



DEPARTMENT OF GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH

K9F6097, Global Public Health Ethics, 1.5 credits (hec)

Global folkhälsoetik, 1,5 högskolepoäng

Third-cycle level / Forskarnivå

Approval

This syllabus was approved by The Committee for Doctoral Education on 2025-09-13, and is valid from spring semester 2026.

Responsible department

Department of Global Public Health, Faculty of Medicine

Prerequisite courses, or equivalent

No prerequisite courses, or equivalent, demanded for this course.

Purpose & Intended learning outcomes

Purpose

The objective of this course is for the doctoral student to:

- gain an understanding of fundamental theories, principles and guidelines of research ethics, and thus get the opportunity to reflect on ethical aspects of their own research.
- get an understanding of what is good scientific research as well as the limits for ethically unacceptable research both concerning research on humans and animals, as well as what applies to the researcher's own integrity.
- develop a research ethical approach within one's own research, towards the research of others and the surrounding society.
- think critically about ethical perspectives in public and global health research,
- gain an understanding of addressing vulnerability in research while ensuring the rights of participants to take part in research.

Intended learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

After completing the course, a doctoral student shall be able to:

- Describe key theories, principles, and selected guidelines in research ethics.
- Explain common ethical dilemmas and challenges that arise in research contexts.
- Discuss various forms of vulnerability in research and evaluate appropriate ethical approaches for engaging with vulnerable populations.

Competence and skills

After completing the course, a doctoral student shall be able to:

- Identify and analyze ethical problems and conflicts in research settings.
- Construct well-reasoned ethical arguments for or against specific research procedures.
- Apply ethical principles to real or hypothetical research scenarios involving complex ethical considerations.

Course content

As a basic course in the ethics of research in health and the medical sciences, the course contains the following elements:

- Central principles, theories and arguments of research ethics
- Research on humans, including informed consent and its components
- The ethics of laboratory animal science, including arguments for and against the use of animals for research purposes, as well as “the 3 Rs” (replace, refine, reduce) see: 3 Rs
- Ethical reviews and research ethics guidelines, such as the Declaration of Helsinki
- Good scientific practice and deviations from good practice in research, such as issues relating to fabrication, falsification and plagiarism, as well as the handling of scientific authorship
- Conflicts of interest in connection to research, such as bias and sponsorship
- Perspectives on research ethics in public health and global health research, including in register research, participatory research, and in research involving vulnerable populations

Forms of teaching and learning

Learning activities include individual work (reading, presentations, and discussion in forums) as well as group projects.

Students are expected to read all required readings by the start of the day they are due, so that they can fully participate in the discussion forums. Students will be encouraged to question, critique and reflect on ideas, assumptions, and examples presented.

Optional readings are not required but are provided as supplementary resources. Students are also encouraged to incorporate additional resources as necessary. All activities, including presentations, should draw upon the assigned readings and other external resources, and references should be cited accordingly.

Language of instruction

The course is given in English

Grading scale

Pass (G) /Fail (U)

Compulsory components & forms of assessment

Compulsory components

This course contains mandatory elements on each course day. Students are therefore expected to be present during each course day. To some extent, absence may be compensated by completing alternative assignments in agreement with the course directors.

Forms of assessment

Each student will prepare and deliver an oral presentation on an ethical theme, in relation to all intended learning outcomes, preferably related to the student's own research. Each student will additionally serve as an opponent and orally present ethical reflections and guide discussion concerning another student's presentation.

Course literature

Mandatory literature:

Assigned readings will include selected articles and excerpts from the following literature. Access to these and any additional assigned readings will be provided for students during the course occasion:

- Coughlin SS, American Public Health Association. Case Studies in Public Health Ethics. 2nd ed. Washington, DC: American Public Health Association; 2009. (selected excerpts)
- Jennings B, Arras JD, Haire J, et al. Ethics and Public Health: Model Curriculum. Washington, DC: Association of Schools of Public Health; 2003. (selected excerpts)

Recommended literature:

Swedish Research Council. Good Research Practice 2024 [Report].

<https://www.vr.se/english/analysis/reports/our-reports/2025-07-03-good-research-practice-2024.html>. Published 2024.

Banks S, Armstrong A, Carter K, et al. Everyday ethics in community-based participatory research. *Contemp Soc Sci*. 2013;8(3):266-277.

Barrett DH, Ortmann LW, Brown N, DeCausey BR, Saenz C, Dawson A. Public health research. In: Barrett DH, Ortmann LW, Dawson A, Saenz C, Reis NS, eds. *Public Health Ethics: Cases Spanning the Globe*. Springer; 2016:285-318.

Beauchamp TL, Childress JF. *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*. 7th ed. Oxford University Press; 2012.

Bracken-Roche D, Bell E, Macdonald ME, Racine E. The concept of 'vulnerability' in research ethics: an in-depth analysis of policies and guidelines. *Health Res Policy Syst*. 2017;15(1):8.

Taylor HA. Framing public health research ethics. In: Mastroianni AC, Kahn JP, Kass NE, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Public Health Ethics*. Oxford University Press; 2019:331-341

McMillan J. Public health research ethics: Is non-exploitation the new principle for population-based research ethics? In: Dawson A, ed. Public Health Ethics: Key Concepts and Issues in Policy and Practice. Cambridge University Press; 2011:174-190.