PSYC 605 - Research Ethics & Professional Issues in Organizations

Assignments

Class Contributions: Session Preparation and Participation

This course is heavily driven by student discussion/dialogue. Therefore, you will create a preparation journal to reflect on the readings before regular class sessions. Use the four questions listed below to guide your journaling and discussions with each other. You will not be submitting your journals directly to me. However, keeping a record of your own journal entries will be helpful for justifying your self-evaluation grade.

1) What are some key insights or perspectives in this reading?
2) What ideas did you find particularly surprising or interesting?
3) How do the readings complement or conflict with each other?
4) What are some points of clarification you would like to discuss with the class?
5) How might these ideas be used to inform ethical behaviors in practice?

My role as the moderator is to move discussion along and help all students participate. At the very end of the class session (last 15m), we will briefly reflect on how well we achieved our dialogue goals/guidelines. You may also make notes to yourself regarding your participation for self-evaluation later (how well you did; what you would like to improve for next time). I will also provide some brief closing thoughts for the session and answer any lingering questions you may have for me (readings, upcoming assignments, etc.).

Grading: This assignment is worth 20pts (20% of your course grade). You will submit two self-evaluations of your session preparation and participation: the first is over Weeks 1-6 and the second is over Weeks 7-13 (presentation weeks are not included). For each submission, give yourself a grade out of 10pts. Justify the grade by describing your performance on the following dimensions (~1-2 paragraphs):

- Did you consistently prepare for each class session?
  - This includes reviewing all assigned readings and completing all journal questions.
- Did you take time to reflect and challenge your thinking/assumptions on course topics?
  - This could occur through session preparation and after participating in class sessions.
- Did you effectively participate in class discussions according to dialoguing goals/guidelines?
  - This includes appropriate amount of thoughtful participation and helping move discussion along.
  - Deduct 1pt per missed session beyond one absence for the entire semester; the first absence doesn’t count. Also consider (very minor) deductions for early/late arrivals.

Based on your paragraph and my class observations, I may suggest potential minor adjustments if self-grading is too severe or lenient (only in consultation with you). Given that you are all motivated graduate students, I anticipate that all self-grades will be between 8-10 points for each submission. You may also use decimals in your grading to represent conversions from percentages (i.e., 93% = 9.3). Be honest. Be critical. Be ethical 😊
Research Ethics Training

As part of your research ethics education and evaluation, you will complete Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training through the CITI program and ensure your Social & Behavioral Research (SBR) investigator training is up to date. The RCR course contains training modules over nine areas of research conduct (some of which will actually supplement course material): research misconduct, data management, authorship, peer review, mentoring, using animal subjects in research, conflicts of interest, collaborative research, and research involving human subjects. Additional instructions are below:

1. Log into the CITI program at least one week before the due date to ensure you have access and can navigate the system. It took me four hours to complete the RCR modules, which included careful reading of all of the materials and clicking into the additional links. If your Social & Behavioral Research training is also expired, then you will need even more hours to complete all the requirements.

2. Log into the CITI program website (https://www.citiprogram.org/) with your user name and password. You should already have one as a requirement for ethical training to conduct research at NIU. Click on “Add a Course or Update Learner Groups.” Scroll down to Responsible Conduct of Research (showed up as Question 4 for me) and select “Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research Course” and then click “Submit.” The course should now appear under your list for NIU Courses.

3. Submit a copy of your RCR completion report in Blackboard via the Assignments function.
   a. Note: The entire RCR module does not have an expiration date, but modules are periodically updated. If you’ve completed RCR training before, you will need to take any updated quizzes/modules (they show up as “Optional” under “Already Taken?”). The new scores will be on the second page when you print the report, which will be used for this assignment.

4. Also submit copy of your up-to-date SBR investigator training completion report. Make sure it is up-to-date (this certification usually expires after one year)
   a. Note: If your SBR training expires any time this semester after the initial assignment deadline, you will need to re-submit the newly completed one again after it expires. For example, if the report you submit on the deadline shows you took it last October and it expires this October, you need to resubmit the new one by the last week of classes. All Blackboard assignment portals are set to allow multiple submissions.

