

## Introduction to research ethics: Schedule and literature

Welcome to the research ethics course!

To pass the course, you need to actively participate in the lectures, and write a short essay.

You will do some of the work divided into groups.

### **Tuesday January 26. Ethics, morality and law.**

Reading: Chapter 1 and 2 from James Rachel's *The elements of moral philosophy*.

Chapter 1 from the Swedish Research Council's *Good Research Practice*.

My text "Ethics and applied ethics"

10:15-12:00 Seminar

13:15-15:00 Seminar

### **Wednesday January 27. Research ethics, integrity and utility.**

Reading: *Good Research Practice* chapters 2, 5, 8-9.

Torsten Wilholt (2009) Bias and Values in Scientific Research, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 40: 92-101.

10:15-12:00 Seminar

13:15-15:00 Group work. You prepare for this by considering the following two questions:

- a) What are the risks, within your own area of research, that researchers' preferences and/or financial interests in getting certain results will distort studies? How can such risks best be handled?
- b) What does it mean for research to be useful for society? Is it important for research to be useful?

These questions will first be discussed in groups in break-out rooms. One person in each group takes notes (one page suffices) to be emailed to me afterwards. After the group discussions, the whole class gathers again to discuss the questions together.

### **Thursday January 28. Research on humans and animals.**

Reading: *Good Research Practice* chapters 3-4.

Michelle Biros (2018) Capacity, Vulnerability and Informed Consent for Research, *Journal of Law, Medicine and Ethics*, 46: 72-78.

Pandora Pound (2020) Are animal models needed to discover, develop, and test pharmaceutical drugs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? *Animals*, 10.

10:15-12:00 Seminar

13:15-15:00 Group work. You prepare for this by considering the following two questions:

- a) Which actual or potential problems for consent in human research subjects might you encounter in your role as a researcher? How can these problems best be handled? (Now, this question will be more difficult to answer for students who don't work in areas where human research subjects tend to be used. But do your best and use your imagination! What might the future hold in store for you? Could you be involved in interdisciplinary research later on, perhaps? It doesn't matter how realistic the scenario is, as long as you come up with something conceivable.)
- b) Which methods could one use to compare and weigh animal suffering against human benefits in ethical assessments of animal experiments? Which factors should be considered? How should these factors, in turn, be weighted?

These questions will first be discussed in groups in break-out rooms. One person in each group takes notes (one page suffices) to be emailed to me afterwards. After the group discussions, the whole class gathers again to discuss the questions together.

### **Friday January 29. Gender equality and discrimination.**

Reading: *Good Research Practice* chapter 7.

European Commission *Guidance to facilitate the implementation of targets to promote gender equality in research and innovation.*

Eric Uhlmann and Geoffrey Cohen (2005) Constructed Criteria: Redefining merit to justify discrimination, *Psychological Science*, 16: 474-480.

Mary Fox and Carol Colatrella (2006) Participation, performance and advancement of women in academic science and engineering: What is at issue and why, *Journal of Technology Transfer*, 31: 377-386.

10:15-12:00 Seminar.

13:15-15:00 Group work. You prepare for this by considering the following two questions:

- a) To which extent can anonymization be used in your field, and discrimination avoided that way? How feasible is it to hide someone's identity in various contexts?
- b) Implementing quotas and targets for gender balance (or balance between other groups) – what are the advantages and drawbacks? Are there versions that have more advantages and fewer drawbacks than others?

These questions will first be discussed in groups in break-out rooms. One person in each group takes notes (one page suffices) to be emailed to me afterwards. After the group discussions, the whole class gathers again to discuss the questions together.

### **Friday February 5: Essay day.**

You prepare for this day by writing a mini essay, 2-3 pages long, about research ethics related to your own research. The topic can be picked from one of the previous group discussions, but other topics can also be used, as long as they are about ethical issues related to your own research. You write the essays individually, with the following structure:

1. A very brief introduction, a couple of sentences only, where the question or thesis is presented.
2. Background, with references to literature we have read during the course (you can use additional literature as well, if you want to) about a page long. You can use any reference system you like, as long as it is comprehensible.
3. Discussion, with arguments pro and con.
4. Conclusion. However, the conclusion need not be in the shape of a clear statement of what is right and wrong. That the arguments seem equally strong on both sides of an issue, or that determining the strength of the arguments is too difficult, can also make for acceptable conclusions.
5. Reference list.

10:15-12:00 Divided in groups, you make brief presentations of your essays to the other group members. Try to find either some interesting similarity between several essays in the group – for instance, similar arguments, similar values, similar practical problems that you encounter – *or* interesting differences and contrasts between the ethical issues faced by researchers in different fields. Write a brief text about this, which you present to the rest of the class in the afternoon.

13:15-15:00 One group at a time make a brief presentation, which the class can then ask questions about. Roughly 20-25 minutes per group.

**Tuesday February 9. Deadline for sending your essays to me.**