

## INFORMATION ON RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

All questions about research participation should be directed to  
Katherine Thompson ([kjt2111@columbia.edu](mailto:kjt2111@columbia.edu)).

\*\*\* Please do not write to professors or teaching assistants about the Participant Pool \*\*\*

*Sign up for experiments and see credits earned at: <http://columbia.sona-systems.com/>*

### **Research Participant Pool: What is it?**

A first-hand experience with laboratory procedures is an important part of the first course in psychology. At Columbia, we take advantage of the need our faculty researchers have for student participation in their studies. Each student is given the opportunity to participate in carefully supervised studies, thus gaining otherwise unobtainable experience with original research in psychology. We have a university-wide committee that approves studies for students in our introductory courses. The committee exacts high ethical standards. Each of the research projects contains safeguards designed to protect the rights and welfare of the students who participate. All records are confidential, so the student's privacy is protected.

**As part of your coursework you are asked to participate in 6 credits worth of psychology studies. Each credit is earned with one half-hour of participation.** You may earn 6 credits using any combination of experiment lengths (e.g., 6 studies that are ½ hour; 3 that are 1 hour; 2 that are 1.5 hours; 2 that are 1 hour and 2 that are ½ hour). To ensure the diversity of your experience, however, you may not participate for more than 1.5 hours (3 credits) in any single experiment. Additionally, you may only participate in one experiment per experimenter for credit. **You may only participate in one online experiment for credit regardless of how many credits the experiment is worth.**

Faculty members, graduate students and research assistants conduct the studies offered to the participant pool. While all of these studies fall under the umbrella of psychology, they cover a wide range of topics including cognition, sensation, perception, emotion and social psychology.

This is meant to be an interesting and educational experience, complementing your work in the introductory course. By participating in psychology experiments, you gain first-hand experience with the procedures and research methods used by psychologists. After each study, the experimenter will explain the study's purpose, theoretical background, and implications—this portion of the experiment is called “the debriefing.” **PLEASE ask questions**—this is a great opportunity to get a feel for the ways studies are designed and run. In some cases, an experimenter may need to postpone a part of the debriefing. In such cases the experimenter will contact you before the semester ends and debrief you fully at that time. (Often, this is so that you don't enter the experiment having heard what it's about from other students!)

In addition to helping you learn about psychology, your participation aids the professors and graduate students at Columbia with advancing real research. Science requires the active participation of many, many research participants, so you are a valuable resource for us.

Finally, some important points:

- 1) Students who are under 18 are considered to be minors and in general will not be able to participate in studies.** If you will not turn 18 with enough time to complete this assignment, please contact your professor for another option early in the semester.
- 2) Some students are uncomfortable with this assignment for personal or ethical reasons. Any student who does not wish to participate in the participant pool should contact their professor for an alternate assignment early in the semester.**
- 3) You will receive participation credit for a study even if you decline to participate once you find out what the study is about.** On occasion, a student will decide not to participate in a study once they have read the consent form and instructions. In this event, the student will be given 1 credit for the time spent.
- 4) Keep a record of what studies you signed up for and whether you have received credit for studies you participated in.** Experimenters and websites can both make mistakes—if you have a record of what you participated in, this will ensure that you will receive credit for participation even if other systems fail.

5) **Try to get most of your credits done before the midterm.** It can get hard to find remaining experiment times at the end of the semester.

6) **If you don't see any experiments listed, do not panic – just continue to regularly check back and you should see some available slots.** New experiments are added frequently but can quickly be filled by students who check the website regularly. Sometimes new experiment slots are added several times a week and other times, they are added several times a day—it is up to the experimenters running the studies.

7) **It can take experimenters up to a week to award credit for study participation.** If you still have not received credit after one week, email the experimenter. If you don't hear back from him or her in 3 days, email Katherine and include details including the study number, the experimenter's name, and your timeslot.

### **When can I participate?**

**Experiments start:** September 4 (Tuesday, first day of classes).

**Experiments end:** December 10 (Monday, last day of classes and NOT last day of exams).

### **How do I sign up for studies?**

You can sign up for studies on the Participant Pool website at <http://columbia.sona-systems.com/>.

1. Getting a login: The first time you go to the site, you need to request a login and password by clicking **Request an account here**, on the lower left-hand corner of the site under **New Participant?**, and entering your name and UNI. The system will email you right away with log-in instructions.

2. Logging in: The first time you log in, you will see the **Human Subjects Privacy Policy**. It's not too long, but it's important, so please read it thoroughly—the information in it is relevant to you as a participant, and it will also add to your educational experience. This will only show up the first time you log in.

3. Changing your password: Once you have logged in with your new info, you can change your password by going to **My Profile** in the top navigation bar.

