When research involves “human subjects,” the IRB (Internal Review Board) process is required. IRB allegedly provides protection to human subjects through a series of requirements imposed on the researcher. There are at least 2 problems with IRB: 1) some of the IRB requirements actually may place “subjects” at risk and 2) there is no consideration of protection for the researcher (despite some well-documented risks). An additional problem arises when researchers become paid consultants; their research may cater to the goals of those who hired them even if this creates conflict among colleagues and subjects at the site of research. Finally, there is little if any information regarding how to prepare for risks while in the field.

This talk will cover some of the most pressing ethical concerns for academics engaged in consulting and research in international settings (including safety for researchers and subjects, ethical quandaries, and guidelines for work in risky settings).