



**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)  
REVIEW FORM  
FOR PROJECTS USING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

Investigators are responsible for ensuring that the rights and welfare of human subjects participating in research activities are protected, and that methods used and information provided to gain subject consent are appropriate to the research. **The IRB will review only those assignments, activities, or investigations that are defined as research.** “Research” as defined by federal administrative bodies is “a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge” (45 CFR 46.102). Course projects whose primary intent and design are pedagogical, and are not originally intended to contribute to the general body of knowledge, are not normally subject to IRB review. However, it is the position of the IRB that the individual faculty member retains ethical responsibility for the proper conduct of such instructional studies.

**All the research activities involving the use of human beings as research subjects** (participants) must be reviewed and approved by the Elon University Institutional Review Board (IRB), unless the IRB chair determines that the research falls into one or more of the categories of exemption established by federal regulation. These categories include research conducted in commonly accepted educational settings involving normal educational practices such as research on regular and special education instructional strategies, research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods. Also exempt is research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior. However, each category of exemption contains specific exceptions. Please note that only the IRB may make the determination if the research qualifies for exemption under Title 45 CFR 46.101.

**Investigators may not solicit subject participation or begin data collection until they have received approval** or written concurrence that research has been determined to be exempt from the Institutional Review Board.

**Students may not serve as Principal Investigator** on an IRB study and should work with their faculty mentor, instructor, etc as a Co-Investigator when submitting an IRB application.

**Application forms** are available on the Internet at [www.elon.edu/IRB](http://www.elon.edu/IRB). The form may be downloaded and completed but must be submitted in both electronic and hard copy due to signature requirements. If you have **questions** about the IRB application form or about the review process, contact:

**Stephen Bailey**

**Chair, IRB**

**Phone: 278 6346 /E-mail: [baileys@elon.edu](mailto:baileys@elon.edu)**

The Institutional Review Board generally meets on an ad hoc basis as proposals are submitted for review. Applicants must allow a minimum of 2 weeks for the review process. Allow for extra time if proposal is submitted during the summer or winter term. Proposals describing research that involves more than minimal risk to participants (any harm anticipated in the proposed research that is more probable or of greater magnitude than that ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests) will require a full review, which will occur during the monthly standing IRB meeting. Contact the IRB Chair for meeting times.

A notice of the IRB's action will be sent to the researcher(s). It is the responsibility of the researcher(s) to see that the form is given to any agency which may require it.

**Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 46 (45 CFR 46) Protection of Human Subjects** specifies federal regulations for the conduct of research involving human subjects. See especially sections 46.102 Definitions, 46.116 General Requirements for Informed Consent, and 46.117 Documentation of Informed Consent. The document is available at <http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm>. See references throughout this application to 45 CFR 46.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Your responses to the 20 questions in the summary sheets that follow are basic to the Institutional Review Board's determination about the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects in your research. Your responses should be clear, complete, and easy to understand.

Place your typewritten response immediately under each question (not on a separate sheet). It is important that you answer every question. If you believe that a question does not apply to your research, enter a response such as "N/A" or "does not apply."

Copies of the following must be included with this form:

1. The letter/script that will be used to inform participants of the nature of the research.
2. The informed consent template the subject(s) will sign (samples appropriate to behavioral and biomedical research are available at [www.elon.edu/IRB](http://www.elon.edu/IRB)).
3. Copies of surveys, instruments or measures, questionnaires, interview schedules, focus group questions and/or other materials used to collect data.

