

Ethics

A faint, stylized illustration of a balance scale is visible in the background. The scale is tilted, with the right pan being lower than the left pan. The entire image has a teal color scheme.

Social Research and Ethics

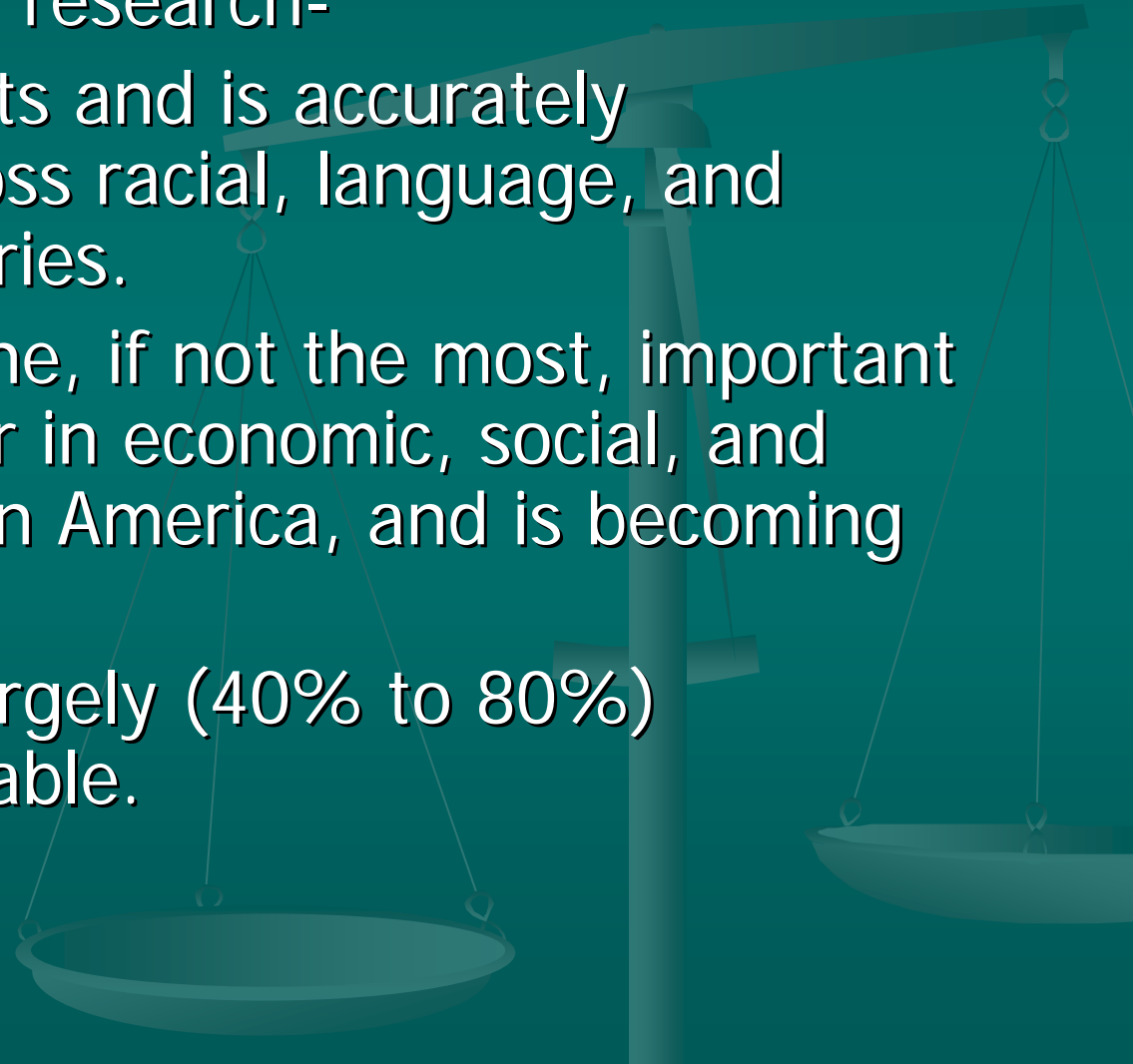
Bell Curve-1994

Current ethics issues



Bell Curve-Scientific Racism

- Basic premise of research-
Intelligence exists and is accurately measurable across racial, language, and national boundaries.
- Intelligence is one, if not the most, important correlative factor in economic, social, and overall success in America, and is becoming more important.
- Intelligence is largely (40% to 80%) genetically heritable.



Bell Curve-Scientific Racism

- There are racial and ethnic differences in IQ that cannot be sufficiently explained by environmental factors such as nutrition, social policy, or racism.
- No one has so far been able to manipulate IQ long term to any significant degree through changes in environmental factors, and in light of their failure such approaches are becoming less promising.
- The USA has been in denial regarding these facts, and in light of these findings a better public understanding of the nature of intelligence and its social correlates is necessary to guide future policy decisions in America.

Bell Curve-Findings

- We can imagine no recommendation for using the government to manipulate fertility that does not have dangers. But this highlights the problem: The United States already has policies that inadvertently social-engineer who has babies, and it is encouraging the wrong women. *If the United States did as much to encourage high-IQ women to have babies as it now does to encourage low-IQ women, it would rightly be described as engaging in aggressive manipulation of fertility.* The technically precise description of America's fertility policy is that it subsidizes births among poor women, who are also disproportionately at the low end of the intelligence distribution. We urge generally that these policies, represented by the extensive network of cash and services for low-income women who have babies, be ended. (p. 548)

Response to Bell Curve

- Georgetown University Distinguished Professor of Health Studies Craig T. Ramey said "Within the sophisticated research community, the opinion has been virtually unanimous that *The Bell Curve* was a primitive, oversimplistic and flawed analysis." University of Oklahoma Assistant Professor of Anthropology Michael Nunley wrote:
 - I believe this book is a fraud, that its authors must have known it was a fraud when they were writing it, and that Charles Murray must still know it's a fraud as he goes around defending it. [...] After careful reading, I cannot believe its authors were not acutely aware of [...] how they were distorting the material they did include.

