

RESEARCH ETHICS IN PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

COURSE GUIDE

DEPARTMENT OF PEACE & CONFLICT RESEARCH
UPPSALA UNIVERSITY

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RESEARCH ETHICS IN PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

Master's Course, 7,5 credits. Offered by the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University.

PREREQUISITES

Accepted as a student in either (1) the Master's Program in Peace and Conflict Studies and Social Science and have passed the Methods I course; or (2) the Bachelor's Program in Peace and Development Studies and have passed the Peace and Conflict Studies A course.

STAFF

Associate Professor Karen Brounéus, Course Convener
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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completion of this course the student is expected to:

- have acquired knowledge of the basic principles and standards of research ethics in peace and conflict research
- have acquired knowledge of advanced topics in research ethics in peace and conflict research
- be able to identify and assess relevant ethical problems associated with commonly used methodologies in peace and conflict research
- be able to identify and assess strategies to minimize and mitigate ethical problems in peace and conflict research
- have acquired knowledge about the challenges involved in research ethics
- independently solve assignments within allocated time

COURSE DESCRIPTION & CONTENT

The course is largely focused on independent reading, so that students are able to take it in parallel to other courses. There are two mandatory seminars. A short written assignment is due prior to each seminar, and a longer final assignment paper is submitted at the end of the course. There are three reflective seminars – departing from photography, art-work, and a film respectively – to help deepen our learning together. These seminars are voluntary, but warmly encouraged. At the end of the course, students should be equipped to think critically about issues of research ethics in the field of peace and conflict research, as well as consider ethical reflections when planning their own research.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EXAMINATION

Examination consists of three parts:

- participation in both mandatory seminars
- complete all assignments on time
- a final written assignment

Should a student fail to hand in a seminar assignment on time and/or be absent from a seminar, they will need to complete a replacement assignment in addition to the original assignment.

As reflected in Uppsala University's each and Learning Programme (2018), students are expected to take responsibility for and play an active role in their own learning.

The final course mark will be based on performance in fulfilling all of the examination requirements listed above. Grades: Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G), Fail (U). Assoc. Prof. Karen Brounéus is the course examiner.

Two examination opportunities are offered every time the course is given. These are **10 May and 12 October**.

The final course grade will be calculated as follows:

Assignment 1: 22.5%

Assignment 2: 22.5%

Assignment 3: 45%

Participation: 10%

COURSE SCHEDULE & LITERATURE

Course dates, title, teacher:

Jan 17: Welcome and introductory overview, KB

Feb 1: Photography seminar (AL)

Feb 24: Ethics seminar I (papers due Feb 17), KB

March 17: Art seminar (AL)

April 7: Ethics seminar II (papers due March 31), KB

April 28: Film seminar (AL)

May 12: Final paper due

Course location: Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, where we meet will differ from session to session – please check the schedule on TimeEdit before each session for an up to date schedule and location! (We will meet on zoom Jan 17 for our welcome/intro session, and in Svedelius-salen (4235, Gamla torget 6 for our first reflective seminar (Photography) on Feb 1.)

Zoom link for Jan 17:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://uu-se.zoom.us/j/64014501390?pwd=MldXcFRGVDA5UStvRFNtMjZpY2dxdz09>

Meeting ID: 640 1450 1390

Passcode: 646825

Reflective seminars (voluntary but warmly encouraged!):

For the photography and artwork seminars (Feb 1 and March 17), there is nothing to prepare. For our film seminar on April 28, please watch the film *Waltz with Bashir* (here is a [link](#)) before we meet.

***Photography Session, Feb 1 (15:15-17:00):** In this seminar, we will explore how themes from course literature are reflected in the choices artists and their audiences make as they create and digest works portraying violence and conflict.

***Artwork session with artist Juan Descans, March 17 (15:15-17:00):**

Juan Descans is a self-taught Colombian artist based in Uppsala, Sweden. Combining his scientific knowledge (BA in Political Science, MA in Social and Political Studies) and his passion for artistic creation, he uses art as a political statement. He is confident that art is the best channel to spread awareness of some of our time's most important challenges (e.g. the Climate Crisis and conflict/violence). Focused on that, during the last three years he has been exploring mediums such as engraving, watercolor, acrylic painting, and drawing as an expression tool. His artworks are housed in private collections in the USA, Mexico, Colombia, and Sweden.

