

Fall, 2006

Department of Religion Guidelines for Interviews

Coursework and research in the department of Religion at Reed College do not involve experimentation on human subjects. It is likely to be the case, however, that students in the department will, from time to time, have the opportunity to observe and discuss matters of interest to students of religion with believers and practitioners of a variety of religions. We do not relinquish our rights to freedom of speech and assembly when we decide to study religion.

That said, when conversations with others constitutes formal research that will be cited in the production of a thesis, such research is subject to review and must be approved by the Human Subjects Committee. The following guidelines, adapted for the department's use from the Oral History Society's ethical guidelines¹ should be observed. Research that does not adhere to these guidelines will not be approved by the department.

1. Interviewers have the following responsibilities before an interview takes place:
 - 1.1 To consider the purpose of the interview and the possible range of future uses to which it might be put.
 - 1.2 To carry out research and acquire sufficient technical knowledge to conduct an interview of the best possible standard.
 - 1.3 To inform the interviewee of the purpose for which the interview is to be carried out, with background information where appropriate.
 - 1.4 To determine the preferences of the interviewee as to the location and conduct of the interview (for example the presence of other persons; subject matter or personal references to be avoided).
2. The interviewer has the following responsibilities during the conduct of an interview:
 - 2.1 To ensure that the interviewee's preferences as to the location and conduct of the interview are abided by.
 - 2.2 To treat interviewees with respect and courtesy.
3. The interviewer has the following responsibilities after an interview has taken place:
 - 3.1 The product of interviews must not be published, broadcast or otherwise exploited without the permission of the Interviewee. Interviewers must inform the interviewee of any use to which the interview is likely to be put. Interviewers must record in writing any restrictions on use or other conditions which the interviewee may require.
 - a. Normally, use will be restricted to an unpublished term-paper or thesis. Academic standards of written citation must be maintained.
 - b. Publication to the World Wide Web or to commercial press or broadcast should not be undertaken without the informed, written consent of the interviewee.

- c. If the interview or the product of the interview, for example a senior thesis, is to be archived, the Interviewer must make this known to the Interviewee in writing prior to the interview.
- 3.2 To ensure that the interview is documented, indexed, catalogued and made available as agreed with the interviewee, and that a copy of the recording or transcript is given to the interviewee if an undertaking to do so has been given.

¹ <http://www.oralhistory.org.uk/ethics/>