

Syllabus  
SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY  
**CMH-ED 7320: PROFESSIONAL ISSUES & ETHICS IN COUNSELING**  
Fall 2025/Meara McMains, LPC, RYT, PhD Candidate

Instructor: Meara McMains

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Cell Phone: 210-818-9524 for texts and phone calls. Please give your name and the class you are in when you text or leave a message.

Office Hours: Virtual, Thursdays and Fridays 9am-noon  
Or by appointment

Please read through the syllabus carefully and refer to it throughout the course. All course objectives and expectations are outlined in the syllabus. If anything is unclear, please contact the instructor for clarification. This is a web course and is delivered entirely on Blackboard.

### **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

You need the following materials:

All the required course materials for your classes are being delivered through Sully Shelf, the campus-wide course materials program. Your student account will be charged automatically, and you will not need to make a separate purchase.

- For this course we will be using a physical (print) book. You will receive an email confirming your materials are ready for pickup. Upon receipt of the email, please bring your Student ID to the online order pickup area at the campus store to pick up your print course materials. **Note:** If you drop this course on, or before, the last day of the DROP/ADD period (check the academic calendar [here](#)), when you return your physical course material to the campus store, your account will be refunded.

If you have any questions about Sully Shelf or the charge to your student account, please contact the campus store by phone at (432) 837-8194 or via email at [sullyshelf@follett.com](mailto:sullyshelf@follett.com).

- Sheperis, D., Henning, S., & Kocet, M. (2016). Ethical decision making for the 21<sup>st</sup> century counselor. SAGE: Thousand Oaks, California.
- Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition— 9781433832161
- **HIPAA Training for Individuals: Mental Health**  
Link for Program: [HIPAA Training and Certification for Mental Health](#)  
**Pricing:** One Course: **\$29.99**  
PLEASE NOTE: If you can find a free or lower cost certificate program for [HIPAA Training for Mental Health Professionals](#), email me the information about that program ([Rebecca.wren@sulross.edu](mailto:Rebecca.wren@sulross.edu)), or text me (210-818-9524) for approval.

**Avg Completion Time:** 1.5 Hours / Course

- **Format:** Online Self-Paced Training
- **Access:** Online Access for 90 Days
- **Certificate of Completion:** Yes
- **Certificate Expiry:** 2 Year
- **Wallet Card:** Yes
- **Audio:** Yes
- **License:** Single User

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

A course to familiarize students with the ethical and legal practice in the field of counseling; included are standards of ethical practice and their application to the various areas of counseling, ethical decision-making, major ethical and legal issues, and ethical responses to unethical behavior.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Student will be able to...:

1. ... respond to ethical dilemmas by using a decision-making process.
2. ... identify the different major components of ethical codes for school or professional counselors.
3. ... communicate an understanding of the laws for counselors and therapists in Texas.
4. ... communicate her/his/their value system, with emphasis on how these values are likely to impact a counseling practice.
5. ... communicate how her/his personal values influence her/his ethical posture.
6. ... identify the professional organizations for counselors.

## **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**This course contributes to the following required student learning outcomes:**

1. Students will demonstrate their ability to apply within guidance and counseling, their knowledge of human development, diversity, and factors that affect students /clients' ability to achieve their potential.
2. Students will demonstrate their ability to determine ethical dilemmas and the steps involved and best practices for an effective resolution while utilizing appropriate theoretical frameworks, techniques, and interventions to address personal, interpersonal/social, educational, and career needs, etc.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate and collaborate effectively with colleagues, others in the school, with students' parents, and/or with the community in order to facilitate student/client success, and will demonstrate the ability to apply ethical, legal, and professional standards.

