

Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition  
University of Guelph

## FRAN-6140 PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course involves an in-depth exploration of ethics and standards of practice in couple and family therapy (CFT) [EG3]. Legal issues in the practice of family therapy and issues regarding professional identity, membership in associations, and standards of practice are also examined [EG3]. In the context of this course, students will consider the intersection of therapists' social location, values and beliefs; power relations inherent in client-therapist interactions; and diverse client circumstances with professional standards of practice [EG4],

### OBJECTIVES

1. To learn the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy *Code of Ethics*, the principles of ethical behaviour and practice within its frame, and the role of the AAMFT Ethics Committee. [EG3]
2. To recognize ethical dilemmas, raise appropriate questions, engage in discussion of the implications of various responses/actions, and gain practice in the ethical decision-making process using a multi-dimensional model. [EG3]
3. To know the policies and procedures of the CFT Centre and discern when supervision is necessary. [EG3]
- 4.. To develop:
  - (a): an understanding of scope of practice and professional competence [EG3]; to implement a program to self-monitor personal issues and maintain personal wellbeing [EG4],, and
  - (b) an initial plan for maintaining professional competence, including on-going professional development with respect to new developments in the field and engaging in career-long learning [EG3]
5. To increase knowledge about professional identity, responsibility, and accountability in relation to clients, colleagues, supervisors/ees, and the CFT profession generally. [EG3]
6. To increase knowledge of relevant aspects of family law, recognize when a legal consultation is necessary, and understand the legal responsibilities involved in clinical practice and research. [EG3]
7. To increase understanding of issues of power, privilege and marginalization associated with differences of gender, race, culture, age, sexual identity, ability, etc. Explore the power relations at all system levels: client, client family, therapist, supervisor, agency/program, community, social political context, etc. as these relate to ethical decision-making. Critically evaluate ethical decision-making with respect to meeting the needs of diverse populations and to promoting resiliency and recovery. [EG4]

Educational Goals and Expected Student Learning Outcomes	Incorporation & Assessment
<b>EG-3 Professionalism, Ethical Conduct and Accountability:</b> Students will develop a professional identity as a couple & family therapist who consistently applies the principles of ethical practice in their work with clients, maintains high standards of conduct – including following “best practices” regarding the delivery of therapy services, and engages in critical, reflexive self-evaluation.	Students will develop a professional identity as a couple & family therapist who consistently applies the principles of ethical practice in their work with clients, maintains high standards of conduct – including following “best practices” regarding the delivery of therapy services, and engages in critical, reflexive self-evaluation.
<b>ESLO 3 a.</b> Students will gain an understanding of the principles of ethical behaviours and practice within the frame of the <i>AAMFT Code of Ethics</i> .	Incorporated through course readings and class discussions; Assessment: Assignments 1, 2, 4
<b>ESLO 3 b.</b> Students will demonstrate ability to identify ethical dilemmas, raise appropriate questions, and engage in discussion of the implications of various responses/actions.	Incorporated through course readings and class discussions; Assessment: Assignments 1,2, 4
<b>ESLO 3e.</b> Students will develop an initial plan for maintaining professional competence, including on-going professional development with respect to new developments in the field and engaging in career-long learning.	Incorporated through course readings and class discussions; Assessment: Assignment: 3
<b>EG-4 Social Context and Power Relations:</b> Students will integrate a sophisticated sensitivity to diversity into their professional identity as a couple and family therapist, privileging attention to social location/socio-cultural context and including an understanding of social justice issues and awareness of how direct and systemic marginalization, discrimination, and abuse may impact people’s everyday lives.	
<b>ESLO 4a.</b> Students will critically analyze how their social location, values and beliefs shape their professional identity	Incorporated through course readings and class discussions; Assessment: Assignments 1, 2, 3, 4
<b>ESLO 4b.</b> Students will develop abilities to critically and reflexively analyze power relations of a given situation and/or embedded in the construction of knowledge, including attention to one’s own participation in these processes.	Incorporated through course readings and class discussions; Assessment: Assignments 1, 2, 4
<b>ESLO 4c.</b> Students will demonstrate awareness of and sensitivity to multi-dimensional aspects of diversity in the everyday lives of clients, including an ability to explore and articulate with clients the pertinence of potential social location issues on their experiences of current concerns in therapy.	Incorporated through course readings and class discussions; Assessment: Assignments 1, 2, 4