**Submit one complete hard copy and one digital copy (as a .docx or .pdf file, via e-mail or disk) to:**

**Stephen Bailey  
Chair, IRB  
2085 CB**

**[\(baileys@elon.edu\)](mailto:baileys@elon.edu)**

<b>Title Page: Review Form for Projects Using Human Subjects</b>
<b>Elon University</b>

<i>For office use only</i>
<b>PROTOCOL NUMBER:</b>
<b>PROTOCOL TYPE:</b>
<b>Exempted    Expedited    Full</b>

Research Project Title	An Ethnography of the Gaming Community in Burlington, NC	
<b><u>Principal Investigator</u></b> <u>Note: Students cannot serve as PI</u>  University Relationship: (Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Instructor, Other (please specify)  Click here to enter text.  ("Other" categories may require prior approval.)	Name (first, middle initial, last):  Tom Mould	Campus Box/Phone:  CB 2035 / (336) 278-5746
	Department:  Anthropology	E-mail:  tmould@elon.edu
	Signature:Click here to enter text.  Date:Click here to enter text.	Fax:  Click here to enter text.
<b><u>Co-Investigator</u></b>  University Relationship: (Faculty, Staff, Graduate Student, Undergraduate Student, Other (please specify))  Student	Name (first, middle initial, last):  Erika L. Lassiter	Campus Box/Phone:  CB 8627/ (336) 675-6314
	Department:  Anthropology	E-mail:  elassiter@elon.edu
	Signature:Click here to enter text.  Date:Click here to enter text.	Fax:  Click here to enter text.

IF MORE THAN ONE CO-INVESTIGATOR, PROCEED TO NEXT PAGE

<p><b><u>Co-Investigator</u></b></p> <p>University Relationship: (Faculty, Staff, Graduate Student, Undergraduate Student, Other (please specify))</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>	<p>Name (first, middle initial, last):</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>	<p>Campus Box/Phone:</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>
	<p>Department:</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>	<p>E-mail:</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>
	<p>Signature:Click here to enter text.</p> <p>Date:Click here to enter text.</p>	<p>Fax:</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>

<p><b><u>Co-Investigator</u></b></p> <p>University Relationship: (Faculty, Staff, Graduate Student, Undergraduate Student, Other (please specify))</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>	<p>Name (first, middle initial, last):</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>	<p>Campus Box/Phone:</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>
	<p>Department:</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>	<p>E-mail:</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>
	<p>Signature:Click here to enter text.</p> <p>Date:Click here to enter text.</p>	<p>Fax:</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>

<p><b><u>Co-Investigator</u></b></p> <p>University Relationship: (Faculty, Staff, Graduate Student, Undergraduate Student, Other (please specify))</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>	<p>Name (first, middle initial, last):</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>	<p>Campus Box/Phone:</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>
	<p>Department:</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>	<p>E-mail:</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>
	<p>Signature:Click here to enter text.</p> <p>Date:Click here to enter text.</p>	<p>Fax:</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>

**NOTE: If more than four co-investigators will be listed, copy box on form and fill in additional information as needed.**

**Application Questions**  
**Please type your responses.**

**INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPOSED RESEARCH**

1. Provide the **date** when you propose to begin research and the date when you anticipate that research will be completed.

Proposed start date: September 11, 2009      Anticipated completion date: December 15, 2009

2. Indicate any source(s) of **funding** for the proposed research i.e., department funds or grants.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH**

3. Provide a brief (1 page or less) description of the **purpose** of your research.

As students at Elon University, we are working as a group to produce a video ethnography on the topic of gaming. Gaming is where players assume fictional roles, as in RPGs, but unlike RPGs huge numbers of players interact with each other in their own virtual reality. This research will be conducted primarily for a college course at Elon University. However, we also plan to deposit a copy of the video in Elon's Program for Ethnographic Research and Documentary Studies (PERCS) for use by faculty, students, and any interested public. Our goal is to depict what it means to be part of this culture. We will be focusing on the events, language and symbolic interactionism that gamers share in common. We will be talking to a number of people involved in gaming in Burlington N.C. to get a broad understanding of the community and activity. Our key form of research will come from immersing ourselves in the gaming community and being actively involved in their activities. We are hoping to bridge the gap of gaming awareness and make this research relatable to anyone who enjoys gaming.

4. Indicate the **setting or location(s)** where research will be conducted. Attach letters of support or agreement, as necessary, showing that you have permission to conduct research at that location. If you are interacting with human subjects outside of the United States, describe what procedures are required to adhere to the human subjects mandates for the country where data collection will take place.

