

Research Ethics in the Professional and Social Sciences Course Outline and Syllabus

This course explores ethical and moral dilemmas researchers have encountered in conducting research in the social, professional, and human sciences and the sources of ethical principles and practices they have used in addressing these dilemmas. Philosophical traditions in ethics from around the world and codes of ethical practice from professional associations, government agencies, and other relevant institutions are examined for their applications to choices researchers make and challenges they face. This course is designed to equip researchers studying human behavior and experience to engage in *ethical analysis* and *concrete ethical problem solving* when designing, conducting, analyzing, reporting, and applying research design. It is *not* intended to provide definitive answers to ethical conundrums, but rather to orient the researcher to the moral complexity inherent in all inquiry and present a collection of tools for navigating ethically ambiguous research situations. Students apply these frameworks to their own and others' research dilemmas. Drawing from personal experiences and the professional, social, and human science literature, students develop their own principles for ethical research practice. This course counts as an elective for the Interdisciplinary Qualitative Studies Certificate.

Course Objectives:

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify and articulate your own preconceived moral/ethical assumptions and positions and recognize alternative positions held by others, as well as evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these positions.
2. Express increased proficiency assertively, yet respectfully, engaging in moral conversation in which a variety of opposing viewpoints may be represented.
3. Use classical, postmodern, and feminist ethical theories to reveal the ethical dimension (i.e., overt and covert ethical assumptions, implications, and ramifications) embedded in the research topic and methods of your choice.
4. Identify and apply (as applicable) formal regulatory guidelines established by statutory standards (e.g., the Belmont Report), professional codes of ethics, local and international institutional review board policies, and religious or other nongovernmental codes of conduct (e.g., the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki).
5. Identify and apply different models of ethical decision making to concrete research situations.
6. Recognize that the ethical analysis and problem-solving tools presented in this course have broader applicability than the formal research process.

Topical Structure:

1. *Introduction:* What is ethics and how come we keep using the word moral? Is there a difference between “moral” and “moralistic”? Is it possible to engage in moral discourse without being moralistic? What does morality have to do with science? What is the relationship between “is” and “ought”? Is science and research value free, amoral, and ethically neutral; ought it to be?
2. *Identifying Presuppositions:* How do we know what is ethical and what is not ethical? What is the source(s) of these distinctions (e.g., individual assessment, local community or larger cultural norms, God, Buddha, Allah, etc.)? What are our epistemologies? What are the ethical assumptions embedded in our world views? Do they shape or are they shaped by our research efforts? How do we live with moral certainty or uncertainty in a pluralistic society?
3. *Developing Moral Discernment:* What are specific ethical challenges faced by everyone engaged in human research? What are ethical surprises, contingencies, and constraints? What ethical issues arise because of the researcher’s role and/or experiences (e.g., social hierarchies and power relationships in research: studying up, down, sideways, and inside and outside groups)?
4. *Broadening Ethical Perspectives:* What do different ethical traditions (i.e., classical, postmodern, and feminist theories) identify as ethically relevant and what is considered ethically irrelevant? What standards are established by formal regulatory guidelines such as governmental law (e.g., the Belmont Report), professional codes of ethics, local and international institutional review board policies, and religious or other nongovernmental codes of conduct (e.g., the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki)?
5. *Applying Ethical Analysis:* What role does ethics play in selecting research topics and the formulation of research problems (i.e., studying AIDS, domestic abuse, and other sensitive issues)? How does ethics apply to action research, insider research, participatory action research? What is the role of ethics in the design and conduct of research studies? What can’t researchers do? What “ought” they to do? How are institutional review board expectations and constraints managed in practice? What is the relationship between ethics and research participants and settings? How do researchers conceptualize those they study (i.e., as subjects, participants, coresearchers)? How do ethical considerations affect data representation, research applications, and implications? What do we do when the needs of scholarship conflict with the needs of research participants? How do the norms and mores of the participants being studied affect our ethical decision making?
6. *Practicing Concrete Ethical Problem Solving:* What models for problem solving are presented by different ethical traditions (i.e., classical, postmodern and feminist theories)? What are the strengths and weaknesses associated with these models? What model or combination of models is intuitively most appealing? Why? Why not others? How do you justify ethical decisions? What is the impact of setting and context on ethical decision making (i.e., ethics in the academy and other professional venues like school districts and human service agencies)? How do we live with the ethical ambiguity

and uncertainty that come from having to choose between multiple viable ethical options?
What is ongoing moral reflection?