Note from Juan on this session:

What is the session going to be about?: The session's main goal is to share my scientific and artistic research experience around the question of objectivity. I will do this by sharing a brief resume about my scientific research trajectory, and also by explaining the creative process behind my latest art piece ("Semblances of wars and hopes: polyphony of Colombian conflict"). After that, we will use most of the time to discuss the topic.

***Film Session, April 28 (15:15-17:00):** In this seminar, we will explore how themes from course literature are reflected in the 2008 film *Waltz with Bashir* (here is a [link](#)).

Please note:

Students taking, or planning to take, this course should be aware that the art, film, and texts we use deal with war and peace, and thus contain material with high emotional charge. We ask you to be prepared for this, and also be ready to later discuss these materials. For these reasons, we will invite those who wish to stay on a while longer after each art and film seminar, to a non-compulsory forum for discussing and/or sharing thoughts or emotions of what we just have seen with your peers, and the teachers. You are free to stay or leave as and when you please. Please note also that you will also be expected to watch the film outside of class. We encourage you to arrange so you can watch it with your classmates, so that you can share and discuss your experiences together. Additionally, please remember to listen to yourself – if there are scenes or passages that you find highly distressing, do not feel obliged to complete the viewing/reading. Please contact Karen or Amanda, however, so that we are aware of your decision. Thank you.

The two examining seminars:

Seminar 1: Basic principles and standards of research ethics

Thursday, 24 February

Group 1: 13.15-15.00

Group 2: 16.15-18.00

Location: Zoom

Assignment due (uploaded to Studium): Thursday, 17 February by 12.00 (noon)

Overview

At this seminar we will discuss basic principles and standards of research ethics in the field of peace and conflict research. Above all, this means centering the research participant as the focus of our considerations: how should we understand the prohibition to do no harm? What kinds of harm are there, and how can they be prevented? How do we assess the risk for harm? How are these basic principles and standards regarding the safety of research participants formalized in different institutionalized guidelines, and are the institutional guidelines sufficient?

Assignment:

Write a 3-4 page memo summarizing the basic principles of ethical research. The assignment should be uploaded to Studium prior to the deadline, and you should name it [Your last name].Assignment1 (e.g. Brouneus.Assignment1). In order to show that you have read the literature, make sure to *discuss and cite at least 80% of the references*.

This memo should summarize and synthesize the literature you read, making sure to provide definitions when relevant. Question to consider include: How should we understand the prohibition to do no harm? What responsibilities does this entail? What sorts of harm exist and how can they be mitigated? How should we think about the cost—benefit analysis when conducting research? Are institutional oversight procedures sufficient to ensure that no harm is done? What are our responsibilities as researchers, legally and morally? How can we understand procedural ethics versus ethics in practice? Do you disagree with any of the claims in the literature?

Literature (169p)

For this seminar, you should read and come prepared to discuss the following literature, **all of which is required**. It is recommended that you read the works in the order that they are listed:

Belmont Report. 1979. https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/sites/default/files/the-belmont-report-508c_FINAL.pdf

Cronin-Furman, Kate, and Milli Lake. 2018. "Ethics abroad: Fieldwork in fragile and violent contexts." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51(3): 607-614.

Fujii, Lee Ann. 2012. "Research ethics 101: Dilemmas and responsibilities." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 45(4): 717-723.

Driscoll, Jesse. 2015. "Prison states and games of chicken." In Scott Desposato, ed. *Ethics and Experiments*. New York: Routledge, pp.95-110.

Goodhand, Jonathan. nd. "Research in conflict zones: Ethics and accountability." *Forced Migration Review* 8.

Eck, Kristine and Dara Kay Cohen. 2021. "The ethics of student human subjects research on political violence." *Third World Quarterly*, forthcoming, 10 pp [Will be distributed].

Lyall, Jason. 2019. "Preregister your Ethical Redlines." Working paper, available at: <http://www.jasonlyall.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/PreregisterYourEthics.pdf>

Mitchell, Audra. 2013. "Escaping the 'field trap': Exploitation and the global politics of educational fieldwork in 'conflict zones'." *Third World Quarterly* 34(7): 1247-1264.

Guillemin, Marilys and Lynn Gillam. 2004. "Ethics, reflexivity, and 'ethically important moments' in research." *Qualitative Inquiry* 10(2): 261-280.