AAMFT Competency	Sub-Domain	Competency	Demonstration of Knowledge
1.1.4	Conceptual	Understand the risks and benefits of individual, marital, couple, family, and group psychotherapy.	Preparation of class readings and participation in class discussion; graded assignments 2, 4
1.5.1	Professional	Understand the legal requirements and limitations for working with vulnerable populations (e.g., minors).	Preparation of class readings and participation in class discussion; graded assignments 2, 4
3.1.2	Conceptual	Understand the liabilities incurred when billing third parties.	Preparation of class readings and participation in class discussion.
5.1.1	Conceptual	Know the state, federal, and provincial laws and regulations that apply to the practice of marriage and family therapy.	Preparation of class readings and participation in class discussion; graded assignments 2, 4
5.1.2	Conceptual	Know professional ethics and standards of practice that apply to the practice of marriage and family therapy.	Preparation of class readings and participation in class discussion; graded assignments 1, 2, 4
5.1.4	Conceptual	Know policies and procedures of the practice setting.	Participation in class discussion; graded assignments 2,
5.2.1	Perceptual	Recognize situations in which ethics, laws, professional liability, and standards of practice apply	Preparation of class readings and participation in class discussion; graded assignments 1, 2, 4
5.2.2	Perceptual	Recognize ethical dilemmas in practice setting.	Preparation of class readings and participation in class discussion; graded assignments 1, 2, 4
5.2.3	Perceptual	Recognize when a legal consultation is necessary.	Preparation of class readings and participation in class discussion; graded assignments 2, 4

5.2.4	Perceptual	Recognize when clinical supervision or consultation is necessary.	Preparation of class readings and participation in class discussion; graded assignments 1, 2, 3, 4
5.3.1	Executive	Monitor issues related to ethics, laws, regulations, and professional standards.	Preparation of class readings and participation in class discussion; graded assignments 2, 3, 4
5.3.6	Executive	Report information to appropriate authorities as required by law.	Preparation of class readings and participation in class discussion; graded assignments 2, 3, 4
6.1.1	Conceptual	Know the extant MFT literature, research, and evidence-based practice.	Preparation of class readings and participation in class discussion
6.1.3	Conceptual	Understand the legal, ethical, and contextual issues involved in the conduct of clinical research and program evaluation.	Preparation of class readings and participation in class discussion
6.3.1	Executive	Read current MFT and other professional literature.	Preparation of class readings and participation in class discussion
6.3.3	Executive	Critique professional research and assess the quality of research studies and program evaluation in the literature.	Preparation of class readings and participation in class discussion
6.4.1	Evaluative	Evaluate knowledge of current clinical literature and its application.	Preparation of class readings and participation in class discussion

## COURSE FORMAT AND REGISTRATION

This course involves a total of 36 seminar hours that are spread over a four term period (Fall, Winter, Fall, and Winter) with 9 in-class hours each term. Students only register for this course in the second Winter term of the course; i.e., their 5<sup>th</sup> semester. This means that students currently in the second year of the CFT Program register for the Winter 2014 term. Students who are beginning the first year of the CFT Program will register for the Winter 2015 term.

The rationale for the four-term schedule is to highlight professional and ethical issues throughout the two-year period of professional training in the CFT Program. Different specific topics are covered over the two year period. At the same time some issues are treated as themes which run through the entire course. As the course progresses students will find their initial understandings of these themes expanded in a dialogue enriched by the new voices of the entering cohort.

## PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

The course has a learner-centred focus. In order to foster an environment of shared inquiry we will rely greatly on mutual respect and collaboration among all those involved. By definition the course material will create questions and tensions since ethical issues closely connect with each person's core values and beliefs. People can expect to have their ideas challenged in a collegial way that supports everyone's learning. In the process each participant's personal ideas will be clarified and their knowledge expanded.

The course is mainly practice-oriented. It will involve problem solving usually with respect to specific "clinical situations" that include professional practice issues and/or ethical dilemmas.

## REQUIRED ACTIVITIES

**(All students)**

**Readings: *Code of Ethics* and Others**

**Prior to the first class meeting** each person is required to have read the *AAMFT Code of Ethics (2012)* and the Transitional Council, College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (2013). *Professional Practice & Jurisprudence for Registered Psychotherapists (2013)*. (available online: <http://www.crpo.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Professional-Practice-Jurisprudence-Psychotherapists-June-13-FINAL.pdf>)

A copy of the Code is available in Appendix B of the CFT Centre Operations and Procedure Manual (available on CFTC courselink site) or by accessing the AAMFT website: [www.aamft.org](http://www.aamft.org).

Readings for the Fall term are indicated in the Fall 2013 Course Schedule at the end of this Outline. Readings for the Winter 2014 term will be indicated in a Winter Term Course Schedule which will be provided before the Winter term begins. Everyone is to come to seminar meetings prepared to comment critically on the reading material. The readings will either be discussed explicitly or it will be necessary to have read them to benefit from whatever class activity is carried out.

