



MHS 6700

Legal & Ethical Issues in the Counseling Profession

84375 900

Fall 2026

Instructor Name

Chloe Lancaster

University Course Description

Study of legal, ethical and related issues affecting the role and responsibilities of counselors in schools and mental health facilities.

Course Requisites

Prerequisite(s):

Corequisite(s):

Course Format

The class is an online class conducted via synchronous and asynchronous instructions. The focus of the asynchronous (self-paced) online lessons is to build knowledge through readings, watching videos, written responses, and online discussions. The purpose of live online classes is to build skills and applications through discussion, student presentations, and small group activities. For live online classes, please have your webcam turned on and audio turned off and bring:

- ✓ Bring your TEXTBOOK,
- ✓ Relevant Ethical Codes
- ✓ ASCA's ethical decision-making model

The schedule for synchronous online classes, via TEAMS is as follows

08/ 25/ 2026 (Tuesday) 5:30 – 7:30
09/ 08/ 2026 (Tuesday) 5:30 – 7:30
11/ 10/ 2026 (Tuesday) 5:30 – 7:30
11/17 /2026 (Tuesday) 5:30 – 7:30

Minimum Technical Skills & Requirements: In order to take courses online at USF, you will need to be able to demonstrate proficiency in basic computer skills, maintain reliable internet access, and meet the [computer system requirements](https://www.usf.edu/it/remote/requirements-for-students) listed at: <https://www.usf.edu/it/remote/requirements-for-students>

Student Learning Outcomes

Program Goal

1. Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice

Key Performance Indicator:

Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the counselor's various professional roles and functions in providing ethically sound counseling and advocacy

Course Objectives

Course Objectives

Here's a cleaned-up and more consistent version of your course objectives. I standardized the wording, corrected grammar, ensured parallel structure, and fixed the numbering (Objective 12 was missing).

Course Objectives

Based on the **Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) 2024 Standards** for all counseling programs and the School Counseling specialty area, students will be able to:

1. **Demonstrate knowledge** of the historical development, licensure requirements, credentialing, accreditation, and professional organizations of the counseling profession, including its specialty areas and related professional affiliates. *(CACREP 2.F.1.a, f, g)*
2. **Differentiate between** legal and ethical standards as they apply to professional counseling practice. *(CACREP 2.F.1.i; 5.G.2.l, m, n)*
3. **Apply relevant ethical codes** to counseling practice and evaluate the ethical implications of counseling, consultation, and supervision services in school-based settings. *(CACREP 2.F.1.i, m; 5.G.2.l, m, n)*
4. **Recognize dual relationships** and identify strategies to avoid entering inappropriate dual relationships in professional counseling practice. *(CACREP 2.F.1.i)*
5. **Demonstrate knowledge** of counselors' legal and ethical responsibilities when working with students, families, schools, and community stakeholders. *(CACREP 2.F.1.b, c, i)*
6. **Identify legal and ethical issues** related to protecting the rights of clients and students. *(CACREP 2.F.1.i; 5.G.2.n)*
7. **Examine factors** that influence professional counseling practice, including counselors' personal values, cultural experiences, and self-care. *(CACREP 2.F.1.i, k, l)*
8. **Apply a systematic ethical decision-making model** to resolve complex ethical dilemmas in counseling practice. *(CACREP 2.F.1.i)*
9. **Demonstrate knowledge** of the legal rights of students and parents regarding educational records, confidentiality, and assessment data. *(CACREP 2.F.1.i; 2.F.7.m; 5.G.2.m, n)*
10. **Demonstrate knowledge** of federal and state legislation affecting students with disabilities and other special needs. *(CACREP 2.F.1.i; 5.G.2.m, n)*
11. **Demonstrate knowledge** of laws and ethical responsibilities related to child abuse, neglect, and mandated reporting. *(CACREP 2.F.1.i; 2.F.7.d; 5.G.2.i, m, n)*
12. **Evaluate the influence of technology** on the counseling profession, including the ethical and legal implications of technology in work with individuals, groups, and communities. *(CACREP 2.F.1.j; 2.F.5.d, e)*
13. **Demonstrate an understanding** of the ethics of advocacy and counselors' responsibility to engage in professional advocacy on behalf of the

profession and individuals and groups experiencing marginalization.
(CACREP 2.F.1.d, e; 5.G.2.a, f)

