CEP 861- Section 001: Counseling Theory Philosophy and Ethics  
Fall 2008 Course Syllabus

Matthew Diemer, Ph.D.  
441 Erickson Hall  
Office hours: Wednesdays 1-3:00pm (Sign-up sheet outside my office door)

Phone: (517) 355-6684  
E-mail: diemerm@msu.edu

Class Meeting Time: Wednesdays, 4:10pm-7:00

Class Location: 310 Ernest Bessey Hall

Course Rationale:  
This course is designed as a lecture and discussion course to provide students in Counseling with an overview of selected counseling theories and ethical issues. Counseling theories help to organize the myriad presenting problems and clinical presentations of our clients. Applying the framework of a counseling theory to client concerns provides a structure for counselors to understand what clients present to us and is facilitative of counselors remaining empathic, connected and centered with their clients. As counseling theories are integral in understanding a client and developing treatment goals for a client, a solid grasp of counseling theories also facilitates counselors’ intentionality and capacity to help clients. Counseling professionals must also learn the ethical codes germane to their discipline (such as the American Counseling Association code), the major ethical dilemmas facing mental health professionals, and internalize an ethical decision making model to work through ethical dilemmas. This course will expose students to ethical problems and the process of working through ethical dilemmas.

Course Goals:  
Students will learn counseling theories and their philosophical bases, rather than specific counseling skills. Students will learn how to “think clinically” by using counseling theories, which will facilitate the effective implementation of microcounseling and other clinical skills and techniques. Students will learn the common areas where ethical issues occur in mental health practice. Students will also learn models of ethical reasoning and decision-making, as well as professional standards and codes of conduct.

Course Objectives:

1. Review major historical and current theories of counseling, as well as examine the assumptions and values underlying theories of counseling.
2. Analyze and critique major theories’ treatment of gender, cultural and sociopolitical issues.
3. Examine personal values that influence one's selection of certain counseling theories over others.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the points of similarity and dissimilarity among the major counseling theories.
5. Articulate one's own emerging theory of counseling and how it is similar or
dissimilar to leading theories of counseling.
6. Develop a personal theory of counseling that attends to issues of gender, culture,
sociopolitical issues, and other forms of difference.
7. Use counseling theory(ies) to develop a case conceptualization of a client.
8. Use counseling theories to increase the intentionality of counseling interventions
and microcounseling skills.
9. Demonstrate knowledge of professional standards and codes of conduct for
counselors and psychologists.
10. Understanding of widely held ethical principles and ethical decision-making
processes.
11. Demonstrate beginning ability to analyze ethical situations/cases, anticipate ethical
dilemmas, make sound professional judgments and articulate your rationale for
ethical decisions.
12. Articulate an ethical decision-making model to be used in your counseling practice.

Required Textbooks:
Corey, Gerald (2009). *Theory and practice of counseling and psychotherapy*


In place of a coursepack, the following required readings are available as full-text through
the MSU library system. Search for the journal title using the MAGIC system, and then
click the ‘electronic resource’ option, then click ‘connect to online resource’ to find the
specific article in full-text form. The full reference for these articles are:


Vera, E.M. & Speight, S.L. (2003). Multicultural competence, social justice, and


Basic Expectations of Students at Michigan State University:
All rules governing scholarship and social behavior at Michigan State University are
required of students enrolled in this course. Specifically, students are expected to follow
guidelines of academic integrity as outlined in the Graduate Student Handbook (published
by the university). Suspected cheating (including plagiarism) will be reported to the
appropriate university officials for further investigation. Incidents of substantiated cheating may result in one or more of the following: a failing grade in this course, dismissal from the MA Counseling Program, dismissal from the university.