## **CACREP STANDARDS:**

(Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs)

Standards for Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) track	
1. Roles and setting of clinical mental health counseling (CMHC:VC1a);	Counseling Interview
2. Knows the roles and setting of clinical mental health counselors (CMHC: VC2a)	Counseling Interview
3. Mental health service delivery modalities within the continuum of care, such as inpatient, outpatient, partial treatment and aftercare, and the mental health counseling services networks. (CMHC:VC2c);	Counseling Interview
4. Knows the professional organizations, preparation standards, and credentials relevant to the practice of clinical mental health counseling (CMHC:VC2k);	Professional Affiliation
5. Is aware of legal and ethical considerations specific to clinical mental health counseling (CMHC:VC2l);	
6. Understands the record keeping, third party reimbursement, and other practice and management issues in clinical mental health counseling (CMHC:VC2m);	Counseling Interview

7. Understands the impact of crises and trauma on individuals with mental health diagnosis (CMHC:VC2f);	
8. Applies knowledge of legislation and government policy relevant to clinical mental health counseling (CMHC:VC2i);	
9. Understands effective strategies for interfacing with integrated behavioral health care professionals (CMHC:VC3d)	Counseling Interview

## **TExES STANDARDS**

TExES standards addressed in this course are:

**Standard I. Learner-Centered Knowledge:** The certified school counselor has a broad knowledge base.

**Standard II. Learner-Centered Skills:** The certified school counselor applies the knowledge base to promote the educational, personal, social, and career development of the learner.

**Standard III. Learner-Centered Process:** The certified school counselor participates in the development, monitoring, and evaluation of a developmental school guidance and counseling program that promotes learners' knowledge, skills, motivation, and personal growth.

**Standard IV. Learner-Centered Equity and Excellence for All Learners:** The certified school counselor promotes academic success for all learners by acknowledging, respecting, and responding to diversity while building on similarities that bond all people.

**Standard V. Learner-Centered Communications:** The certified school counselor, an advocate for all students and the school, demonstrates effective professional and interpersonal communication skills.

**Standard VI. Learner-Centered Professional Development:** The certified school counselor continues professional development, demonstrating a commitment to learn, to improve the profession, and to model professional ethics and personal integrity.

## **TExES COMPETENCIES**

TExES competencies addressed in this course are:

**Competency 001, Human Development:** The school counselor understands processes of human development and applies this knowledge to provide a developmental guidance program, including counseling services, that meets the needs of all students.

**Competency 002, Student Diversity:** The school counselor understands human diversity and applies this knowledge to ensure that the developmental guidance and counseling program is responsive to all students.

**Competency 003, Factors Affecting Students:** The school counselor understands factors that may affect students' development and school achievement and applies this knowledge to promote students' ability to achieve their potential.

**Competency 006, Counseling:** The school counselor understands how to provide effective counseling services to individuals and small groups.

**Competency 007, Assessment:** The school counselor understands principles of assessment and is able to use assessment results to identify students' strengths and needs, monitor progress, and engage in planning to promote school success.

**Competency 008, Collaboration with Families:** The school counselor knows how to communicate effectively with families and establish collaborative relationships that enhance work with students.

**Competency 009, Collaboration with Others in the School and Community:** The school counselor understands how to work collaboratively with other professionals and with community members to promote positive change and to facilitate student learning.

**Competency 010, Professionalism:** The school counselor understands and complies with ethical, legal, and professional standards relevant to the profession.

## **DISTANT LEARNING STATEMENT:**

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as Smarthinking, library resources, such as online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

## **Student Expectations of Instructor:**

- Instructor will provide weekly communication with the class through announcements and email notifications, virtual office hours, and zoom meetings as needed.
- Instructor will provide email responses within 48 hours of receipt during the hours
- Instructor will provide grades to assignments within two weeks of the submission date.
- Instructor will provide feedback to discussion board postings as needed, on a weekly basis.
- Instructor will provide a range of opportunities to engage in course content in a meaningful way.