Required Texts and/or Readings and Course Materials

1. Stone, C. (2022). School Counseling Principals: Ethics and Law (5th ed.). Alexandria, VA: American School Counselor Association
2. Erford, B. T., Hays, D. G., & Crockett, S. (2020). Mastering the national counselor examination and the counselor preparation comprehensive examination (3rd ed.). Pearson.
3. [Student membership to ASCA](#)

Supplementary (Optional) Texts and Materials

- [American School Counselor Association. \(2022\). ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors](#)
- [American Counseling Association \(2014\) ACA Code of Ethics](#)

Grading Scale

Grading Scale (%)

94 – 100	A	74 – 76	C
90 – 93	A-	70 – 73	C-
87 – 89	B+	67 – 69	D+
84 – 86	B	64 – 66	D
80 – 83	B-	60 – 63	D-
77 – 79	C+	0 – 59	F

Grade Categories and Weights

Criteria:

Your grade will be determined by the following (100 points):

Assignment	Points/Percent
Due	
Weekly Discussion Posts & Responses	(28%)
Weekly	

Weekly Quizzes	(28%)
Weekly	
Legal Case Review	(11%)
11/08/2026	
Poster Assignment	(11%)
11/29/2026	
Pop Culture paper	(11%)
12/04/2026	
CPCE Sample Test Form B (chapters 1 & 2)	(11%)
12/04/2026	
Total points	(100)

Instructor Feedback Policy & Grade Dissemination

The instructor will respond to email communication relevant to the subject matter within 48 hours of the date received. The instructor will provide feedback on assignments within one week of the posted deadline and feedback on final papers within two weeks of the posted deadline. [You can access your scores at any time using "Grades" in Canvas.](#)

Major Topics and Course Schedule

Major Topics:

- Ethical Foundations of School Counseling
- Ethical Decision-Making in School Counseling
- Professional Boundaries and Dual Relationships
- Technology, Social Media, and Digital Ethics
- Student Privacy, Confidentiality, and Educational Records
- School Law and Legal Issues in School Counseling
- Negligence, Liability, and Risk Management
- Child Abuse, Neglect, and Mandated Reporting
- Confidentiality, Duty to Warn, and Crisis Response
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Values in School Counseling
- Legal and Ethical Issues Affecting LGBTQ+ Students
- Title IX and the School Counselor's Role
- Advocacy, Leadership, and Systems Change

The schedule for the required synchronous online class meetings via **Microsoft Teams** is as follows:

- **Tuesday, August 25, 2026** – 5:30–7:30 p.m. (Course Orientation)
- **Tuesday, September 8, 2026** – 5:30–7:30 p.m.
- **Tuesday, November 10, 2026** – 5:30–7:30 p.m.
- **Tuesday, November 17, 2026** – 5:30–7:30 p.m.

This version is formatted consistently and is ready to paste directly into your syllabus.

Week Beginning	Topic	Readings	Assignments	Course Objectives
August 24, 2026	Orientation Week – Review the syllabus and professional ethical codes. Live Class via Microsoft Teams: Tuesday, August 25, 2026, 5:30–7:30 p.m.	N/A	Complete the Introductory Discussion Board by Sunday, August 30, 2026, 11:59 p.m.	N/A
August 31, 2026	Module 1 – Ethical Foundations of School Counseling	Chapter 1	Complete Module 1 Quiz and Discussion Board by Sunday, September 6, 2026, 11:59 p.m.	1, 2
September 7, 2026	Module 2 – Ethical Decision-Making in School Counseling Live Class via Microsoft Teams: Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 5:30–7:30 p.m.	Chapter 2	Complete Module 2 Quiz and Discussion Board by Sunday, September 13, 2026, 11:59 p.m.	1, 2
September 14, 2026	Module 3 – Professional Boundaries and Dual Relationships	Chapter 3	Complete Module 3 Quiz and Discussion Board by Sunday, September 20, 2026, 11:59 p.m.	3
September 21, 2026	Module 4 – Technology, Social Media, and Digital Ethics	Chapter 4	Complete Module 4 Quiz and Discussion Board by Sunday, September 27, 2026, 11:59 p.m.	4

