

# PSYC\*6880, Course Outline: Winter 2020

## General Information

**Course Title:** Ethical Issues in Psychology

**Course Description:** This is a general ethics course is designed to sensitize students to ethical decision making, including an awareness of ethical issues, knowledge about what constitutes an ethical dilemma, and an understanding of the steps to take when one encounters an ethical dilemma. Ethics will be explored broadly with respect to psychology including research, teaching, practice, as well as more focused topic areas/issues. The learning outcomes will be achieved through assigned readings/tutorials of key ethical standards in the field of psychology (the CPA Code of Ethics for Psychologists, the Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research involving Humans) and supplemented by articles that explore particular issues in depth.

**Credit Weight:** 0.25

**Academic Department (or campus):** Psychology

**Semester Offering:** Winter 2020

**Class Schedule and Location:** 6 Tuesday mornings in the winter term: 1) January 14; 2) January 21; 3) February 4; 4) February 11; 5) March 3; and 6) March 17. Classes run 8:30-11:20 am. The location is Crop Science Room 403.

## Instructor Information

Instructor Name: C. Meghan McMurtry, Ph.D., C. Psych

Instructor Email: [cmcmurtr@uoguelph.ca](mailto:cmcmurtr@uoguelph.ca)

Office location and office hours: MacKinnon Extension Office #4004. Mondays from 3 to 4 pm.

## Course Content

### **Specific Learning Outcomes:**

In completing this course, students should be able to:

- 1) Identify ethical standards used in psychology, most notably the CPA's Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (4<sup>th</sup> edition) and the Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research involving Humans (2<sup>nd</sup> edition).
- 2) Conceptualize common ethical dilemmas which occur during the practice of psychology (research, teaching, supervision, practice, etc.).
- 3) Interpret major ethical concerns/concepts (i.e., presented through the assigned readings) in the context of their own professional behaviour/training.

- 4) Apply the CPA Ethical Decision-Making Process to ethical dilemmas.
- 5) Engage in basic consultation (seeking and providing) regarding ethical dilemmas.
- 6) Demonstrate appropriate academic independence, tolerance of a degree of uncertainty, personal organization, and time management in completing assigned course tasks.

**Lecture Content:**

The format of the class is a combination of short lectures with discussion-based, active learning. The background required to understand the lectures and to participate in the discussion is achieved through assigned readings as well as knowledge gained in earlier classes. In class, we will discuss ethical issues through case examples and practice addressing ethical dilemmas through vignettes. Attendance and active participation in the class is expected.

My role and responsibilities are as follows: To engage your interest in ethics in psychology and develop your understanding of ethical issues. To support you in your exploration of what are often “grey” rather than “black and white” issues. To facilitate your learning by assigning relevant readings, delivering brief lecture-based material (if appropriate), and focusing on real-world ethical decision making and dilemmas through case examples/vignettes. Encourage and foster an open class environment that facilitates lively discussion. Be available to answer your questions in class, by email, and by appointment (this doesn’t mean solving dilemmas for you though!). Provide fair evaluation. Adhere to this syllabus. In exceptional circumstances, changes may need to be made to the syllabus. In such cases, I will announce the changes in class as soon as possible as well as on CourseLink.

**Schedule**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading and Applicable Assignments</b>
1	Jan 14	Introduction. CPA code of ethics in context.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sinclair (2017). Ethics in psychology: Recalling the past, acknowledging the present, and looking to the future. <i>Canadian Psychology</i>, 58, 20-29.</li> <li>o [OPTIONAL: Gauthier et al (2010). The Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists: A Culture-Sensitive Model for Creating and Reviewing a Code of Ethics. <i>Ethics &amp; Behavior</i>, 20(3), 179-196.]</li> </ol>
2	Jan 21*	Respect for the Dignity of Persons and Peoples	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CPA Code of Ethics (read all but pay special attention to Principal I)</li> <li>2. Complete TCPS-2 Tutorial Course on Research Ethics (CORE) before Jan 28: <a href="https://tcps2core.ca/welcome">https://tcps2core.ca/welcome</a></li> </ol>