## **Professor Expectations of Students:**

- Students will familiarize themselves with the components of an online course: Blackboard, SafeAssign, Quizzes/Exams, HIPAA online course, Research Paper, Calendar of due dates, volunteer Zoom meetings, etc.
- Students will familiarize themselves with the course textbooks, syllabus, online policies, grading policies, student outcomes, marketable skills, course objectives, and course design.
- Students will adhere to the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the APA manual for all written assignments and postings and will not plagiarize the work of another, use the work of their peers and claim it as their own, or use AI (Artificial Intelligence) generated answers.
- Students will complete and submit all coursework by midnight central time, on the due date. Late work will not be accepted.
- Students will engage in the course with their peers and the instructor, with open communication and active participation.
- Students will be diligent to use both oral and written communication that respects peers and instructor.
- Students will respond to instructor communication requests regarding course progress and other general inquiries within 48 hours.
- Students will be proactive, resourceful (such as backing up assignments on other external devices or in the cloud), and pre-plan for internet interruptions and other technology/computer problems so that these will not be issues in test-taking situations or in submitting assignments. It is best to get work completed well before the time it is due.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

Students in this class are required to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be timely, prepared, and focused. Meaningful, respectful, and pertinent online participation is also expected.

Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: submitting work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor, even your own previous work; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation.

**SAFE ASSIGN:**

The Safe Assignment Tool is an advanced plagiarism prevention system deeply integrated with the Blackboard Learning Management System. SafeAssign compares student papers submitted to Blackboard against an enormous wide range of sources and provides instructors with detailed Originality Reports. Because of Safe Assignment's flexibility, this product is an effective plagiarism prevention system that helps instructors to raise student awareness about plagiarism and to educate students about the ways to avoid plagiarism. You can check your similarity report and make corrections if needed. With your similarity report, you will note highlighted areas that have similarity noted between your paper and another source. You will click on the tab within the colored square to see the percentage of the similarity. **Percentages above 10% must be corrected.** It does not matter if the source that is being noted for similarity is not the same source that you used. The system tells you what you have written is too like another source and you need to make corrections. You may need to change some of the wording or order of information to make it your information. More than three or four words in a row that are identical to the originating author can be detected. You can submit your paper as many times as you would like. This system is designed to assist students with increasing awareness of plagiarism. Typically, plagiarism is an accidental occurrence and occurs when students do not realize their writing is overly similar to another source.

**SRSU DISABILITY SERVICES ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act):**

The University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The Disability Services Coordinator in Counseling and Student Support Services has the responsibility to ensure students with disabilities the opportunity for full participation in programs, services, and activities. Students seeking disability services need to contact the Disability Services Coordinator, Mary Schwartze-Grisham, located in Ferguson Hall, room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-171, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, TX 79832. Telephone: 432-837-8203; Fax: 432-837-8724.

**REQUIREMENTS**

Students will:

- participate in online discussions (14) and activities.
- complete reading assignments and study the material **prior** to deadlines.
- complete all assignments.
- take fourteen (14) chapter exams.
- complete a research paper on three (3) scenarios of five (5) that are offered.
- practice professional conduct and ethics.
- practice respectful learning exchanges.
- agree to online participation policy including prompt response to email from instructor.

**PARTICIPATION**

Students are expected to participate in online activities and discussions. You are free to work at your own pace on most assignments, as long as you meet the assignment deadlines. Your final course grade will be affected by the quality of your participation. Your postings and responses on the Discussion Board should give evidence that you have completed the assigned readings and viewing of the Helping Professions Learning Center. Everything you write must be that of graduate level work and should reflect professional courtesy toward fellow students and instructor. Students are highly encouraged to edit all work before posting, as writing errors will affect grades negatively.

