

RESEARCH PRACTICUM IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY (PSY 4100-062)

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Office Hours: M/W 2-3:30pm
or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

In this course you will be directly involved with various stages of the research process in social psychology. You will learn answers to questions such as:

- How do we develop new research ideas?
- How do we incorporate social psychological theory into our research ideas?
- How do we design an efficient experiment that stringently tests our hypotheses?
- How do we know what to do after our study is completed?

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A PRACTICUM STUDENT

Throughout the semester you will take on a number of important duties as a practicum student. You will work with Dr. Rose, social psychology graduate students, as well as with other undergraduate students. In general, you can expect to contribute 3 hours per week for every 1 credit hour you are registered for. Your schedule should be open and flexible enough to accommodate your commitment to this research practicum experience.

It is expected that you...

- Attend weekly lab meetings. There will be weekly lab meetings throughout the semester. During these meetings you will be introduced to new research ideas and be expected to update the lab on the progress of your ongoing project. Issues relevant to your career such as the graduate school application process and topics covering the technological demands of the field will also be addressed. It is expected that lab members attend EVERY meeting.
- Enter/code data. An important step in the research process is the entering and coding of data. Basically, research participants will provide us with their thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Afterwards, we need to translate this information into numbers for data analysis. Thus, data entry/coding help us make the transition from a heap of raw data collected in our research rooms to the condensed findings that we report to other researchers at conferences and in research articles. This step requires great care and vigilance. This is the “not-so-glamorous” step in the research process—but—it is also one of the most critical. At some point in the semester, everyone in the lab (including Dr. Rose) will be involved in data entry and data coding.
- Collaborate with others. One nice aspect of being in a research lab is that it offers an opportunity to connect with like-minded others in Psychology (others who are interested in graduate school, research, etc.). This interaction occurs in lab meetings and during data coding. This is a time to let your geeky-psychology side out in the open!
- Collect data. Data collection is the most important responsibility of being a practicum student. If data is not collected correctly, the research project dies there. It is important to remember that the success or failure of our research projects will have a significant impact on the professional lives for all people in the lab (faculty, graduate students, undergrads). As such, we rely heavily on you in the data collection stage of the research process and we always appreciate your efforts. Data collection can involve:
 - Being an experimenter (in charge of a research session involving subjects)
 - Playing the role of a confederate (someone who pretends to be another subject)

As an experimenter (or confederate), it is imperative that your study be ready to go when participants arrive. To ensure that everything is set up *before* the study start time, please arrive early so that you have time to set up the study and prepare the necessary materials. Also, when running studies, keep an eye out for problems and be pro-active in finding solutions. Finally, experimenters are expected to dress professionally when running participants.

COURSE GRADING

It is absolutely critical that your contribution to the lab is **reliable, responsible, and productive**. This is essential as it will yield the best data possible—thus providing us with an opportunity to advance the science of psychology. On a more pragmatic side, these factors will also be a big determinant of your course grade. The primary criteria for your final grade in this course will be your consistent performance throughout the semester—including your lab meeting and experiment attendance.

I should also note that this is not a typical course and therefore does not follow a typical grading scheme. You will not be allowed to “idle” through this course and be comfortable with an average grade. As mentioned above, reliability and productivity will be the primary criteria for your grade, and lapses in either are not acceptable. As I expect you all to be the top performers at UT, I start out with the assumption that all students will receive an A in this course. Poor performance will result in significant grade reductions. If you have any questions about your grade at any time during the semester, please come talk to me.

Schedule of Tentative Lab Meeting Topics and Events

Date	Topic
1/13	Introduction and Orientation
1/20	Training/Misc.
1/27	How do researchers get their ideas?
2/3	Social Psychology Conference; no lab meeting
2/10	Training/Misc.
2/17	Research Presentation (Jill)
2/24	Graduate School Overview
3/2	Research Presentation (Jason)
3/9	Spring Break (no meeting or lab hours)
3/16	Ethics/Misc.
3/23	Graduate School Materials
3/30	Research Presentation (Barb)
4/6	Research Presentation (Heather)
4/13	Honors project Presentation (Juliana)
4/20	Graduate Student Posters
4/27	Wrap-up and summary

NOTE: We will not meet during Finals week, nor will you have Practicum duties. Note also that the exact time/day of our lab meetings is tentative and will be determined via scheduling.