3	Feb 4*	Responsible Caring and Integrity in Relationships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review Principle II CPA Code</li> <li>2. Review Principle III CPA Code</li> <li>3. Pope (2016). The code not taken: The path from guild ethics to torture and our continuing choices. <i>Canadian Psychology</i>, 57, 51-59.</li> </ol> <p>○ [OPTIONAL: Military psychologist says harsh tactics justified. (2009). <i>All things considered</i>. National Public Radio. <a href="https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=103787285">https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=103787285</a>]</p>
4	Feb 11*	Responsibility to Society	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review Principle IV CPA Code</li> <li>2. Walsh (2015). Bending the arc of North American psychologists' moral universe toward communicative ethics and social justice. <i>Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology</i>, 35, 90-102.</li> <li>3. Bareto (2017). Nudge comes to shove: Policy makers around the world are embracing behavioural science. <i>The Economist</i>. <a href="https://www.economist.com/international/2017/05/18/policymakers-around-the-world-are-embracing-behavioural-science">https://www.economist.com/international/2017/05/18/policymakers-around-the-world-are-embracing-behavioural-science</a></li> </ol> <p>○ [OPTIONAL: Kakkad (2005). A new ethical praxis: Psychologists' emerging responsibilities in issues of social justice. <i>Ethics &amp; Behavior</i>, 15(4), 293-308.]</p>
5	Mar 3*	<p>Focus: Ethical Issues in Treatment / Consultation / Practice</p> <p>Ethical decision-making process consultation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Group members chosen vignettes</li> <li>2. Lannin &amp; Scott (2013). Social networking ethics: Developing best practices for the new small world. <i>Professional Psychology: Research and Practice</i>, 44, 135-141.</li> <li>3. Pipes et al. (2005). Examining the personal-professional distinction. <i>American Psychologist</i>, 60, 325-334.</li> </ol> <p>OR instead of #2 and 3: choose your own adventure! Speak to me before the end of the Feb 11<sup>th</sup> class if you would like to read and respond to a reading(s) on a specific topic such as: ethics of self-care; potentially harmful</p>

			therapy; multicultural counseling; dealing with impaired caregivers; boundary issues or multiple relationships; etc.
6	Mar 17*	[catch up as needed]  Focus: Ethical Issues in Research and Teaching  Guest lecture(s)  Wrap Up	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Salaam &amp; Brown (2013). Ethical dilemmas in psychological research with vulnerable groups in Africa. <i>Ethics &amp; Behavior</i>, 23(3), 167-178.</li> <li>2. Illes et al. (2006). Incidental findings in brain imaging research. <i>Science</i>, 331, 783-784.</li> <li>3. Pittenger (2003). Intellectual freedom and editorial responsibilities within the context of controversial research. <i>Ethics &amp; Behavior</i>, 13(2), 105-125.</li> </ol> <p>OR instead of #1, 2 and 3: choose your own adventure! Speak to me before the end of the March 3<sup>rd</sup> class if you would like to read and respond to a reading(s) on a specific topic such as: forensics; deception; indigenous psychology; ethics in organizations; humanitarian aid work; multiple relationships.</p>

\* Reflection Paper possible due date (2 must be submitted)

### Course Assignments and Tests:

Assignment or Test	Due Date	Contribution to Final Mark (%)	Learning Outcomes Assessed
TCPS-2 Tutorial Course on Research Ethics	January 28, 2020 at 11:59 pm	5	1, 2, 6
Reflection papers	Throughout: must submit 2 papers; if submit 3 then best 2 marks will be used. Reflection papers for the given week are due the Sunday night at 11:59 pm (e.g., a reflection paper for week 3 is due by Feb 2 at 11:59 pm).	30	3, 6
Class participation	Throughout (includes effort in small group work)	15 total - 1 <sup>st</sup> half: 7.5 (feedback to be given by Feb 8 <sup>th</sup> via Courselink) - 2 <sup>nd</sup> half: 7.5	1-6

Assignment or Test	Due Date	Contribution to Final Mark (%)	Learning Outcomes Assessed
Ethical Decision-Making Process Consultation	March 3, 2020 in class	20 total - 10% on your presentation - 10% on your performance as a consultant	1, 2, 4, 5
Ethical Decision-Making Process Documentation	March 31, 2020 at 11:59 pm	30	1, 2, 4

### **Class Participation:**

You are expected to attend and to contribute to the discussion in all classes. Your class participation includes both discussions as well as thoughtful contributions to the case work that we will complete in class. The mark will be broken down into the first half (worth 7.5%) and second half (7.5%). For both the first and second half, your mark will be calculated from a combination of instructor (me!) assigned marks as well as small group self and peer ratings.