**Expectations Regarding Student Conduct:**

Listed below are a few guidelines that will promote a positive learning environment for you, your colleagues and your instructor. This list is not comprehensive. It comprises basic social expectations that instructors in the MA Counseling Program have of students enrolled in program courses:

1. Students will use respectful language and respect the rights and opinions of others when speaking with one another and the instructor.
2. Students will avoid disruptive behaviors in class (e.g., chronic tardiness, talking in class on unrelated topic(s), consuming food/drink in a disruptive manner, reading newspapers or other non-class related material, “packing up” before the end of class).
3. Students will accept feedback (including but not limited to) regarding conduct and academic performance in a mature manner consistent with professional standards.
4. Students will strive to integrate feedback and will consult with the instructor regarding ways in which feedback may be incorporated. Failure to incorporate feedback may result in consequences including, but not limited to, inhibiting the development of counseling skills and competencies, interpersonal conflicts with instructors and/or peers, and/or cumulative grade reductions.

A student’s consistent violation of the behavioral expectations noted above and inattention to feedback may result in a lower grade in this course, may influence the content of the student’s annual evaluation letters, and may affect faculty’s letters of recommendation for post graduation activities (i.e., job search, application for doctoral programs). The instructor will provide students with a first warning by e-mail; a second warning will occur in a formal meeting with the instructor; and any subsequent warning, at the discretion of the instructor, will result in the student’s required presence at a formal program faculty meeting to discuss the status of the student in the program.

**Course Policies**

1. Assignments are due on the dates and times stated in the schedule unless prior approval is received from the instructor. Only rare exceptions will be made for extensions. Late work will be penalized.
2. Do the reading before each class. I will ask direct questions regarding the material for the day.
3. **Class attendance and participation are expected.** If you will be missing a class for any reason please discuss this with me or leave a message via telephone or email. If you are absent from class more than twice we will need to talk about makeup arrangements. If you already know that you will be missing class more than twice during the term we need to discuss the appropriateness of your being in this class.
4. Students are required to obtain and maintain an MSU email account. I will conduct class business and make announcements through your MSU account and the ANGEL system. If you choose to use another email account (such as AOL) as your primary email, you must have your MSU email account forwarded to your primary email account. You will be held responsible for course content and information provided to you via email.

5. Students are required to use and familiarize themselves with the ANGEL system (to be discussed further in class). Your course notes and other information will be posted via ANGEL for you to download.

6. Respect confidentiality in the classroom. People may reveal information about themselves that they would not want others outside of the class to have.

7. If you require a special adaptation or accommodation to participate fully in this course, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss your request. If the student with a disability does not choose to disclose that s/he has a disability, then the student is agreeing to take full responsibility for any related consequences that may occur. Last minute special requests will be subject to the same late assignment policy as other students. You will also need to provide a letter from the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities that verifies your status. Please know that arrangements to take exams at the RCPD should be made early in the semester, as space and staffing at RCPD fills quickly.

Course Requirements

1. Team Presentations:

Before (October 8th and October 15th) the midterm exam on October 22, students will present in groups regarding one theoretical perspective and answer questions from the audience about that theory. There will be nine groups composed of two to three members, with each group assigned to cover one theoretical perspective.

Your objective is to learn the theory well enough to teach others about the theory (you will not be expected to know everything about a theory or be an expert). By becoming an “expert” in one counseling theory, you will share your expertise with your classmates to help them understand that theory and be prepared for the midterm exam.

I will distribute a sign-up sheet for each of the nine different theoretical perspectives to be covered in class.

Your presentation will be in two parts. In the first part, your group will lead the class through an exercise to help them learn the theory. Your group cannot simply lecture or deliver a presentation. Groups who do so will receive a 0 for this assignment.

In the first part, your group must lead the class in an experiential exercise, game, or role play to help your classmates understand the theory. You could involve the class in experiments, share cases and develop a conceptualization, do role plays, give
demonstrations, or do anything (apart from lecturing) that will encourage learning and expand the perspective of the class members.

The second part of your presentation is the question and answer section, where students can seek consultation from your group about parts of that theory they find unclear or confusing. Be sure and allow five minutes for questions and answers at the end. Inviting audience participation should be an important aspect of your presentation; you may consider coming prepared with thought-provoking questions to ask the class. For example, your group could invite the class to respond to a controversy or debate regarding your theory. I will also ask your group questions about your theory during the Q&A session, so it's important that your group be prepared to “think on your feet.”

