

Reed College Human Subjects Research Committee (HSRC)
2007-2008

Projects Completed As Class Assignments

In accordance with Part 45CFR46 of the Federal Regulations, projects involving human participants are subject to institutional review when they are “designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.” The Reed College Human Subjects Research Committee (HSRC) interprets this to mean that projects which are done solely to meet the requirements of a course and which will not contribute to a document that is publicly accessible do not need to be submitted to the Committee for review.

However, all researchers have personal and professional responsibilities to respect the rights of study participants and to treat them in a fair and ethical manner, whether the project requires review or not. In this regard, instructors should insure that the projects carried out by their students are being conducted in a manner that is consistent with the ethical principles of their discipline and with the federal guidelines for the protection of human participants. In addition, as review by an institutional review board is becoming a normal part of “doing research,” instructors might consider the benefits of requiring students to submit their projects for review as part of the educational process. Members of the HSRC are always available for informal advising of instructors and students on matters pertaining to projects involving human participants.

The following outlines in more detail the Committee’s interpretations of the conditions under which research done for a class does and does not need to be reviewed:

1. All senior thesis projects involving human participants must be reviewed. Although senior theses meet a course requirement, they are catalogued by the library and thus become publicly accessible.
2. All student independent projects involving human participants that are not being done as part of a course but that otherwise are being done under Reed College auspices must be reviewed (e.g., summer projects). Student independent projects being done for 481 (Independent Study) credit should be evaluated as class projects (see 3 below).
3. Class projects will normally not need to be reviewed by the Committee. Exceptions to this include:
 - a. If a course assignment requires that the student submit a class project to a professional meeting, professional journal, or otherwise disseminate it widely (e.g., on a publicly accessible website), the project must be submitted for review.

- b. If an instructor thinks it likely that the data collected as part of a class project will contribute to a presentation at a professional meeting or a professional publication, the project should be submitted for review before it has begun. If an instructor or student later decides to submit a class project to a meeting, journal, etc., it must be reviewed by the Committee before submission, with the risk that some aspect of the project will not be approved by the Committee.
- c. Class projects in which a primary focus is interviews of or other direct interactions with children, prisoners, or other populations granted special protection under the Federal Guidelines must be reviewed.

Please do not hesitate to contact members of the Committee if you have questions about the application of these guidelines to specific studies.