



**University of La Verne Institutional Review Board
Policy and Procedure on Oral History and Similar Research
Approved February 10, 2017**

According to the revised Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, 82 FR 7149, effective 1/19/2018, “scholarly and journalistic activities (e.g., oral history, journalism, biography, literary criticism, legal research, and historical scholarship), including the collection and use of information, that focus directly on the specific individuals about whom the information is collected” (whether audio, visual, or written) are not considered research under this policy. Therefore, the above categories of scholarly activities are not subject to review from Institutional Research Boards whose charge is to review “research involving human subjects”. This means that scholars involved in these activities no longer have to apply for approval to the La Verne IRB. Further clarification from the Federal Policy regarding its rationale concludes that these activities already have their own codes of ethics (for example, standard consents in oral history) to ensure fidelity of information collected. From an ethical standpoint, it is not a requirement to protect people in these activities from “public scrutiny”.

Other activities common to anthropology/sociology such as participant observation and ethnographies may also fall under this exception. However, an important commonality in the exempt activities is the focus on a single individual; these projects do not attempt to generalize to others. If participant observation or ethnographies seek to study individuals to apply the findings to “the studied participant or group, and not just the individuals from whom the information was obtained”, these activities do “fall within the scope of the definition of research” and are not exempt. It is recommended that exemption of related activities (participant observation, ethnographies) be handled on a case-to-case basis, depending on whether the study in question intends to draw generalizable conclusions about the community sampled.

While this document is written to be in compliance with the regulations effective 1/19/2018, the policies contained herein are effective immediately.