This is a web-delivered course therefore is subject to the **Sul Ross State University online participation policy**. It is the student's responsibility to check the Discussion Board and Sul Ross email continuously for the duration of the course. Participation will be evaluated in Blackboard online discussions. For you to remain enrolled, you must reply to the Blackboard Discussion Board "Online Participation Policy" forum by the deadline posted on the Due Dates listing in the Weekly Assignments tab of Bb. It is policy at Sul Ross State University that if a student enrolled in a web-delivered course fails to stay active (for a period of 3 weeks in a long semester or for 1 week during a summer

### **PARTICIPATION, continued:**

session) or fails to submit assignments and/or does not reply to emails from the instructor then the student will be dropped from the course with a grade of "F." You may access the "Online Participation Policy" forum by entering Blackboard, then selecting Discussion Board. Please follow the directions regarding your required response. ***You will be expected to check your Sul Ross email regularly for the duration of the semester.***

## **ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS**

### **\*\* DISCUSSION BOARD (30%):**

Discussion Board Questions are presented for each chapter. After reading each chapter, go to the Discussion Board tab on Blackboard. Click on the Week/Chapter that is due that week (most are due by 11:59 pm, central, on Sundays). Read and answer the questions provided.

Discussion Board postings should be concise, yet thorough. Please share your conceptualization of what you have learned about the process of making an ethical decision and answer the questions thoroughly. Use this platform to demonstrate your acquired knowledge and insights. You will need to read all posts and **respond to at least TWO other classmates' posts** to receive the maximum possible points. You will address the posts you choose by either agreeing with the student's approach, respectfully challenging/disagreeing with their approach, and/or offering personal insight. Please do not make the mistake of thinking that you must agree with all the posts. Such practices deny you and the class the rich, interactive, and critical thinking aspects required at the graduate level and especially where ethics are concerned. Remember to make citations within your text, and you must have a Reference List at the end.

**Writing Style.** APA writing format is required on original Discussion Board posts. **You MUST cite all material.** Make sure you edit for spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors, as points will be taken off if there are more than just a couple.

### **\*\* CHAPTER QUIZZES (35%)**

Ethical approaches to online testing are required of each student. Individual integrity is an expectation in this venue.

**You MAY NOT collaborate on the chapter quizzes. Do not attempt to print, copy, take photos, or screen shot of these quizzes.** To do so will violate stated rules regarding academic honesty, and you will be dropped from the course **and/or program**. Correct answers will not be provided until all students have taken each quiz, and a few days after the due date.

### **\*\* HIPAA TRAINING for MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS (15%)**

Link for Program: [HIPAA Training and Certification for Mental Health](#)

**Pricing:** One Course: \$29.99

PLEASE NOTE: If you can find a free or lower cost certificate program for [HIPAA Training for Mental Health Professionals](#), email me the information about that program for approval.

**Avg Completion Time:** 1.5 Hours / Course; **Format:** Online Self-Paced Training; **Access:** Online **Access for 90 Days**  
**Certificate of Completion:** Yes; **Certificate Expiry:** 2 Years; **Wallet Card:** Yes [you can print]; **Audio:** Yes

## **ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS, Continued**

### **\*\* RESEARCH PAPER (20%)**

This research paper will be answering ethical questions of three (3) scenarios. Choose the three (3) you wish to research (out of the five (5) presented). You must submit it through SafeAssign and correct any SafeAssign similarities over 10%. You may submit it as many times as you wish to check for SafeAssign analysis of your paper. When you have finished, and you've corrected similarities, upload your paper with the title: **"To Grade- Research Paper- Last name, First Name,"** with the final SafeAssign Report. That is the one I will grade. If you do not do this, and the deadline has passed, I will grade the LAST paper you submitted.

Writing Instructions: Each paper must be written using APA guidelines. Students are required to purchase the 7th edition of the APA writing manual. APA guidelines does include a Title page, citing of references and a reference page. In addition, each paper should include one-inch margins, 12-point font, double line spacing, have all pages numbered, and be edited for spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Papers with multiple errors will receive a deduction in grade. You must have a Reference List after EACH SCENARIO! Do NOT list all references at the end of your paper. Major points will be taken off if you do this!

Submit all papers through SafeAssign. Percentages above 10% similarities from SafeAssign **must be corrected** before you submit your paper for grading.

Please note: **Do NOT write the entire scenarios or their following questions in your paper.** Start your answers by briefly noting the situation.

