

BOOK REVIEW: Research Ethics for Students in the Social Sciences

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Research Ethics for Students in the Social Sciences by Dr. Jaap Bos is an open access textbook that prioritizes educating undergraduate students on the ethics of research and helping them to apply skills through practice and problem-based learning. It is available in both pdf and epub formats.

Chapters One through Ten are divided into four parts that are titled Perspectives; Ethics and Misconduct; Ethics and Trust; and Forms, Codes, and Types of Regulations. Each chapter includes keywords, case studies, artwork, study questions, suggested reading, and references. Throughout the book, the author applies real world examples within the context of European and U.S. policy. There are sidebars throughout the chapters that offer definitions, explain information, or provide summaries for the reader, which could be helpful for students new to research.

Dr. Bos works at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands. He is an Associate Professor and Senior Researcher in the Department of Interdisciplinary Social Studies (ASW). According to his webpage, one of his interests is the use of historiography (the study of historical writing) in the social sciences and communications studies.

Chapter One discusses the plans, structure, and purpose of the book. The author offers examples of ethical challenges undergraduate students might face throughout their educational journey. Topics such as plagiarism, bias, confiden-

tiality, and societal issues can arise at any time throughout one's academic career. Dr. Bos intends the book to be the beginning of students' educational journey and to ease them into social science research. Part I follows the introduction and engages the audience by applying a case study. Dr. Bos refers to both the U.S. Code of Conduct and European Code of Conduct. The book is not intended solely for US audiences, which may be a new experience for some US students. This broader context can be enriching to all students. Students across the US and in European countries could benefit from learning the differences and similarities with each Code of Conduct to expand their knowledge of the social sciences and research.

Part II, like Part I, provides callout boxes breaking down information in a more digestible format for the reader. Callout boxes, such as "*Unintentional Plagiarism*," are helpful in showcasing how easy and accidental plagiarism can be. The lengthy discussion on cheating and plagiarism feels overdone and could have been more concise. The example of plagiarism by professors felt unrelatable to us. The text provides consequences of plagiarism and cheating by researchers, which will likely feel more relevant to undergraduate students. Next, the discussion about bias contributes in-depth information on plagiarism and cheating and draws the reader back in with new information. Chapter Five offers an interesting overview of ghostwriting, about which many students may not be educated. However, it could be beneficial if the author addressed ChatGPT and other types of AI.

Part III focuses on confidentiality within several areas such as social media (Facebook, etc.) and technology. It would be helpful if the author could break down the legality of confidentiality more specifically with legal requirements, limitations, and implications. The chapter provides charts to simplify information, which are helpful. Practical case studies are helpful for students, such as the Russell Ogden case, which provides a practical example of the breach of confidentiality. Breakout boxes that distinguish various types of conflicts of interest make the material more accessible. Defining the term *conflict of interest* would seem to be helpful if the intended readers are new to research. Mentioning tenure gap reveals the hiring process within educational institutions where publishing research is sometimes prioritized over teaching experience. It relates to undergraduate students because they may have an opportunity to assist in a re-

search project or proposal with a professor in their social science department. Part IV educates readers step by step on research ethics.

The text has strengths and weaknesses. Chapters Two through Nine conclude with case studies, however, one recommendation would be moving the case study toward the beginning of the chapter, which may grab attention earlier. It seemed that there was some redundancy in how the topics were presented, and we would recommend an organization of the concepts in a way that distinguishes them more clearly and distinctly. We wondered if underlying the redundancy of some subjects might be an assumption that this would deter students who may plagiarize, and we were skeptical that this would be effective.

Many students dread the requirement to read textbooks. However, Dr. Bos creates a fresh alternative. The book has an approach that does not inspire anxiety, which many students feel when the topic of research is brought up. This book felt like it was written with an intended audience in mind: students that often feel left to fend for themselves in the world of research and ethics. This book achieves its stated goals: to raise students' awareness of research ethics and to present students with real life situations in a way that helps them to consider their own position on them. Students in classes that require this book will also appreciate that it is free access.

Reference

Utrecht University. (n.d.). *Dr. Jaap Bos*. <https://www.uu.nl/staff/JCBos>