

Information for Participation in Psychology Experiments

This handout explains the research participation requirement in your class. Immediately below is a list of the topics covered in this handout.

- **What is the reason for the research participation requirement?**
- **What exactly is required?**
- **Are there any options?**
- **How do I go about meeting the requirement?**

What is the reason for the research participation requirement? Just as biology students often do dissections and chemistry students often conduct classic laboratory experiments, psychology students learn about research partly by participating in it. In psychology, however, where the topics include human cognition, emotion, and behavior, one can learn about research partly by being the subject of it. When you participate in several studies during the quarter, you will see how psychologists collect data and what it feels like to be the 'object' of study. You will be able to talk with researchers about what they're doing and why. Besides being educational, your participation is very important to researchers -- faculty members, doctoral students, and undergraduate honors students -- who depend on human participants to advance their research programs. UCD's Psychology Department has an excellent reputation for research, and this reputation could not be sustained without the help of "human subjects," as psychologists call their research participants. Members of the Department will be very grateful for your help.

What exactly is required? You need to earn five credits by participating in approximately five hours of research (or submit brief papers as described below). This usually means participating in five studies during the quarter, although some studies may offer more than one credit (if they take more than an hour of your time). The first of the five hours' worth of credits can be obtained by completing an on-line background questionnaire which will be used by some of the researchers (see below for details). **Each credit is worth 1% of your grade, for a total of 5%. YOU MUST COMPLETE YOUR CREDITS (or papers) BEFORE THE FINAL EXAM. HOWEVER, MOST EXPERIMENTS ARE CLOSED BY THE LAST WEEK OF CLASSES. START THESE EARLY!**

Are there any options? If for any reason you do not wish to participate in five hours' worth of research studies, you may write brief papers instead. See below for information on writing papers.

How do I go about meeting the requirement? At your earliest convenience, go to www.experimetrix.com/ucdavis:

1. Click on '**log in**' and type in your login and password
 - a. Your login consists of the **last 6 digits of your student number**
 - b. Your password is **your last name followed by the last 4 digits of your student number (all lower case)**

2. In the next screen choose Edit Your Course Selection and pick the psychology class(es) you are taking and press “Apply Changes.” You are now free to sign up for experiments.

Once you sign up for experiments, you will be sent a reminder via e-mail to your UC Davis e-mail address. You may also add an alternative address. **DO NOT CHANGE YOUR STUDENT NUMBER OR YOUR NAME.** This information matches your class roster. **If you make changes to your student number or name, your research credit will not be applied to your class.**

How to Sign Up for Experiments

1. Go to the web site (<http://www.experimetrix.com/ucdavis>) and click on 'sign up', or if you are already logged in, click on “Sign up for Experiments.”
2. Scroll down the list of experiments until you find one you are interested in and click on View Schedule.
3. On the experiment page, look at the experiment information at the top of the page and make sure you are eligible to participate. Some experiments have restrictions on who can participate (e.g., only women, only students who have completed the prescreening questionnaire).
4. On the experiment page you will see a list of times you can sign up for. Click on one of these times and then enter your login and password to sign up. NOTE: Make sure you WRITE DOWN the **time** and **location** of the experiment (e.g., in your personal calendar).

You can participate in experiments up to the last day of instruction in the quarter. After that day, you can check your credits, but you will not be permitted to sign up for any more experiments.

New experiments are posted throughout the quarter, depending on when individual experimenters are ready to start collecting data. We recommend checking back every week or so to see what's new. *And don't wait until the last minute: End-of-the-quarter sessions tend to fill up quickly!* If you wait until the last minute, you may be faced with an unpleasant surprise when there are few experiments available or the sessions are all filled. In that case, you will need to write one or two papers to pass the requirement.

Earning your first credit. Several experiments require that you first complete a prescreening questionnaire. This questionnaire can be completed online at any time. It is listed as Experiment RUN BY GINA SUTIN (I DO NOT KNOW THE NUMBER AT THIS TIME. You do not need to use Experimetrix to sign up for this experiment. Simply go to: <http://psyweb2.ucdavis.edu/prescreen>. Once you complete this questionnaire online, you will be credited 1 unit and can sign up for any experiment that lists this experiment as a prerequisite. Your completion of this questionnaire is very helpful to researchers in the Psychology Department.