Mackenzie, Catriona, Christopher McDowell, and Eileen Pittaway. 2007. "Beyond 'do no harm': The challenge of constructing ethical relationships in refugee research." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20(2): 299-319.

Knott, Eleanor. 2019. "Beyond the field: ethics after fieldwork in politically dynamic contexts." *Perspectives on Politics* 17(1): 140-153.

Wackenhut, Arne F. 2018. "Ethical considerations and dilemmas before, during and after fieldwork in less-democratic contexts: Some reflections from post-uprising Egypt." *The American Sociologist* 49(2): 242-257.

Baele, Stephane J., David Lewis, Anke Hoeffler, Olivier C. Sterck, and Thibaut Slingeneuer. 2017. "The ethics of security research: An ethics framework for contemporary security studies." *International Studies Perspectives* 19(2): 105-127.

Seminar 2: Advanced topics in research ethics

Thursday, 7 April

Group 1: 13.15-15.00

Group 2: 16.15-18.00

Location: Zoom

Assignment due (uploaded to Studium): Thursday, 31 March by 12.00 (noon)

Overview

At this seminar we will discuss advanced topics in research ethics within the field of peace and conflict research.

Assignment

Write a 4-5 page memo following the instructions below. The assignment should be uploaded to Studium prior to the deadline, and you should name it [Your last name].Assignment2.

Write a minimum of two pages for "Reflexivity" and a minimum of one page for each of the remaining two topics. You should provide definitions of relevant terminology. Discuss the ethical considerations raised in the context of each topic, and think critically about the content of the literature. Questions to consider include: what can we learn from the literature on this topic? Where is it unclear? Do clear guidelines arise, or is much left to interpretation? In order to show that you have read the literature, make sure to *discuss and cite at least 80% of the references for each section.*

Literature (224-283 pp)

For this seminar, you have two reading tasks:

- (1) read all of the literature for "Reflexivity, positionality and power"
- (2) read all of the literature from **two** other sections of your choice

Reflexivity, positionality, and power (59 pgs)

Abaza, Mona. 2011. "Academic tourists sightseeing the Arab Spring." *Abram Online*.

Al Hardan, Anaheed. 2017. "Researching Palestinian refugees: Who sets the agenda?" *Al Shabaka*.

Curtis, Devon EA. 2019. "What is our research for? Responsibility, humility and the production of knowledge about Burundi." *Africa Spectrum* 54(1): 4-21.

Davenport, Christian. 2013. "Researching while black: Why conflict research needs more African Americans (maybe)" *Political Violence at a Glance*. 10 April.

Henderson, Frances B. 2009. "'We Thought You Would be White': Race and Gender in Fieldwork." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42(2): 291-294.

Henry, Marsha, Paul Higate, and Gurchathen Sanghera. 2009. "Positionality and power: The politics of peacekeeping research." *International Peacekeeping* 16(4): 467-482.

Schwedler, Jillian. 2006. "The third gender: Western female researchers in the Middle East." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39(3): 425-428.

Thomas, Lahoma. 2018. "Dear Political Science, it is time for a SELF-REFLEXIVE turn!" *Duck of Minerva*, 18 December.

Thompson, Marshall. 2009. "Research, identities, and praxis: The tensions of integrating identity into the field experience." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42(2): 325-328.

Townsend-Bell, Erica. 2009. "Being true and being you: Race, gender, class, and the fieldwork experience." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42(2): 311-314.

Weiner, Scott. 2014. "On local frameworks and the ethics of accuracy." In *The Ethics of Research in the Middle East*. pp.11-12.

Yom, Sean L. 2014. "Why race matters." In *The Ethics of Research in the Middle East*. pp.17-18.

The researcher & collaborators (65 pgs)

Bouka, Yolande. 2018. "Collaborative research as structural violence." *Political Violence at a Glance*. 12 July.

Enria, Luisa. 2018. "Elective affinities: Fragility and injustice in the field." *The New Ethnographer*, 25 April-23 May.

Kalinga, Chisomo. 2019. "Caught between a rock and a hard place: navigating global research partnerships in the global South as an indigenous researcher." *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 31(3): 270-272.

Lake, Milli and Sarah Parkinson. 2017. "The Ethics of fieldwork preparedness." *Political Violence at a Glance*. 5 June.

