

## INFORMATION ON RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

All questions about research participation should be directed to  
[psych-subjectpool@columbia.edu](mailto:psych-subjectpool@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/>

**NOTE: You cannot earn Psychology Participant Pool credits for studies offered through the Business School's Behavioral Research Lab (BRL).** Make sure you sign up for the correct system via the link above—DON'T just search online for, e.g., "Columbia study pool," or you may end up with an account with the BRL and a semester's worth of useless credits.

### The Key Facts

*(You're still responsible for reading the rest of this sheet, but here's a quick overview.)*

- Studies will be available on the **Participant Pool website** during the semester.
  - All the info on how to get access to the website is listed below.
- You may sign up for and complete up to **3 credits' worth of studies** (that's 1.5 hours' worth). For the way that these credits contribute to your grade, check your course syllabus.
- Start your participation **early** in the semester!
- Arrive at your scheduled studies **on time**!
- Remember that you can **decline** to participate, or to stop participating, at any time, before or during a study, without any penalty.
- The most important purpose of the Participant Pool is for you to learn about research, so please **ask questions** after each study.

### 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 firsthand 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 privacy of every student participant is protected.

**As part of your coursework, you are asked to participate in 3 credits worth of psychology studies. Each credit is earned with one half-hour of participation.** You may earn 3 credits using any combination of experiment lengths (e.g. 3 studies that are ½ hour; 1 study that is 90 minutes). You may not participate for more than 1.5 hours (3 credits) in any single experiment. Studies can be either in-person or online however, **students are strongly encouraged to complete at least 1 in-person study.**

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.

#### Important facts to know about your participation in studies:

- 1) **Students who are under 18 are considered 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 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 after reading the consent form and instructions. Such students will be given 1 credit for the time spent.
- 4) **Keep a record of which 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 open time slots listed, do not panic—just continue to check the website regularly and you should see some available slots.** New time slots are added on a rolling basis, but can quickly be filled by the students who check the website frequently. Sometimes new 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. Typically, the students who complain that there are “never any studies available” are the ones who have only checked the list of available studies a couple of times, whereas the students who get their credits done quickly have been more proactive about looking for slots.
- 7) **It can take experimenters up to a week or longer to award credit for study participation.** If you have not received credit after one week, first email the experimenter. If you don't hear back in 3 days, please forward the email to your experimenter to us (psych-subjectpool@columbia.edu), and include the study number and the time slot you are trying to resolve credit for.
- 8) **Students are strongly encouraged to complete at least 1 in-person study.**
- 9) If you have a question, **first check the FAQ** on the Participant Pool website to see if it's answered there. The link can be found at the very bottom of the site. If not, then send your question to psych-subjectpool@columbia.edu.

#### When can I participate?

**Experiments start:** Tuesday, January 21 (first day of classes)

**Experiments end:** Monday, May 05 (last day of classes — NOT the 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/>. (Note that there's no www in this URL.) If you Google "participation pool" instead of typing this URL into your browser, be very careful: if the site you end up on says "Columbia Business School" or "BRL," then you are at the WRONG place. Make sure you are on the **Psychology** Research Participation page.

1. Getting a login: The first time you go to the site, you need to request a login and password by clicking "**Request Account**", and entering your name and UNI. The system will email you with instructions. (Note: when a student hasn't received an email with login information, it is typically because they typed their UNI in wrong). If you are a Barnard student, please contact the subject pool email to receive your login information.
2. Logging in: Log in using your UNI and the temporary password that was mailed to you. The first time you log in, you will see the **Human Subjects Privacy Policy**. It's not long, and 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. It 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 edit the course(s) you are enrolled in. **Make sure you selected the correct section (professor) when signing up, or there will be difficulties assigning your credit at the end of the semester.**
5. Signing up for experiments: Log in and then click on **Studies** on the top navigation bar. This page shows you all of the current studies. Studies with open appointments (time slots) will say "timeslots available" next to their entry. 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 your time slot BEFORE you sign up. When you sign up, you will receive an e-mail confirmation of your appointment, with the study's number and information about when it is.

Be sure you **note these three things** about the experiment:

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| 1) what? | study number   |
| 3) when? | date and time of the appointment   |
| 4) who?  | the researcher's name, and how to contact him or her (phone & e-mail) in case you are late or the experimenter is late |

## **Experiment Participation**

Please **be on time** for your appointment! Often, many students are scheduled one after another, so if you are late, you may miss the study and forfeit your credit—10 minutes is usually the rule, but it is up to the experimenter.

Researchers' time is valuable, and they often take a lot of trouble to be ready for you. So please don't sign up for an experiment unless you're sure that you will be able to come. **If you realize that you cannot make it to an appointment, cancel it as soon as possible** so that you can be rescheduled, and so that some other student may take your open 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 time window), you may need to **contact the experimenter directly**.

If you have two unexcused no-shows, your Sona account will be deactivated. You will need to email **psych-subjectpool@columbia.edu** to initiate the reactivation procedure.

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 decline to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardizing your grade or student status. You will receive credit for the time you participated in the experiment.

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

After you participate in an experiment, the experimenter will assign you credit through the Participant Pool website. **It may take up to a week or longer for credit to show up on the website.** If you haven't received credit after a week, first contact the experimenter. If he or she doesn't get back to you within 3 days, forward your email to us (psych-subjectpool@columbia.edu) and include the study number, date, and time.

### **Experimenter no-shows**

If you make an appointment for an experiment that the experimenter fails to keep, if after 10 minutes the experimenter has still shown up, you should report the no-show to us (psych-subjectpool@columbia.edu) via email. Do this immediately after the missed appointment. Please let us know the details: the experiment number, the time and date, the experimenter's name, and your name. If an experimenter misses an appointment, but 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 the participant pool team (psych-subjectpool@columbia.edu).