Week Beginning	Topic	Readings	Assignments	Course Objectives
September 28, 2026	Module 5 – Student Privacy, Confidentiality, and Educational Records	Chapter 5	Complete Module 5 Quiz and Discussion Board by Sunday, October 4, 2026, 11:59 p.m.	5
October 5, 2026	Module 6 – School Law and Legal Responsibilities of School Counselors	Chapter 6	Complete Module 6 Quiz and Discussion Board by Sunday, October 11, 2026, 11:59 p.m.	6
October 12, 2026	Module 7 – Negligence, Liability, and Risk Management	Chapter 7	Complete Module 7 Quiz and Discussion Board by Sunday, October 18, 2026, 11:59 p.m.	7
October 19, 2026	Module 8 – Child Abuse, Neglect, and Mandated Reporting	Chapter 8	Complete Module 8 Quiz and Discussion Board by Sunday, October 25, 2026, 11:59 p.m.	8
October 26, 2026	Module 9 – Confidentiality, Duty to Warn, and Crisis Response	Chapter 9	Complete Module 9 Quiz and Discussion Board by Sunday, November 1, 2026, 11:59 p.m.	9
November 2, 2026	Module 10 – Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Values in School Counseling	Chapter 10	Complete Module 10 Quiz and Discussion Board by Sunday, November 8, 2026, 11:59 p.m. Legal Case Review Due: Sunday, November 22, 2026, 11:59 p.m.	10
November 9, 2026	Module 11 – Legal and Ethical Issues Affecting LGBTQ+ Students Live Class via Microsoft Teams: Tuesday, November 10, 2026, 5:30–7:30 p.m.	Chapter 11	Complete Module 11 Quiz and Discussion Board by Sunday, November 15, 2026, 11:59 p.m.	11
November 16, 2026	Module 12 – Title IX and the School Counselor's Role Live Class via Microsoft Teams: Tuesday, November 17, 2026, 5:30–7:30 p.m.	Chapter 12	Complete Module 12 Quiz and Discussion Board by Sunday, November 22, 2026, 11:59 p.m.	12

Week Beginning	Topic	Readings	Assignments	Course Objectives
November 23, 2026	Module 13 – Advocacy, Leadership, and Systems Change	Chapter 13	Complete Module 13 Quiz and Discussion Board by Sunday, November 29, 2026, 11:59 p.m. Poster Assignment Due: Sunday, November 29, 2026, 11:59 p.m.	13
November 30–December 4, 2026	Independent Work Week	N/A	Pop Culture Paper Due: Friday, December 4, 2026, 11:59 p.m. CPCE Practice Exam Due: Friday, December 4, 2026, 11:59 p.m.	—

USF Core Syllabus Policies

USF has a set of central policies related to student recording class sessions, academic integrity and grievances, student accessibility services, academic disruption, religious observances, academic continuity, food insecurity, pregnancy and related conditions, and sexual harassment that **apply to all courses at USF**. Be sure to review these online:

<https://www.usf.edu/provost/faculty-success/resources-policies-forms/core-syllabus-policy-statements.aspx>

Student Recordings

Florida Statute 1004.097 Free Expression on Campus

Students may, without prior notice, record video or audio of a class lecture for a class in which the student is enrolled for their own personal, educational use (USF Policy 10-048). A class lecture is defined as a formal or methodical oral presentation as part of a university course intended to present information or teach enrolled students about a particular subject. Recording class activities other than class lectures, including but not limited to lab sessions, student presentations (whether individually or part of a group),

class discussion, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving student participation, test or examination administrations, field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty member is prohibited. Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation and class attendance and may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of the USF Student Conduct Code.

Course Policies: Grades

Late Work Policy

Students who anticipate submitting an assignment late should contact the instructor as soon as possible. When notified in advance and under reasonable circumstances, I will work with students to establish an alternative submission timeline. Any late work that is not covered by a prior agreement, or that is submitted after the agreed-upon deadline, will be subject to a point deduction.