**(First Year students only)**

**ASSIGNMENT 1 (30%)**

**Reflective Writing Project**

The objectives of this project are:

- To extend and deepen your understanding of the class material and the readings as these apply to ethics and their application to therapy settings. ESLO 3a
- To promote collegial consultation through reflective writing, and to provide an opportunity to explore the impact and implications of decision making with colleagues through sharing writing work ESLO 3b
- To provide an opportunity to explore multiple identity and power dimensions of a discussion topic provided as well as the shared views of colleagues critically and reflexively ESLOs 4a, 4b, 4c).

This project involves first year students preparing two reflective papers based on a topic assigned in class on Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup>. The combined mark for the two papers will comprise 30% of the Professional Issues grade. Students will be expected to respond to the topic provided by preparing one reflective paper about the topic provided that is shared with colleagues, and to read and explore the impact of the written reflections of colleagues through preparing a second reflective paper.

**(Second Year students only)**

**ASSIGNMENT 2 (30%)**

**Seminar Presentation**

The objectives of this activity are to provide practice in: (a) briefly presenting a clinical dilemma or practice issue to a group of colleagues, and (b) providing the information in an organized summary format that raises appropriate questions and facilitates a discussion of the implications of various responses/actions for colleagues to reflect upon. (ESLOs 3a, 3b, 4a, 4b, 4c)

Students in their second year of the course will do an in-class presentation regarding either: (a) an ethical dilemma they have personally encountered or (b) a professional practice issue. Both kinds of presentations will be equally valued. The presentation itself is to be no more than 20 minutes long. The presentation should reflect the kinds of questions raised in the Woody article. In the presentation the student needs to also address issues of power and privilege that are relevant to the dilemma/practice issue.

The presenter will provide course colleagues with a type-written handout (1-2 pages) at the time of the presentation. Sections of the *AAMFT Code of Ethics* that are relevant to the dilemma or issue will be quoted on the handout. The handout will also include suggestions for readings related to the dilemma or professional practice issue. The presenter will read at least one extra article on the topic they have chosen and include this information in their presentation. If a practice issue is chosen, more reading might be required.

Both topics and times for presentations must be arranged in consultation with the instructor. It is possible to arrange with the instructor to co-present with a colleague, depending on the topic and format. Co-presentation will involve the same amount of work. Students are encouraged to begin preparing their presentations well in advance. Students are required to meet with the instructor to discuss their presentation at least two weeks prior to the presentation. Students are required to meet at least one more time with the instructor prior to their presentation to review their hand-out and to

ensure that what they are planning relates to the course objectives and will enhance everyone's learning.

If the student is planning to include information related to Centre clients in their presentation, they must have the permission of the practicum supervisor who supervised the clinical work before they begin to prepare their presentation. At least three weeks prior to the presentation date, the student must invite that practicum supervisor to the presentation. Space will be provided for the supervisor's comments after the student presentation. Strict confidentiality guidelines regarding client information will be followed. No videotaped material or clinical documents will be shown.

**(Second Year students only)**

**ASSIGNMENT 3**

**Professional Development Assignment**

The objective for this assignment is to have students who are close to leaving the training context of the CFT Centre to articulate and plan a professional development strategy. Students will develop an initial plan for maintaining professional competence, including on-going professional development with respect to new developments in the field and engaging in career-long learning. (ESLOs 3e, 4a)

This written assignment will be five double-spaced typed pages and will be due in the Winter semester. Students will demonstrate their ability to critically assess their preparedness for working professionally as MFTs, perceived gaps in their training, knowledge and experience to date, special interests for future development. The instructor will provide a full description of this assignment at the start of the Winter semester.

**(Second Year students only)**

**ASSIGNMENT 4**

**Ethical Dilemma Analysis Paper**

The objective of this activity is to develop competence in ethical decision-making by drawing upon: (a) knowledge of the *AAMFT Code of Ethics*, (b) Woody's (1990) framework, (c) material from seminar presentations, class discussions, readings, and (d) personal/professional experience. Students will demonstrate their ability to identify ethical dilemmas, raise appropriate questions, and discuss the implications of various responses/actions. (ESLOs 3a, 3b, 4a, 4b, 4c)

At the end of their final term in the course each student will write a paper that involves analyzing two clinical situations where there are ethical dilemmas. These clinical situations and relevant guidelines for the activity are provided by the instructor. In total the analysis for the two situations will be approximately 10 pages (double-spaced).

