The purpose of this course is to familiarize you with issues of psychology as a profession and with professional ethics. We will examine the process of ethical decision making as well as the outcome. I would hope that by the end of the course your thinking about ethics will be more informed and more critical. In addition we will examine some of the social/political/doctrinal issues facing psychology as a profession.

In studying both of these areas, professional affairs and ethics, we are chasing ephemera. The issues that we are looking at change as we examine them, they do not remain static for any time. Therefore we need to constantly keep our eyes open for new information on these matters and how things are evolving. Some examples:

- The recent revision of the APA Code of Ethics.
- The Vermont Board of Psychological Examiners has recently published new rules.
- There is a new Canadian Ethics code on conducting human subject research (http://www.ethics.ubc.ca/code/) promulgated by their research council (somewhat like our NIMH), which will among other things, require researchers to debrief their subjects after each study, to allow participants to review research results, comment on findings, and to delete their data if participants did not like what they heard, and more. This code will likely have some effect on ethics codes in this country.

- There is a case before the California Supreme Court that might extend the Tarasoff rules to warnings made by patient relatives.

- Similarly, as psychologists move into the drug world, as researchers and prescribers, new ethical issues arise. There have been a hue and cry raised about drug companies (and other corporate bodies) sponsoring research and the effect that it has had on academic freedom, protection of the public etc. (For example http://www.cauro.ca/en/issues/academicfreedom/OliverInquiryReport.pdf for a Canadian case that should make the hair on the back of your neck stand up.) (A good Web site for research ethics is http://www.ethics.ubc.ca/resources/research/).

- Other examples; major issues on professional psychology's agenda include health care reform, and psychology's place in any health care program; the likely changes in research funding with the current Congress and its impact on Behavioral/Social Science funding. More parochial issues are managed care, prescription privileges for psychologists, the whole issue of the unity of psychology in the face of the ongoing splits in the APA and the development of APS. Globalization effects us too. Cross border licensing is being studied. Another ongoing issue is the use of animals in research programs, and the impact of animal rights organizations on future research efforts. As recently as 1996 a couple of states again tried to limit psychotherapy (calling it Medical Psychotherapy) to physicians, and there has been a recent report by the Pew Commission suggesting required lifelong evaluation of practitioners, which would completely revamp existing licensing laws.

We will be keeping up with current issues, but we can't completely predict what they will be, so a little flexibility is in order.
Finally. Most of you know that I can’t keep to a schedule. I digress and develop logorhea. So keep up with the readings according to the schedule.
Class Design

I. Goals of Course.

The student should:

A. become knowledgeable about current ethical and legal standards, standards for practice and for professional behavior.
   1. Be familiar with various ethical theories and ethical decision making, and know how they inform the development of ethical codes
   2. Be able to use these principles, standards and practices to analyze cases, to formulate choices and to evaluate appropriate courses of action.

B. become familiar with current issues in organizational and professional psychology.

C. become familiar with the history and structure of the psychology as an institution.

D. become familiar with the social and political context in which psychology operates
   1. psychology and other professions
   2. multi-cultural and ethnic issues
   3. professionalism and anti-professionalism

E. develop personal standards of professional behavior and methods for maintaining an ongoing awareness of ethical standards/issues.
   1. achieving and maintaining competence
   2. developing plans for ongoing training

II. Course Structure/Process

A. The course has been structured to promote students' active involvement in thinking about ethical and professional issues. Thus, the course emphasizes the use of the following:
   1. Active participation in course discussions of current articles and issues in the psychological field.
   2. Ongoing review of APA Monitor, American Psychologist and other psychological periodicals. Selected articles from current issues will be discussed.
   3. Topics of interest will be drawn directly from the readings, ongoing cases in the news, personal experiences and these will be discussed within the context of the current ethics code and elaborated on with class debates, and discussions.
B. Ongoing reading and course Materials:

1. Read Monthly: APA Monitor and American Psychologist, and issues of the National Psychologist


3. Other readings are by the copier

III. General Assignment

A. Ongoing Review of APA Monitor, American Psychologist, National Psychologist

Monthly Assignment. Each month choose one article from the current issue of one of these publications. Preferably the article should address a professional issue, rather than a report of research. Submit a 1-2 paragraph write-up on the article. Your write-up might address some or all of the following:

- why topic/article is of interest to you
- main points of article
- whether you agree or disagree with the position taken
- questions the article raises for you
- experiences you have had that reflect or are related to this topic
- what other issues are related to this topic
- why should we discuss this article in class
- why is this topic being raised now
- current context
- historical influences
- significance to the field, society

Your write-up should reflect your thoughts, musings, contemplations of the issues raised by the article. Spend your time thinking/reflecting -- do not spend time being concerned about careful wording, perfect format, etc. Thus, the write-up can be presented loosely -- outline form, incomplete sentences, etc. Feel free to do as a free-write, stream of consciousness. You might even contradict yourself. Or write as a letter to the editor. (Please type the write up).

B. Keep a journal or a set of notes to yourself about issues that you think are important. At the end of the semester I am going to ask you to reflect back on the issues that we read about and discussed, and to choose at least 4 of those that you think are most important to you and/or to the profession. The reflection will be written and handed in, so having notes will help.
IV. Final Debates:

In lieu of individual papers, you will be preparing and taking part in debates about a number of controversial issues in psychology. Since there are 12 people signed up for the course, we will probably set up 4 teams of 3 people (or 3 of 4 people, depending on the topics chosen) to participate in the debate. Each team will select, or be given one side of an issue to debate with one of the other teams.