#### **Research Paper-Case Studies: Due Sunday, November 24, 2024, 11:59 pm (central)**

Five (5) Case Studies are provided to you for this research paper. See BlackBoard for these scenarios. You will need to **choose three (3)** of the case studies for this paper. You will research each case study using your textbook and **other reliable and good references**.

**FIVE (5) references per case study.**

The Research paper needs to be **eight to ten pages, NOT including the Title Page, nor the Reference Pages.**

I am providing an example of how the paper should be written, with notes I have made to it. Please see in Blackboard for this example.

### **EVALUATION:**

Your grade for this course will be determined by evidence of the **quality** of your learning as **demonstrated by your performance** on the following areas:

Discussion Board Postings	30%
Quizzes (14 total)	35%
HIPAA for Mental Health Professions course	15%
Research Paper	20%
Course Grade:	

A	B	C	F
91% - 100%	81% - 90%	71% - 80%	Below 71%

**NOTE:** Graduate students must maintain a 3.0 GPA to remain in good standing.

Effective Fall 2019 counseling students will be required to maintain A/B grades in all graduate coursework.



## **DISCUSSIONS**

Final note - complete the reading assignments and study the material **PRIOR** to each deadline noted in Bb. You may complete all assignments, exams, and tests early. All assignments must be submitted in **Blackboard no later than 11:59 pm, Central Time** on the date indicated in the Weekly Assignments tab. To complete the assignments, you will need to refer to the textbook, Codes of Ethics booklet, and the downloaded Supplementary Materials (accessed via the Course Documents tab on Blackboard).