Grading: This assignment is worth 25pts (25% of your course grade). Your grade on this assessment will be based on two components. The first 20pts is based on the percentage points on the RCR report. For example, a score of 82% will be 16.4pts and a score of 96% will be 19.2pts. The system will let you re-take quizzes to improve your score, which I highly encouraged. The last 5pts is based on providing an up to date verification of SBR investigator training based on completion only (i.e., not adjusted based on score). If your SBR training expires this semester (based on the report submitted by the deadline), then you will need to resubmit the newly completed version to retain the credit.
Research Communication

For this assignment, you will create a blog post translating research on a topic of your choice. It needs to be written to be accessible to an applied audience (see examples from psychology faculty and your fellow grad students published in Psychology Today here, here, and here). You will also deliver a 5-7m professional PowerPoint presentation on this post using information you learned about effective presentation techniques.

All blog posts are due on the same day via Blackboard (see syllabus) but you can submit your accompanying presentation slides any time before the class session on your specific presentation day. Presentations will be conducted over two class sessions. If you present the first day for this assignment, then you will submit the second day for the other assignment presentation week (and vice versa).

Grading: This assignment is worth 15pts (15% of your course grade). See dimensions below:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholarship &amp; Positioning</th>
<th>0-4pts (Improvement Feedback)</th>
<th>5pts (Outstanding Proficiency)</th>
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<td></td>
<td>You will receive specific feedback on improvement areas related to satisfactory (4pts), marginal (3pts), and unsatisfactory (0-2pts) proficiency ratings.</td>
<td>Information and recommendations are based on research and literature relevant to the topic. Provides practical and insightful recommendations from research. Covers a management amount of information for short post (not too much information) and avoids jargon/unexplained terms. Accurately references work using APA guidelines.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Creativity &amp; Synthesis</th>
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<td>You will receive specific feedback on improvement areas related to satisfactory (4pts), marginal (3pts), and unsatisfactory (0-2pts) proficiency ratings.</td>
<td>Demonstrates original/creative synthesis of information with accessible and clear writing. Includes formatting techniques for accessibility (visuals, bullet points, etc.). Overall blog formatting follows logical and organized flow. Provides catchy title and tagline that accurately reflects topic.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Professional Communication (Presentation)</th>
<th>0-4pts (Improvement Feedback)</th>
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<td></td>
<td>You will receive specific feedback on improvement areas related to satisfactory (4pts), marginal (3pts), and unsatisfactory (0-2pts) proficiency ratings.</td>
<td>Presentations slides are professional, uncluttered (not too many words), and engaging (pleasing visual displays and graphics). Verbal communication is professional, focused, and stays within the specified time limit.</td>
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Ethical Analysis Paper

For this assignment, you will analyze an issue in a research, academic, or applied setting. The topic should not be extensively covered in the current readings or past research. For example, what are some new ethical considerations in academic settings? What are ethical considerations for conducting research on a unique topic or with unique populations? What are new ethical considerations in some applied careers related to social psychology or I/O psychology based on the changing nature of work?

The paper should describe the issue context, analyze the problem using APA principles/standards, and provide multiple recommendations for resolving any issues. When applicable, you should also include any relevant research on the issue (with citations), as well as relevant RCR guidelines. The paper should be written in APA manuscript style and range from 2,000-3,000 words (not including references). You will also deliver a ~10m professional PowerPoint presentation on the paper to the class using information you learned about effective presentation techniques.

All papers are due on the same day via Blackboard (see syllabus), but you can submit your accompanying presentation slides any time before the class session on your specific presentation day. Presentations will be conducted over two class sessions. If you presented the first day for the blog assignment, then you will present the second day for this one (and vice versa).