Fieldwork will be conducted in Burlington N.C. No formal permission is required for such fieldwork, nor is such permission relevant, as individuals choose to participate or not based on their own interests.

5. Does the proposed research require that you **deceive** participants in any way?

Yes                       No

6. If your response is "yes," describe the type of **deception** you will use, indicate why it is necessary for this study, and provide a copy of the debriefing script.

7. Describe **in detail** what will happen to or be required of subjects in your investigation.

(include a description of any instruments used, sample of questionnaires, focus group questions, etc.)

Participants volunteer as active members of the community under study. They are part of this research if they voluntarily agree to talk to researchers and invite them into their lives to observe them in the course of their daily lives. The research design will incorporate a traditional ethnographic toolkit and methodology including immersion in the lives of our research population. This research emphasizes culture rather than individuals. It will involve keeping detailed field notes, using a tape recorder for informal and semi-structured interviews, and photographic equipment to record public life with appropriate permission. The field notes will be taken on a daily basis. The taped interviews will be transcribed and incorporated in my field notes. Interviews will be conducted formally and informally. The semi-structured interviews will evolve from focused observations and will include open-ended questions.

During interviews, questions will be based on the subject's views and ideas about gaming and what it is like to be a gamer. Specific questions cannot be established prior to the ethnographic experience because ethnography is an iterative process. The questions in both formal and informal interviews will evolve through time and will be modified by the research setting. Video will be of public behavior of groups of people and/or individuals with the intent for use in a video documentary. Approval will always be sought prior to shooting. A written consent form will be given to people who are videotaped as primary subjects, as in the case of interviews.

### **RISKS AND BENEFITS**

8. Describe any **potential physical or psychological risks or problems** that a research participant may encounter by participating in this investigation. Also describe how you plan to minimize these risks. Examples of risks and problems include but are not limited to physical injury, painful simulation, deception, coercion, embarrassment, lack of confidentiality, lack of full disclosure, and lack of feedback for subjects. If appropriate, include a description of any special qualification or training by investigators that will be used to minimize risk for the subject (e.g. CPR certification).

There is no additional risk involved in this study for the research population. We are guided by the Elon IRB and the "Statement of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association" which states: "My paramount responsibility is to those involved in the study and everything within my power will be done to protect their physical, social, psychological welfare and to honor their dignity and privacy" (from Podolefsky 1989:214).

9. Describe the **potential benefits** of conducting this research. List the benefits to the participants themselves, contributions to the field of knowledge, and benefits to society as a whole. If the research participants will not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study, indicate this in your response.

There are no real or potential benefits to the research population other than the production of documents that are relevant to their culture. Specifically, we will be sending copies of the video ethnography to primary participants in the study.

### **PARTICIPANTS**

10. Indicate the total **number of participants** you require, and your sampling procedure.

Ethnographic research depends upon a convenience sample where informants are chosen based on their professed cultural knowledge of a particular topic and a community recognized proficiency in the culture. The researchers will traverse the three stages of participant-observation: entry into the community via both individual initiative and go-betweens within the community, who then introduce the researchers to informants, establishing rapport and understanding the culture. We will then work most closely with key informants who exhibit the most extensive knowledge of the community and who are willing to work with us. While this work does not require a specific number of participants, we expect to talk to between 5-10 people.

11. Do you plan to use vulnerable subjects in your investigation? \_\_\_ Yes  No

***Examples of vulnerable subjects include students, children, prisoners, pregnant women, mentally disabled persons, or economically disadvantaged persons.***

12. Describe **the type and source of subjects** required (i.e., single parents at Elon, psychology classes, patients at Alamance Regional Medical Center, sixth graders at Turrentine Middle School, etc.).

Please see #10. In particular, we expect to talk to people who have been a part of the gaming community anywhere from a few months to a few years. Most of our participants will be above the age of 18 with the exception of a few minors that we will be gathering consent forms from.

13. Provide an estimate of the **amount of time** that will be requested from each person who participates in this research study (number of sessions, amount of time per session, and duration of period of time over which the research will take place).

