop critical thinking skills as well as implement an ethical resolution process for what could be actual clinical or human resource situations. The dilemmas will be turned in through CANVAS.

**Ethical Code Review Paper worth 100 points:**

1. The student will compare and contrast 7 (seven) concepts from two different behavioral health codes of ethics or two human resource codes of ethics
2. These will be from two of the following: Oklahoma LPC rules and regulations and the ACA codes of ethics), or from a local agency and SHRM code of ethics.
3. Keep in mind most ethical codes or codes of professional conduct usually cover approximately 14 -19 concepts. **The paper is due four days after the last day of class.**

The Ethical code Assignment allows the students to be exposed to the various professional codes of ethics and encourages them to view these at a deeper level of understanding.

**Attendance worth 50 points:**

You are expected to be in class on time and to stay until the end of class each day. Late arrivals and early departures will lose 5 points for each offense. If you miss more than one hour of class time, you will

receive a grade no higher than a “B”. If you miss more than two hours of class you will receive a grade no higher than a “C”. If you miss three hours or more of class you will receive an “F”. Please see the instructor for rules concerning excused absences.

Complete all written requirements on time. All work is due by 11:59 PM on the due date. Post your assignment in the proper assignment box on CANVAS. Any work not received by that time will be considered late and will **NOT** be accepted. A grade of zero (0) will be given for all late work. As a professional in *any* field, it is your responsibility to manage your time and meet deadlines and requirements.

This course will be comprised of readings, discussion boards, web-based activities, and written assignments. Specific assignments, due dates, and guidelines will be posted on the class Canvas site in detail.

**Grading:**

This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>
Ethical Dilemmas	150
Ethical Review Paper	100
Attendance	50
Total Possible	300

Grading scale: A=300-271, B=270-241, C=240-211, D=210-181, F=180 and below

**Notice:** Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.

## **POLICIES AND NOTICES**

### **Attendance/Grade Policy**

Attendance and participation in interaction, individual assignments, group exercises, simulations, role playing, etc. are valuable aspects of any course because much of the learning comes from discussions in class with other students. It is expected that you attend all classes and be on time except for excused emergencies.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution's policy regarding "I" (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy. Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any "I" (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on "financial aid probation." If the "I" grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student's Financial Aid may be suspended making the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

### **Academic Integrity and Student Conduct**

Academic integrity means honesty and responsibility in scholarship. Academic assignments exist to help students learn; grades exist to show how fully this goal is attained. Therefore all work and all grades should result from the student's own understanding and effort.

Academic misconduct is any act which improperly affects the evaluation of a student's academic performance or achievement. Misconduct occurs when the student either knows or reasonably should know that the act constitutes misconduct. Academic misconduct includes: cheating and using unauthorized materials on examinations and other assignments; improper collaboration, submitting the same assignment for different classes (self-plagiarism); fabrication, forgery, alteration of documents, lying, etc...in order to obtain an academic advantage; assisting others in academic misconduct; attempting to commit academic misconduct; destruction of property, hacking, etc...; intimidation and interference with integrity process; and plagiarism. All students should review the Student's Guide to Academic Integrity at [http://integrity.ou.edu/students\\_guide.html](http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html)

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. All students should review policies regarding student conduct at <http://studentconduct.ou.edu/>

### **Accommodation Statement**

The University of Oklahoma is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your local OU Site Director.

### **Adjustment for Pregnancy/Childbirth-Related Issues**

Should you need modifications or adjustments to your course requirements because of documented pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss. Generally, modifications will be made where medically necessary and similar in scope to accommodations based on temporary disability. Please see <http://www.ou.edu/content/eoo/faqs/pregnancy-faqs.html>.

### **Title IX Resources**

For any concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking, or intimate partner violence, the University offers a variety of resources, including advocates on-call 24/7, counseling services, mutual no-contact orders, scheduling adjustments, and disciplinary sanctions against the perpetrator. Please contact the Sexual Misconduct Office at [smo@ou.edu](mailto:smo@ou.edu) or (405) 325-2215 (8-5), or the Sexual Assault Response Team at (405) 615 -0013 (24/7) to report an incident. To learn more about Title IX, please visit the Institutional Equity Office's website at <http://www.ou.edu/content/eoo.html>

### **Course Policies**

Advanced Programs policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are mailed to the professor for the course. Advanced Programs does not provide duplicating services or office supplies.

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about Advanced Programs, visit our website at: <http://www.goou.ou.edu/>

**INSTRUCTOR VITA**  
**Thom D. Balmer, Ph.D., LPC, LMFT**

**Education**

- M.Div. – Psychiatric Chaplaincy, Southern Seminary
- M.A. – Marriage and Family Therapy, Hardin-Simmons University
- Ph.D. - Counseling Studies, Capella University

**Current Positions**

Lecturer- University of Oklahoma, Department of Human Relations

**Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest**

- Spirituality and counseling
- Ethical issues in counseling
- Supervision ethics
- PTSD – Military and Civilian
- Trauma Resiliency

**Representative Publications and Presentations**

- Balmer, T., VanAsselt, K., Walker, C, Kennedy, B. (2012). A Phenomenological Study of Spiritual Values in Secular-Based Marriage and Family Therapists. *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health, Vol. 14, No. 4.*
- Chapter in a publication: Carbaugh, L. (2014). What Successful Losers Know That You Don't: Stories of People Who Lost Weight and Kept it off. Chapter 6, Thom's Story. Kindle Books.
- Balmer, T. (2015). One Table – Many Wars. As You Were: The Military Review Journal, Vol. 3, November 11, 2015, Morgantown, WV.

**Major Professional Affiliations**

- AAMFT – Clinical Fellow and Approved Supervisor
- OCA – Member
- Vietnam Veterans of America – Life Member
- Disabled Veterans of America – Life Member
- *LMFT Inquiry Committee Member* – Oklahoma Board of Behavioral Health Licensure, March 2015 to Present.
- *Chair* – Oklahoma State Board of Behavioral Health Licensure, November 2013 to March 2015
- *Board Member* – Oklahoma State Board of Behavioral Health Licensure, November 2013 to Present
- *Past President* – Oklahoma Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.
- *Advisory Board Member* – Oklahoma Counselor Licensing, Department of Health, 1000 NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Oklahoma City, Ok. 2003-2006