Grading: This assignment is worth 25pts (25% of your course grade). See dimensions below:

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<tr>
<th>Scholarship &amp; Positioning</th>
<th>0-9pts (Improvement Feedback)</th>
<th>10pts (Outstanding Proficiency)</th>
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<tr>
<td>You will receive specific feedback on improvement areas related to satisfactory (8-9pts), marginal (6-7pts), and unsatisfactory (0-5pts) proficiency ratings.</td>
<td>Positions the paper as an important and relevant issue (with supporting evidence). Demonstrates command of scholarship relevant to topic. Accurately discusses and references relevant APA principles/standards that inform the issue.</td>
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<td>You will receive specific feedback on improvement areas related to satisfactory (4pts), marginal (3pts), and unsatisfactory (0-2pts) proficiency ratings.</td>
<td>Demonstrates original/creative synthesis of information (as opposed to a small variation on a similar case in the class). Provides useful and insightful recommendations from APA principles/standards and past practice.</td>
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<td>You will receive specific feedback on improvement areas related to satisfactory (4pts), marginal (3pts), and unsatisfactory (0-2pts) proficiency ratings.</td>
<td>Overall paper formatting follows logical and organized flow with accessible and clear writing (make sure to still maintain professional writing standards). Adheres to APA style reporting in-text and in references.</td>
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Final Exam

There is one written exam in this course during finals week. This exam is designed to help you practice responses to questions that are similar to those that may appear on comprehensive exams. You will choose three questions to answer from a subset of four on the final exam during the 1.5hr exam session. Final exam questions will be randomly chosen from the list provided below.

Grading: The exam is worth 15pts (15% of your course grade). A good essay response varies depending on writing style/conciseness (content is most important), but often ranges from 500-750 words (~1-2 single-spaced pages using Times New Roman 12pt font). Responses for the regular three exam questions are evaluated on three dimensions: correctness (is it accurate?), cogency (is it clear/logical?), and comprehensiveness (did you cover key concepts/components?). Make sure to integrate relevant course reading ideas—using in-text citations—for the exam and focus on arguments from ethical theory and APA principles/standards rather than personal opinions. Ultimately, the goal is to demonstrate that you have a strong mastery of information in the course readings.

1. Describe the five principles guiding the standards APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct. Explain how ethical theory informs each principle, and how principles are then used to develop ethical standards. In your response, provide a few examples of APA standards that are informed by the five principles.
2. What is the IRB, and what is its role in research governance at universities? How do concepts of risk, vulnerability, and benefit factor into the IRB's evaluation of ethical research?
3. Milgram's obedience research, Zimbardo's prison experiment, and Humphrey's tea room research are three common studies with questionable ethics that drove the development of IRB protections. Explain a few key ethical missteps in each study, but also ethical precautions these researchers did take in planning or conducting the research.
4. Is research deception ethical? Explain both sides the controversy, as well as how the concept of degrees of nondisclosure factor into these discussions.
5. What is confidentiality in the research process? What are various ways in which confidentiality can be breached, and steps researchers can take to prevent these issues?
6. Explain how ethical considerations of online research compare and contrast to research conducted in the laboratory. How can researchers protect online participants?
7. What are some potential ethical issues with conducting research using university students as participants? How might researchers address these issues to protect student participants?
8. What is careless responding, and why does it pose issues for research? What can researchers do to both (a) identify and (b) prevent these issues in their research?
9. Discuss at least four ethical issues related to data management practices that researchers should consider before starting a new project. What are some strategies researchers can use to improve data stewardship?
10. How might data flexibility pose issues for psychological science? Is there any evidence of questionable research practices occurring in research publishing due to data flexibility? What can we do to reduce these issues?
11. What are key biases people may have during the data analysis process that can interfere with ethical data analysis? What are some proposed solutions for reducing these biases?
12. What is HARKing and why is it a problem for publishing research? What are factors that may induce researchers to "HARK" during the research and publication process, and what are potential solutions for addressing them?
13. Explain the "replication crisis" controversy in psychology that has driven discussions about ethical research practices. Identify arguments both opposed and in favor of the view that there is fundamental problem with how psychological science is conducted. Also, discuss common recommendations for how to make changes in the research process.
14. Explain barriers to "translating" psychological science to the general public. Also, what are common ethical challenges encountered in this process? Finally, what are strategies researchers can adopt to avoid these barriers and ethical issues to engage in wider dissemination and use of their work?
15. What are common ethical challenges associated with determining authorship in research collaborations? How can researchers resolve these issues?
16. What ethical issues can arise during the peer-review process in academic publishing? Make sure to mention issues from multiple stakeholder perspectives (editors, peer reviewers, submitters). What are some recommendations to resolve these issues?