### **Completion of TCPS-2 Tutorial Course on Research Ethics (CORE):**

<https://tcps2core.ca/welcome>

The TCPS-2 Tutorial CORE is an excellent overview of the TCPS-2. The TCPS-2 applies to all researchers in Canada who receive funding from any of the tri-councils (NSERC, CIHR, SSHRC) and is consistent with the expectations of our Research Ethics Board at the University of Guelph which requires research staff involved with a project to complete this course as part of ethical approval. Time to completion varies but is typically estimated at 2 to 3 hours. The website has step by step instructions for completing the tutorial. If you have already completed this tutorial within the past 12 months, you may submit your certificate to meet this course requirement. Submission is via Courselink Dropbox.

### **Reflection and Discussion Papers:**

These reflection papers are designed to challenge you to make connections between the assigned readings and your research/practice/teaching in psychology and use your critical thinking skills. As time permits, these papers will also form the basis of our discussions in class as you will end each reflection paper with **\*\*one to two questions\*\***.

Guidelines for writing the reflection papers: These are not simply summaries of the readings. Instead, I want to hear from you: focus on the logical extensions of the issues/principles/articles and the implications (positive and negative) it may hold for your research, teaching, and practice. You need to demonstrate a thoughtful analysis of at least some aspect of the assigned readings – you don't have to discuss every reading

(but you can!) as long as you sufficiently explore the reading you select. Please note that this does not mean you don't have to read the other papers – you do! A successful reflection paper will be thoughtful, insightful, and organized; the majority of your mark will come from substance rather than style. Don't stress too much about perfect style and grammar – if you can demonstrate that you have read and thought critically about the reading, you will get a good mark. Examples and consideration of multiple points of view will enhance the paper. You are not required to disclose any personal ethical issues that you have faced previously or currently face. Rather, below are some questions that you may consider answering in your reflection papers:

- How do the issues raised in the reading relate to your work/life?
- How are the readings helpful/not helpful for your development in psychology?
- What kind of situations might you encounter in your own work which might result in ethical dilemmas?
- Do you agree or disagree with the author/code/principle etc.? Why?
- Did the arguments resonate with you or make you uncomfortable? Why?
- Were there any biases or assumptions embedded in the work?
- If you could suggest changes to the principles/codes explored, what would they be (major or minor)? Does something need to be added? Taken away? Why?
- Does anything surprise you?
- Are there specific articles or sections that you find vague? Problematic? Need expansion? For each issue, you should identify the particular section/wording etc., why you find it problematic, and what you would do to change it.
- Do you see any inconsistencies between readings (of the same week or other readings you have completed)?
- What parts do you find helpful/useful?
- Do you have any unanswered questions after completing the reading?

The main text of each paper should be between 400 and 600 words; the discussion questions are not included within the word limit. These papers are due the Sunday before the relevant class by 11:59 pm. You must hand in 2 papers but if you choose to hand in 3, then the top 2 will be chosen. Submission is via Courselink Dropbox.

### **Reflection Paper Rubric**

Note: no main text beyond the 600-word limit will be read or marked for the reflection piece.

#### **REFLECTION: /10**

- **9-10** -Demonstrates exceptional depth and insight in reflecting on the topic. Clearly demonstrates having read the paper(s) and connects the reading with their own views/training/practice/research/development in psychology using specific, well

- chosen example(s). An appropriate breadth is expertly balanced with depth yielding a paper which reflects well on one or more aspects of the assigned reading(s).
- **7-8** -Demonstrates excellent depth and insight in reflecting on the topic. Solid demonstration of having read the paper(s) and connects the reading with their own views/training/practice/research/development in psychology with an occasional example. Some breadth is apparent and depth is achieved on topic(s) selected to explore.
  - **5-6** -Demonstrates good depth and insight in reflecting on the topic. Some demonstration of having read the paper(s) and connects the reading with their own views/training/practice/research/development in psychology but connections are somewhat vague. Breadth is apparent but little depth – exploration borders on superficial.
  - **4** -Demonstrates some insight in reflecting on the topic. Superficial or no demonstration of having read the paper(s). No connections between the reading and their own views/training/practice/research/development in psychology.
  - **0-3** - Paper regurgitates information from the reading(s) but does not engage in any reflection. OR paper is off topic and does not demonstrate any connection with the reading(s).