Your team presentation should last no more than 15 minutes and will be worth 10 points. You may (optionally) choose to distribute any copied materials, but limit them to a few pages. Your presentation will be evaluated on its accuracy, completeness, depth, originality, and capacity to invite class participation. Your group will be expected to submit a documentation of each team member’s contribution to the final product, approved and signed by all team members.

2. Personal Theory of Counseling
For this assignment, you will describe your emerging theory of counseling and connect that theory to who you are as a person. This assignment is due on October 15. This assignment will be worth 20 points. (Your Personal Theory of Counseling paper will also inform your work in CEP 863 and 865).

Your objective in this paper is to describe your emerging Personal Theory of Counseling. Borrowing from the theories we cover in class, give the key concepts of your theory, your view of the human change process, the relative importance of the therapeutic relationship and explain the therapeutic goals of your theory. What I am particularly interested in is why you feel this theory fits you: how do the values, moral perspectives and assumptions of this theory fit your views of human beings, distress and change? Why do you feel more comfortable with or value this theory (such as cognitive-behavioral) over another (such as psychoanalytic)? There is not an expectation that you disclose sensitive or personal material in this assignment, but an expectation that you connect who you are to what theory you like. Some introspection and reflection about why a particular theory fits you will help you write an excellent paper.

The paper needs to be typed, double-spaced and no more than four pages in length. Use 12-point font with one-inch margins on all sides and have the pages numbered. Being concise is important. Points will be deducted for papers that do not follow these instructions, especially papers that are longer than 4 double spaced pages. [Your title page and/or references, which are not required, will not be counted against the page limit.]

3. Case conceptualization
Using one of the counseling theories that we have covered in class, students will complete a case conceptualization of a fictional client. You may not develop a case conceptualization of yourself or someone that you have a personal relationship with. Students who do so will receive a 0 for this assignment. For students in the M.A. Counseling program, you will develop a case conceptualization of your mock client from CEP 860A and 862. (Students from other programs enrolled in the course will be provided with a range of client vignettes from which they will choose one to develop a case conceptualization.) You will need to submit the written information you have received about a mock client/client vignette along with your case conceptualization report.

The paper needs to be typed, double-spaced and no more than four pages in length. Use 12-point font with one-inch margins on all sides and have the pages numbered. Being concise is important. Points will be deducted for papers that do not follow these instructions, especially papers that are longer than 4 double spaced pages. [Your title page will not be counted against the page limit]

More specific information regarding case conceptualizations and a template will be provided to you via ANGEL. The case conceptualization will be worth 25 points and will be due on October 22nd.

4. Ethical decision-making model
This course requirement has been designed to help you establish a framework for your ethical decision-making and this assignment will allow you to work collaboratively to accomplish this task. Your ethical decision-making model (EDMM) must be grounded in the ACA Code of Ethics; students have generally been most successful using the Forester-Miller and Davis article (‘A Practitioner’s Guide to Ethical Decision Making’) as a framework for their EDMM.

The Team Presentation and your write-up will be worth 20 points. The assignment is due on November 19 and December 3. There will be 5 groups total, composed of 4-5 members. Your group will develop a brief presentation (10-15 minutes) followed by a question and answer/discussion section (5-10 minutes). In this project, you are welcome to lecture during your presentation. [You may consider developing questions you’d like to ask the audience to stimulate discussion.]

Your group will be responsible for handing in ONE write-up of your ethical decision-making model per group, be typed within the usual formatting (be double-spaced, with 1” margins, page numbers and 12-point font). The write-up should not exceed three pages and should be used as an outline or framework for your presentation. [If you elect to represent your decision-making model visually, your model and/or your title page will not be counted toward the page limit.] Your group will be expected to submit a documentation of each member’s contribution to the final product, approved by all members of the group.

5. Mid-term and final exams
The first exam will cover the lectures and required readings up to that point in a semester. The mid-term exam will be worth 15 points. This exam will be given on October 22nd. The second exam will cover the course content of the second part of the semester. The final exam will be worth 15 points will be given during the week of final exams on Thursday, December 11th from 5:45-7:45 in EBH 310.

Please note that we will have a Q & A session to prepare for the exams in the class period preceding each exam; I strongly suggest that you remain up-to-date on the readings and begin your studying early to maximize the opportunity these Q & A sessions provide.