Defending the “Research”

- In its defense, fifty-two professors, including researchers in the study of intelligence and related fields, signed a statement titled "Mainstream Science on Intelligence" supporting many of the scientific views reported in *The Bell Curve*.

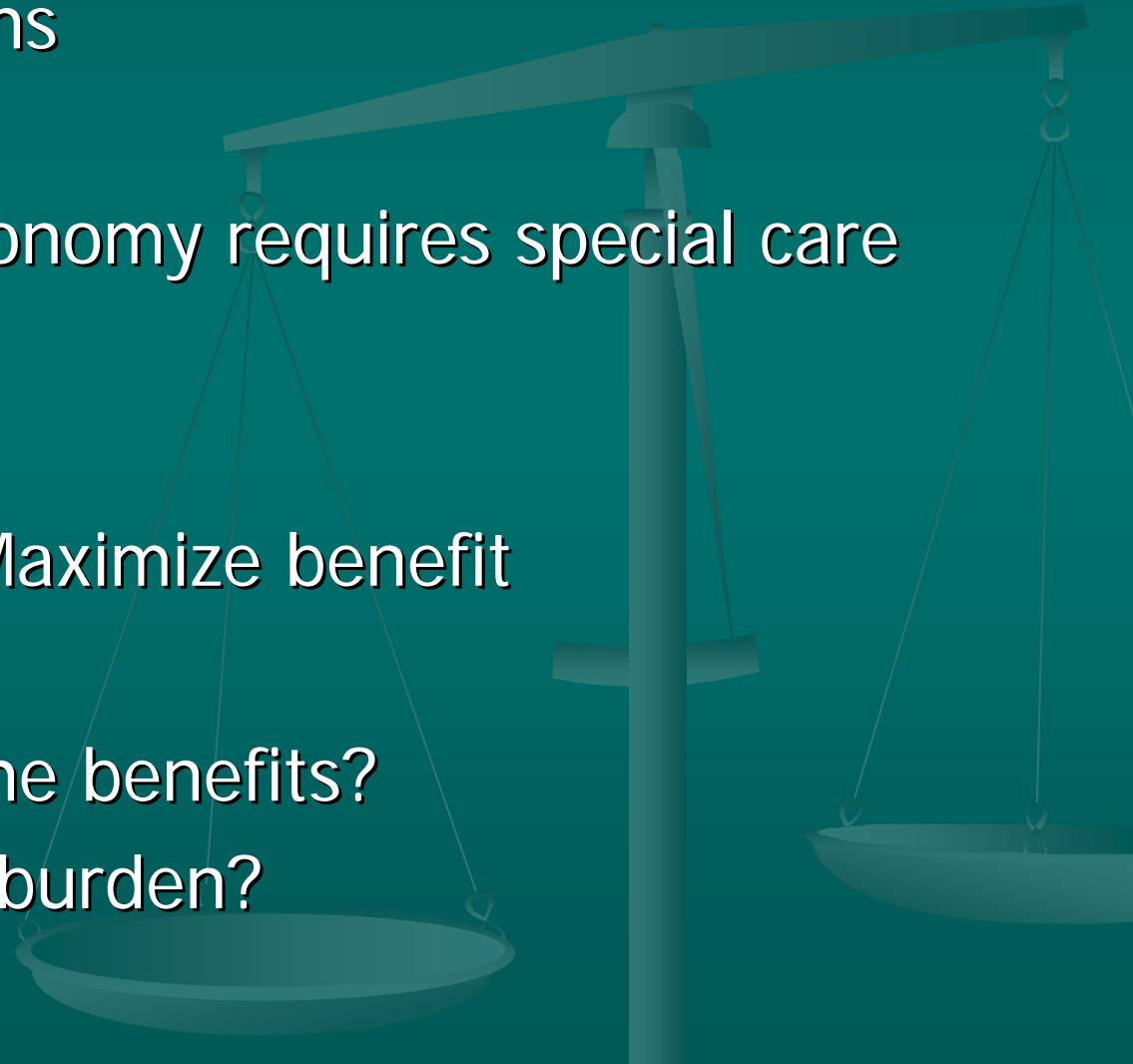
Belmont Report

- 1974
- National research act



Basic Ethical Principles

- Respect for persons
 - Autonomy
 - Diminished autonomy requires special care
- Benefice
 - Do no harm
 - Minimize risk, Maximize benefit
- Justice
 - Who receives the benefits?
 - Who bares the burden?



Applications



- Informed Consent
 - We choose what will and won't happen to us
- Assessment of risk and benefit
 - Nature and scope of risks
 - Our job to think of possible “bad” outcomes
- Selection of subjects
 - Not just desirable subjects
 - injustice arises from social, racial, sexual and cultural biases institutionalized in society

Ethical Conflicts and Dilemmas



- Conflict of ethical principles
 - You are studying wife batterers and witness a woman being beaten by her husband – ethical responsibility to victims and larger society i.e. research
- Conflict between ethical concerns and legal matters
 - Study gang members and police want your contact information
 - Legal pressure to violate confidentiality