Receiving Credit for Experiments

By signing up for an experiment, you are promising to show up on time and be a conscientious participant. If something comes up and you cannot make your appointment, you may cancel online up to 24 hours prior to your appointment. *The computer will not allow you to cancel less than 24 hours prior to your appointment.*

After you have completed the experiment, the researcher will record your participation on the Experimetrix system (please allow 48 hours for your credit to be recorded). *If you miss your appointment or are more than 10 minutes late, you will be penalized one credit.* You may check your credits (and penalties) anytime by logging onto the Experimetrix website. Your net credit will always be calculated by subtracting your Penalties from your Earned Credits.

Our researchers are bound by their commitments, just as you are. If a researcher cancels an experiment less than 24 hours prior to your appointment, shows up more than 10 minutes late for an appointment, or fails to show up, you will receive credit for that experiment, regardless of whether you participate or not.

Within 48 hours of participating in a study, your credit (or penalty) will be recorded in the Experimetrix system. Experiments that last one hour or less are worth one credit; experiments that run more than one hour, but not more than two are worth two credits; and so on. You can check your total credits (and penalties) each time you log in. You are responsible for ensuring that your credits are correct. As part of this handout, we have provided a credit form. **Bring this form to all your experiments.** This is your only receipt for participation. If you notice that your credits on the computer are incorrect, you need to show the SP Coordinator (spcoordinator@ucdavis.edu) your credit form to fix the problem. Your credit form is YOUR ONLY PROOF of how many credits you have truly earned; **no other proof or explanation will be accepted.** KEEP YOUR CREDIT FORM IN A VERY SAFE PLACE!

You must **assign** your credits to **specific** classes. You can do this by logging in and selecting "Assign Credits To Your Courses." This page will show you how many credits you have earned and which classes you have selected. Each credit can be assigned to only *one* class. You can distribute your credits between your classes as you like. (Except for Experiment 170, which can count in more than one class, you cannot use the same experiment for two or more classes.) This is the only way your professors know which credits belong to their class. If you do not assign your credits (even if you are only taking one psychology class), your professor will not know that you have completed the requirement for his/her class. This means that you will receive an **incomplete**, even though you satisfied the requirement. Remember, you must **assign** your research credits to **specific** classes.

If you have additional questions, please check the Frequently Asked Questions page. Select '**help me**' on the main page (<http://www.experimetrix.com/ucdavis>) to view the list of frequently asked questions. Guidelines, policies, and a comprehensive FAQ page can also be found on-line at: <http://psyweb2.ucdavis.edu/experimetrix> . If your question is not addressed, feel free to contact Gina Sutin at spcoordinator@ucdavis.edu.

Paper Assignments

If you choose not to participate in the experiments (or you could not find time to participate) you should complete the paper assignments discussed below. **Each paper that you write is worth 2 experimental credits, or 2% of your course grade. Thus, you have the following options:**

- 1.) Do five experiments
- 2.) Do one paper and 3 experiments
- 3.) Do two papers and 1 experiment
- 4.) Do three papers

The goal of these assignments is to get you thinking about how to test a research question using both correlational and experimental studies. **For each paper**, you should select one of the following research topics, then respond to the seven questions/statements that appear below about each topic. You should write in prose style rather than just answering each question point by point. The paper should be 1-2 pages in length (double-spaced).

First, select 1 of these topics:

Research Topic 1: The relationship between number of tattoos and frequency of dating.

Research Topic 2: The relationship between alcohol consumption and academic performance.

Research Topic 3: The relationship between time spent playing violent video games and aggression.

Research Topic 4: The relationship between the physical attractiveness of a political candidate and voters' opinions of him/her.

Research Topic 5: The relationship between degree of identification with one's racial group and prejudice expressed toward other racial groups.

Research Topic 6: The relationship between frequency of sexual activity before marriage and satisfaction with marriage.

Research Topic 7: The relationship between effort spent to join a group and commitment to that group.

Second, respond to the following directions/questions about each of the 2 topics you choose:

1. Design a correlational study to investigate the relationship between these two variables. What is your hypothesis? How will you operationally define and measure the two variables? Be specific about how you would measure your variables.
2. How will you obtain a random sample of participants?
3. Assume that your study produces a correlation of .46 (or -.46) between the two variables. What are at least three possible explanations for this relationship? (Hint: Remember the lecture on 3 possible interpretations of any correlation)
4. Now design an experimental study to investigate these variables. What is your hypothesis? What is the advantage of your experimental design over the correlational design?
5. What is your independent variable? What is your dependent variable? Be specific about your manipulation(s) and how you will measure your dependent variable.
6. How will you make sure that the study has high internal validity? Is the study high in psychological realism or not?
7. Do any ethical concerns about the treatment of participants emerge from your experimental design?