**QUESTIONS:**

- **3** – Questions are well designed to elicit discussion from the class – they are accessible yet are capable of evoking a range of responses, rather than simple superficial answers.
- **2** – Questions are reasonably well put together and could evoke some discussion but are somewhat superficial or simplistic in nature.
- **1** – Questions are straightforward and/or are not related to the readings or the reflection.
- **0** – No questions are provided.

**OVERALL GRADE:     /13**

**Ethical Decision-Making Process Vignette:** The overall aim of this aspect of the course is to demonstrate your application of the CPA Ethical Decision-Making Process in addressing an ethical dilemma. You will choose an ethical dilemma vignette from the CPA Code of Ethics Companion Manual. The dilemma will be selected in consultation with me so that it is relevant to your area of research and/or practice/teaching/consultation. You will use this same vignette for the related ethical decision-making assignments outlined below.

### 1) Ethical Decision-Making Process Consultation (worth 20% of your final grade):

There are two objectives. The first is to seek consultation regarding an ethical dilemma; this requires identification of biases/self-interest, succinct exploration of the major issues present within an ethical dilemma, outline of the most reasonable courses of action with advantages and disadvantages, and solicitation of feedback from your peers. The second is to offer effective consultation regarding an ethical dilemma to your peers; this requires the provision of clear positive and constructive feedback in a professional manner. You will work in groups that are formed by me; each member of the group will have a unique vignette.

When you are seeking consultation for your ethical dilemma, you will have 10 full minutes to present your dilemma, highlight the major issues (i.e., through the principles and key standards) present, and what you have selected as your most reasonable course(s) of action and why (advantages and disadvantages). Then, you will have 10 minutes to seek feedback from your peers on any particular questions or issues with which you are struggling and get general feedback from them. In addition to provision of feedback, your peers will each mark you on your presentation and solicitation of feedback as follows:

- Clear identification of relevant biases/self-interest /3
- Succinct exploration of the major issues present in the vignette /10
- Reasonable courses of action presented with advantages and disadvantages /10
- Organized solicitation of feedback /7

When you are acting as a consultant for your peers, you will come prepared to the March 3 class having read each of your group members' chosen vignettes. You will listen carefully to each person's presentation, ask relevant questions, and provide constructive, professional feedback in two formats: orally within the 10-minute discussion period and in a written form by responding to a series of questions – later, your answers will be shared with the presenting peer.

- What were the two strongest aspects of the presentation?
- What two things should the presenter focus on improving for their written documentation in resolving this ethical dilemma? (e.g., did they miss any crucial ethical standards or biases? Were the courses of action unclear? Did they provide unnecessary extraneous detail?)
- [Each presentation will also be marked according to the rubric above]

Each presenter will provide each consultant with a mark on the quality of their consultation and feedback as follows:

- Oral questions and feedback were relevant and clear /5
- Written feedback was specific/clear and high in quality /10
- Tone of the feedback (oral, written) was professional and cordial /5



## **2) Ethical Decision-Making Process Documentation (worth 30% of your final grade):**

When you face an ethical dilemma in your professional life, you are expected to engage in “an ethical decision-making process that is explicit enough to bear public scrutiny” (CPA, 2017, p. 5). Documentation of your application of the CPA Ethical Decision-Making Process is a logical way to meet this expectation. This assignment is designed to build upon your peer consultation above, in providing you practice with just such an activity. In a written paper, you will document steps 1-6 and 10 in your application of the CPA Ethical Decision-Making Process. The format of your paper will follow the examples in the CPA Code of Ethics 4<sup>th</sup> Edition Companion Manual, including using the Code Chart in step 2a, and tables for step 2b and 5. While rampant spelling and grammatical issues are not encouraged, the majority of your mark will come from your thoughtful consideration of the ethical dilemma and application of the decision-making process. Given the purpose of the assignment is to practice documentation that would bear public scrutiny and to prepare you for undertaking this activity in your professional life, brevity must be balanced with sufficient depth. The marking guide is given below. There is no minimum number of pages required but the maximum number of pages is 10 (single spaced throughout), beyond which I will not mark.