The time each participant will spend will vary. Some participants may agree to a single, brief interview. Others will become active participants in the research process and work with our team throughout the semester.

### **INFORMED CONSENT PROCEDURES**

14. Describe what you have done to make sure your subjects are **fully informed** about their role in the research, that their confidentiality will be maintained, and that their participation is **voluntary**, and that they can withdraw at any time without penalty. Include a description of how and by whom consent will be sought from subjects.

Informed consent will be given in writing with subjects signing the Consent Form (see attached Consent Form). The names and identities of participants will *not* be anonymous or confidential. The research gathered in this study falls within the domain of expressive culture, where aesthetic elements and individual virtuosity are communally and publicly performed. Accordingly, it would be unethical to mask the names of these performers who often take great pride in what they do. We will be identifying individuals by name and image. We will clearly identify the speaker and retain record of his or her name with the material. In cases where the interviewee asks to delete information, we will respect his or her wishes according to the following guidelines: If the speaker asks that what they say remain confidential before they speak, we will stop recording; if the speaker asks that the discussion of certain topics be omitted after the interview has taken place, we will delete those entire sections on the tape and from my notes.

15. Describe any **incentives, inducements, or reimbursements** (e.g. extra credit, research credit, cash payment, raffle, and gift) that will be offered to the participants. Indicate whether participants will receive the incentives if they withdraw before the study has been completed.

NA

**CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE DATA**

16. Indicate the **intended use** of your data. Check all that apply.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Publication/journal article                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Capstone                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Results released to participants/parents   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate honors project         | <input type="checkbox"/> Results released to employer or school     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conferences/presentations | <input type="checkbox"/> Results released to agency or organization |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other. Describe below.    |   |

We will be using the data to produce a video ethnography. This video will be shown publically and will be available online through the PERCS website. Copies of the video will be given to participating community members.

17. Describe the steps you will take to insure the **confidentiality** of the data. Indicate how you will safeguard data that includes identifying or potentially identifying information (e.g. coding). Indicate when identifiers will be separated or removed from the data.

Please see #14 above.

18. Indicate where and how you will **store** the data and how long you plan to retain it. (Research proposals that involve any type of use of human subjects must be retained for 3 years.) Describe how you will dispose of it (e.g. erasure of tapes, shredding of data).

Please see #14 above. This data will be made available to the community as well as the research team. It will not be disposed of.

19. Will results of this research be **made available** to the subjects involved?

- Yes       No

20. If so, **how and when?**

Community members will be invited to a screening of the video on campus in December during exam week. Afterwards, copies of the video will be given to participating community members.



Elon University Consent to Participate in a Research Study

IRB Study # \_\_\_\_\_

Consent Form Version Date: September 2009

Title of Study: An Ethnography of the Gaming Community in Burlington NC

Principal Faculty Investigator: Dr. Tom Mould, Associate Professor of Anthropology

Principal Student Investigator: Erika Lassiter

Elon University Department: Sociology/Anthropology

Phone Number: Tom Mould: (336) 278-5746

Co-Investigators: Erika Lassiter (336) 675-6314

As students at Elon University, we are working towards developing an understanding of the gaming community and the traditions and values shared among its members. We will be talking to a wide range of people involved in or knowledgeable of gaming to get a broad understanding of the community and activity over the course of three months.

We will be identifying you by name in the research in order to credit you for your comments, interview, and/or performance. Since the research will be archived, future researchers may quote your comments, interview and/or performance in their own studies. We do not foresee any specific risks or benefits to your participation in this study other than from the effects of publicizing your group and activities to a general audience.

Your participation is voluntary and unpaid. You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at Elon University, North Carolina. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Chairman of the IRB, Stephen Bailey at [baileys@elon.edu](mailto:baileys@elon.edu) or 336-278-6431.

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Addition for Minors

I represent that I am the parent and/or guardian of the minor who has signed above or is the participant in the program. I agree that we both shall be bound by this agreement.

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_