Ethical Conflicts and Dilemmas

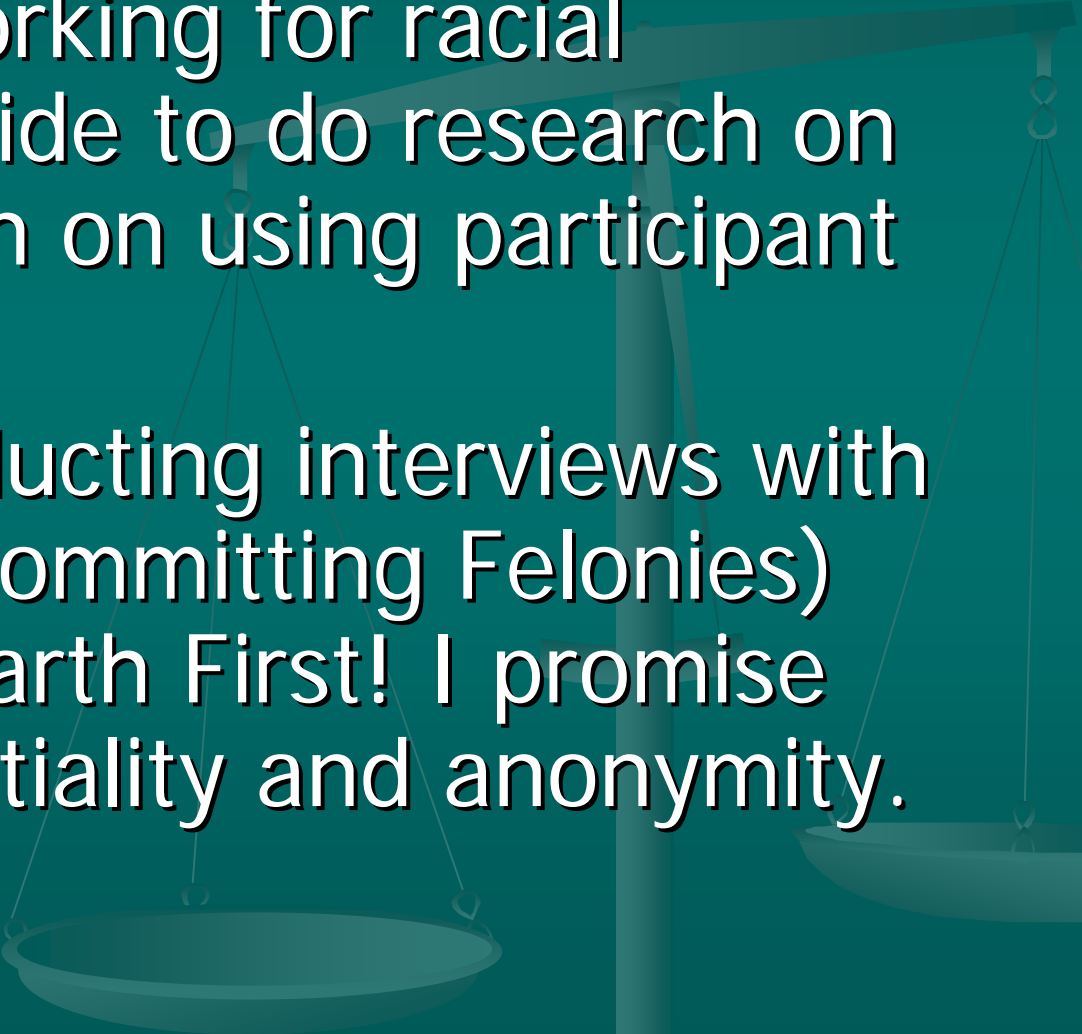


- Conflicts between ethical principles and research interests
 - At what point is research unethical?

How does gender impact strength, speed and agility?

Take 100 boys, 100 girls from orphanages and run a gender experiment on a deserted island.

