



**SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY & PHILOSOPHY**

Ethics and Legal Issues in School Psychology

**PSYC 5334
Fall 2017**

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Time: Wednesdays—9am to 11:50am
Classroom: CHSS 249
Office Hours: Thursday- 1pm to 3pm or appt.

COURSE OVERVIEW:

Students will acquire knowledge of ethics, standards, laws, rules and regulations, and historical foundations of the practice of school psychology. Throughout the course, we will address and consider issues related to school demographic changes, assessment issues pertaining to individual differences and diverse populations. Specific cases are utilized to study the legal and ethical requirements for professionals in education and specifically in school psychology.

A guiding theme of the course is that learning to be an ethical practitioner of psychology involves an active, ongoing “acculturation process.” It is expected that students will be at different stages integrating their personal values with the culture of psychology and its ethical values and traditions. We will deal far more with the complexities of ethical decision making than acquiring a set of rules and regulations to follow. The overriding goal is to further facilitate each student’s development as an effective, ethical, caring professional. Of necessity, this will be done within the context of an enhanced awareness of one’s own personal ethics, sense of morality, and other attributes, and stage of professional acculturation, and how these may impact on the ethical reasoning, decision-making, and problem-solving process.

REQUIRED TEXT²

Jacob, S., Decker, D. M., & Hartshorne, T. S. (2011). *Ethics and Law for School Psychologists*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

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² Additional readings (i.e., journal articles, etc.) will be distributed.

PSYC 7392 OBJECTIVES:

The course is intended to be an integration and application of previous course work which culminates:

- (1) in the ability to understand and implement the comprehensive delivery of school psychological services; (NASP Domains 2.1, 2.7, 2.8, 2.10)
- (2) in the understanding of the importance of professional advocacy as a professional and ethical responsibility to children, families, schools and the profession; (NASP Domain 2.10)
- (3) in the understanding of the role of the school psychologist in the context of the legal and procedural functioning of educational systems; (NASP Domains 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 2.10)
- (4) in the ability to apply knowledge of federal and state laws which govern the practice of school psychology; and (NASP Domains 2.1, 2.7, 2.8, 2.10)
- (5) in the ability to determine and apply the highest ethical standards in practice. (NASP Domain 2.10)

TIME REQUIREMENT

In a typical graduate class, for each hour attempted, at least three hours of outside work are expected. This 3-credit hour course will meet 3 hours each week. That leaves roughly 9 hours each week outside of class in which to read and complete assignments. Given that this course has an applied component, more time may be required. It is expected that if you enrolled in this course, you can meet the time requirements.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Active class participation in class discussions, small group activities, and presentations is expected as an avenue to meet course objectives. Active participation is factored into the points earned for each course assignment.

All information on SHSU's Academic and Related Policies can be found at:

<http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular and punctual attendance is expected. SHSU policy is that no student will be penalized for three or fewer hours of absence. However, a student may be penalized for more than three hours of absences. Students may miss one class without penalty to their grade, but **missing two classes could result in a failing grade for the class. The three hours of absence provided by university policy should be used carefully for serious illness and emergencies.** If a student

has a conflict with a scheduled class, he/she must meet with me to determine an appropriate plan of action. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor regarding make-up work, and arrangements must be arranged with the instructor PRIOR to the absence. Often, I will provide class handouts and materials during class. If you are absent, be sure you have a peer obtain the materials for you. They will not be available from me except on the date initially provided.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Section 51.911 (b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for the absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

CLASSROOM RULES OF CONDUCT

Students should review, and adhere to, the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline at <https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>.

The use by students of telephone and pagers or any device that performs these functions during class-time is *prohibited* unless specifically permitted by the instructor. All such devices should be turned off or put in a silent or vibrate mode and should not be visible during class. At no time should students answer a call, page, or text message during class or leave the classroom to answer a call or page. Failure to comply with this policy could result in expulsion from the classroom or with three or more offenses, failure of the course.

Any use of a cell phone or any device that performs these functions during a test period is *prohibited*. These devices should not be present during a test or should be stored securely in such a way that they cannot be seen or used by the student. Even the visible presence of such a device during the test period will result in a zero for that test. Use of these devices during a test is considered de facto evidence of cheating and could result in a charge of academic dishonesty (see student code of conduct <http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/StudentGuidelines20102012.pdf#page=29>).

If there is an emergency situation for a student, that student should inform the instructor and place himself/herself in a seat near the door where an exit for a phone call would be only minimally disruptive. Other arrangements for handling potential emergency situations may be granted at the discretion of the instructor.

PROFESSIONALISM

Attendance, punctuality, adherence to standards for appropriate classroom behavior, and the quality and the quality of your academic performance are all related to your observable “professionalism”, which in turn, signals your readiness to advance in your degree program.

Please note that *punctuality is a particularly important habit for students and professionals*. It is a show of respect for instructors, peers, and even for your own education. Habitual tardiness is a demonstration of quite the opposite. Further, while dress for class is quite casual, you are expected to dress *professionally* when working on your cases in schools.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The university expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action.

The university and its official representatives, acting in accordance with Subsection 5.32, may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

It is the policy of SHSU that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs, nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until you register with the ADA office located at the SHSU Counseling Center (294-1720), and there are no retroactive accommodations.

INSTRUCTOR EVALUATIONS

Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Class Participation:

ACTIVE class participation is expected. You must be prepared to participate in class, which includes completing the readings and gathering required research materials. Being absent would, therefore, be *particularly disadvantageous*. Further, absences will result in failure to earn class participation points.

