

PHI 816: Introduction to Research Ethics

Spring 2006

Instructor: Dr. Gary Comstock

Rm: Dabney 330

Office Hours: WRF 9 - 10:45 a.m. and by appointment

Office: DH Hill library 8222

Meetings: Tuesdays, 3-5 pm, on 2/28, 3/14, 3/21, 4/4, 4/11, and 4/25

## **Syllabus**

### **Learning objectives**

The purpose of this course is to help students understand the policies regulating research at land grant universities (LGUs) and the ethical principles on which these policies are based.

The course will fulfill its objectives if, after completing it, students have the ability to explain:

- 1) The research mission of land grant universities;
- 2) Ethical principles supporting research policies;
  - (a) What is ethics? Interests, harms, choices, customs, science, law, professional codes;
  - (b) Four ethical principles and their justifications;
  - (c) A method for analyzing ethical arguments and making decisions;
- 3) Policies regulating research;
  - (a) Mentoring, and under-represented minorities and women in research;
  - (b) Use of humans in research;
  - (c) Use of animals in research;
  - (d) Research misconduct, and appropriate responses, including whistleblowing;
  - (e) Authorship and peer review;
  - (f) Intellectual property;
  - (g) Conflicts of interest and commitment; collaborative research;
  - (h) Proper experimental design, data collection, and statistical interpretation;
- 4) The importance of life-long learning (ability to find updated information on policies).

**Required Texts:**

All required readings are online at: [www.chass.ncsu.edu/ethics/langure/Corecourse.htm](http://www.chass.ncsu.edu/ethics/langure/Corecourse.htm)

**Credit Hours, Grading, Attendance, Punctuality:**

1 credit, S/U grading. Attendance is mandatory, and punctuality is encouraged. To receive a passing grade, the student must have no unexcused absences, complete all assignments on time and participate significantly in class discussions

**Prerequisites:**

Graduate standing. Other students may enroll with consent of instructor.

**Format:**

The course will be structured as a seminar. The first session will begin with an overview of the topic by the instructor. The majority of the balance of sessions will begin with students completing online readings and quizzes, and then participating actively in seminar-style meetings.

**Assignments:**

The instructor will provide required reading material. Assignments will be given out in class and on the web site and will include reading from the current literature. All students must complete assignment #1, below. If applicable, they must also complete #2 and #3.

1. Seminar attendance: Participate in one departmental seminar (see list in Schedule).
2. Human subjects certification: Students using or likely to use humans in research must complete the NC State tutorial and notify the instructor by email when they have finished it: [NC State Basic Training for Personnel Involved in Human Research](#)
3. Animal subjects certification: Students using or likely to use animals in research must complete the NC State tutorial and notify the instructor by email when they have finished it: [NC State Basic Training for Personnel Involved in Animal Research](#)

**Course Web Site:** [www.chass.ncsu.edu/ethics/langure/Corecourse.htm](http://www.chass.ncsu.edu/ethics/langure/Corecourse.htm)

**Disabilities Accommodations:**

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653.

[http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/offices/affirm\\_action/dss/](http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/offices/affirm_action/dss/)

For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see [http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/hat/current/appendix/appen\\_k.html](http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/hat/current/appendix/appen_k.html)

### **Academic Integrity:**

The NCSU Student Code of Conduct ([www.fis.ncsu.edu/ncsulegal/codeof.htm](http://www.fis.ncsu.edu/ncsulegal/codeof.htm)) covers all work done in this course. Any suspected violations will be promptly reported. Academic dishonesty will result in an automatic failing grade for the course.

### **Useful Web Sites:**

**LANGURE core course:** [chasss.ncsu.edu/ethics/langure/Corecourse.htm](http://chasss.ncsu.edu/ethics/langure/Corecourse.htm)

**NC State Ethics Program:** [www.chasss.ncsu.edu/ethics](http://www.chasss.ncsu.edu/ethics)

**Ethics Updates:** [ethics.sandiego.edu/index.html](http://ethics.sandiego.edu/index.html)

**Ethics Center for Engineering & Science:** [/onlineethics.org/reseth/index.html](http://onlineethics.org/reseth/index.html)

### **Assistance with speaking and writing**

The Writing and Speaking Tutorial Services tutors offer free, one-on-one tutorial services. Bring any piece of speaking or writing at any stage in the development process to get help with brainstorming, topic development, thesis construction, organization, drafting, editing, presentation skills, and more. More information available online at: [http://www.ncsu.edu/tutorial\\_center/writespeak/index.htm](http://www.ncsu.edu/tutorial_center/writespeak/index.htm) or at 513-7829.