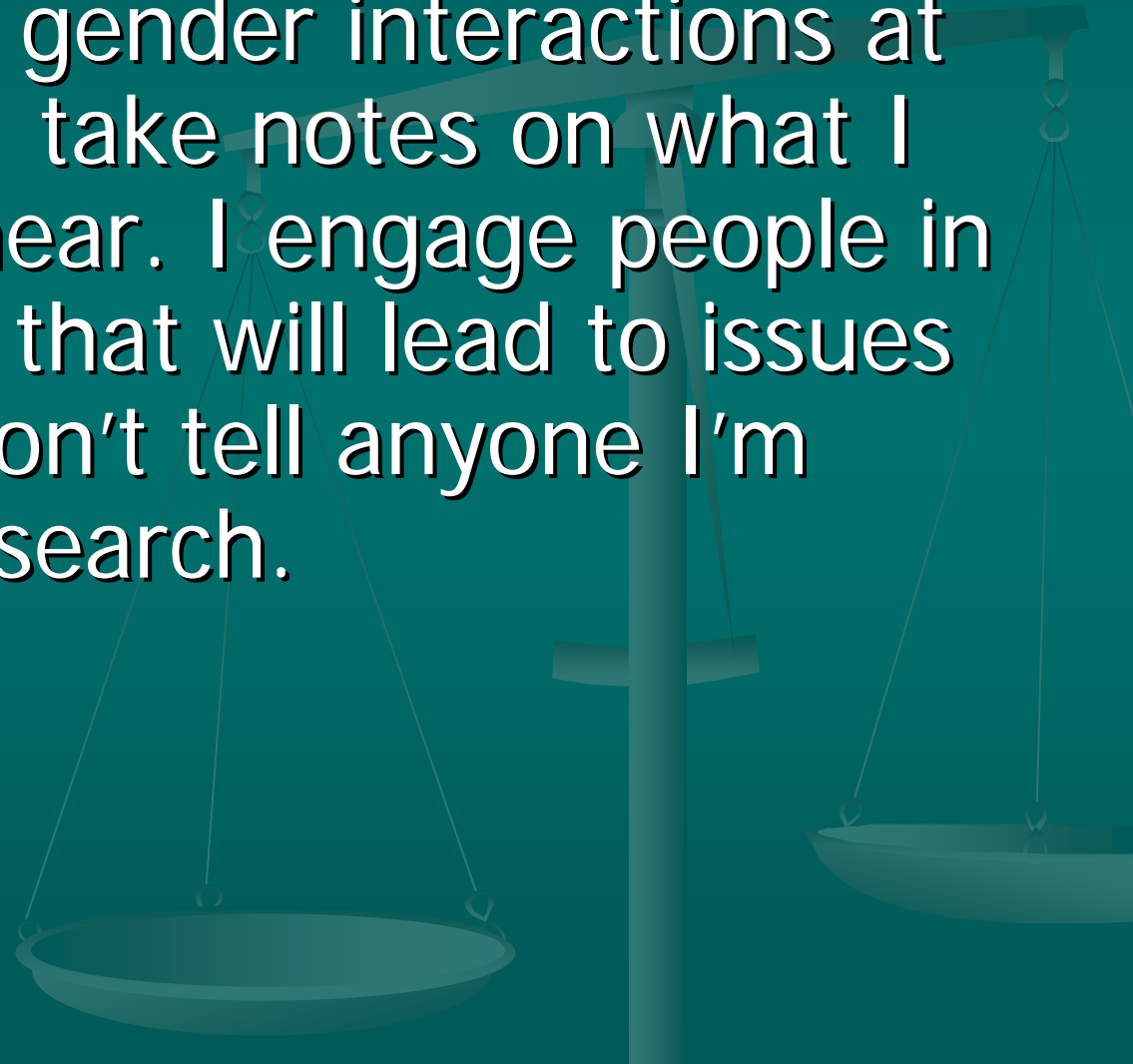
Ethical Quandaries



- I believe in working for racial equality. I decide to do research on the KKK. I plan on using participant observation.
- I plan on conducting interviews with radical (read committing Felonies) members of Earth First! I promise them confidentiality and anonymity.

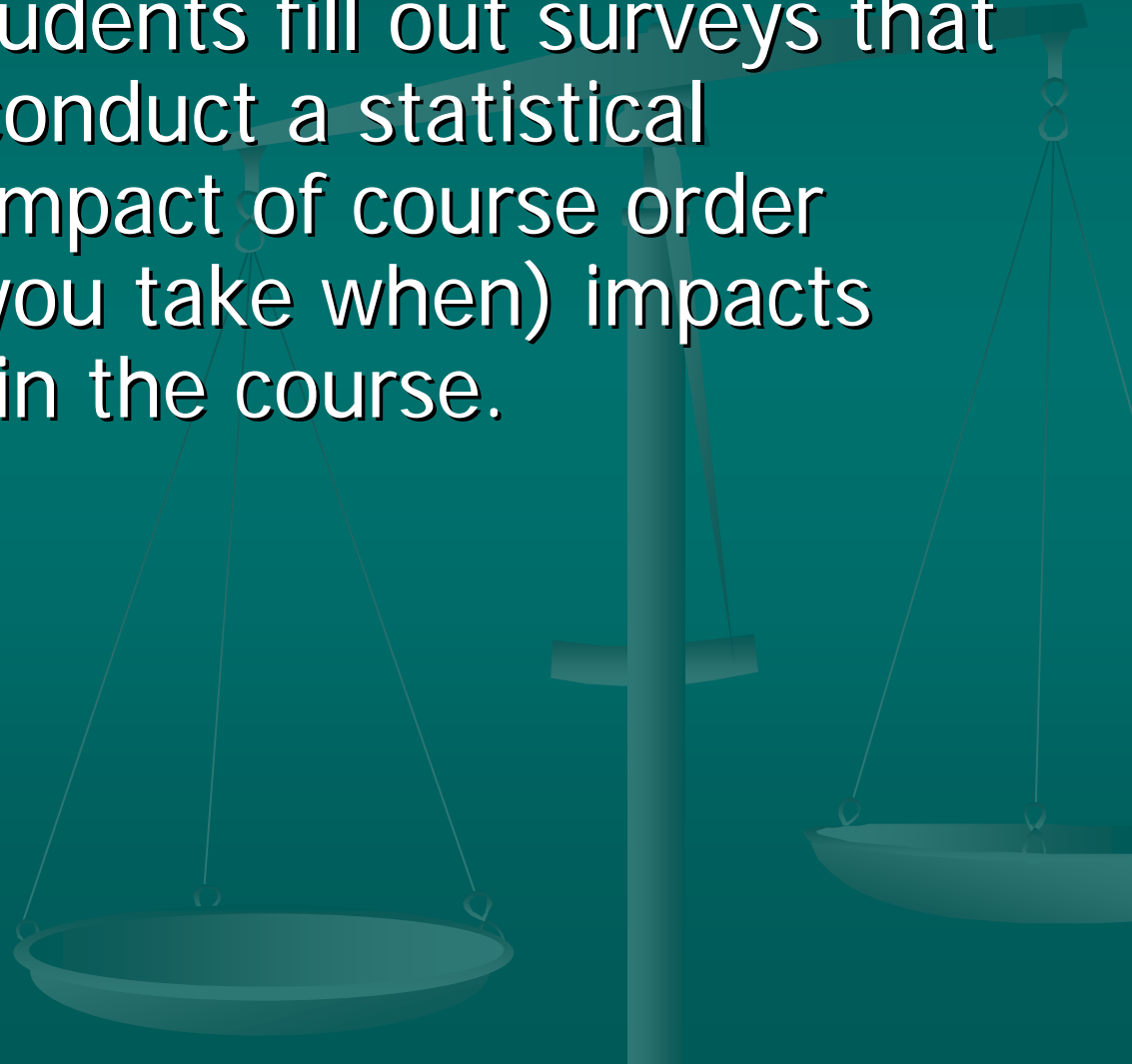
Ethical Quandaries

- I am studying gender interactions at a rock show. I take notes on what I see and overhear. I engage people in conversations that will lead to issues of gender. I don't tell anyone I'm there to do research.

