

# ETHICS, POWER & PRIVILEGE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

Social Work Research

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## CLASS AGENDA

- Check-in: how's everyone doing?
- Facilitated discussion
- Overview of key concepts
- Learning activity
- Next steps...



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# HOW ARE YOU?

**ANY ISSUES, CONCERNS,  
CELEBRATIONS, QUESTIONS,  
PROVOCATIONS, DESIRES THAT  
WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?**

# FACILITATED DISCUSSION



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# HUMAN VS. NON-HUMAN RESEARCH

## Human Subjects

Living individuals with whom an investigator obtains data or private information through intervention or interaction for research purposes.

## Non-Human Subjects

Non-living sources such as newspapers, historical documents, clinical notes, films, buildings, and letters among other objects obtained for research purposes.



*At what point does a non-human subject become human?  
Does this change how we think about research ethics?*

# AN UNETHICAL HISTORY OF CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH ETHICS

- [Nuremberg Code of 1947](#)  
created ten points defining legitimate research.
- [National Research Act of 1974](#)  
created the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects in Biomedical and Behavioral Research.
- [The Hunter College Human Research Protection Program \(HRPP\) Office](#)

What is the IRB, why do we need it, and how is it not enough?



[Image](#) by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

# PROTECTIONIST DISCOURSES AND VULNERABLE RESEARCH POPULATIONS

- Ethical research will always minimize harm (physical and psychological) and maximize beneficence.
- Not all participants are considered equally competent nor legally allowed to consent to participate in research.
- People from vulnerable populations may be at risk of experiencing undue influence or coercion.

***How are protectionist discourses that make it difficult for certain people to participate in research both necessary and harmful?***

## Vulnerable Populations

According to Hunter College IRB “subjects that are minors, prisoners, fetuses, pregnant women or individuals that have a diminished mental capacity are considered vulnerable subjects.”

# INFORMED CONSENT

A person's **voluntary** agreement to participate in research based on **full understanding** of the research, including the possible risks and benefits involved. Often involving a consent form and/or presentation to the community.

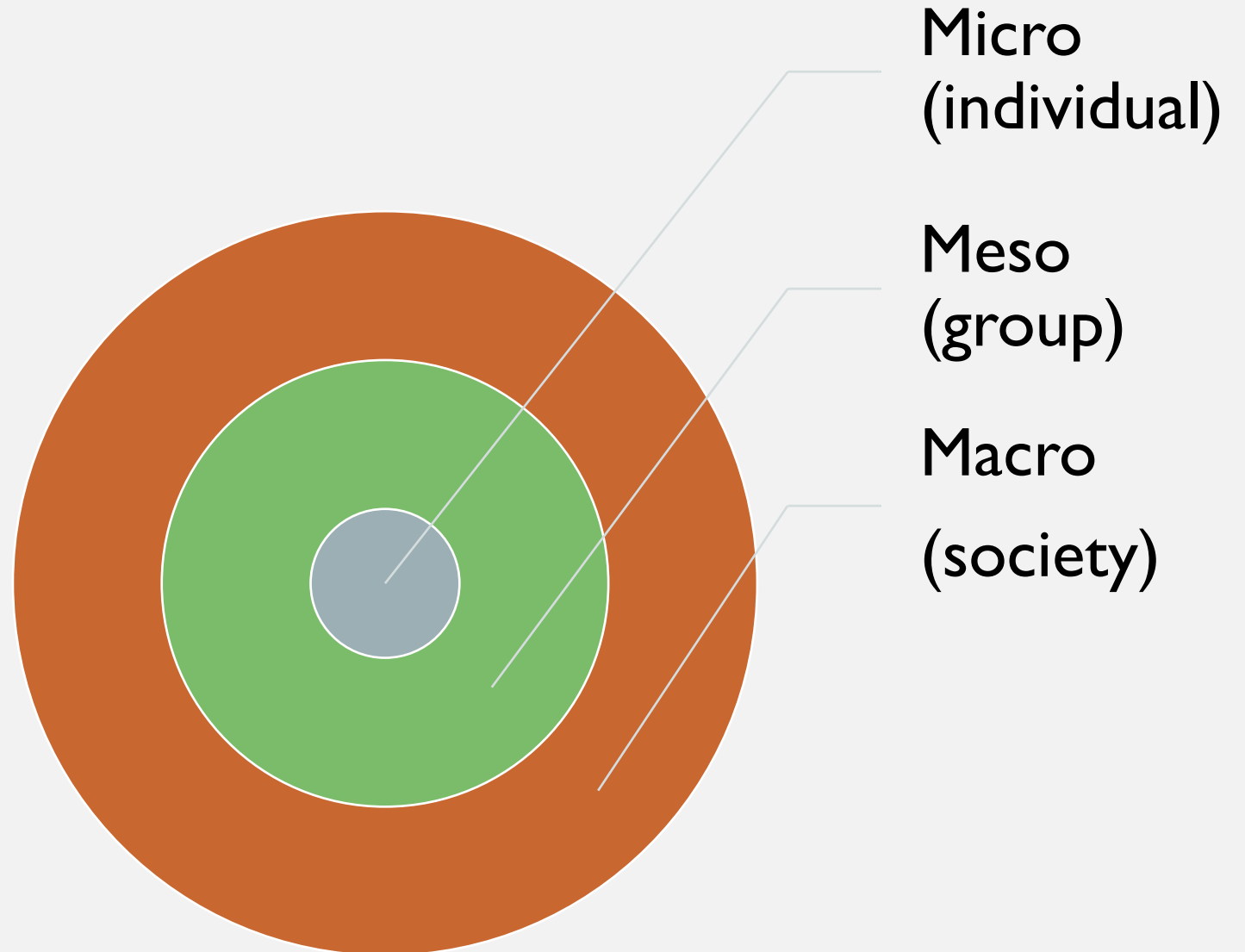
- What's the difference between anonymity and confidentiality?
- What are some unique ethical dilemmas that social workers may face?
- [Consent form from last year's MSW student research project.](#)





**ETHICS AT THE  
MICRO, MESO, AND  
MACRO LEVELS**

Social work researchers are implicated in ethical issues at all levels, sometimes multiple levels at once.



# CODE OF ETHICS

OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
SOCIAL WORKERS

## LEARNING ACTIVITY

In small groups, review the ethical scenario assigned to you and identify the ethical dilemma(s). How might you respond to this issue and why? What are the pros/cons to your decision?

## NEXT WEEK

Session	Date	Topic	Assignments Due
7	10/25	Writing and Web Design Workshop	<i>Come prepared</i>