

Psy 105 Experimental Participation Requirement

Information for Students

The Psychology Department has an experimental participation requirement for students enrolled in General Psychology. This adds a component to the course that cannot be accomplished in the classroom. Because faculty and students in our department conduct original research, you will have the opportunity to learn first-hand how research in psychology is designed, carried out, and interpreted. An important part your participation involves learning how generalizations about human thought and behavior are made. The experimenter will discuss the design and hypotheses of the research with you and answer any questions that you may have.

Requirement. Each student in General Psychology is required to participate in *three hours' worth of approved experiments*. These hours can be completed in ½ hour increments (i.e., each study will count for at least ½ hour). Any exercises that take place during class time do not count toward fulfillment this requirement. It is your responsibility to make sure that you satisfy this requirement, and your instructor will decide how this factors into your course grade.

Ethical Review. All experiments are carefully reviewed by faculty members in the Psychology Department to ensure that they follow the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association. This includes obtaining your informed consent, maintaining anonymity and confidentiality, and allowing you to terminate your participation at any time without penalty. For this reason, only experiments that are approved by the Psychology Department qualify toward fulfillment of this requirement; if you have questions about whether an experiment will count, ask your instructor.

Finding Experiments. Information on approved experiments will be located on the table just outside of the General Psychology classroom (Esbenshade 263). You will find a written description of each experiment—including the amount of credit that it is worth (e.g., ½ hr, 1 hr, 1 ½ hrs, ...)—along with either a signup sheet of available times or details on how you may contact the experimenter to sign up. Experimenters will be instructed to leave signup sheets in the folder until after the experiment is finished, but you should not count on this. When you sign up for a time, *be sure to make a note of the date, time, and location of the experiment as well as the experimenter's name and phone number.*

Receiving Credit. Experimenters will sign your card to indicate the amount of credit that you have earned (½ hour per line that is signed on your card) and maintain lists of participants in each section of General Psychology. When you arrive at an experiment, make sure that your card is signed and that your name is added to the list being compiled for your professor.

No-Show Policy. Experimenters will also maintain a list of individuals who fail to show up for a scheduled time without phoning in advance. Those students will be responsible for participating in *one additional hour of experiments* for each experiment that they missed. Likewise, if an experimenter fails to show up for a scheduled time without phoning the participant(s) in advance, he or she must award full credit for the experiment.

Availability of Experiments. Most experimenters are not ready to start conducting their research early in the semester, so you should not expect to see many experiments until mid-semester, and then increasing numbers of experiments will become available. If, after making every effort to sign up for approved experiments, you find yourself at the end of the semester without having completed the experimental participation requirement, you should use the alternative means for fulfilling the requirement (see below or check with your instructor for details). *It would be wise to periodically check for new experiments so that you can choose those in which you are most interested to satisfy the requirement.*

Alternative Means for Fulfilling the Requirement. If for any reason you do not wish to participate, or if there are not enough experiments available, you may fulfill some or all of the requirement in one of two ways. First, you may learn about the research process by attending the presentations of upper-level psychology research classes. The dates and times of these sessions will be announced once they are scheduled. Second, you may simulate the role of an experimental participant by writing a short (1 to 2 page) paper describing a psychological experiment from the perspective of a participant. *Each research class you attend or paper you write will take the place of one hours' worth of experimental participation.*

Questions. If you would like more information or clarification of this course requirement, ask your professor or contact the Research Coordinator, Dr. Amanda Price (pricea@etown.edu).