

PSY611 Professional Issues I: Law and Ethics

(2 credit hours)
Course Syllabus

Course Description

This graduate level course will explore and describe how legal and ethical considerations develop in psychology and the helping professions; how practitioners respond to these issues; and consequences of such decisions. Emphasis will be placed on the American Psychological Association's Code of Ethics, the Ohio Revised Code, and best practices in the helping professions as supported by peer reviewed data.

Course Learning Outcomes

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

1. Identify the need for law and ethics in psychology and the helping professions
2. Explore how ethics developed in psychology and the helping professions
3. Prepare to practice as an ethical helping professional according to APA Code of Ethics and state laws

Required Textbook(s) and Resources

Knapp, S. J., & Fingerhut, R. (2024). Practical ethics for psychologists: A positive approach (4th ed.). American Psychological Association.

Be sure to also review the weekly **Explore** sections for additional library or web resources. For access to databases, research help, and writing tips, visit the [Tiffin University Library](#).

Time Commitment

Effective time management is possibly the single most critical element to your academic success. To do well in this online class you should plan your time wisely to maximize your learning through the completion of readings, discussions, and assignments. Because of our accelerated, seven-week term, TU online courses are designed with the expectation that you dedicate a little over **six (6)** hours per credit hour to course activities and preparation **each week**. For example, for successful completion of a three-credit, seven-week online course you should reserve roughly **twenty (20) hours per week**.

To help plan your time and keep on track toward successful course completion, note the distinctive rhythm of assignment due dates:

1. All times assume Eastern Time (GMT-4).
2. Weeks begin at 12:00 a.m. ET on Monday and end at 11:55 p.m. ET on Sunday.
3. Unless otherwise noted, initial assignments or discussion posts are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Wednesdays.**
4. Additional assignments or follow-up discussion posts are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Saturdays, and**
5. Major assignments and reflections are typically due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Sundays.**

Learning Activities

This course includes a variety of learning activities to engage you and help you apply concepts related to law, ethics, and professional issues in psychology. Each week you will have the opportunity to participate in forum discussions centered around real-world case studies, allowing you to analyze complex situations through an ethical lens. For example, in Week 2, you examine informed consent challenges with a cognitively impaired client. Weekly 3-5 page written assignments build on the case studies, having you investigate topics like licensure requirements, documentation practices, and expert testimony. You will research official ethical codes and state laws to evaluate scenarios and propose ethically sound responses. The final paper is a culminating activity where you assess a custody case weighing legal, ethical, and competence considerations in your analysis. Through individual and peer-based activities, you gain practical insight into navigating the multifaceted legal and ethical landscape in psychology. The course provides opportunities to apply your learning to real scenarios you may encounter and develops critical skills for ethical and legal practice.

Grading

The chart below identifies the individual contributions from each type of activity, per week.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Total
Forums Activity 1.1 (n/a) Activity 1.2 (50)	Forums Activity 2.1 (50)	Forums Activity 3.1 (50)	Forums Activity 4.1 (50)	Forums Activity 5.1 (50)	Forums Activity 6.1 (50)	Forums Activity 7.1 (50)	350
Assignments Activity 1.3 (80)	Assignments Activity 2.2 (80)	Assignments Activity 3.2 (80)	Assignments Activity 4.2 (80)	Assignments Activity 5.2 (80)	Assignments Activity 6.2 (80)	Assignments Activity 7.2 (170)	650
130	130	130	130	130	130	220	1000

Grading Scale

A: 90-100% | B: 80-89% | C: 70-79% | F: <69%

Course Schedule and Weekly Checklist

Start Here

- ☐ MON: Activity 1.1: Introduce Yourself - Introductory Post

Week 1 – Intro: Law, Ethics, and Professional Conduct

- ☐ WED: Activity 1.1: Introduce Yourself – Follow-Up Post
- ☐ WED: Activity 1.2: Exploring Ethics and Law
- ☐ SUN: Activity 1.3: Licensure and Competency Analysis

Week 2 – Core Ethical Principles

- ☐ WED: Activity 2.1: Principle Application Scenario
- ☐ SUN: Activity 2.2: Ethics in Practice

Week 3 – Privacy and Confidentiality

- ☐ WED: Activity 3.1: Confidentiality Case Study
- ☐ SUN: Activity 3.2: Reporting and Protection

Week 4 – Professional Boundaries and Relationships

- ☐ WED: Activity 4.1: Boundary Scenarios Analysis
- ☐ SUN: Activity 4.2: Ethical Relationships in Practice

Week 5 – Professional Conduct in Practice

- ☐ WED: Activity 5.1: Digital Ethics Scenario
- ☐ SUN: Activity 5.2: Ethics in Assessment and Research

Week 6 – Record Keeping Ethics

- ☐ WED: Activity 6.1: Ethical Documentation Practice
- ☐ SUN: Activity 6.2: Ethical Considerations in Documentation

Week 7 – Specialized Legal and Ethical Issues

- ☐ WED: Activity 7.1: Court-Related Issues
- ☐ SUN: Activity 7.2: Expert Testimony and Custody Ethics

Tips for Success

Online learning requires self-discipline and self-direction. As seekers of the truth, we should be willing to challenge one another's academic work in a spirit of respectful comradery. Your course is a place for you to grow as you benefit from the expertise, experience, and diverse perspectives of your instructor and peers. Constructive feedback will challenge you to stretch your own thinking, thereby expanding your knowledge and understanding.

To get the most out of your learning experience, you should actively engage (participate) in **ALL** course activities. Course elements are arranged chronologically. To complete a week, simply work your way "down the page" through all of the course materials and activities.

For More Information:

Be sure to review the [Support, Policies, and Procedures](#) addendum.