Rewrite Policy

Rewrites are entirely optional; however, only the formal essay may be rewritten for a revised grade. Note that an alternate grading rubric will be used for the rewrite, featuring an additional column that evaluates the changes made specifically.

Grades of "Incomplete"

An Incomplete grade ("I") is exceptional and granted at the instructor's discretion only when students are unable to complete course requirements due to illness or other circumstances beyond their control. The course instructor and student must complete and sign the "I" Grade Contract Form that describes the work to be completed, the date it is due, and the grade the student would earn factoring in a zero for all incomplete assignments. The due date can be negotiated and extended by student/instructor as long as it does not exceed two semesters for undergraduate courses and one semester for graduate courses from the original date grades were due for that course. An "I" grade not cleared within the two semesters for undergraduate courses and one semester for

graduate courses (including summer semester) will revert to the grade noted on the contract.

Campus Free Expression

It is fundamental to the University of South Florida's mission to support an environment where divergent ideas, theories, and philosophies can be openly exchanged and critically evaluated. Consistent with these principles, this course may involve discussion of ideas that you find uncomfortable, disagreeable, or even offensive.

In the instructional setting, ideas are intended to be presented in an objective manner and not as an endorsement of what you should personally believe. "Objective" means that the idea(s) presented can be tested by critical peer review and rigorous debate, and that the idea(s) is supported by credible research.

In this course you may be asked to engage with complex ideas and to demonstrate an understanding of the ideas. Understanding and engaging with an idea does not require you to believe it or to agree with it.

Course Policies: Technology and Media

Canvas

This course is offered via USF's learning management system (LMS), Canvas. If you need help learning how to perform various tasks related to this course or other courses being offered in Canvas, please consult the [Canvas Student Guides](#). You may also contact USF's IT department at (813) 974-1222 or help@usf.edu.

Course Policies: Student Expectations

Health and Wellness

Your health is a priority at the University of South Florida. We encourage members of our community to look out for each other and to reach out for help if someone is in need. If you or someone you know is in distress, please make a referral at www.usf.edu/sos so that the Student Outreach & Support can contact and provide helpful resources to the student in distress. A 24-hour licensed mental healthcare professional, offered through the counseling center, is

available by phone at 813-974-2831, option 3. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, please dial 9-1-1.

Title IX Policy

USF is committed to fostering a safe and respectful learning environment, free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment, in accordance with Title IX and USF Policy 0-004. If a student shares an experience of sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, or relationship violence with a USF employee (including faculty), that employee will notify the Title IX Office. This allows the Title IX Office to send the student an email with information about support resources and options—if it is safe to do so. Students are not required to respond to this email. The Title IX Office is a private resource. Information is shared only on a need-to-know basis to provide students with support measures. To speak to a confidential resource, students may contact USF Center for Victim Advocacy at 813-974-5757. Confidential resources do not notify the Title IX Office unless the student requests it. For more information about Title IX, available resources, or to make a report, please visit www.usf.edu/title-ix.

Course Hero / Chegg Policy

The USF Policy on Academic Integrity specifies that students may not use websites that enable cheating, such as by uploading or downloading material for this purpose. This does apply specifically to Chegg.com and CourseHero.com – almost any use of these websites (including uploading proprietary materials) constitutes a violation of the academic integrity policy.

Professionalism Policy

Per university policy and classroom etiquette; mobile phones, iPods, etc. must be silenced during all classroom and lab lectures. Those not heeding this rule will be asked to leave the classroom/lab immediately so as to not disrupt the learning environment. Please arrive on time for all class meetings. Students who habitually disturb the class by talking, arriving late, etc., and have been warned may suffer a reduction in their final class grade.

Turnitin.com

In this course, turnitin.com may be utilized. Turnitin is an automated system which instructors may use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. Accordingly, you may be expected to submit all assignments in both hard copy and electronic format. After the assignment is processed, as instructor I receive a report from turnitin.com that states if and how another author's work was used in the assignment. For a more detailed look at this process visit <http://www.turnitin.com>.

