PHI 816: Introduction to Research Ethics                          Spring 2007
Instructor: Dr. Gary Comstock                                   Rm: Gardner 2213
Office Hours: WRF 9 - 10:45 a.m. and by appointment           Office: DH Hill library 8222
Meetings: Tuesdays, 3-5 pm, on 1/16, 1/23, 2/13, 2/20, 2/27, 3/6 and 4/13

Syllabus

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1. Learning objectives

The main goal of this course is to welcome doctoral students at land grant universities into the community of scholars.

To succeed in your research career you will need to know about some key narratives and individuals, four ethical principles and a decision-making method; and a host of regulatory policies. The course will fulfill its objective if, after completing it, students feel they know where to go to learn more about:

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).

In the area of use of human subjects, students will also be able to:

- Identify and describe at least five historical events that have influenced current ethical guidelines and Federal regulations
- Identify the three fundamental ethical principles that guide the ethical conduct of research involving human participants
- Describe the role of international guidelines in the protection of human participants
- Recognize when a study requires human participant protections
- Describe the responsibilities of at least four organizations or individuals in protecting human participants
- Identify issues to consider when selecting participants for a study and the policies and regulations that apply to special groups
- Define privacy and confidentiality as it applies to protecting human participants and describe how these can be maintained throughout the research process
- Define informed consent and describe the elements that should be included in an informed consent document
- Describe conditions that may affect a person's capacity to consent and the responsibilities of the researcher in seeking consent from research participants
- Identify at least one new and emerging issue in informed consent that should be considered
- Define institutional review board (IRB), describe its membership requirements, and identify at least four responsibilities of an IRB
- List the criteria each study must meet in order to be approved by an IRB
- List and describe four ways that ongoing protections of human participants are ensured throughout the conduct of a study
- List and describe special challenges to investigators that may arise when conducting international research
- Describe the regulations and policies applicable to international research supported by U.S. federal monies.
2. **Required texts:** All required readings are online at [http://openseminar.org/ethics/](http://openseminar.org/ethics/)

3. **Class details**

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.

4. **Prerequisites:** Graduate standing. Other students may enroll with consent of instructor.

5. **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.

6. **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 assignments 1 - 3. If applicable, they must also complete 4.

   1. Research project, due last period.
   2. April 13 research seminar: Participate seminar at the Sheraton Raleigh Hotel, noon-5.
   4. 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](http://vista.ncsu.edu)

7. **Course web site:** [http://vista.ncsu.edu](http://vista.ncsu.edu)

8. **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](http://vista.ncsu.edu) at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653.
For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please click here.

9. Academic integrity:

The NCSU Student Code of Conduct (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.

10. Useful web sites:

LANGURE core course: chasss.ncsu.edu/ethics/langure/Corecourse.htm
NC State Ethics Program: www.chasss.ncsu.edu/ethics
Ethics Updates: ethics.sandiego.edu/index.html
Ethics Center for Engineering & Science: /onlineethics.org/reseth/index.html

11. 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/ or at 513-7829

12. First assignment

Before Jan 16, 2007, the first day of class—please e-introduce yourself. Instructions:

1) Go to PHI 816 on WebCT Vista by clicking here: http://vista.ncsu.edu/index.php

2) Log in by clicking "Vista Login"

3) Enter your NC State "Unity" username and password.

4) You should see a list of courses. Click on "PHI816-001 Sp 07"

5) Look for "Course Tools" on the left side. Under it, you should find "Discussions." Click on "Discussions".

6) Below the headings "All Topics" and "All My Posts" you should see "Introduce yourself." Click on "Introduce yourself."

7) Read all of the messages listed under "Subject." Respond to anyone you wish.

8) Click on "Create Message."

9) Write a brief biography by answering some of these questions:

   a. What would you like us to call you (Bob? Mrs. Smith? -- and please tell us how to pronounce your name if necessary)
b. Where did you grow up?
c. What would you like to be doing professionally in 5 years?
d. How would you define ethics in one sentence?
e. Have you encountered unethical behavior in your research?
f. Have you reviewed the syllabus, and do you think the class will adequately address your interests in research ethics?
g. And, just for fun--this question, like all the questions, is optional--what is the strangest thing you have ever been paid to do?

10) If you make a mistake and wish to start over, click "Cancel" and begin again.

11) When you are happy with your message, click on the "Post" button.

13. Optional assignment: You are strongly encouraged, but not required, to complete the Pre-test.

14. Schedule: See OpenSeminar.org