*Have a wonderful semester!*

### *Calendar of Assignments & Special Dates*

***11:59 PM IS THE TIME DEADLINE  
REMEMBER! THESE TIMES ARE CENTRAL TIME!***

#### ***Week 1- Participation Policy-Acknowledgement Statement***

***Discussion Board Posting***

***-Due: Sunday, August 31.***

***- Get Acquainted***

***Discussion Board Posting and Responses to 2 classmates.***

***-Due: Sunday, August 31.***

#### ***Week 2- Chapter 1- due Sunday, September 7***

***Chapter 1- Discussion Board Posting and Responses to 2 classmates.***

***Chapter 1- Quiz 1***

#### ***Week 3- Chapter 2- Due Sunday, September 14***

***Chapter 2- Discussion Board Posting and Responses to 2 classmates.***

***Chapter 2- Quiz 2***

#### ***Week 4- Chapter 3- Due Sunday, September 21***

***Chapter 3- Discussion Board Posting and Responses to 2 classmates.***

***Chapter 3- Quiz 3***

#### ***Week 5- Chapter 4- Due Sunday, September 28***

***Chapter 4- Discussion Board Posting and Responses to 2 classmates.***

***Chapter 4- Quiz 4***

#### ***Week 6- Chapter 5- Due October 5***

***Chapter 5- Discussion Board Posting and Responses to 2 classmates.***

***Chapter 5- Quiz 5***

#### ***Week 7- Chapter 6- Due October 12***

***Chapter 6- Discussion Board Posting and Responses to 2 classmates.***

***Chapter 6- Quiz 6***

***Week 8- Chapter 7- Due October 19******Chapter 7- Discussion Board Posting and Responses to 2 classmates.******Chapter 7- Quiz 7******Week 9- Chapter 8- Due October 26******Chapter 8- Discussion Board Posting and Responses to 2 classmates.******Chapter 8- Quiz 8******Week 10- Chapter 9- Due November 2******Chapter 9- Discussion Board Posting and Responses to 2 classmates.******Chapter 9- Quiz 9******HIPPA Training due******Week 11- Chapter 10- Due November 9******Chapter 10- Discussion Board Posting and Responses to 2 classmates.******Chapter 10- Quiz 10******Week 12- Chapter 11- Due November 16******Chapter 11- Discussion Board Posting and Responses to 2 classmates.******Chapter 11- Quiz 11******Week 13- Research Paper- Due November 23******Research Paper Due!******November 24-November 30******Thanksgiving, please take some time to practice self-care ☺******Week 14- Chapter 12- Due December 7******Chapter 12- Discussion Board Posting and Responses to 2 classmates.******Chapter 12- Quiz 11******Chapter 14******Chapter 14- Discussion Board Posting and Responses to 2 classmates.******Chapter 14- Quiz 14******Remember these special dates:******Week 9-HIPAA Training for Mental Health Professionals******Certificate-******Upload your pdf format Certificate of Completion for you HIPAA  
online course.******To do so, Go to “Assignments to post/complete, find and click  
on, “HIPPA course certificate” link. Once in that folder,  
upload your certificate in pdf format.***

**WRITING RUBRIC FOR ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS:**

<b>Sub-skill</b>	<b>Beginning 1</b>	<b>Basic 2</b>	<b>Proficient 3</b>	<b>Advanced 4</b>	<b>Exceptional 5</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Integration of Knowledge</b>	The paper did not incorporate knowledge from the literature or class in relevant and meaningful ways	The paper somewhat incorporated knowledge from the literature in relevant and meaningful ways	The paper incorporated knowledge from the literature in relevant and meaningful ways	The paper effectively incorporated knowledge from the literature in relevant and meaningful ways	The paper very effectively incorporated knowledge from the literature in relevant and meaningful ways	
<b>Organization and Presentation</b>	The paper lacked topic sentences, transitions from one topic to another, relevant connections among topics, and	The paper occasionally included topic sentences, transitions from one topic to another, relevant connections	The paper consistently included topic sentences, transitions from one topic to another, relevant connections	The paper consistently and effectively employed topic sentences, transitions from one topic to another,	The paper uniformly and very effectively employed topic sentences, transitions from one topic to another,	

<b>Sub-skill</b>	<b>Beginning 1</b>	<b>Basic 2</b>	<b>Proficient 3</b>	<b>Advanced 4</b>	<b>Exceptional 5</b>	<b>Score</b>
	a seamless flow	among topics, and a seamless flow	among topics, and a seamless flow	relevant connections among topics, and a seamless flow	relevant connections among topics, and a seamless flow	
<b>Focus</b>	The paper's topic lacked focus and a clear direction	The paper's topic had occasional focus, direction, and purpose	The paper's topic had focus and clarity of direction and purpose	The paper's topic had effective focus and clarity of direction and purpose	The paper's topic had very effective focus and clarity of direction and purpose	
<b>Level of Coverage</b>	The paper lacked depth, elaboration, and relevant material	The paper occasionally included depth, elaboration, and relevant material	The paper included depth, elaboration, and relevant material	The paper effectively included depth, elaboration, and relevant material	The paper very effectively included depth, elaboration, and relevant material	
<b>Grammar/ Spelling</b>	The paper contained numerous errors of grammar and spelling	The paper contained some errors of grammar and spelling	The paper contained very few errors of grammar and spelling	The paper contained only one or two errors of grammar and spelling	The paper contained no errors of grammar and spelling	
<b>References and Sources</b>	The paper did not include content from peer reviewed journal articles and/or scholarly books/book chapters and instead cited web site material of questionable veracity	The paper included content from a few peer reviewed journal articles and scholarly books/book chapters and instead included material from web sites of questionable credibility	The paper included content from peer reviewed journal articles and scholarly books/book chapters and only included material from credible web sites	The paper effectively included content from peer reviewed journal articles and scholarly books/book chapters and only included material from credible web sites	The paper very effectively included content from peer reviewed journal articles or scholarly books/book chapters and only included material from credible web sites	
<b>APA Style</b>	The paper did not use APA style	The paper was partly based on APA style	The paper was mostly based on APA style	The paper was based on APA style with only a few exceptions	The paper was completely and accurately based on APA style	
<b>Total Score</b>						

