

*Syllabus*  
**Ethical Issues in Organizations**  
**PSY 594**

**Spring 2013**

**Instructor:** Karin Tochkov, Ph.D.



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*NOTE: I try to respond to all e-mails within 24 hours during weekdays unless I notify the class that I will not have access to e-mail for a short period of time.*

**Office hours:** virtual office hours (e-College)

**Telephone:** (903) 468-6056

*NOTE: Please use e-mail as the main form of communication for this course, but if there are personal issues you would like to discuss, please feel free to contact me but realize that I may not be able to respond immediately. Also, please note that all emails through eCollege go to your default email account, which may be your MyLeo account. Therefore you will need to check this account regularly.*

**Required Text**

Fisher, C. (2012). *Decoding the Ethics Code: A Practical Guide for Psychologists* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). SAGE Publications.

**Catalog Description:** Ethical issues applied to individuals in an organizational setting. Included are theories of moral philosophy and the development and application of professional and business codes.

## PREREQUISITE

Graduate standing.

**Student Standards of Conduct:** Students are responsible for knowing and adhering to the TAMU-Commerce policies and procedures outlined in the TAMU-Commerce Graduate Catalog, including but not limited to TAMU-Commerce’s principles of academic integrity (see Academic Honesty).

“All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.” Students are expected to follow the code of conduct in class described in the Student Handbook (Policies and Procedures, Code of Student Conduct). Violation of the code will lead to an initiation of the disciplinary processes described in the Handbook. Proper student conduct also includes maintaining a standard of academic honesty. This means that neither cheating nor plagiarism will be tolerated and students who engage in either will be subject to the disciplinary processes described in the Code of Student Conduct). Plagiarism essentially means that you cannot use the words and ideas of another person without giving them credit. Therefore, “quotation marks should be used to indicate the exact words of another. Each time you paraphrase another author you will need to credit the source in the text” (APA, 2001, p. 249). If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism please see me.

**Inclusion:** Students requesting accommodations for disabilities must go through the Office of Student Disability and Services. For more information, please contact the Director of Disability Resources & Services, Gee Library, Room 132, Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835, Fax (903) 468-8148. E-mail: [StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)



### **Global Course Objectives:**

1. Gain factual knowledge (e.g., terminology, ethical standards and codes)
2. Learn to analyze and resolve ethical dilemmas
3. Develop specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course.

**Specific Course Objectives:** The content of this course involves gaining an understanding of professional ethics for psychologists and developing certain skills, including all of the following:

- a. Sensitivity to ethical issues and the needs of others
- b. Recognition of ethical issues and the ability to see the ethical implications of specific situations or choices
- c. Ability to identify differences and similarities among the ethics codes of different professional organizations
- d. Ability to analyze and critically evaluate ethical dilemmas
- e. Ability to propose solutions to ethical problems that are consistent with the ethics code

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### **Methods of Evaluation:**

1. **Term assignment.** At the beginning of the semester, each student will be assigned a topic that will feature an ethical conflict or issue either in more general terms or in the context of a specific case study. Students will write a report that discusses and evaluates the issue at hand referring to the appropriate sections of the APA Ethics Code.

Reports should be at least two pages and no longer than ten pages long. Please use appropriate font, #12 font size, 1” margins, and double space lining. The submission deadline is the same as for the final exam. For this reason, make sure to start working on the term assignment as early as possible.

*Failure to turn in assignments on time will result in points being deducted from the assignment grade. Points deducted for late assignments will be determined by the instructor as necessary.*

2. **Weekly assignments.** Each week a homework assignment will be uploaded on eCollege that is related to the corresponding chapter in the book for that week. In most cases, the assignment will include a case study or an ethical issue. Students will be asked to discuss, interpret, and resolve the issue using the APA Ethics Code. The assignment will be completed in the form of a written report that is submitted via the Dropbox in eCollege. The assignments will be posted at the beginning of the week and will be due on the following Sunday at the latest.

**3. Discussions-** will be required as described in the Discussion tab of eCollege. Your comments should be substantive and civil, as different viewpoints will be expected and encouraged. Posts that are not civil, per my judgment, will receive a score of 0. You will be asked to post your comments in the threaded discussion section. The purpose of the discussion post is to get you focused on the applications of the ethics code. Your posts will be graded for depth of understanding/thought and detail.

**4. Midterm and Final Exams.** Format for midterm and final exams may include: multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and case studies. Some items may be cumulative.

Make up exams may be given ONLY by special permission from the instructor. Arrangements for make-up exams must be made prior to the date of the exam (in emergency cases, this stipulation may be waived, provided the student takes the initiative to contact the instructor). Limited times may be available for make-up exams. It is in the student's best interest to take the exams as scheduled. No make-up exams will be given after an exam has been administered and/or reviewed in class.

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Ethical issues pertaining to course assignments:

- \*You must adhere to the APA Code of Ethics at all times
- \*You must attest that the assignments you hand in are your own work.
- \*You may not use other students' work for your reports.
- \*You must keep all assessment materials private (they are not for dissemination to the general public).

Any ethical violation, including but not limited to the issues mentioned above, will be viewed as a serious transgression and will be dealt with as such. No exceptions.

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**Grade Distribution:**

Term assignment .....	20%
Weekly assignments.....	20%
Midterm.....	20%
Final.....	30%
Discussion.....	10%

**Grading Scale** (based on total number of points):

Grades	A	=	90% and above
	B	=	80-89%
	C	=	70-79%
	D	=	60-69%
	F	=	< 60%

**Important Notes:**

- \* APA writing style (5<sup>th</sup> edition) is required for all written assignments.
- \* While students are encouraged to work collaboratively, each student must turn in her or his own work.
- \* All assignments are due as scheduled. Late assignments will not be accepted without prior approval.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Week 1	Class: Introduction Chapter 1: A Code of Ethics; Chapter 2: Introduction, Preamble
Week 2:	Class: Ethical awareness; Moral principles; Absolutism vs Relativism Chapter 3: APA Ethics Code and Ethical Decision Making
Week 3:	Class: Misuse of psychologists work; Ethical conflicts and their resolution Chapter 4: Standards for Resolving Ethical Issues
Week 4:	Class: Boundaries of competence; Multicultural competence Chapter 5: Standards on Competence
Week 5:	Class: Discrimination and harassment; Conflict of interest; Informed consent Chapter 6: Standards on Human Relations
Week 6:	Class: Limits of confidentiality; Disclosures; Recordings Chapter 7: Standards on Privacy and Confidentiality
Week 7:	Class: False and deceptive statements; Testimonials; Solicitation Chapter 8: Standards on Advertising and Public Statements

- Week 8: *Midterm Exam*
- Week 9: *Spring Break*
- Week 10: Class: Maintaining, disseminating, disposal of confidential records;  
Financial arrangements and fees  
Chapter 9: Standards on Record Keeping and Fees
- Week 11: Class: Design of education/training programs; Sexual relations  
Chapter 10: Standards on Education and Training
- Week 12: Class: IRB; Informed consent; Deception in research; Plagiarism  
Chapter 11: Standards on Research and Publications
- Week 13: Class: Informed consent; Release of test data; Maintaining test security  
Chapter 12: Standards on Assessment
- Week 14: Class: Informed consent; Group therapy; Terminating therapy  
Chapter 12: Standards on Therapy
- Week 15: *Final Exam*  
*Term assignment due*

*NOTE: This schedule is tentative and subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.  
If changes are made, students will be given ample time to complete assignments.*