

PSY –217 Ethics in Psychology (2 CHs)

Course Pre-requisite: None

Course Description:

This course offers a foundational exploration of professional ethics with a focus on clinical psychology, equipping students to thoughtfully navigate moral dilemmas where personal values and professional obligations may diverge. Grounded in ethical theory and rational decision-making, students will engage with core principles such as confidentiality, informed consent, fidelity, and beneficence while examining how these standards shape professional conduct across institutional, legal, and cultural contexts. Through case analyses and reflective practice, the course encourages critical examination of biases and emotional responses to ethically complex situations, including emergent challenges in digital care and end-of-life decisions. Students will cultivate self-awareness and professional integrity, learning to approach ethical conflicts with clarity, empathy, and a commitment to mutual respect and responsibility.

Course Objectives:

This course is designed to help students:

1. Understand Core Ethical Principles: Explore foundational moral values including autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, justice, and fidelity that shape ethical codes in psychology and other professions.
2. Apply Ethical Decision-Making Models: Learn to analyze complex dilemmas using structured, context-sensitive reasoning, cultivating clarity and judgment in ethical conflict resolution.
3. Evaluate Standards and Frameworks: Critically examine the APA Code of Conduct alongside legal, institutional, and cultural norms, understanding tensions between ethical ideals and regulatory mandates.
4. Engage Contemporary Ethical Debates: Investigate pressing issues such as psychologists' roles in national security, integrated care, and end-of-life decisions across multidisciplinary contexts (Specifically, in Pakistan).
5. Foster Self-Awareness and Fairness: Reflect on personal values, biases, and emotional responses while cultivating compassion and fairness in professional interactions.
6. Analyze Ethical Arguments and Assumptions: Assess the strengths and limitations of ethical claims across diverse professions through practical case studies and philosophical critique.

Course Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Define and demonstrate understanding of foundational ethical concepts including competence, informed consent, confidentiality, and avoidance of harm in psychological practice.

2. Analyze the historical evolution of ethics in psychology, recognizing key shifts in professional standards, public accountability, and ethical oversight mechanisms.
3. Apply structured ethical decision-making frameworks to real-world scenarios involving clinical, institutional, and cultural complexities, supporting context-sensitive judgment.
4. Identify and critically evaluate ethical dilemmas across diverse settings such as schools, hospitals, and community care, considering cultural and systemic factors in Pakistan.
5. Examine the ethical implications of psychologists' roles in controversial practices, including those outlined in the Hoffman Report, through informed analysis and ethical reasoning.
6. Distinguish between ethical codes, legal regulations, and institutional policies, demonstrating an understanding of how these interact in complaint resolution and enforcement processes within professional psychology.

Course Contents:

- Ethical obligations of psychologist in different settings
- Competence
- Confidentiality
- Multiple relationships
- Ethical decision-making
- Working with human diversity
- Working with children and adolescents
- Working with life-endangering patients
- Social Responsibility
- Human Diversity and Ethics
- Ethical conduct in research
- Future trends
- Exploring all the concepts with reference to Pakistan

Textbook:

Kline, J.M. (2005). *Ethics for International Business: Decision making in a Global Political Economy*. NY: Routledge.

K & V: Knapp, S., & VandeCreek, L. D. (2012). *Practical ethics for psychologists: A positive approach (Second edition)*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. (Available from on-line textbook outlets.)

Koocher, G. P., & Keith-Spiegel, P. (2016). *Ethics in psychology and the mental health professions: Standards and cases (4th ed.)*. Oxford University Press.

Koven, S.G. (2015). *Public Sector Ethics: Theory and Applications*. FL: CRC Press.

Lawton, A., Rayner, J., & Lasthuizen, K. (2013). *Ethics and Management in the Public Sector*. NY: Routledge.

Meyers, C. (2018). *The Professional Ethics Toolkit*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Plante, T. G. (1999). Contemporary clinical psychology (1st ed.). John Wiley & Sons.

Rachels, J. (1998). The elements of moral philosophy (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill College.

Other Useful Resources:

American Psychological Association. (2020). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association 2020: the Official Guide to APA style (7th ed.). American Psychological Association.