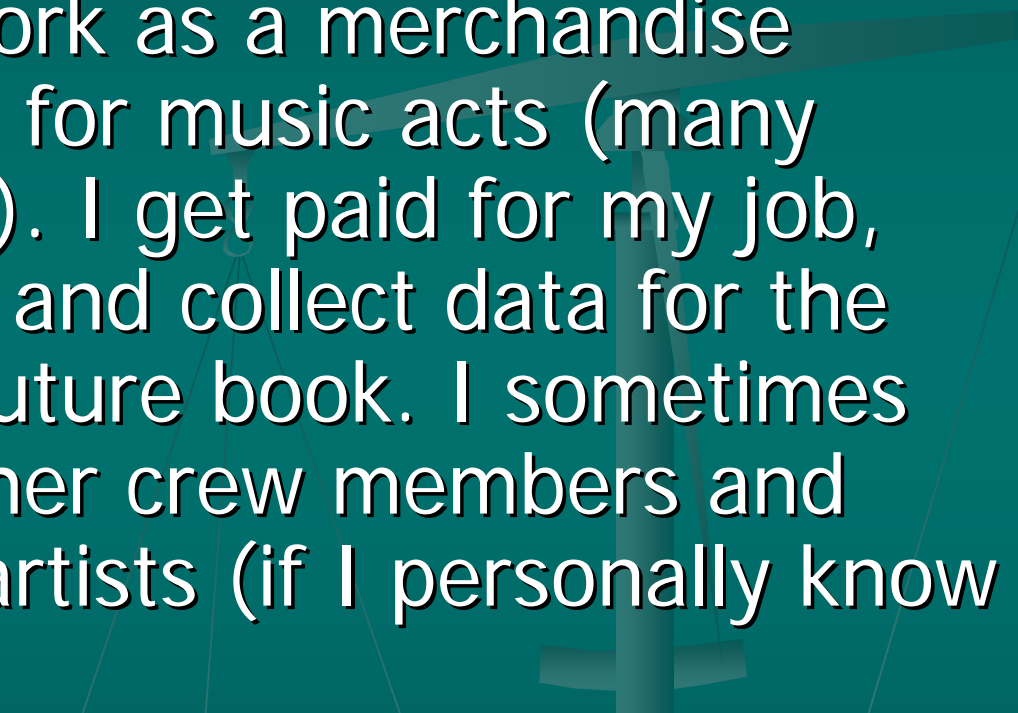


Research Quandaries

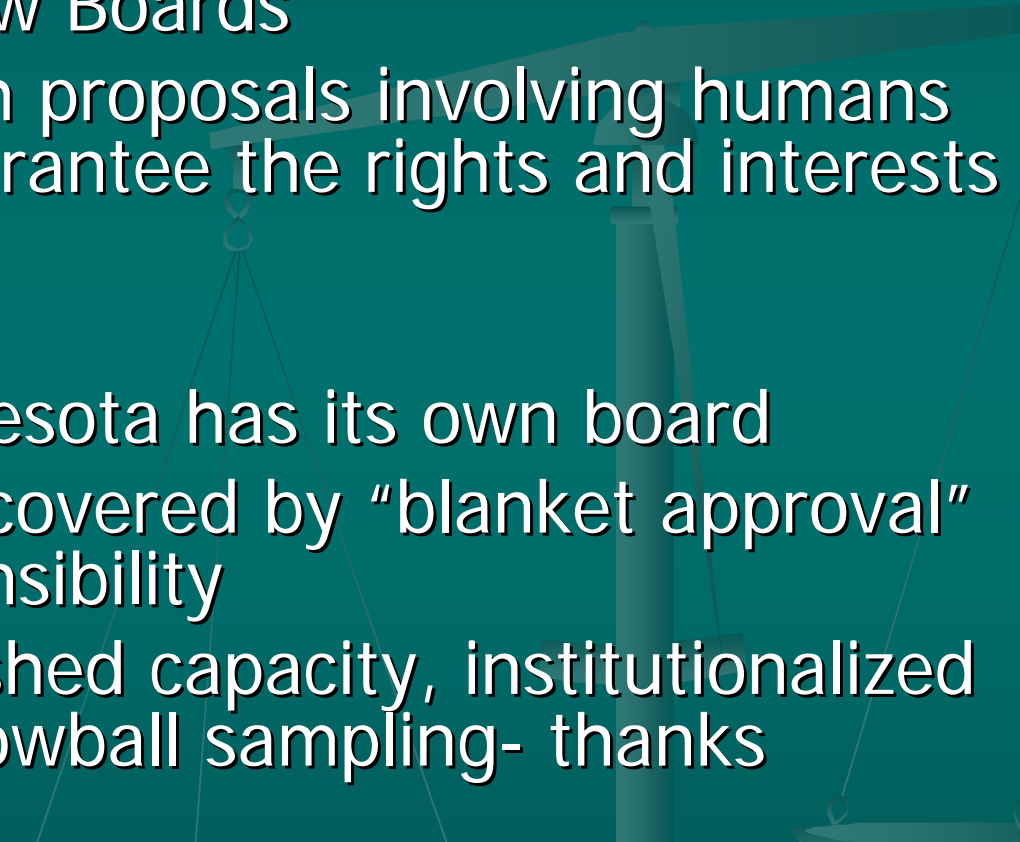
- I use to have students fill out surveys that I later used to conduct a statistical analysis of the impact of course order (which classes you take when) impacts students grade in the course.