6. Class participation

Class participation will include your attendance, participation in discussions, and participation in collaborative learning activities and total 25 points. Although personal experiences and reactions are welcomed, comments that are connected to the course reading and content are more useful in facilitating learning and will be evaluated more positively. Simply raising your hand to make comments frequently is not class participation in a graduate course. Please keep in mind that class participation is not a competitive endeavor, and that participating in a manner that invites your peers into discussions, or builds upon the earlier comments of a classmate, will be evaluated more highly. Your class participation grade also includes discretionary points that reflect your overall work in the course.

Criteria to evaluate class participation:

90-100% Student contributes positively to each class session on a voluntary basis.
- i.e. Contributions follow the topic of discussion, stimulate further discussion, and participate in the feedback process.
70-89% Student contributes during each class.
50-69% Student does not contribute voluntarily, student occasionally fails to pay attention or talks in class on unrelated topics.
0-49% Student refuses to participate in class or group discussions or collaborative learning activities.

Determination of Grade

Grades will be assigned in accordance with the grading policies of the College of Education. The cut off lines may be moved lower depending upon the distribution of grades at the end of the semester, but I will not move them higher. The following standard will be used to assign grades:

95-100% 4.0
89-94% 3.5
83-88% 3.0
77-82% 2.5
71-76%  2.0  
65-70%  1.5  
60-64%  1.0

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

[All readings are required unless noted otherwise]

*Note:* All chapters listed in the required reading correspond to the most recent edition of each course text – 8th edition of Corey and 3rd edition of Pope & Vasquez.

Aug 27  Introduction and Overview  
Review of Syllabus and Course Requirements  
Introduction & Overview (CH1): The Counselor as Person and Professional (CH2)  
**Readings:** Corey, Chapters 1, 2

Sept 3  Cognitive-Behavioral Theory [skim Meichenbaum pages]  
**Readings:** Corey, Chapter 10

Sept 10  Person-Centered Theory, The Therapeutic Relationship & Existential Theory  
**Readings:** Corey, Chapter 7  
**Readings:** Corey, Chapter 6  
Theory presentation sign-up sheet distributed today

Sept 17  Psychoanalytic & Psychodynamic Theory  
**Readings:** Corey, Chapter 4

Sept 24  Gestalt Theory  
**Readings:** Corey, Chapter 8  
Family Systems Theory  
**Readings:** Corey, Chapter 14

Oct 1  Feminist Theory and Therapy  
**Readings:** Corey, Chapter 12  
Enns (1992) in Journal of Counseling and Development  
Postmodern Approaches  
**Readings:** Corey, Chapter 13

Oct 8  Social Justice Perspectives  
Recommended reading: ACA Advocacy Competencies (to be posted to ANGEL)
Student presentations/(5 groups)

Oct 15  Integration and Theoretical Convergence
Readings: Corey, Chapters 15
Student presentations/Q & A for midterm preparation (4 groups)
Personal counseling theory is due

Oct 22  Case Conceptualization is due
Mid-term exam

Oct 29  Framework and a Model for Ethical Decisions
Readings: Pope & Vasquez, Chapters 1 & 2
Forester-Miller & Davis (1996) – A practitioner’s guide to ethical
decision-making. .Pdf has been posted to ANGEL.

Nov 5  Major Ethical Issues: Competence, Confidentiality and Informed Consent
Readings: Pope & Vasquez, Chapters 4, 11, 16

Nov 12  Major Ethical Issues: Sexual and Dual Relationships
Readings: Pope & Vasquez, Chapters 13 & 14

Nov 19  Major Ethical Issues: Diagnosis and Multicultural Concerns
Readings: Pope & Vasquez, Chapters 12, 15
Ethical decision-making model presentations (1 Group)

Nov 26  No Class (Thanksgiving Holiday)

Dec 3  Ethical decision-making model presentations (4 Groups)
Q & A for Final Exam

Final Exam is scheduled for Thursday, December 11\textsuperscript{th} from 5:45-7:45 in EBH 310.

[Syllabus subject to change with notice]