Exams:

Two exams (200 points each) will be administered during the course of the semester (i.e., one midterm and one final exam). The items for the exams will be drawn from the readings, lectures, notes, and class discussion. The format may include multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay questions.

Projects/Presentations:

Several projects and assignments are required in this course. They are described below:

1. Ethics Autobiography:

- At the beginning of the term, students will be asked to develop an Ethics Autobiography (as described in Peluso [2003]). Responses to Peluso's items (see Table 1, page 288) should be typed and submitted to the instructor at the beginning of the second class session. More detailed instructions will be given during the first class session.


2. Case Presentation:

- Each student will research an important court case that impacts the practice of school psychology, present the case to the class, and facilitate a discussion of the case.
- The presentation should include:
 1. the situation that lead to the case,
 2. the claims of the parties in the case,
 3. the findings of hearing officer/court in the case and any appellate decisions,
 4. the implications for school psychology/education practice.
- Cases should be presented in PowerPoint format and be approximately 15 to 25 minutes in length.
- Some example cases are listed below:
 1. *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) v Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*
 2. *Mills v the Board of Education for the District of Columbia*
 3. *Timothy W v Rochester, NH, School District*
 4. *Doe v Bellville Public Schools*

5. *Daniel RR v Texas Board of Education, El Paso Independent School District*
6. *Sacramento City Unified School District Board of Education v Rachel H*
7. *Retting v Kent City School District*
8. *Biggs v Board of Education of Cecil County*

3. Advocacy Project:

- Students will work in groups of 3 to advocate for an issue that is germane to child/family welfare, education, and/or psychology. The purpose of this project is to provide students with an opportunity to familiarize themselves with ongoing issues of importance in the aforementioned areas and to develop skills for advocacy. While there is a variety of approaches that may be taken to advocate for a given topic, some general suggestions are provided below.
- Following completion of the project, each group will be asked to write a brief (5 page, APA format) Outcome Paper. The Outcome Paper should include the following elements:
 - Problem/Issue Clearly stated—Cite relevant research/data as appropriate
 - Advocacy Action—Describe what action was taken by the group
 - Outcome Assessment—e.g., discuss: What reactions did you receive? How can you know if you successfully advocated?
- More information on this project will be provided by the instructor during the initial class sessions. Some example topics are targets are listed below.

Advocacy Focus		Targets for Advocacy
Mental Health Care		Local Community
Education Funding		Government Officials
Understanding/Awareness of School Psychology		Principals, Superintendents, Administrators
Arts in the Schools		Practicing School Psychologists
Food and Nutrition in Public Schools		Graduate Students in School Psychology
Data-Based Decision Making		Graduate Students in Related Disciplines
Underrepresentation of SP's in the field		Undergraduate Students

4. Case Studies:

- Across the term, four Case Studies will be assigned to students. These cases will include detailed information about a particular scenario. Students will be asked to respond to each case with the following elements:
 1. Identify ethical Issue(s) noted in the case.
 2. Identify relevant elements from the ethical codes.
 3. Identify a solution or course of action supported by the ethical codes.

STUDENT EVALUATION PLAN:

Area	Points Possible
Class Participation	100
Midterm Examination	200
Final Examination	200
Ethics Autobiography	100
Case Presentation	100
Advocacy Project	100
Case Studies (x 4 @ 50 each)	200
<i>TOTAL</i>	

Points Accrued	Grade Assigned
900-1000	A
800-899.99	B
700-799.99	C
600-699.99	D
<600	F

INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION:

You will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation at a time near the end of the semester.

SPECIAL NOTE:

I am especially indebted to two of my colleagues – **Dr. Laurie Klose** and **Dr. David Nelson** – for their generosity. A number of their ideas and some of the wording is adapted (or used word for word) in this syllabus.

Course Outline

The course outline is tentative and subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class.

Session	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments/Projects Due
1	8/23	Introduction to Course; Ethics in School Psychology	Jacob et al.—Ch. 1 NASP's Principles for Professional Ethics (2010) Haidt's RM Ch. 7	
2	8/30	Legal Issues in School Psychology: An Overview	Jacob et al.—Ch. 2 Peluso (2003)	Ethics Autobiography
3	9/6	Consent, Confidentiality, & Record Keeping	Jacob et al.—Ch. 3 Stein & Sharkey (2015) Rae et al. (2009)	
4	9/13	IDEIA	Jacob et al.—Ch. 4 IDEIA (<i>Specific portions TBA</i>)	
5	9/20	Section 504 of the ADA	Jacob et al.—Ch. 5 Section 504 of the ADA (<i>Specific portions TBA</i>)	
6	9/27	Midterm Examination		
7	10/4	School Psychology in Texas	Acts & Rules of the TSBEP (<i>Specific portions TBA</i>)	
8	10/11	Psychoeducational Assessment	Jacob et al.—Ch. 6	Case Presentations
9	10/18	School-Based Interventions	Jacob et al.—Ch. 7	Case Presentations
10	10/25	Ethical Issues in Indirect Services	Jacob et al.—Ch. 8 & 9	
11	11/1	IEP/ARD Meetings; MDRs; Due Process Hearings	Procedural Safeguards Cheramie et al. (2014)	
12	11/8	Burnout and Self-Care	Boccio et al. (2016)	
13	11/15	Forensic Issues in Professional Psychology	TBA	Guest Speaker
14	11/29	Advocacy in School Psychology	Jacob et al.—Epilogue	Advocacy Project (Outcome Paper Due)
15	12/6	Final Examination		