Research Quandaries

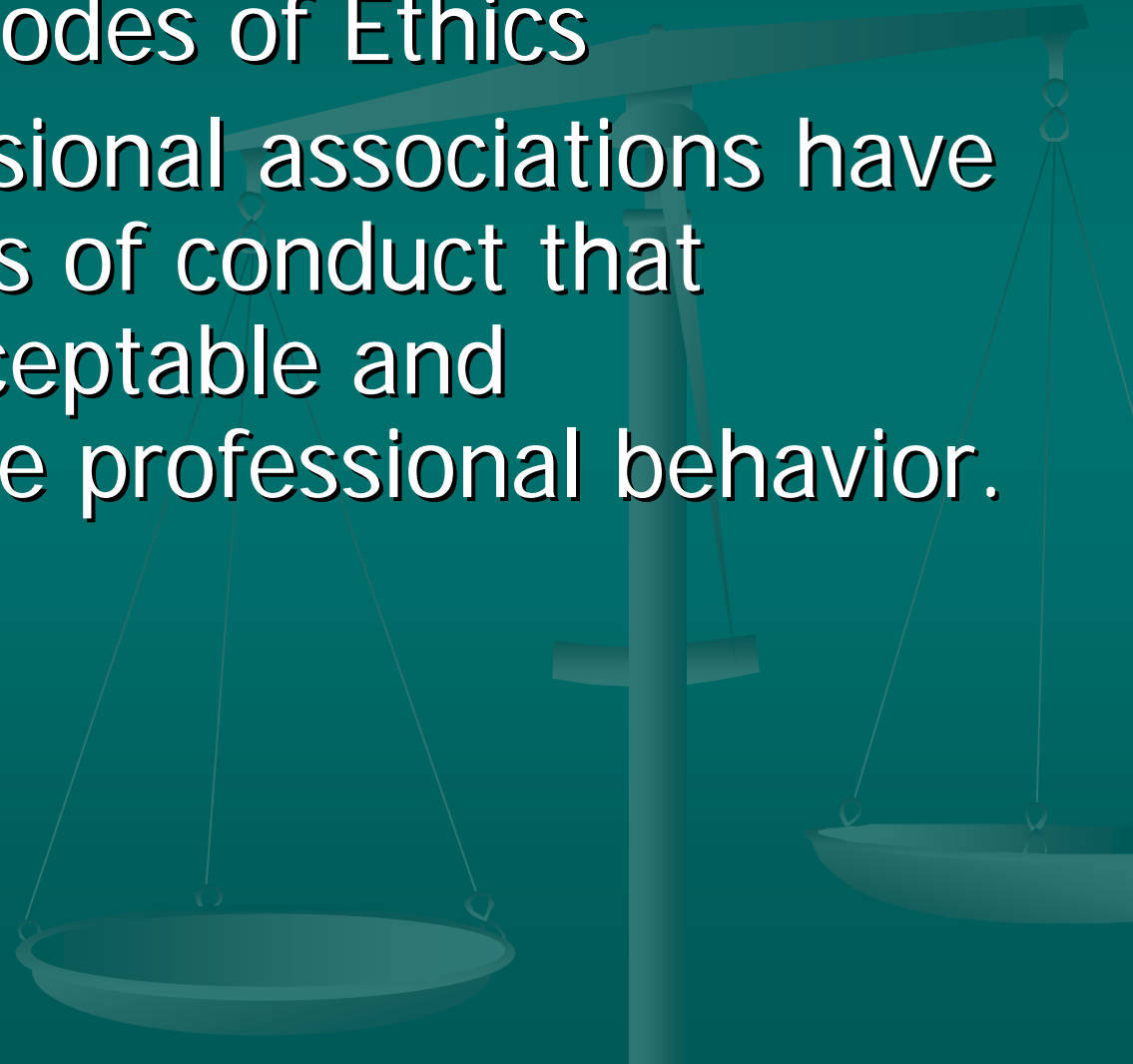
- I occasionally work as a merchandise seller/ light tech for music acts (many different genres). I get paid for my job, yet I take notes and collect data for the possibility of a future book. I sometimes mention it to other crew members and sometimes the artists (if I personally know them).
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Ethical Issues in Social Research

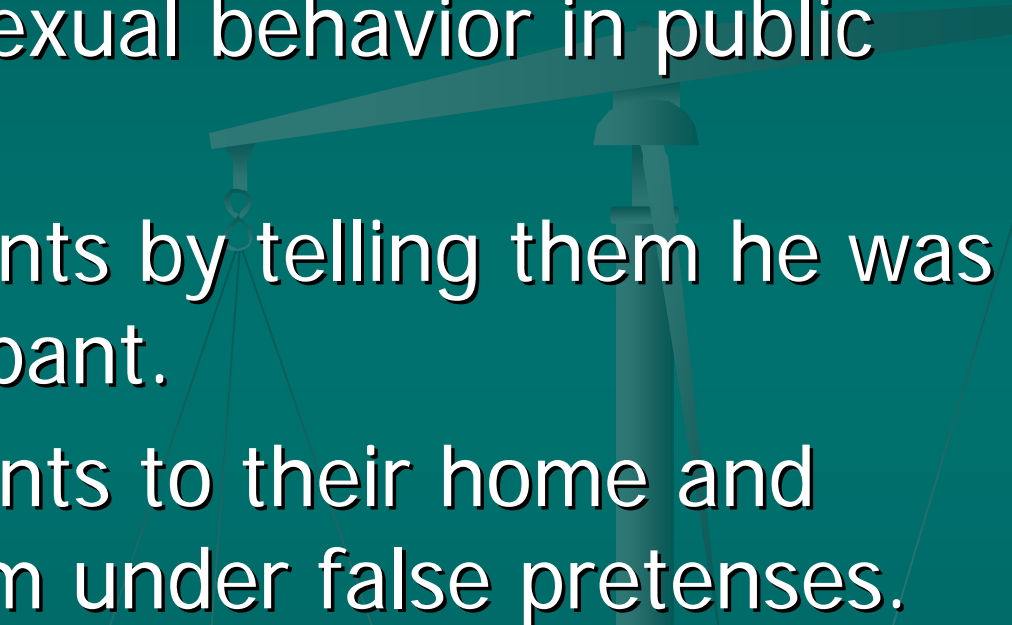
- Institutional Review Boards
 - Review research proposals involving humans so they can guarantee the rights and interests are protected.
 - University of Minnesota has its own board
 - Senior projects is covered by “blanket approval” –professors responsibility
 - No minors, diminished capacity, institutionalized individuals. No snowball sampling- thanks medical school
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Ethical Issues in Social Research