### **Instructions and Marking Guide: Ethical Decision-Making Process Documentation**

**Step 1:** Appropriate identification and clear justification of the individuals/groups involved; inclusive without being “catch-all”. /5

**Step 2:** Identification of appropriate directly relevant ethical issues, standards, practices using the Code chart (2a). Table following the format in the Manual clearly and succinctly outlines your thoughts as to why each of the particular standards is important (2b). Your thoughts should provide sufficient depth (vs. being superficial) and demonstrate your understanding of important rather than extraneous details. /16

**Step 3:** Thoughtful, insightful consideration of biases and self-interest which are clearly relevant to the vignette. /5

**Step 4:** Sufficiently detailed consideration of any alternatives that are ruled out, providing rationalization for why you are not reviewing these alternatives; clear identification of the ~2 most reasonable potential courses of action. /10

**Step 5:** Thorough risk/benefit analysis for the most reasonable courses of action identified in Step 4. Risk/benefit analysis is concise yet substantive rather than superficial. /10

**Step 6:** Compelling, succinct justification of the chosen course of action which includes consideration of all Principles involved (you do not need to worry about laws and regulations for this assignment). /5

**Step 7 through 9:** Not applicable

**Step 10:** Brief outline of specific ways to proactively reduce similar ethical issues in the future. /6

**Total:** /57 (worth 30% of Final Grade)

## **Course Resources**

### **Required Texts:**

The readings are to be completed prior to class so that you will derive maximum benefit and can meaningfully contribute to class discussion (please also note that the Reflection Papers outlined below will be based on assigned readings).

1. Canadian Psychological Association (2017). Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Ottawa: Author.  
[https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Ethics/CPA\\_Code\\_2017\\_4thEd.pdf](https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Ethics/CPA_Code_2017_4thEd.pdf)
2. The Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research involving Humans – 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (TCPS-2; 2014) can be found online: [www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/Default/](http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/Default/) The tutorial course for the TCPS-2 that you are asked to complete: <https://tcps2core.ca/welcome>
3. Other readings from various sources (listed in the class schedule). The majority of the articles are available through e-journals through the U of Guelph system. They will all be on reserve through the ARES system as well.

### **Other Resources:**

Lecture notes (as applicable) will be posted on Courselink by 11:59 pm the day before the scheduled class. A copy of this syllabus and other course materials are also posted.

## **Course Policies**

### **Grading and Submission Policies**

Explicit marking guides have been provided elsewhere in the syllabus. The following table summarizes due dates, manner of submission, and late penalties for the submissions.

Assignment	Due Date	Manner of Submission	Late Penalty
TCPS-2 Tutorial Course on Research Ethics	January 28, 2020 at 11:59 pm	Courselink Dropbox (certificate)	- 3 points immediately. 3 additional points taken off for each day of lateness.
Reflection papers	11:59 pm the Sunday before the relevant class	Courselink Dropbox Need to submit 2 (or maximum of 3 and top 2 will be chosen)	- 3 points immediately. 3 additional points taken off for each day of lateness.
Ethical Decision-Making Process Documentation	March 31, 2020 at 11:59 pm	Courselink Dropbox	- 3 points immediately. 3 additional points taken off for each day of lateness.

### **Your Role and Responsibilities:**

Be an engaged learner. Complete the reading assignments and come prepared for class. Speak up! Offer your opinion. Active discussion and learning from each other are very important for this class. I encourage healthy debate in our discussions, but you must also be respectful of other members of the class. Sit with the discomfort of not being able to have a “cookie-cutter approach” to ethics in which there is a sole "correct" way to address an ethical dilemma - it would not be a dilemma if this was the case! Put thought and effort into your course work.

### **Course Policy regarding use of electronic devices and recording of lectures:**

Electronic recording of classes is expressly forbidden without consent of the instructor. When recordings are permitted, they are solely for the use of the authorized student and may not be reproduced, or transmitted to others, without the express written consent of the instructor.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Consideration**

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration: [Grounds for Academic Consideration](#)

### **Academic Misconduct**

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community, faculty, staff, and

students to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring.

University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection. Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the [Graduate Calendar](#).

### **Accessibility**

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible. For more information, contact SAS at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or email [accessibility@uoguelph.ca](mailto:accessibility@uoguelph.ca) or see the website: [Student Accessibility Services Website](#)

**Course Evaluation Information:** Please refer to the [Course and Instructor Evaluation Website](#)

**Drop date:** The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is April 3, 2020. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the [Schedule of Dates in the Academic Calendar](#). Instructors must still provide meaningful and constructive feedback to students prior to the 40th class day. [Current Graduate Calendar](#)