

**Grand Valley State University**  
**ABA Graduate Certificate Program**  
**Psy 527 – Ethics and Diversity in Professional Practice**

**Instructor:** Amanda Karsten, PhD, BCBA-D

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**Phone:** 616-331-2388

**Meeting location:** TBD

**Office location:** 2139 Au Sable Hall

**Office hours:** By appointment (on Allendale campus or Zoom)

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course introduces the ethical guidelines that govern practice in applied settings, particularly in schools. The BACB Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts will be covered in detail with an emphasis on practical implications. This course will also incorporate ethical guidance from the National Association of School Psychologists and Council for Exceptional Children.

### **Course Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe and apply the ethical guidelines from the Behavior Analysis Certification Board, National Association for School Psychologists, and Council for Exceptional Children
2. Utilize ethical guidelines in decision making related to a variety of case scenarios
3. Discuss ethical issues commonly encountered in practice
4. Apply ethical guidelines to decision making in practice (e.g., practicum sites)
5. Describe and apply ethical guidelines while working with diverse populations

<b>BACB Test Content Outline (6<sup>th</sup> edition, students applying after January 2025)</b>		
<b>Domain E</b>	<b>Task List Items</b>	<b>Content Hours</b>
Ethical and Professional Issues	E-1 to E-12	45 hours

## **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

LeBlanc, L. A. & Karsten, A. M. (2024). *Ethics: A proactive and practical approach to ethical decision making for behavior analysts*. Sloan.

**\*Note:** My portion of the royalties for GVSU student purchases will be donated to SASP.

Paperback ISBN: 978-1-59738-160-4

Redshelf e-book ISBN: 978-1-59738-161-1

VitalSource e-book ISBN: 978-1-59738-163-7

Please follow this link to access and save the [BACB Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts \(2020\)](#).

Please follow this link to access and save the [NASP Professional Standards \(2020\)](#).

Please follow this link to access [Michigan DOE Code of Educational Ethics \(2019\)](#).

## COURSE LOGISTICS

### What do I need to know about my instructor?

It is the goal of your instructor to foster a learning environment that is welcoming, fair, and productive for each individual student. Toward this goal, students can expect the instructor to:

- Prepare for class and enthusiastically facilitate activities
- Answer your questions and help you solve any problems you may experience
- Model effective teaching practices and professional conduct
- Provide thoughtful feedback on your posts and assignments
- Check GVSU email daily (Monday-Friday) and respond to email within 48 hours
- Maintain the Blackboard page with accurate, accessible information and promptly address any errors or problems that a student brings to my attention

### BCBA Certification Information

This course is one of seven courses in the 21-credit Applied Behavior Analysis Graduate Certificate Program at GVSU. Successful completion of the course sequence results in the GVSU Graduate Certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis. The ABA Graduate Certificate is a Verified Course Sequence (VCS) by the Association of Behavior Analysis International (ABAI). The BACB has approved the GVSU course sequence as meeting the 5<sup>th</sup> edition Task List 315-hour coursework requirements for eligibility to pursue certification as a BCBA. All students applying to take the BCBA exam after January 1, 2025 must include an attestation that your coursework complied with the BACB's 6<sup>th</sup> edition Test Content Outline. Dr. Amanda Karsten or Dr. Amy Matthews can assist you with this process at the time of your exam application. The BACB also requires that you show proof of a master's degree and evidence that you have accrued the required number of supervised experience hours before you can register to take the BCBA exam. You are responsible for ensuring that you meet all the current BACB standards. For more information about the Behavior Analyst Certification Board, go to [www.bacb.com](http://www.bacb.com).

### Required Equipment (owned or accessible)

- High-speed internet access
- Operating system that meets current Blackboard browser requirements (see below)
- Computer with a sound card and speakers
- Microphone (built in or external)
- Computer camera for synchronous meetings, if applicable

### Blackboard is the Course Management System

To access Blackboard, go to <https://mybb.gvsu.edu/> and enter your network login and password.