Course schedule:

8-17-06	Introduction
8-24-06	Hinsman, Ch. 1 Sales & Folkman, Preface, Ch. 1, & Part 1 AERA, pp. vii-41
8-31-06	Hinsman, Ch. 2 Wolcott, Pp. vii-34 AERA, pp. 43-74
9-7-06	Hinsman, Ch. 3 Wolcott, Chs. 2-3 AERA, pp. 75-99
9-14-06	Hinsman, Ch. 4 Wolcott, Chs. 4-5 AERA, pp. 101-150 <i>Ethical overview due</i>
9-21-06	Hinsman, Ch. 5 Deyhle et al. Wolcott, Chs. 6-7
9-28-06	Hinsman, Ch. 6 Wolcott (finish) AERA, pp. 151-192
10-5-06	Hinsman, Ch. 7 Patton Sales & Folkman, Part 2
10-12-06	Hinsman, Ch. 8 Tierney Sales & Folkman, Part 3 and Appendices
10-19-06	Hinsman, Ch. 9 Miller Fleuhr-Lobban <i>Ethical case due</i>
10-26-06	Fall Break–no class
11-2-06	Virtual Class on WebCT Hinsman, Ch. 10 Christians Hemmings Milgram, Chs. 1-5
11-9-06	Hinsman, Ch. 11 Briggs Milgram, Chs. 6-8
11-16-06	Milgram, Chs. 9-12

- Murphy and Dingwall
Keenan, Intro & Ch. 1
 11-23-06 Thanksgiving Break–no class
 11-30-06 **Milgram, Chs. 13-15, Appendices**
 Thomas
 Cooper and Blair
Keenan, Part 1
 12-5-06 Note: we are meeting on Tuesday this week
Keenan, Part 2
 Coulter and Wiens
 Nash, Chs. 2 and 6
 12-12-06 *Final papers due* (no class meeting)

Required Textbooks:

- American Educational Research Association, *Ethical standards of the American Educational Research Association: Cases and commentary*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association, 2002.
- Lawrence M. Hinsman, *Ethics: A pluralistic approach to moral theory*, 2nd ed. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace, 1994.
- Thomas Keenan, *Fables of responsibility: Aberrations and predicaments in ethics and politics*. Stanford University Press, 1997.
- Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to authority: An experimental view*. HarperPerennial, 1974.
- Bruce Dennis Sales and Susan Folkman (Eds.), *Ethics in research with human participants*. American Psychological Association, 2000.
- Harry F. Wolcott, *Sneaky kid and its aftermath: Ethics and intimacy in fieldwork*. Altamira, 2002.

Additional Materials (still negotiable--password for e-reserves is ethicsres):

- Briggs, Charles L.
 2002 Interviewing, Power/Knowledge, and Social Inequality. In Handbook of Interview Research. Jaber F Gubrium and James A. Holstein, eds. Pp. 911-922. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Christians, Clifford G.
 2000 Ethics and Politics in Qualitative Research. In Handbook of Qualitative Research. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds. Pp. 133-155. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cooper, Martha, and Carole Blair
 2002 Foucault's ethics. *Qualitative Inquiry* 8 (4):511-531.
- Coulter, David, and John R. Wiens
 2002 Educational Judgement: Linking the Actor and the Spectator. *Educational Researcher* 31 (4): 15-25.
- Deyhle, Donna L., G. Alfred Hess, Jr., and Margaret D. LeCompte
 1992 Approaching Ethical Issues for Qualitative Researchers in Education. In The Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education. Margaret D. LeCompte, Wendy L. Millroy, and Judith Preissle, eds. Pp. 597-641. San Diego: Academic Press.

