



Stockholms
universitet

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Ethics in Educational Research, 7,5
ECTS Forskningsetik, 7,5 hp
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Course overview and literature

Course Leaders

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Overall aim

The aim of the course is to give doctoral students the opportunity to develop their ability to take an ethical position in relation to their own research, as well as the ability to formulate, analyse, and critically reflect on issues pertaining to research ethics based on regulations and relevant literature. The course also raises participants' awareness of ethical questions, and developing a deeper understanding of both the wide-range of possibilities and limitations of research, and the role society and individual responsibility plays in relation to pedagogical and didactical phenomena and questions.

Course Content

This course focuses on ethical dilemmas and considerations in research on educational phenomena. During the course we will analyse dissertations in relation to the ethical guidelines and laws governing research involving individuals and groups. We will also reflect on moral and ethical dilemmas in current educational research. Moreover the course will focus on how the research design in terms of theoretical perspectives, data construction, analytical premises and instruments used in many existing research traditions influence ethical issues. Finally the course will focus on how research based knowledge is received on different arenas and how it may influence different groups, social practices and potential areas of conflict with other forms of knowledge and experiences in society.

Course Activities

The course is offered in the form of five compulsory, full-day, seminars (10.00-15.00). Each seminar session starts with an introduction that gradually develops into a seminar. At around 12 noon there will be a lunch break. After lunch, from 13.00-14.00, the doctoral students will work in

groups and discuss questions that were brought up during the morning session. The entire group then gathers for final discussions from 14.15-15.00. In preparation for the seminar session, the doctoral students are required to write up a short reflective paper (2-4 pages) based on the literature, in order to be able to engage in and benefit from the seminar discussions. The paper should be uploaded onto the Mondo 'forum' and uploaded to the 'dropbox' folder no later than 2 days before the seminar. The maximum number of course participants is limited to 20. Students from the Department of Education are given priority in this course.

1. Thursday January 18: Ethical rules and regulations and the history behind it.
2. Thursday February 8: Analyzing ethical issues in dissertations.
3. Thursday March 15: Deepening the reflection on ethical dilemmas in relation to different research designs and traditions.
4. Thursday April 19: Focus on how educational research is received on different arenas and potential conflicts with other forms of knowledge.
5. Thursday May 24: Presentation and discussion of PM drafts.

Compensation in the case of absence

If a student is absent during a seminar session, they will receive an article from the course leaders that they must present orally with the help of a power-point presentation. The article will be presented at the following full-day seminar session, during the final discussion session when the entire group is gathered.

Examination

The course is assessed through an individual paper that should include, on the one hand, an overview of the various themes brought to the fore during the course, and on the other hand, offer a critical, comparative reflection on these themes. Each paper (ca. 10-max 12 pages, formatted using the current PhD dissertation template) will be discussed, in depth, during the final seminar on May 24th. The doctoral students will have the week following the seminar to edit and amend their text based on the feedback provided at the final seminar session, and then turn it in for grading on Mondo on June 1st at the latest. The grades used are G (pass) or U (fail). Students will be notified of their grade within 15 working days, via email. Possible re-examinations are submitted upon consultation with the course leaders.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completing the course, the doctoral student will be able to:

- take an ethical position in relation to their own research, and formulate, analyse, and question research ethics based on current regulations and relevant literature.
- demonstrate an awareness of ethical questions, and an in-depth understanding of both the wide-range of possibilities and limitations of research, and the role that society and individual responsibility plays in relation to pedagogical and didactical phenomena and questions.

Examination

To demonstrate fulfillment of the learning outcomes of the course, the individual final paper should include an adequate overview of the various themes presented in the course literature and also offer a critical, comparative reflection on these themes. The discussion should also include reflections about the doctoral student's own thesis project in relation to selected relevant themes in the literature. The grades used are G (pass) or U (fail). Possible re-examinations may only be submitted after consulting the examiners Lázaro Moreno Herrera and Moira von Wright.