This course utilizes Blackboard, GVSU's online course management system. Take a look at the GVSU Online Learning pages to find numerous materials about using Blackboard and online learning <http://www.gvsu.edu/online/>.

Use of Blackboard is integral to this course and students must log on a few times each week in order to complete course requirements, receive important announcements and updates, and communicate with instructors and other students about course content.

Check the current [technical requirements](#) to use Blackboard and [preferred browser information](#).

#### Technical difficulties with Blackboard

If you experience technical problems with Blackboard, contact the help desk by email or phone - [helpdesk@gvsu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@gvsu.edu) or 616-331-3513. The help website is <http://www.gvsu.edu/it/learn/>

#### **Accessing the Library**

Many of GVSU's library resources can be accessed online [Distance and Off-Campus Learning Services](#) with many journal articles available on demand. You must have an active GVSU student account to take advantage of the library's resources and services. Some courses may have reading materials in [course reserve](#).

#### **Graduate Writing Resources**

The [Graduate Writing Resources](#) available to assist with all kinds of writing tasks and they will give feedback on writing assignments. It is not just for students who struggle with writing. They can help any student improve writing skills.

#### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you are in need of accommodations due to a learning, physical, or other disability you must present a memo to me from Disability Support Resources (DSR) indicating the existence of a disability and the suggested reasonable accommodations. If you have not already done so, please contact the [Disability Support Resources](#) office (4015 JHZ) by calling 331-2490 or email to [dsrgvsu@gvsu.edu](mailto:dsrgvsu@gvsu.edu). Please note that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received a copy of the DSR issued memo. All discussions will remain confidential.

#### **COURSE ORGANIZATION and ASSIGNMENTS**

*The learning activities for this course take a few different forms, but the instructor has scheduled each activity in a predictable rhythm within each unit. Please contact the instructor early in the semester if you have questions about expectations for the course or how to establish a work pattern that fits both our course calendar and your unique schedule and responsibilities.*

#### **Learning Units** (two week modules)

This course is organized into seven learning units. The unit folders on Blackboard contain instructions regarding reading assignments, recorded lectures, assignments, and other resources. Units will open up two weeks at a time and all unit activities will be due before the end of the two-week period. All previously completed units will be open throughout the course so you can refer back to them at any time.

**Meetings** (participate in 3 meetings, format TBD)

The purpose of synchronous meetings is to unpack the most useful or challenging ideas addressed by this course, to work through any problems or misunderstandings together, and to prepare you for continuous, post-graduate learning as part of a professional community of practice. The details for these meeting are listed on Blackboard.

**Readings** (each learning unit)

Assigned readings contain most of the foundational information we will discuss and apply in this course. I will provide unit objectives to help guide your engagement with those materials and I will generally post a unit overview lecture to introduce key ideas. While the best learning strategies can vary between students, I recommend scheduling time to thoroughly read and take notes on all materials as early as possible during the first ~7-9 days of a new unit. Online discussions, synchronous meetings, and assignments will be most productive and fun if you've already made meaningful contact with the readings.

**Discussion board** – (each learning unit)

Discussion boards in this course create opportunities to collaborate, to work through nuances of difficult material together, and to make connections between course content and field experiences. I will post instructions for the unit discussion board on Wednesday of Week 1. More information about discussion board and a grading rubric are provided on Blackboard.

**Assignments** – (each learning unit)

Assignments in this course are designed to help you either connect personally with key concepts from class or prepare you to transfer your knowledge and skills to new situations within and beyond the course. All written assignments must be prepared in a professional manner (typed, and free from spelling/grammatical errors). More information about each of these assignments will be provided on Blackboard. *Please note, the instructor will drop one missed or low-scoring assignment from each student's final grade; students remain accountable for all unit objectives, whether or not they skip the unit assignment.*

**Exams** – (3 take-home exams)

You will have 3 exams scheduled throughout the semester focused on 4-6 weeks of course content. The exams will consist of essay questions that require a synthesis of information from each unit. All questions will relate closely to unit big ideas, objectives, DBs, and assignments. This course does not include a cumulative final exam, however, the units build on one another and overlap in major themes (e.g., circumstances view of ethical and unethical behavior).

