

## **PHIL 6000-O Responsible Conduct of Research (CRN 83075) - Fall Semester 2026**

**Instructor:** Yolande Berta

**Meeting Days:** Thursday, Aug. 20 & Friday, Aug. 21, 9:30 AM-4:30 PM EST

**Course Format/Location:** On-line

**Course Description:** The primary aim of this course is to identify and discuss ethical issues that graduate students confront relating to their research. Topics addressed include those recognized by U.S. funding agencies and Georgia Tech as crucial to being a responsible researcher. PHIL 6000 satisfies doctoral RCR course requirement in the GT RCR Academic Policy for Doctoral Students (note: laboratory safety is not covered in this course).

\* If you have not yet completed the online RCR training requirement for doctoral students, refer to: [rcr.gatech.edu/online-training/](http://rcr.gatech.edu/online-training/)

**Learning Objectives:** By the end of the course, each student should be able to:

- Identify key research ethics topic areas.
- Describe foundational concepts in the realm of research ethics.
- Describe strategies for handling ethical challenges that can arise from a research project.

**Required Readings:** Presentation slides will be available on Canvas (under the “Files” tab). Included in the slides are links to articles and case studies that will be discussed in the course.

**Recommended Readings:**

- National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, and Institute of Medicine. 2009. [On Being a Scientist: A Guide to Responsible Conduct in Research](#) (Third Edition). Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2017. [Fostering Integrity in Research](#). Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

**Attendance Policy, Live Sessions, and Make-Up Assignments:** The course format involves a combination of synchronous and asynchronous activities. The instructor will host live sessions on August 20 & 21 to discuss the course slides; the times and topics are listed in Canvas. Attendance during the live sessions is required. The purpose of the sessions is to discuss the course slides and answer questions about course content. If a student wants to discuss individual issues (e.g., a paper topic idea), contact the instructor through Canvas or over e-mail.

**Course Requirements and Assignments:** The course is for one credit and may be taken on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis only. 70 points or above is considered Satisfactory in the course. Students must complete all work by the assigned due date and time. If a student misses an

assignment and wants to request make-up work, it is the student's responsibility to provide information to the instructor explaining the reason (for example, missed due to illness).

- **Attendance (15 points)**

Attendance will be taken during each course session. The student can earn a maximum of 15 points for attending the course sessions. Missing more than one attendance sign-in for an unexcused reason will result in a zero for this portion of the course grade. Missing more than three sign-in sessions for an unexcused reason will result in an Unsatisfactory for the course.

- **Discussion Forums on Canvas (60 points)**

Each student must contribute to a set of seven discussion forums – only six will be counted - on Canvas either by responding to existing discussion threads or initiating new threads. The student can earn a maximum of 10 points for each forum (60 points in total, the lowest score will be dropped). Each forum will open at **9:00AM** approximately two days before it is due and close at **11:59PM EST** on the due date. Students will be randomly assigned into groups for the discussion forums. The schedule for the discussion forums is as follows:

- Discussion Forum One (Mentoring) will open on **Tuesday, August 18 at 9:00AM** and close on **Thursday, August 20 at 11:59pm EDT**.
- Discussion Forums Two, Three, and Four will open on **Thursday, August 20 at 9:00AM** and close on **Wednesday, August 26 at 11:59pm EST**.
- Discussion Forums Five, Six and Seven will open on **Friday, August 21 at 9:00AM** and close on **Wednesday, Sept. 2 at 11:59pm EST**.

The discussion forum contributions will be evaluated based on:

1. The originality of your posts (posts must be written by you *only* - not AI - and must not repeat or reuse content from other sources).
2. The thoroughness of posts (a minimum of one paragraph per discussion forum).
3. The relevance of your posts to the assigned topic/course slides.
4. Whether your posts sincerely engage with and consider views expressed in other posts.

Each student is expected to be respectful of other students in the course. Personal attacks, harassment, or other forms of inappropriate behavior will result in a reduced grade on the assignment, and depending on the severity of the misbehavior, may be reported to the Dean of Students.

- **Paper Assignment (25 points)**

Each student must write an original paper on the main ethical issues related to either their own research OR research in their field. The paper will be due in Canvas by **11:59PM EST on Wednesday, September 9**; a grace period will be extended until 8 AM Thursday, September 10.

The paper must not repeat or reuse what has been said in a Discussion Forum. The paper should be ~250-500 words and is worth a maximum of 25 points. Standard paragraph form, grammar, margins, spacing (1.5-2), type font (11-12 point, Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman), and punctuation are required. If sources influence the paper, the paper *must* include complete citation information; you can use the citation format common in your field. The paper will be evaluated based on:

1. Its relevance to the course; whether it directly discusses issues related to research ethics;
2. The originality of its content and the proper attribution of credit to any relevant sources;
3. The degree to which ethical concepts/principles discussed in the course are integrated into the paper;
4. Organization of its content (into clear paragraphs, etc.), grammar and clarity.

**Original work is required.** *The paper must be written by you only - not AI - and you must explain ideas and concepts in your own words.* You are required to limit the number/length of any quotations used in the paper (roughly meaning no more than a one-to-two sentence quote). Any quotations or other referenced information **must be cited properly in your paper**. Close paraphrasing/rephrasing of other people's work **is not permitted**. Plagiarism and/or collaboration (human or AI) on the paper are violations of the Honor Code and may result in an unsatisfactory grade for the course. An unsatisfactory grade for the course may also be received if the paper is not submitted on time, is difficult to follow, too informal, and/or on a topic that is not suitable for the assignment. Additional guidance for the paper assignment will be available on Canvas.

**Statement on Privacy and Confidentiality:** The course will cover topics, including in Canvas Discussion Forums, that may be considered controversial. It is expected that each student will respect the privacy of the other students by not sharing or using information from the discussions for purposes outside the course unless written permission has been obtained from the relevant person(s). Also, please avoid sharing confidential information, including identifying details about individuals from a case that is not publicly known, in the Discussion Forums or in the course paper.

**Academic Integrity and Student Rights & Responsibilities:** Each student in the course is expected to be familiar with and uphold Georgia Tech's [Honor Code](#) and [Student Code of Conduct](#). A list of [student and faculty expectations](#) is available in the GT Catalog. Consult with the instructor if you have questions about these policies.

**IAC's Commitment to a Diverse Community:** "The Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts enthusiastically embraces the values set forth in the Georgia Tech strategic plan — a welcoming, inclusive culture; mutual respect among faculty, staff, and students; and celebration of uniqueness in thought, background, perspectives, and intellectual pursuits." For more information: <https://iac.gatech.edu/about/community>

\* If you have any learning disabilities, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404) 894-2563, refer to <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>, and/or consult with the instructor as needed.

\*\* If you have any personal or academic difficulties, contact the Center for Mental Health Care & Resources at (404) 894-2575, refer to <http://www.mentalhealth.gatech.edu>, and/or consult with the instructor as needed.