



APPLIES TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2013/2014

DRE 7013 Research Ethics and Critical Thinking

Programme

Elective course

Responsible for the course

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Department

Department of Innovation and Economic Organisation

Term

According to study plan

ECTS Credits

6

Language of instruction

English

Introduction

A topic is on the problem of how we can coin a scientific research ethics? The relation between basic scientific research versus contract research will be considered, and exemplified by how standard-form contracts and clarification of their meaning has to be done in order to avoid misunderstandings and conflict of interests: What is research and what is consulting? A thoroughgoing review will be given of what is meant by the notion of "research ethical norms", among other things (a) norms of research freedom, common practice in research, (b) norms concerning persons and groups involved in research, and finally (c) norms concerning user interests and relevance for the society.

Research fields where these norms have to be applied to will be properly dealt with. This concerns the research system as such (with the well known demand of truth seeking, honesty, consistency, insight and peer review), research institutions (with institutional freedom to inquire into, produce and communicate even controversial knowledge, come to informed decisions without guidance even if it is contract research), institutions in general (where it should be given access to public administration as far as possible), groups (protect exposed groups from further exclusion and discrimination), persons and users (confidentiality/anonymizing, self-determination, protection from harm and unreasonable embarrassment, respect for private life).

The course will stress the importance of research freedom (even when it comes to controversial topics), impartiality and possibility of verification (cf. financing, administration and directing).

The third basic topic of the course is an introduction to a more critical thinking when it comes to the business discipline and cases applied to the field of business, including the student's own assumptions and judgments concerning what it means to be a researcher. In addition to discussing basic norms and values which have general support in the scientific community, the student will also be introduced to the problem of how to beguile norms and values with propaganda.

Learning outcome

The objective of the course

The paramount objective of the course is to give insight into the premises and the consequences of practicing scientific research based on research ethical principles. This means that it is not sufficient to build up knowledge to a specific topic or problem chosen for a Phd thesis, however this includes a responsibility with a broader scope, both for the research community and the contractors, and for users and persons who are involved in the research project. Another important aspect is to learn how to respect each others freedom, work up the ability to make rational explanations, and orient oneself to the society in general. In this context, active participation, presentations and practicing discursive and critical dialogue is a demand for the participants.

Learning outcome

Successful completion of the course prerequisite several types of outcome

- gain knowledge of – and developing skills in – hermeneutics of suspicion by e.g. revealing conflict of interests and problems of disability
- increasing consciousness of mechanisms in social science, e.g. mechanisms of moral disengagement
- acquire knowledge and understanding of fundamental questions of rationality and emotionality and its limitations within science

- obtain knowledge of prejudices within science and society
- achieve understanding of the best argument in scientific argumentation and its limitations in groups, organizations and society in competition to abuse of rhetoric and propaganda
- acquire understanding of academic honesty, trust and research ethics

Prerequisites

Admission to a PhD Programme is a general requirement for participation in PhD courses at BI Norwegian Business School.

External candidates are kindly asked to attach confirmation of admission to a PhD programme when signing up for a course with the doctoral administration. Other candidates may be allowed to sit in on courses by approval of the courseleader. Sitting in on courses does not permit registration for courses, handing in exams or gaining credits for the course. Course certificates or conformation letters will not be issued for sitting in on courses

Compulsory reading

Collection of articles:

A collection of articles will be made available

Bandura, A. 1999. Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities. in: *Personality & Social Psychology Review*. 3. pp. 193–209 (16 p)

Bechtel, W. 2008. "Mental Mechanisms. Philosophical Perspectives on Cognitive Neuroscience". Ch. 7: *Confronting Mechanism's Critics. Accounting for Freedom and Dignity via Mental Mechanisms* (29 p)

Dodge, R. 1920. "The Psychology of Propaganda". *Religious Education*. 15. pp. 241-252 (11 p)

Elster, J. 1987. "The Multiple Self. Studies in rationality and Social Change.". Introduction pp. 1-34 (33 p)