Grading Criteria

In order to receive a passing grade, the doctoral student must demonstrate in their final paper that they have fulfilled the learning outcomes of the course through:

- Present, analyse, and critically reflect on the main themes of the course and the course literature; this should be done in a coherent manner and in relation to the doctoral student's own thesis project.
- Demonstrate understanding of differences and similarities between the original hypotheses and methodologies as well as the analytical premises presented in the course concerning perspective, ethical considerations and different research traditions.
- Produce concise and coherent arguments in a grammatically correct fashion in order to demonstrate such attention to detail that is expected of scholarly work.
- Demonstrate precision in writing correctly citing and referencing in accordance with the American Psychological Association (A.P.A.) System.

Plagiarism and self-plagiarism

Needless to say, one is allowed to cite other sources, but both direct and indirect quotes must always be referenced using correct and full references. Copying or extracting shorter or longer sections of text with the intention to present this text as one's own work is prohibited. Such copying without referencing is considered plagiarism. Also doctoral students' are not allowed to cut and paste from previously submitted and graded texts. Re-using identical passages of text cut from previous graded work amounts to self-plagiarism.

Plagiarism is regarded a violation of established ethical regulations. It also involves a moral breach of the general approach towards one's own and others' texts. Plagiarism is cheating and may provide sufficient ground for suspension from an educational program. All course papers are submitted to Mondo and checked by the Turnitin software to ensure their originality.

Course literature

In preparation for the seminar on January 18th,

Hammersley, M. & Traianou, A. (2012). *Ethics in qualitative research: controversies and contexts*. London: SAGE.:

- <http://www.codex.vr.se/en/forskningmanniska.shtml>
- <http://www.unesco.org/most/ethical.htm>
- http://www.isa-sociology.org/about/isa_code_of_ethics.htm
- <https://publikationer.vr.se/produkt/god-forskningssed/> (there is no English version of this booklet).

The Swedish Research Council's expert group on ethics. (2011). *Good research practice*. The Swedish Research Council, Stockholm Sweden. Available at: <https://publikationer.vr.se/produkt/good-research-practice/> (131 pages)

In preparation for the seminar on February 8th:

You will work together in small groups with a comparative analysis of ethical issues in four recent (maximum 10 years) dissertations in education. You choose the dissertations that the group members find most interesting. Try to find contrasting examples with different designs, data and theoretical perspectives. Present your group's analytical work orally with a PP presentation (together with an individual pm uploaded in the drop box as usual).

In preparation for the seminar on March 15th:

1. Smeyers, P. & Depaepe, M. (2010). *Educational Research - the Ethics and Aesthetics of Statistics* Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.
2. Miller, T. (2012). *Ethics in Qualitative Research* Sage Publications.

In preparation for the seminar on April 19th:

Malone, S. (2003). Ethics at home: informed consent in your own backyard. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 16(6), 797-815.

McNamee, M., & Bridges, D. (eds.) (2001). The ethics of educational research. *A special issue of Journal of Philosophy of Education* 35(3)

Recuber, T. (2015). From obedience to contagion: Discourses of power in Milgram, Zimbardo, and the Facebook experiment. *Research Ethics* 1747016115579533, first published on May 13, 2015, doi: [10.1177/1747016115579533](https://doi.org/10.1177/1747016115579533)

In preparation for the Presentation and discussion of PM drafts on May 24th:

We will discuss the PM draft using a so-called critical-friend round, meaning that in preparation for the seminar you will read and prepare to provide constructive criticisms to the PM written by another group member. The discussion is organized in form of 'chain', that is, you will read the work of another student that cannot be your critical friend. The organization, who reads whom, will be freely organized by the group members. You are expected to write your comments as critical friend in 1 to max 2 pages A4 and upload it to your Dropbox in Mondo. During the seminar, you are required to give printed copy of your comments to the author of the PM you are reading.

The presentation and discussion is started by the critical friend who first makes a short presentation of the PM (max 5 min), the author of the PM is given possibility to add if he/she wishes to do so, then start the dialog critical friend and author based on the questions/remarks from the critical friend. Concluded this part, the session is open to questions or comments from other group members.

More information during the course introduction January 18th.

Important: you are expected to send your PM by email to your critical friend and upload it in Mondo at least **5 days before the meeting**.