Biological Sciences First Year Seminar on Research Ethics

Twitter & This Course

In order to encourage you to engage more fully with the course material outside of class time, we will all be using the social media site Twitter. In particular, we want you to use Twitter to post your thoughts about the course readings, ask questions when confused about those readings or other course elements, respond to your classmates' posts and questions, and *connect course topics to current events*. We assure you that making those connections will make this class far more interesting for all of us. We will be regularly checking on and responding to your tweets while using them to help us structure what we cover during class. Do feel free to follow us on Twitter (@ProfessorDEG and @ProfessorKenH). We also suggest that you use Twitter to follow not only people who share your interests but also leaders within your future fields. You may be surprised to see them post about ethical issues related to research! Very soon, you should even be able to use knowledge gained from this class to post a response to them.

For assessment purposes, you are required to tweet *a minimum of 10 times* between each class meeting. Tweets should be (1) relevant, (2) substantive, and (3) respectful. By *relevant*, we mean that it your tweet is clearly connected to some aspect of research ethics. By *substantive*, we mean more than giving generic commentary or retweeting someone else's post. For instance, do not simply say that you agree or disagree with something: go further by giving some sense of your reasoning/justification behind your position. Similarly, a relevant retweet is great, but do follow it up some interesting commentary of your own about it. By *respectful*, we mean that you critically assess the arguments others are making and not attack the person making that argument. It is fine to disagree with others—we want you to disagree, even with us!—but it is disrespectful to besmirch another person's integrity or character. Indeed, resorting to such personal attacks only suggests that your position is the one which is weak and without substance.

This means that you need access to a Twitter account. If you do not have a Twitter account—or if you prefer not to use your personal account for this class—please do not hesitate to create a new, disposable account. *We strongly encourage you to create a disposable account if for any reason you prefer not to share your personal account for classroom activities*. Indeed, you do not need to have this account connected to your real name or any other personal details. All we require is that you send us the name of the account you want us to track for this class and make sure that account's contents are publicly viewable. So even if your account is not connected to your real name, we still know to whom that account belongs for assessment purposes. Email us this information by 5:00PM on Thursday, January 16TH.

When tweeting for this course, please always use the hashtag **#RE14M3**. This hashtag is essential since we will not be checking your account's non-course-related tweets. Instead, we will be using an automated program to collect all tweets for us to read. So using that hashtag allows us to collect your course-related tweets. To summarize: if your tweet does not contain **#RE14M3**, then we will never see that tweet.

Finally, if you have any trouble using Twitter do not hesitate to seek help from one of us or one of your classmates. That said, your classmates probably know more about Twitter than we do, but we will do our best to resolve any technical issues!