Evans, J. St BT. 2010. "Thinking Twice. Two Minds in One Brain. Oxford University Press. Ch. 1, pp. 1-22 (21 p)

Habermas, Jürgen. 1983. "Discourse ethics", English version of "Diskursethik – Notizen zu einem Begründungsprogramm", in *Moralbewusstsein und kommunikatives Handeln*. Suhrkamp: Frankfurt am Main. pp. 53-127, (74 p)

Luhmann, Niklas. 1990. *Paradigm lost: Ethical reflection on morality*. Suhrkamp: Frankfurt am Main. (40 p)

Mele, Alfred R. et al. 2004. *The Oxford Handbook of Rationality*. Ch. 13: *Motivated Irrationality* (16 p)

Mogahaddam, F. M. & Marsella, A. J. (Eds). 2004. *The Role of Selective Moral Disengagement in Terrorism and Counterterrorism. Understanding Terrorism: Psychological Roots, Consequences and Interventions*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press. pp. 121–150 (29 p)

O'Shaughnessy, N.J. 2004. "Politics and Propaganda. Weapons of Mass Seduction.". pp. 1-23, 39-49, 65-70 (37 p)

Popper, Karl. 1993. *Science: Conjectures and refutations, in Conjectures and refutations: the growth of scientific knowledge*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p. 33-59. (26 p.). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. pp. 33-59. (26 p.)

Sen, Amartya. 1987. "On ethics and economy". Basil Blackwell: Oxford et.al. (125 p)

Sproule, J.M. 1987. "Propaganda Studies in American Social Science: The Rise and Fall of the Critical Paradigm". *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 73. pp. 60-78 (18 p)

Walton, D. 1997. "What is Propaganda, and What Exactly is Wrong With It?". *Public Affairs Quarterly*. Vol. 11, no. 4. pp. 383-413 (30 p)

Whitehead, Alfred North. 1967. "The origin of modern science". *Science and the modern world*. The Free Press: London et al. (30 p)

Zhong, C-B. 2011. "The Ethical Dangers of Deliberative Decision Making". *Administrative Science Quarterly*. 56. pp. 1-25 (24 p)

Zimbardo, P. 2008. "The Lucifer Effect. Understanding How Good People Turn Evil". Ch. 11: *The Stanford Prison Experiment*. *Ethics and Extensions* (28 p)

Other:

During the course there may be hand-outs and other material on additional topics relevant for the course and the examination

Guidelines for research ethics in the social sciences, law and the humanities. National Committees for Research ethics in Norway (40 p)

Selected cases related to research ethical problem solving

Recommended reading

Course outline

Three basic topics are central in the course:

- 1) The significance and limitations of rationality within science, including emotionality
- 2) The significance of prejudices within science and society
- 3) The consequence of giving the best argument the last word in scientific argumentation, contrary to eristic dialogue

Computer-based tools

Not applicable.

Learning process and workload**Learning process, approval of the course and examination**

To pass the course the students have to participate in an active manner and make presentations. The evaluation will be based on the student's seminar attendance and the term paper.

1. Lectures 30 h
 2. Specified learning activities, including reading 85 h
 3. Autonomous student learning, including written course paper 40 h
 4. One class participation 5 h
- Total 170 hours

Examination

The students have to write one paper each based on a self-elected topic, presented in a critical manner qua original work. The evaluation will be based on the student's seminar attendance and the term paper. The academic term paper (15 to 20 pages, graded pass/fail) should be written especially for this course according to the guidelines in the PhD handbook.

The course grade will be based on the following activities and weights:

30% - Class participation.

70% - Term paper.

All parts of the evaluation must be passed.

This is a course with continuous assessment (several exam elements) and one final exam code. The course is graded Pass/Fail

Examination code(s)

DRE 70131 accounts for 100 % of the final grade in the course DRE 7013.

Examination support materials

Not applicable.

Re-sit examination

Next time the course is offered.

Additional information