- Professional Codes of Ethics
 - Most professional associations have formal codes of conduct that describe acceptable and unacceptable professional behavior.



Ethical Controversy: Laud Humphreys

- Study of homosexual behavior in public restrooms.
 - Lied to participants by telling them he was a voyeur-participant.
 - Traced participants to their home and interviewed them under false pretenses.
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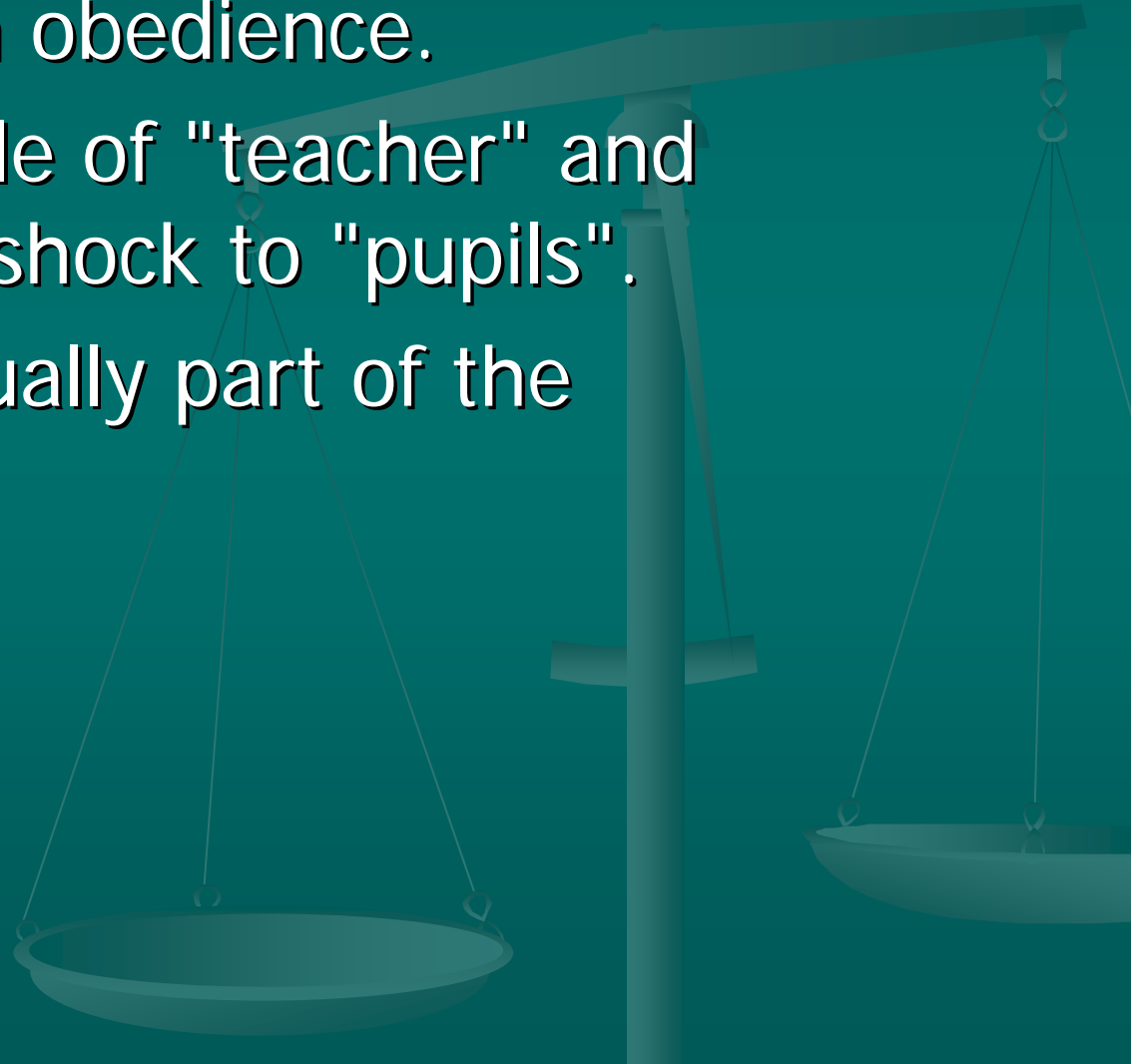
Humphreys

- Was this ethical?
- Could we have learned about this any other way?

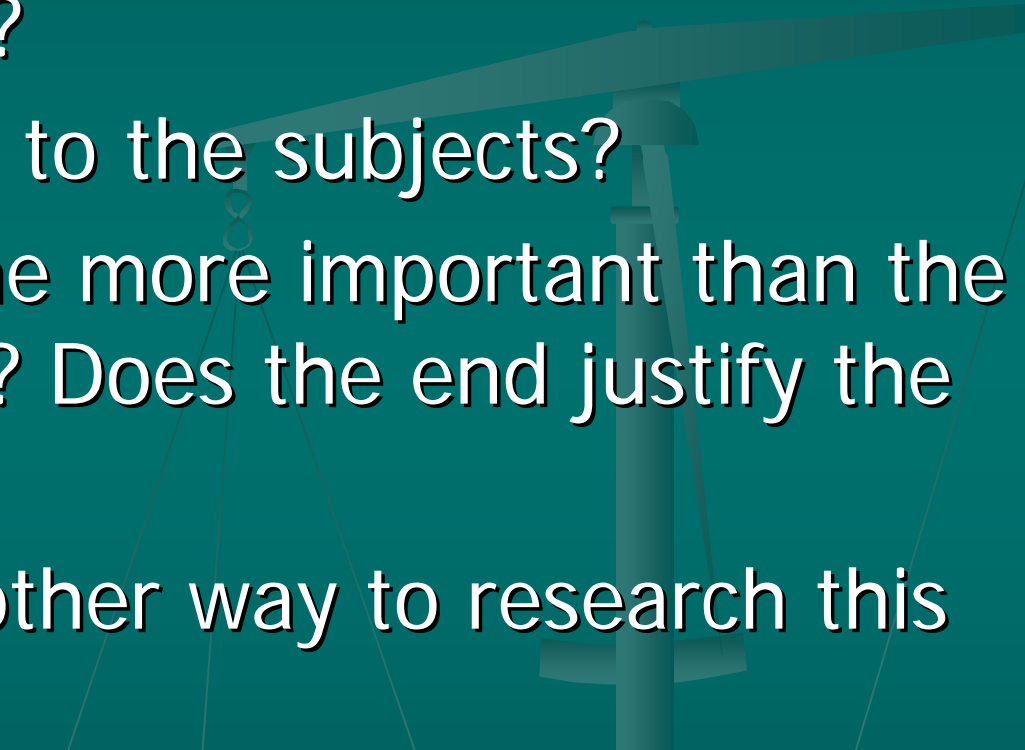


Ethical Controversy: Stanley Milgram

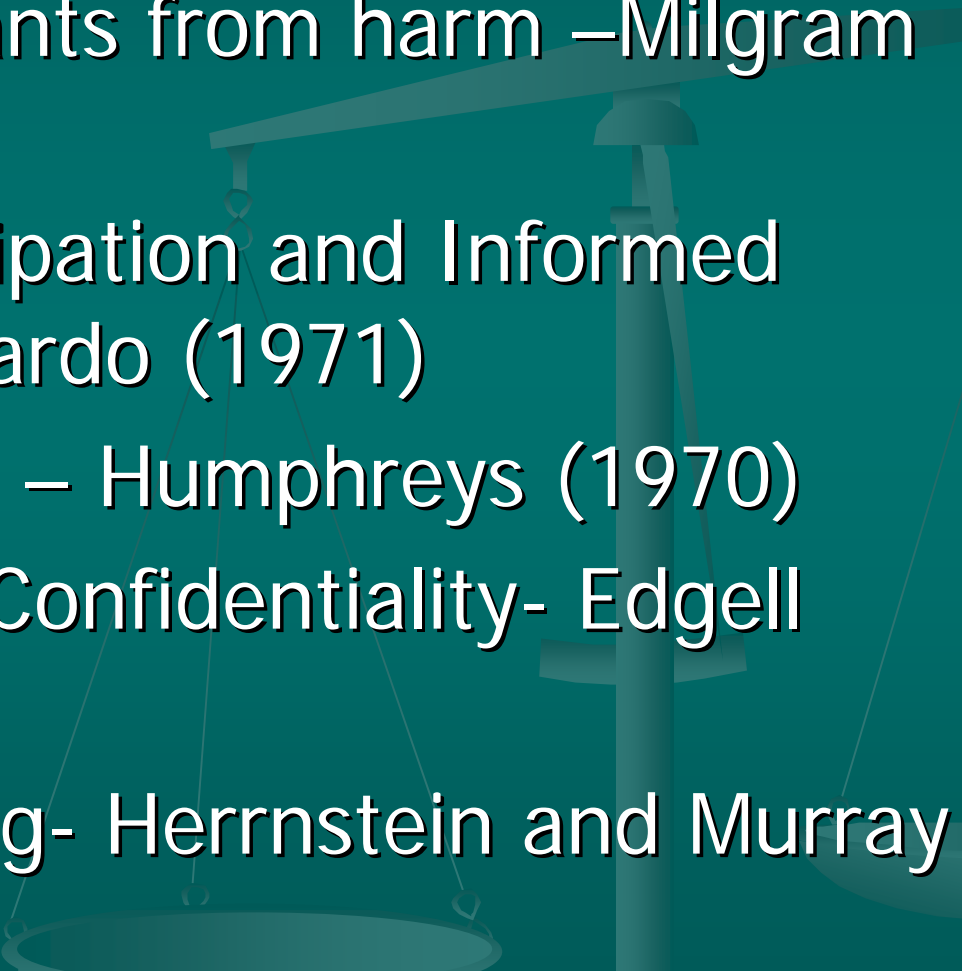
- Study of human obedience.
- Subjects had role of "teacher" and administered a shock to "pupils".
- Pupils were actually part of the experiment.



Ethical?

- Was this ethical?
 - Was there harm to the subjects?
 - Was the outcome more important than the damage caused? Does the end justify the means?
 - Was there any other way to research this topic?
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Principles Regarding Participants of Research

- Protect participants from harm –Milgram (1963)
 - Voluntary Participation and Informed Consent – Zimbardo (1971)
 - Passive Consent – Humphreys (1970)
 - Anonymity and Confidentiality- Edgell (2001)
 - Honest Reporting- Herrnstein and Murray (1994)
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Ethics and Politics of Social Research

- Ethics deals mostly with methods used in research.
- Politics deals with the substance and use of research.
- There are no formal codes of accepted political conduct.