4. Selecting your course: Also in **My Profile**, you may select the course(s) you are enrolled in. Make sure to select the correct section (professor), or there will be difficulties assigning your credit at the end of the semester! If you are enrolled in *both* Science of Psychology and Mind, Brain, and Behavior, you should select both. (If you are enrolled in two courses you will need to decide which class you want to assign each new credit to when you sign up for a study, but you can re-allocate credits for completed studies at any time under **My Schedule/Credits**. If you are enrolled in only one course, you do NOT need to do this.)

5. To sign up for experiments, log in and then click on **Studies** on the top navigation bar. This page shows you all studies in a random order, identified by a number and the researcher's name. Here you can also search for studies that have open timeslots on particular days. When you click on a study's name, you will be able to see some of the study details, and if you have not already signed up for the study you will be able to click on **View Time Slots for This Study** to sign up. Most studies require you to sign up at least 24 hours in advance, so there may be timeslots listed as "too late to sign up."

### **Tips:**

-CHOOSE A STUDY THAT FITS YOUR SCHEDULE. Make sure that you are free to attend at these times BEFORE you sign up. After you sign up, you will receive an e-mail confirmation of your appointment, with the study's number and information about when and where it is. NOTE THIS INFORMATION ON THE RECORD AND FEEDBACK SHEET (attached).

-Be sure you note four things about the experiment:

- a) what? study number
- b) where? location of the study (building and room number)  
Many experiments go on in the department, and many of them are run near each other.  
Make sure you write down the exact room number.
- c) when? date and time of the appointment

- d) who? The researcher's name, who to contact (phone & e-mail) in case you are late or the experimenter is late

### **Experiment Participation**

Make sure to go to your appointments and please **be on time!** Most studies have to start on time, because many students are scheduled one after another. If you are late (10 minutes is usually the rule), you may miss the study and forfeit your credit. Give yourself enough time to find the right place, to wait for the elevator, etc.

Researchers' time is valuable, and they often take a lot of trouble to be ready for you. So don't sign up for an experiment unless you're sure that you will be able to come. If you realize that you cannot come to an appointment, cancel it as soon as possible so that you can be rescheduled, and so that some other student may take your vacated time slot. If you are canceling more than 24 hours in advance, you can usually do this online; if your study starts in less than 24 hours (or if the experimenter has set a different cancellation threshold), you may need to contact the experimenter directly. If you have an emergency and cannot make an appointment, be sure to contact the experimenter in advance and cancel your appointment.

Remember that participation in research is entirely voluntary. If at any time during an experiment you experience discomfort and wish to stop, you are free to do so at no penalty. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardizing your employment, student status or any other entitlements. You will receive credit for the time you participated in the experiment.

After you have completed each study, fill out the feedback part of the attached form.

### **Verifying You Receive Credit for Participation**

-Every time you participate in an experiment, the experimenter will assign you credit through the Participant Pool website. You will be able to check on the site how many credits you have earned. **It may take up to a week for credit to show up on the website.** If you have not received credit after a week, contact the experimenter. If he or she doesn't get back to you within 3 days, email Katherine with all the relevant details.

-Take your "Research Participation Log" sheet with you to every study. Experimenters sometimes forget to assign students credit and unless you keep track of what experiments you participated in, we cannot assign you credit for an experimenter's mistake. You should also use this log to track your opinions of each of the different experiments.

-We appreciate your opinions and thoughts about research participation. After each study, please take the time to assess the study using the log on the last page of this document. When you have completed your experimental credits, you may submit this log as a form of feedback about the experiments. You may print out the last page of this packet and put it in Katherine Thompson's mailbox in 406 Schermerhorn or you may submit your feedback online at <http://bit.ly/NILZ6O>. Either way, your feedback will be kept anonymous.

### **Experimenter no-shows**

If you make an appointment for an experiment that the experimenter fails to keep, the first thing to do is to make sure you've gone to the correct location. You can check the location on the Participant Pool website at any time. If after 10 minutes the experimenter has still not arrived, you should report it to Katherine Thompson via email. Do this immediately after the missed appointment. Please let Katherine know the details: the experiment name, the time and date, the location (room #) you waited at, and your name. If an experimenter misses an appointment and you show up, you will be given credit for your time.

### **PROBLEMS**

If you have any questions about or problems with research participation, you can contact Katherine Thompson ([kjt2111@columbia.edu](mailto:kjt2111@columbia.edu)).

## RESEARCH PARTICIPATION LOG

You should use this form to keep a record of the experiments in which you have participated and your thoughts on each experiment. When assessing how interesting, meaningful and educational the experiments were, use a scale of 1-7 (1=not at all, 7=very much so). At the end of the semester, you may anonymously rate the experiments you participated in either by submitting this piece of paper to Katherine Thompson's mailbox in 406 Schermerhorn or online at: <http://bit.ly/NILZ6O>

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