

Beyond the IRB: Introducing students to the complex ethical issues  
involved in modern psychological research through replication

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## Beyond the IRB: Introducing students to the complex ethical issues involved in modern psychological research through replication

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The relatively recent “replication crisis” in psychology brings new ethical concerns to the forefront (Nosek, et al., 2015). Previously, training student researchers to weigh the benefits of research against the risks, using the Institutional Review Board as the arbiter of ethical conduct, was sufficient. However, a new culture of replication exposes deeper ethical issues. The limited ability to replicate pivotal findings in the field brings serious ethical concerns of data fabrication and/or data mining. Careers and reputations can be destroyed with lack of replication, and researchers across all psychological disciplines are currently debating best practices for the future. Given the importance of this issue, academics across all research driven fields should discuss the implications for these radical changes to our science and our careers.

As researchers committed to a transparent, accurate science, we have participated in two replication initiatives over the past two years. However, as teachers, we have struggled with the best ways of introducing our students and undergraduate research assistants to these types of concerns. These issues can be difficult for students to grapple with when they are just learning to be contributing members of our scientific community. While healthy skepticism is encouraged, exposing students to the steamy underbelly of potential corruption and targeting of colleagues for review may turn them away from science. In our session, we will draw from recent psychological publications (e.g., Miguel et al., 2014; Simmons, Nelson, & Simonsohn, 2011) and our own experience as research team leaders and mentors to briefly introduce the current state of psychology’s replication debate. In addition, we will invite several of our student research assistants to share their perspectives of learning about these ethical questions. We hope to facilitate a lively discussion in which participants will grapple with the issues we are facing as a field. A round table format would be ideal to encourage ideas from multiple perspectives. How and when to broach this type of topic with students will be relevant to researchers across academia as we strive to encourage students to dive into research as a career.

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