Some of the topics that I have in mind are:

Prescription Privileges for Clinical Psychologists
Masters level psychologists (I.E. The Masters degree should be the entry level degree for practice of clinical psychology)
Subjects in clinical research should be paid.
Therapists should have absolute confidentiality, like the clergy.
The ban on therapist-patient sexual relations following therapy should be absolute.
Psychologists should be restricted to practicing empirically validated interventions
Personal Relationships between faculty and students should not be regulated by the Administration of Universities
The Scientist-Practitioner model should be abolished
Psychologists should not take part in physician assisted suicide
Industry participation in research (drugs e.g.)
IRB=s should be abolished
The Ph.D. should be the basis for licensing.

Other topics are possible, and we can discuss them during the first class meeting.
Week 1 - 3  Introduction to the course and  
The history and the organization of professional psychology

A. The nature of a profession.

B. The History of the Profession: Putting Psychology and Ethics in a Context.

Questions to ponder. What is a profession? What are the rights and responsibilities of a 
profession in society.

Is psychology a profession? If so what kind of profession is it? Is it one or two professions (or 
maybe more.).

What is the current structure of organized psychology? How did it get to be that way? What is 
the likely future (more fragmentation or reunited and reorganized?)

Readings:

A. The nature of professions, Psychology as a Profession

Routledge.

Koehn, D. (1994) The public pledge as the ground of professional authority. Chapter 4 in The 


Haskell, T.L.(1984) Introduction to The Authority of Experts. (pp ix-xxxix). Bloomington, 
Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Collins,R (1979) The politics of professions.(Pgs 131-159 of Chapter 6) in R. Collins The 


B. The History and Structure of APA (Also see American Psychologist, February, 1992)

Psychology,1,1-3. (Reprinted in Journal of Consulting and Clinical 
Psychology,1992,60,7-8.


Cummings, N. (?) An open letter to Doctoral Students in Psychology. *Graduate Student Newsletter. APA*

**Week 4 Introduction to Ethics - Codes of Ethics**

A. Ethical Theory

General theories of Ethics
Ethical decision making

B. Codes of Ethics

APA code of ethics & Preamble
Entire code also at (http://www.apa.org/ethics/code2002.html)
ABA code of conduct
Behavior of Ethics Committees

Questions to think about:

a. What is a code of ethics? Where does it come from?
b. What purpose does an ethical code serve? What is the purpose of understanding professional affairs?
c. Who does it apply to and when?
e. How is a code enforced?
f. How best to teach ethics principles, cases or both?

g. Where do the principles of autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, justice and paternalism come from?

Readings:


Week 5 Ethics II

General Standards
Relationship between Law and Ethics
Competence

Readings:

Pope, K.S. & Vetter, V.A., Ethical Dilemmas Encountered by Members of the American Psychological Association: A National Survey
http://www.kspope.com/ethics/ethics2.php

The Vermont Laws and Rules can be found at: http://www.vtprofessionals.org/
There is a drop down list to each profession.

Vermont Board of Psychological Examiners: Laws and Rules
State of Vermont Rules for Clinical Social Workers
State of Vermont Rules for Certified Mental Health Counselors
Vermont Laws for Psychoanalysts, Marriage and Family Therapists
Vermont Law for Roster of Non-Licensed Non-Certified Therapists


Week 6  Ethics III (Section 1.1 -1.2)

Treatment of others
Boundaries
Relationships with others

Readings:


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**Week 7 Ethics IV**

Testing - Evaluation
Advertising

**Readings:**


**Weeks 9 -10 Ethics IV (Sections 2 - 3)**

Therapy and Confidentiality

Bersoff Chapter 7


Division 44 / Committee on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns Joint Task Force on Guidelines for Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients (JTF) Guidelines for Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay, & Bisexual Clients  
http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbc/guidelines.html#18

Task Force on Sex Bias and Sex Role Stereotyping in Psychotherapeutic Practice, APA Guidelines for Therapy with Women.

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**Mar.21-25  Spring Break**

**Week 11 Ethics VI**

Teaching  
Research (The functioning of the IRB)

**Readings:**

The University of Vermont and Fletcher Allen Health Care on-line tutorial for the protection of human subjects in research. At:  
http://www.uvm.edu/irb/tutorial/index.html

As a result of the Tuskegee Experiment, a bibliography on research ethics is available on-line:


About the experiment:  
On May 16, 1997, President Clinton apologized to the survivors and families of hundreds of men used in a research project to study the progression of untreated syphilis. These men were mainly sharecroppers.
from Macon County, Alabama (the area surrounding Tuskegee). They were poor, African American, and had few resources available to them. In 1932, when they were offered free medical care by physicians and researchers involved with the United States Public Health Service, they believed they had found treatment for what they had been told was "bad blood." Instead, they were enrolled in an observational research study, without their knowledge or consent. In exchange for their participation (which included agreeing to an autopsy at death), the men received free medical examinations (primarily to provide data for the study), transportation and hot meals on the days of their examinations, and $50 for burial expenses. Even though some rudimentary remedies for syphilis were available in the early years of the study, they were not offered to these men, so that the study of the natural history of the untreated disease would not be jeopardized.  

The study (the Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Male Negro 2) did not end until 1972, forty years after it had begun, and twenty years after penicillin had been identified as an effective treatment for syphilis. The New York Times headline exposing the experiment read, "Syphilis victims in U.S. study went untreated for 40 years." 3 The article revealed the details of the study and called it "the longest nontherapeutic experiment on human beings in medical history." According to the Report of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study Legacy Committee, "In the almost 25 years since its disclosure, the Study has moved from a singular historical event to a powerful metaphor. It has come to symbolize racism in medicine, ethical misconduct in human research, paternalism by physicians, and government abuse of vulnerable people." 4

Bersoff, Chapter 8


Also available at:
http://ohsr.od.nih.gov/guidelines/belmont.html


**Week 12 Ethics VII**

Miscellaneous

**Readings:**

TBA

Subsequent weeks are for Debates: