

General Psychology Student Guidelines for Participating in Research Fall 2009

- **Requirement:**

All Gustavus General Psychology students are required to participate in research experiences carried out by Gustavus Psychology faculty members and students. Students are expected to accumulate 4 credits of research experience (note that online surveys are valued at .5 whereas “live” experiences carry at least 1 credit). You will have a variety of research studies throughout the semester from which to choose and will be expected to complete these experiences on your own outside of class.

Participating in these research experiences is typically enjoyable and provides a sense of the kinds of psychological science going on in the Gustavus Psychology Department. Moreover, your participation is critical for the advance of psychological science. Most of the findings psychologists discover (and report in psychological journals and your textbook, for example) are the result of studies that involved undergraduate students just like you!

- **How and where to sign up:**

Notices of research opportunities are posted online at: <http://gustavus.sona-systems.com/>. To sign up to participate you need to log in to this site using the password provided to you via e-mail, and add your name to the list that corresponds to the research study you choose. When you sign up to participate, you must take note of three things: 1) the **title of the experiment**, 2) the **date and time**, 3) the **location**. Write these things down so you have them for later. You are also encouraged to write down the phone number and/or e-mail of the experimenter in charge in case you need to contact him/her.

- **How to receive credit for participating:**

Credit is awarded by the researcher and is tracked by the research administrator (Psychology Department Administrative Assistant, Lee Sande). Participants do not need to do anything beyond their participation to receive credit. If you have concerns about the points you've been awarded, you should talk first to your General Psychology instructor.

- **Extra credit:**

Students who wish to participate in additional research experiences (beyond the 4 required) will receive extra credit for doing so. Each additional experience will be worth 3 extra credit points. Although you can participate in as many research experiences as you desire, you may earn no more than 9 extra credit points for doing so.

- **Participant responsibilities and rights:**

When you sign your name to an experiment sign-up sheet you are making a commitment to show up for the experiment and take it seriously. If an emergency arises that prevents your attendance, you are responsible for notifying the experimenter listed on the sign-up sheet. Students who show a pattern of missing experiments will lose the opportunity to participate and thus will lack the points necessary to fulfill the research requirement of the course.

As a research participant you should expect to be fully informed of the tasks you will be asked to complete before the experiment begins. Part of this information will be included in a consent form which you should read before signing. You have the right to ask questions before participating and to stop your participation at any time if you desire. Most researchers enjoy talking about their research so you should feel free to ask questions once your participation is complete.

All researchers will share information about their experiment with you either immediately after your participation or later in the semester (via e-mail or GAC PO mail). In addition, a summary of research findings will be presented at the Gustavus Psychology Department Research Symposium at the end of the semester which you are encouraged to attend. Details of this event will be forthcoming from your instructor.

- **Alternative assignment option:**

If you are opposed to participating in research, you may choose to complete an alternative assignment to fulfill the general psychology research requirement. The details necessary to complete this alternative assignment are described on the back of this sheet.

Alternative Research Assignment Option

Students who are opposed to participating in research may complete three brief research reports in lieu of participating in three research experiments. To do so, students must select three different research articles from the journal titled, *Current Directions in Psychological Science* which is available in the Gustavus library both in print and online and answer for each article the four questions listed below. These alternative assignments must be turned in to your instructor no later than the start of the eleventh week of the semester (November 16, 2009).

1. What is the purpose of this article?
2. Describe in your own words one of the interesting findings the authors discuss.
3. What do the authors conclude?
4. What are the implications or applications of this work?

To receive full credit, each assignment should be completed on one page with the reference to the article you read typed at the top of the page (see example below). The four questions (listed above) should be typed as headings on the page. Your corresponding answers should be written in complete sentences in your own words (do not simply quote the authors) and typed below each question. Note that students cannot receive extra credit for completing additional written assignments.

Example summary with required format:

Jane Doe
11:30 General Psych

Authors: David Riccio, Paula Millin, and Pascale Gisquet-Verrier
Title: Retrograde Amnesia: Forgetting Back
Journal: Current Directions in Psychological Science
Year: 2003

1. What is the purpose of this article?

The authors are interested in examining the characteristics of retrograde amnesia in an attempt to consider whether the memory-consolidation hypothesis (memory storage is disrupted by a trauma) is a suitable explanation for the phenomenon. They also examine alternative explanations.

2. Describe in your own words one of the interesting findings the authors discuss.

In some studies amnesia is reversed by providing a reminder cue. For example, in one study rats were trained to avoid a location and then were made amnesic (they forgot to avoid the location). If these rats were given a reminder (exposure to a small part of the original training) their amnesia was eliminated and they remembered to avoid the location again.

3. What do the authors conclude?

The authors conclude that the forgetting that accompanies amnesia may not be the result of a disruption in the storage of information as many authors believe. Instead it may result from the inability to retrieve information that is stored but for some reason has become inaccessible.

4. What are the implications or applications of this work?

This work suggests that researchers need to continue to look for new ways to explain the memory loss that results from amnesia. It would be incredible if these explanations could some day be used to develop methods for alleviating amnesia in humans who suffer from this potentially debilitating condition.