Loyle, Cyanne E. and Alicia Simoni. 2017. "Researching under fire: Political science and researcher trauma." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50(1): 141-145.

Mwambari, David. 2019. "Local positionality in the production of knowledge in Northern Uganda." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 18: 1-12.

Nayel, Moe Ali. 2013. "Palestinian refugees are not at your service." *The Electronic Intifada*. 17 May.

Sukarieh, Maysoun and Stuart Tannock. 2019. "Subcontracting Academia: Alienation, exploitation and disillusionment in the UK overseas Syrian refugee research industry." *Antipode* 51(2): 664-680.

Ukiwo, Ukoha. 2011. "Hidden Agendas in Conflict Research: Informants' Interests and Research Objectivity in the Niger Delta." *Researching Violence in Africa*. Christopher Cramer et al., eds. BRILL, pp. 137-153.

Ethics in Fieldwork Contexts (124 pgs)

Brounéus, Karen, Prakash Bhattarai and Erika Forsberg (2022). "The Bumpy Road of Peace Research: Reflections on Sharing Mistakes in Fieldwork." *Third World Quarterly*.

Clark, Janine Natalya. 2012. "Fieldwork and its ethical challenges: Reflections from research in Bosnia." *Human Rights Quarterly* 34: 823-839.

Dixit, Meha. 2012. "Field research in conflict zones: Experience from India and Sierra Leone." *International Studies* 49(1-2): 133-150.

Fujii, Lee Ann. 2010. "Shades of truth and lies: Interpreting testimonies of war and violence." *Journal of Peace Research* 47(2): 231-241.

Lecocq, Baz. 2002. "Fieldwork ain't always fun: Public and hidden discourses on fieldwork." *History in Africa* 29: 273-282.

Shesterinina, Anastasia. 2019. "Ethics, empathy, and fear in research on violent conflict." *Journal of Peace Research* 56(2): 190-202.

Thaler, Kai M. (2019) "Reflexivity and temporality in researching violent settings: Problems with the replicability and transparency regime." *Geopolitics*, forthcoming: 1-27.

van Baalen, Sebastian. 2018. "Google wants to know your location?: The ethical challenges of fieldwork in the digital age." *Research Ethics* 14(4): 1-17.

Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2006. "The ethical challenges of field research in conflict zones." *Qualitative Sociology* 29(3): 373-386.

Ethics in Archives, Experiments & Other Contexts (123 pgs)

Dionne, Kim Yi, Augustine Harawa, and Hastings Honde. 2015. "The ethics of exclusion when experimenting in impoverished settings." In Scott Desposato, ed. *Ethics and Experiments*. New York: Routledge, pp.39-55.

Einwohner, Rachel L. 2011. "Ethical considerations on the use of archived testimonies in Holocaust research: Beyond the IRB exemption." *Qualitative Sociology* 34(3): 415-430.

Gohdes, Anita R. 2018. "Studying the internet and violent conflict." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 35(1): 89-106.

Hoover Green, Amelia and Dara Kay Cohen. Forthcoming. "Centering Human Subjects: The Ethics of 'Desk Research' on Political Violence." *Journal of Global Security Studies*.

Lyall, Jason. 2020. "Group Rights in an Era of Large-Scale Field Experiments." Working paper. 8 pp. Available at: <http://www.jasonlyall.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/GroupRights.pdf>

Macías, Teresa. 2016. "Between violence and its representation: Ethics, archival research, and the politics of knowledge production in the telling of torture stories." *Intersectionalities: A Global Journal of Social Work Analysis, Research, Polity, and Practice* 5(1): 20-45.

McDermott, Rose and Peter K. Hatemi. 2020. "Ethics in field experimentation: A call to establish new standards to protect the public from unwanted manipulation and real harms." *PNAS*, 8 pp.

Michelson, Melissa R. 2016. "The risk of over-reliance on the institutional review board: An approved project is not always an ethical project." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 49(2): 299-303.

Morton, Rebecca, and Jonathan Rogers. 2015. "Religion, experiments, and ethical concerns." In Scott Desposato, ed. *Ethics and Experiments*. New York: Routledge, pp.80-94.