**REFERENCING AND FORMAT FOR PAPERS AND E-DIALOGUES**

References to course readings may be made by indicating the author and date of publication; for example, (Woody, 1990). References to seminar presentations and discussion may be made by indicating the presenter and date of the seminar; for example, (Smith, January 20 seminar). Any other references should be written in full using APA format.

**DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION: CFT PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

The CFT Program recognizes that professional development in the CFT field is often enhanced by the exploration of the personal/professional interface. Students are encouraged to thoroughly explore this interface not only generally but also in specific instances where their personal history/experience closely parallels the course subject matter and/or client situation. Generally, a student should only reveal as little or as much information as s/he is comfortable sharing with the faculty. The evaluation of student performance in this course is not dependent on student disclosure of personal information.

**STUDENT EVALUATION**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Second Year Students</b>	<b>First Year Students</b>
1. Reflective writing project (two papers)	20 (Completed Fall 2012)	30 (Fall 2013)
2. One seminar presentation	25 (Fall 2013 or Winter 2014)	30 (Fall 2014 or Winter 2015)
One discussion analysis paper (formerly assignment 3)	20 (Completed Winter 2013)	N/A
3. Professional Development assignment	10 (Winter 2014)	10 (Winter 2015)
4. Ethical dilemma analysis paper	25 (Winter 2014)	30 (Winter 2015)

**COURSE/INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION**

Students are invited to provide evaluative comments at any point in the course by making a time to meet with the instructor or writing an email message to her. An opportunity for written informal and anonymous course/instructor evaluation will be provided at the end of the Fall term. Formal evaluation (Department questionnaire) will take place at the end of the Winter term.

**LATE AND MISSED ASSIGNMENTS**

The instructor will not accept late assignments unless consideration is requested and negotiated in advance of the due date. Departmental regulation on meeting course requirements are as follows: When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement due to illness or compassionate circumstances, you are required to advise the course instructor in writing, giving your name, phone, and e-mail contact information. Where possible, this should be done in advance of the missed work or event, but otherwise, just as soon as possible after the due date. If appropriate documentation of your inability to meet that specific course requirement is necessary, the instructor will request it of you.

**ABSENCES AND TIME**

The course design emphasizes collaborative learning among participants. In the unlikely event that a class member is unable to participate, or knows in advance that they will be absent; they are expected to leave a message with the instructor by e-mail ([bspitzer@rogers.com](mailto:bspitzer@rogers.com)) or voicemail (416-371-0855) at the earliest possibility. If a class member unexpectedly has to leave early, they are asked to let the instructor and their colleagues know at the beginning of the class.

**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

Students are required to familiarize themselves with and follow the University of Guelph policies. Review the website: [www.uoguelph.ca/graduatestudies/calendar/genreg](http://www.uoguelph.ca/graduatestudies/calendar/genreg).

## FRAN-6140 PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

### FALL 2013 COURSE SCHEDULE

NOTE: Seminars for Fall term are on Mondays 8:30-11:20 am, **Room F, CFT Centre**. There will be three class meetings during the January-March period in Winter '14. Class times will be arranged in December.

#### SEPTEMBER 30 Seminar #1

##### Readings

- AAMFT (2012). *Code of Ethics* ([http://www.aamft.org/imis15/Content/Legal\\_Ethics/Code\\_of\\_Ethics.aspx](http://www.aamft.org/imis15/Content/Legal_Ethics/Code_of_Ethics.aspx))
- Woody, J. (1990). Resolving ethical concerns in clinical practice: Toward a pragmatic model. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 16(2), 133-150.
- Transitional Council, College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (2013). *Professional Practice & Jurisprudence for Registered Psychotherapists*. (<http://www.crpo.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Professional-Practice-Jurisprudence-Psychotherapists-June-13-FINAL.pdf>)

#### OCTOBER 28 Seminar #2

##### Readings

- Roberts, J. (2005). Transparency and self disclosure in family therapy: Dangers and possibilities. *Family Process*, 44 (1), 45-63
- Melito, R. (2003). Values in the role of the family therapist: Self determination & justice. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 29(1), 3-11.

(2<sup>nd</sup> Year) Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

(2<sup>nd</sup> Year) Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

#### NOVEMBER 11 Seminar #3

##### Readings

- Butler, M.H., Harper, J.M., & Seedall, R. (2009). Facilitated disclosure versus clinical accommodation of infidelity secrets: An early pivot point in couple therapy. Part 1: Couple relationship ethics, pragmatics, and attachment. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, 35(1), 125-143.

(2<sup>nd</sup> Year) Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

(2<sup>nd</sup> Year) Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reflective paper topic will be provided in this class to first year students – First reflective paper due Nov. 25<sup>th</sup> (first year students only), second reflective paper due Dec. 2nd (first year students only)**