## Schedule

Pre-2/28		<b>PRE-TEST</b>
<b>2/28</b>	3:00	<b>Introduction to course; Introduction to research at land grant universities</b>
	4:00	<b>Introduction to ethics; Choosing a lab</b>
<b>3/7</b>		No class, spring break
<b>3/14</b>	3:00	<b>Egoism and the virtues: From <i>my</i> interests to <i>group</i> interests; Professional codes</b> Read G. Comstock, "Introduction to ethics" and "Egoism and the virtues"
	4:00	<b>Utilitarianism: From <i>group</i> interests to <i>all</i> interests; Use of humans</b> Read G. Comstock, "Utilitarianism"
<b>3/21</b>	3:00	<b>Moral rights: From <i>all</i> interests to <i>individual</i> rights; Making ethical decisions: a method</b> Read G. Comstock, "Moral rights and method in ethics"
	4:00	<b>Mentoring; women and minorities</b> Read B. Alston-Mills "Mentoring, women, and minorities"
<b>3/28</b>		No class
<b>4/4</b>	3:00	<b>Intellectual property; and conflicts of interests</b> Read H. Schaffer and J. Taylor "Intellectual Property"
	4:00	<b>Experimental design and statistical interpretation</b> Read: L. Nelson, "Responsible Use of Statistical Methods" <a href="http://www.chass.ncsu.edu/ethics/inst_mod/ethical_issues_in_statistics.pdf">www.chass.ncsu.edu/ethics/inst_mod/ethical_issues_in_statistics.pdf</a>
<b>4/11</b>	3:00	<b>Research misconduct (FFP)</b>
	4:00	<b>Authorship and peer review</b> Read: J. Wilson, " <a href="http://www.chass.ncsu.edu/ethics/inst_mod/authorship.pdf">Responsible Authorship and Peer Review</a> " at: <a href="http://www.chass.ncsu.edu/ethics/inst_mod/authorship.pdf">www.chass.ncsu.edu/ethics/inst_mod/authorship.pdf</a>
<b>4/18</b>		No class. Attend one of these departmental seminars:

Natural Resources	Bryan Norton, "Defining Biodiversity"	Clark Labs 101	2/6 at 4:00
Research Ethics	Leon Kass, "The Problem of Bioethics"	Stewart Theater	2/20 at 3:00
Philosophy	Tim Hinton, "The Priority of the Good"	Winston 122	3/30 at 4:00
Marine, Earth & Atmospheric Sci	Gary Comstock, "Ethical Issues in Global Climate Change"	Jordan 1109	4/4 at 10:15
Philosophy	Julia Driver, "'Lucky That'"	Winston 122	3/16 at 4:00
Philosophy	G. Gauss, "The Demands of Impartiality and the Evolution of Morality"	Winston 122	4/6 at 4:00
Physics	Michael Paesler, Ignacio General, "Ethics Issues in Physics"	Cox 206	4/17 at 4:00
Biomedical Eng	Albert Banes, "Ethics and Business," and Charles Finley, "Whistleblowing"	Textiles 1217	4/20 at 12:00
Philosophy	Don Garrett, "The first virtuous motive of justice: Hume's circle argument"	Winston 122	4/20 at 4:00
Nuclear Eng	Man-Sung Yim, Jun Li, Gary Comstock, "Ethical Issues in Nuclear Engineering"	Progress Lecture Hall	4/20 at 4:00
Statistics	Nelson, Gumpertz, "Discussion of Role of Research Ethics in Statistics"	Cox 206	4/21 at 3:35
Computer Science	David Wright, Ed Gehringer, Thomas Honeycutt, "Incorporating Ethics into Computer Science Research"	EB 2, rm 3211	5/1 at 4:00

**4/25 3:00 Utilitarianism and rights: Whose interests count?  
Use of animals**

**4:00 Conclusion: Lifelong learning, policy updates**

**Pre-5/2 POST-TEST**