Subotic, Jelena. 2020. "Ethics of archival research on political violence." *Journal of Peace Research*, forthcoming (available online).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FINAL ASSIGNMENT

Aim: For this assignment, you should write a memo that provides a thorough ethical reflection of an empirical research project *within the field of peace and conflict studies*. You have two options: (1) write an ethical reflection that is based on a piece of published work, in which case make sure to state this explicitly and provide a reference to the piece; (2) write an ethical reflection for a proposed/hypothetical study of your own creation. This may, for example, be a tentative idea you have for conducting research involving human participants. If you are not sure whether a topic falls within peace and conflict studies, please contact me.

The memo should begin by providing an overview of the research question and design. This overview should include the hypothesis and theoretical argument under examination, and a brief description of the method and empirical domain used to examine the argument. Make sure to describe what sort of human participation is involved. This overview should be no longer than ½ page.

You should then discuss ethical considerations and reflections relevant for the project, taking care to *reference the course literature* in doing so. These considerations should cover all of the concepts discussed in the course: general principles (e.g. do no harm, mitigating risk to participants and others involved), practicalities (e.g. anonymity, data security, informed consent, etc.) as well as reflections on power and positionality within the research project. How you choose to structure and organize this text is up to you.

Length: The length should be 6-8 pages.

Formatting: The memo should be submitted in Word or pdf format, with 1,5 spacing, Times New Roman or Garamond, 12 pt font, and 2.5 cm margins.

Referencing and list of references: Referencing and list of references must be done in a consistent manner and according to the *Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition*, Author-Date standard. Further information can be found at: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Deadline and submission: You must submit your Final Assignment by **Thursday 12 May at 12.00 (noon)** by uploading it to Studium.

PLAGIARISM (standard information for all courses)

The Department of Peace and Conflict Research considers cheating and plagiarism a major violation of the University's academic values and regulations. We will always take disciplinary action against students if we suspect cheating and plagiarism. Students who intentionally cheat and plagiarize will be liable to the principal/disciplinary committee, which may involve a hearing by the Disciplinary Board. A student who is convicted may either get a warning or suspension from studies for up to six months. For international students studying in Sweden, this will also mean that we always inform the home university about the matter.

Cheating is illicit actions or practices to mislead the examiner in an exam or study performance, and plagiarism is the actions or practices of taking and using the words and ideas of another writer as your own. Any of the following practices constitute acts of cheating and plagiarism:

- If you cooperate with another student in a home assignment, or individual tasks which is part of an individual exam
- If you change an already corrected exam
- If you write from sources without correct use of references
- If you "cut and paste" from the Internet without correct use of references
- If you use and develop ideas that appears in printed material or film without any reference to the author or the source of that idea.

THE LANGUAGE WORKSHOP

The Language Workshop offer consultations about written and oral presentations on an individual basis in both Swedish and English. It is free of charge and available to all students on the undergraduate and master's levels.

Website: <http://www.sprakverkstaden.uu.se/>

E-mail: sprakverkstad@kvk.uu.se

FUNCTIONAL DIVERSITY GUIDELINES

A coordinator with specific responsibility for functional diversity issues is available at Uppsala University. Students with such issues who have enrolled in higher education will, according to need, receive such forms of support as are directly related to their education. Applicants are recommended to make contact with the university coordinator in order to discuss their need of support as soon as possible and no later than at the time of application. Among the forms of support which may be considered include:

- note-taking help
- course literature in alternative formats such as talking books
- reading help
- sign language interpreting (Swedish sign language)
- mentors
- modification of exams, such as extended time for written exams

According to Uppsala University regulation, if there are special reasons for doing so, an examiner may make an exception from the method of assessment indicated and allow a student to be assessed by another method. An example of special reasons might be a certificate regarding special pedagogical support from the University's functional diversity coordinator.

Students are encouraged to contact the Course Convener and Examiner at the earliest possible stage should they wish for such an exception.

For further information contact the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Erika Forsberg (erika.forsberg@pcr.uu.se) or the disability coordinator at Uppsala University:

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ADDITIONAL (NON REQUIRED) READING:

General online resources:

<https://advancingconflictresearch.com>

<http://conflictfieldresearch.colgate.edu>

Online guide to security in the field:

https://www.eur.nl/sites/corporate/files/manual_security_guidelines_def_2.dd_juli_2016.pdf

Online guides to data security:

<https://ssd.eff.org/en/playlist/academic-researcher>

<https://gld.gu.se/en/projects/saferesearch/>

<https://hackblossom.org/cybersecurity/>