**POINTS AND GRADING**

Assignment	Points	Total Points for Semester
Meetings	5	15
1-on-1 check in	5	5
Study products (7)	3	21

Discussion board (7)	8	56
Unit Assignments (1-4 & 6)	20	100
Final Assignment	40	40
Exams (3)	40/40/40	120
TOTAL POINTS		357

### Final Grade Requirement

Students seeking the ABA Graduate Certificate must complete all courses with a B- or higher in each course and finish with a minimum 3.0 grade point average in the course sequence.

Letter Grade	Percentage Range
A	94-100%
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	70-76%
D	61-69%
F	0-60%

### COURSE POLICIES

"This course is subject to GVSU's general requirements for courses. A full list with resources may be found at [www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies](http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies)."

#### Section 223.00: Integrity of Scholarship and Grades

Truth and Honesty. The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of teachers and scholars. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles, and in so doing protect the validity of University grades. This means that all academic work will be done by the student to whom it is assigned without unauthorized aid of any kind. Instructors, for their part, will exercise care in the planning and supervision of academic work, so that honest effort will be positively encouraged.

#### Section 223.01: Plagiarism

Any ideas or material taken from another source for either written or oral presentation must be fully acknowledged. Offering the work of someone else as one's own is plagiarism. The language or ideas taken from another may range from isolated formulas, sentences, or paragraphs to entire articles copied from books, periodicals, speeches or the writings of other students. The offering of materials assembled or collected by others in the form of projects or collections without acknowledgment also is considered plagiarism. Any student who fails

to give credit in written or oral work for the ideas or materials that have been taken from another is guilty of plagiarism.

#### **Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy**

Many faculty and students are exploring the ways that ChatGPT and other AI resources can facilitate their learning and communication. I welcome you to explore these options for my course, including the possibility of meeting with the Writing Center to learn more about best practices for leveraging AI in the development of your original work products. If you utilize ChatGPT for an assignment that you submit in my class, please follow [guidance from the American Psychological Association](#) for explaining the role of AI and citing any specific information from AI sources.

#### **Attendance Policy**

In the event of an unavoidable absence from a meeting or exam window (e.g., illness, family emergency, weather-related disruption), students will have the opportunity to complete an alternative activity or to reschedule the exam as soon as possible, ideally within 48 hours. Please notify your instructor of any planned, non-emergency scheduling conflicts within the first week of the semester.

#### **Makeup/Late Work Policy**

Students will not have the opportunity to make up points lost due to late or missing discussion posts, assignments, or practice quizzes. Please notify your instructor if you are aware of circumstances that could affect your timely completion of assigned work in this course.

#### **Religious Observances**

Your instructor is dedicated to maintaining the rights of students to observe religious holidays. If you need to miss a course-related event to observe a religious holiday, please contact your instructor a week in advance to discuss any arrangements.

#### **Student Support**

GVSU and your instructors are dedicated to helping you meet your academic and career goals. Please do not hesitate to contact your instructors if you wish to discuss your course performance or other academic issues. Additionally, if you would like to talk to a professional counselor about mental health concerns, phone the GVSU Counseling Center during normal business hours at 616-331-3266. If you are experiencing a crisis or are considering suicide you can call 1-800-273-TALK or text [988](#) for support at any time.