Netiquette Guidelines

- Act professionally in the way you communicate. Treat your instructors and peers with respect, the same way you would do in a face-to-face environment. Respect other people's ideas and be constructive when explaining your views about points you may not agree with.
- Be sensitive. Be respectful and sensitive when sharing your ideas and opinions. There will be people in your class with different linguistic backgrounds, political and religious beliefs or other general differences.
- Proofread and check spelling. Doing this before sending an email or posting a thread on a discussion board will allow you to make sure your message is clear and thoughtful. Avoid the use of all capital letters, it can be perceived as if you are shouting, and it is more difficult to read.
- Keep your communications focused and stay on topic. Complete your ideas before changing the subject. By keeping the message on focus you allow the readers to easily get your idea or answers they are looking for.
- Be clear with your message. Avoid using humor or sarcasm. Since people can't see your expressions or hear your tone of voice, meaning can be misinterpreted.

Email and Discussion Board Guidelines

- Use the subject line effectively by using a meaningful line of what your email or discussion is about.
- Keep your emails and postings related to the course content. You should not post anything personal on a discussion board unless it is requested by the instructor.
- Any personal, course or confidential issues should be directly communicated to the instructor via email. The discussion boards are public spaces; therefore, any issues should not be posted there.

End of Semester Student Evaluations

All classes at USF make use of an online system for students to provide feedback to the University regarding the course. These surveys will be made available at the end of the semester, and the University will notify you by email when the response window opens. Your participation is highly encouraged and valued.

Food and Drink Policy (for in-campus sessions only).

Please adhere to the firm policy of no beverages (other than bottled/capped water), food, tobacco products, or like items in the classroom. Your understanding of the necessity for this policy and cooperation will be greatly appreciated. This policy will be strictly enforced.

Learning Support and Campus Offices

Academic Accommodations

Students with disabilities are responsible for registering with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) in order to receive academic accommodations. For additional information about academic accommodations and resources, you can visit the SAS website.

[SAS website for the Tampa campus and Sarasota-Manatee Teachout site.](#)

[SAS website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

Academic Support Services

The USF Office of Student Success coordinates and promotes university-wide efforts to enhance undergraduate and graduate student success. For a comprehensive list of academic support services available to all USF students, please visit the [Office of Student Success website.](#)

Canvas Technical Support

If you have technical difficulties in Canvas, you can find access to the Canvas guides and video resources in the “Canvas Help” page on the homepage of your

Canvas course. You can also contact the help desk by calling 813-974-1222 in Tampa or emailing help@usf.edu.

[USF IT Services](#)

Center for Victim Advocacy

The [Center for Victim Advocacy](#) empowers survivors of crime, violence, or abuse by promoting the restoration of decision making, by advocating for their rights, and by offering support and resources. Contact information is available online.

Counseling Center

The Counseling Center promotes the wellbeing of the campus community by providing culturally sensitive counseling, consultation, prevention, and training that enhances student academic and personal success. Contact information is available online.

[Counseling Center website for the Tampa campus and Sarasota-Manatee Teachout site.](#)

[Counseling Center website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

Tutoring

The Tutoring Hub offers free tutoring in several subjects to USF undergraduates. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information, email asctampa@usf.edu.

[Tutoring website for the Tampa campus and Sarasota-Manatee Teachout site.](#)

[Tutoring website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

Writing Studio

The Writing Studio is a free resource for USF undergraduate and graduate students. At the Writing Studio, a trained writing consultant will work individually with you, at any point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment, email: writingstudio@usf.edu.

[Writing studio website for the Tampa campus and Sarasota-Manatee Teachout Site.](#)

[Writing studio website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

Student Ombuds Office

Florida Statute 1006.51 and Florida Board of Governors Regulation 6.011 require that all public institutions provide ombuds services to students. The Student Ombuds Office at USF is a confidential, impartial, informal, and independent resource for students experiencing challenges related to the university. Ombuds can help students safely explore options, clarify processes, and consider next steps. [Learn more or make an appointment at usf.edu/student-ombuds.](https://usf.edu/student-ombuds)