- Fleuhr-Lobban, Carolyn
2000 How Anthropology Should Respond to an Ethical Crisis. *Chronicle of Higher Education* 47 (6): B24 (October 6 issue).
- Hemmings, Annette
2006 Great ethical divides: Bridging the gaps between Institutional Review Boards and researchers. *Educational Researcher* 35 (4): 12-18.
- Miller, D.W.
2000 Allegations of Misconduct Roil Anthropologists. *Chronicle of Higher Education* 47 (5): A16-A18 (September 29 issue).
- Murphy, Elizabeth, and Robert Dingwall
2001 The Ethics of Ethnography. *In Handbook of Ethnography*. Paul Atkinson, Amanda Coffey, Sara Delamont, John Lofland, and Lyn Lofland, eds. Pp. 339-351. London: Sage.
- Nash, Robert J.
1996a Ethical Bricolage: Integration and Discernment. *In "Real World Ethics": Frameworks for Educators and Human Service Professionals*. Pp. 146-168. New York: Teachers College Press.
1996b Teaching Ethics Ethically. *In "Real World Ethics": Frameworks for Educators and Human Service Professionals*. Pp. 15-34. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Patton, Michael Quinn
1990 Ethical Dimensions of Qualitative Inquiry: Cultural and Research Contexts. *In Processes, Applications, and Ethics in Qualitative Research: Proceedings from the third annual conference of the Qualitative Interest Group*. Pp. 7-38. Athens, GA: College of Education, the University of Georgia.
- Thomas, Jim
2002 "Big Brother" or Allies? In Defense of IRBs and RCR. *Newsletter of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction* 29 (1): 4-6.
- Tierney, Patrick
2000 The Fierce Anthropologist. *The New Yorker*, vol. 76 October 9, pp. 50-61.

Accommodations for Qualified Individuals with Disabilities

University of Georgia policy is to make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. Please let me know if you have a disability request.

University of Georgia Academic Honesty Policy:

All of us are expected to abide by the standards for academic honesty adopted by the university. Learning to appropriately quote and paraphrase and to cite and attribute sources is a skill that is key to honest and creative scholarship. I expect all students to review the guidelines at the website <http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>. If you have questions about what would be considered violations of the standards, please raise them in class or ask me.

"All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." All students are responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic

work” (from page 1, Course Syllabus Policy, Academic Affairs Policy Statement Number 13, University of Georgia).

Need for Editorial Assistance:

Requirements for the course depend on substantial writing. Students who need editorial assistance, such as some individuals who are not native English speakers, are encouraged to make such arrangements. A good place to start is the UGA Writing Center:

<http://www.english.uga.edu/~writingcenter/home.html>.

Course Requirements:

1. I expect regular attendance and will take excessive absences (missing more than 6 hours of a 3-credit course) into account in the final course grade.
2. I expect people to come to class prepared and to contribute to class discussions and activities. Frequent lack of preparation or failure to contribute will also be taken into account in the final course grade.
3. All students are required to use the WebCT services that support this course. Some course material will be available only on the course WebCT site. We will be emailing one another for individual and group purposes using this site. Assignments are to be submitted on the WebCT site.
4. Review the UGA incomplete policy at this website: <http://bulletin.uga.edu/bulletin/acad/Grades.html>. Only students who complete work on schedule are eligible for a grade of A- or A.
5. All students are required to complete a series of assignments. The final grade will be based on the following distribution:

a.	Attendance, preparation, and discussion	10
b.	Complete at least two CITI modules	10
c.	Three-page overview of central ethical issues in your field	20
d.	Three-page case example of an ethical issue in your field	20
e.	Final paper on ethical issues in your area	40
	Total	100

Grading follows Qualitative Research Program policy:

100-93 = A	79-77 = C+
92-90 = A-	76-73 = C
89-87 = B+	72-70 = C-
86-83 = B	69-60% = D
82-80 = B-	below 59 = F

Nature of This Course

Considering ethics in research on human behavior and experience often involves controversial topics. People have strong feelings, values, and beliefs that affect how they interpret scientific

and other scholarly information. Although diversity of opinions is central to the scholarly inquiry encouraged in this course, everyone is expected to accurately represent the variety of views discussed. We may agree to disagree, but we must be able to express the viewpoint with which we disagree. Sound scholarship depends, then, on respectful listening and sometimes respectful disagreement.

Instructor:

I can be reached by telephone at 542-6489, by e-mail through WebCT (please use the WebCT email for course business; if you have other concerns, you may use my jude@uga.edu address), and in my office, River's Crossing 303 before classes and by appointment. Preissle is pronounced price-lee with the accent on the first syllable. I work in the qualitative research program here at the University of Georgia as well as in the College of Education's social foundations of education program. My degrees are an A.B. in history from Grinnell College in 1964 and an M.A. (University of Minnesota) in 1971 and an Ed.D. (Indiana University) in 1975, concentrating in anthropology and education. My scholarly interests and publications focus on sociocultural theory, gender studies, classroom social life, immigration and education, and qualitative research design. My personal interests include books, music, gardening, birding, miniature schnauzers, and ballroom dancing.

**“The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary” (from page 1, Course Syllabus Policy, Academic Affairs Policy Statement Number 13, University of Georgia).*