## Psy 527: Ethics and Diversity in Professional Practice

	Learning Unit	Materials	Events/Deadlines
<b>Unit 1</b> Jan 6- Jan 19	<b>History and Evolution of Professional Ethics</b>	L&K Ch. 1-2 ABAI Position Statement (you pick 1)	Meeting 1 Discussion Board Practice Quiz Study Product Assignment
<b>Unit 2</b> Jan 20- Feb 2	<b>Proactive Approach &amp; Comparison of Ethical Codes and Enforcement Systems</b>  <b>Systematic Approach to Ethical Decision Making</b>	L&K Ch. 3-4 Overton et al. (2013) STATE blog post	Discussion Board Practice Quiz Study Product Assignment
	<b>Take-Home Exam 1</b>	Units 1-2	<b>Due Tues., 2/4 by 11:59PM</b>
<b>Unit 3</b> Feb 3- Feb 16	<b>BACB Code Section 1:</b> Competence, Cultural Responsiveness, and Non-Exploitative Relationships	L&K Ch. 5 Brodhead et al. (2018) Dubay et al. (2018)	Discussion Board Practice Quiz Study Product Assignment
<b>Unit 4</b> Feb 17- March 2	<b>BACB Code Section 2:</b> Providing Safe and Effective Services	L&K Ch. 6 Bowman et al. (2021) Marchant et al. (2012)	1-on-1 Check In Meeting 2 Discussion Board Practice Quiz Study Product Assignment
March 2-9	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES		
<b>Unit 5</b> March 10- March 23	<b>BACB Code Section 3 &amp; Section 5:</b> Responsibilities in Practice and Making Public Statements	L&K Ch. 7 and Ch. 9 Continuity of Care Toolkit	Discussion Board Practice Quiz Study Product Introduce Final Scenario + Peer Review Assignment
	<b>Take-Home Exam 2</b>	Units 3-5	<b>Due Tues., 3/25 by 11:59PM</b>
<b>Unit 6</b> March 24- April 6	<b>BACB Code Section 4 &amp; Section 6:</b> Supervising Others and Responsibilities in Research	L&K Ch. 8 and Ch. 10 (selected) Wong et al. (2015)	Discussion Board Practice Quiz Study Product Assignment
<b>Unit 7</b> April 7- April 20	<b>Refining Your Ethical Repertoires</b>	L&K Ch. 11, 12, and 13	Meeting 3 Discussion Board Practice Quiz Study Product Final Scenario + Peer Review
	<b>Take-Home Exam 3</b>	Units 6-7	<b>Due Wed., 4/23 by 12:00PM</b>

## Thoughts on a Successful Online Learning Experience

Taking an online course is different from taking a traditional classroom course. For example, you will play a larger role in organizing your time and assessing your own learning. The role of the instructor becomes facilitator and guide to help you learn the course material and apply it in your personal and professional life. I am here to assist you by providing materials, activities, and feedback on your performance. You can help me customize my teaching to your needs by communicating early and often when you encounter challenges or barriers to your success in the course.

As a successful online learner, you will interact with the course materials regularly; manage your time; share thoughts and experiences with others; ask questions when something is unclear; critically reflect on material; and apply what you are learning. Active engagement and open communication with the instructor are great strategies for online learning AND for lifelong learning.

Much to the surprise of many students, online courses are not easier than traditional courses. Quite the contrary. You may have more flexibility and less time in a lecture hall, but the goals of the course are unchanged. Online courses like this one have all the essential features to support learning, but it's ultimately your choice whether to engage with those features – and to have meaningful interactions with me and your classmates – so we can maximize growth and enjoyment this semester.

### Online Learning Tips Checklist

- ❑ Read the syllabus and all preparatory information on Blackboard
- ❑ Stay organized and track due dates
- ❑ Schedule weekly study and reading times early in each unit so we can address any questions before the assignment deadlines for that unit
- ❑ Log onto Blackboard at least 3 times per week to check announcements, discussion board, and to interact with course material
- ❑ Get to know the other students in the class and help each other apply concepts
- ❑ Study the course terminology and monitor your progress (e.g., repeated retrieval activities)
- ❑ Post questions, comments, and ideas on discussion board (unit discussion board and open forum)
- ❑ Ask questions of the instructor. Not just questions about logistics or grades, but content questions and personalized questions that can help your instructor present content in a way that is relevant and engaging for you (e.g., related to your career goals, interests, values, and prior experience)

*\*Although these might seem obvious and simple, past students have found they make a tremendous difference in the online learning experience.*