

***Listing of Psychological Research Opportunities
for undergraduates interested in research assistantships***

(Revised August 2016)

There are numerous and varied opportunities for students to become involved in ongoing psychological research conducted within the Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences and affiliated programs. This booklet lists most of those opportunities, including information on the research itself as well as duties of a research assistant in each lab.

Students should speak with the individual identified on the listing with whom they would like to work. The student may receive academic credit by enrolling in Psych 333, Independent Study, after receiving verbal approval from that person and submitting the electronic *Petition for Supervision of Independent Study* form (<http://eyes.wustl.edu/psych333/>). The form will route to the sponsoring faculty for approval and then to Shelley Kohlman, who will then register you for the appropriate section. ***N.B.*** *For research in departments outside Psychological & Brain Sciences, a paper petition form must be submitted, available from Shelley Kohlman (207B Psychology).* The petition form must be completed, signed by the sponsoring faculty, and brought to Ms. Kohlman before the add/drop deadlines. It is required that 3-4 hours per week for 15 weeks be devoted to aspects of the research for each unit of credit to be earned.

The following are some of the goals we hope are accomplished by engaging in Independent Study:

- (1) expose the student to various aspects of empirical research and the functions of a psychology laboratory;
- (2) provide the student with the opportunity to practice and refine research skills;
- (3) give the student a deeper and fuller understanding of a particular topic or field of psychological inquiry;
- (4) promote and support research in the department and the discipline by providing researchers with interested, qualified assistants;

- (5) train students interested in continuing in psychology to be prepared and effective in pursuing these goals and contributing to the scientific world.

To accomplish these goals, the following guidelines are suggested:

- (1) Students are expected to devote 3-4 hours per week for 15 weeks to aspects of the research for *each* unit of credit to be earned. This includes working in the laboratory, attending laboratory meetings, meeting with supervisors, and reading material related to the project.
- (2) The student should meet with the supervisor in charge at the beginning of the semester and establish what is expected from each side. The student should be informed as to which project(s) the student will be involved, and in what capacities they are expected to assist.
- (3) It is recommended that there be at least one assessment/feedback session during the course of the semester between the professor and student.

Assessment of the student's work and effort for the Independent Study and any additional requirements are the responsibility of the student's research mentor. Papers, presentations, and/or discussions of material are all possibilities that the mentor may require of the student. These expectations should be outlined at the beginning of the semester. **N.B.** *For Psych 333 work completed, only Cr/NCr credit will be given.*

In addition to research opportunities, the Department also offers *Internships in Psychology* (Psych 225) and a *Practicum in Applied Behavior Analysis: Autism Spectrum Disorder* (Psych 235). The *Internship* provides students with the opportunity to apply psychological principles to applied settings, such as social service agencies, medical settings, and business and industry. For further details, and a listing of approved Internship placements, see the *Guide to Internships in Psychology*. The *Practicum* offers an opportunity to be trained in applied behavior analytic techniques and work with a child with autism spectrum disorder. For additional details, see the brochure, *Practicum in Applied Behavior Analysis: Autism Spectrum Disorder*.

Name: Richard A. Abrams, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

Eye movements, visual attention, movement control, visual perception.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

It is helpful if students have taken a course taught by Professor Abrams, and it is useful to have had some prior coursework in Experimental Psychology or Sensation & Perception, but these are not essential.

Description of Research:

My research examines questions about the mental mechanisms that underlie overt movements of the eyes and limbs, and covert movements of visual attention. I seek answers to fundamental questions about such behaviors including: To what extent do eye, limb, and attention movement systems obey similar operating principles or perhaps employ shared mental mechanisms? To what extent do these systems share spatial information? In what coordinate systems and reference frames are the various movements planned and implemented?

In recent work we have studied an interesting interaction between vision and movement systems: There are systematic differences in the visual perception of objects near our hands compared to objects that are far from our hands. Experiments that have revealed these differences have simply had subjects respond to visual stimuli while their hands were either on the table in front of them, or placed on the sides of the video monitor. Several aspects of performance differed depending on the location of the hands. The results reveal brain mechanisms that are specifically devoted to evaluating objects near our hands—perhaps because we may need to plan how to reach for and grasp such objects.

For more information about my research and laboratory see: <http://rabrams.net>

Duties of Research Assistant:

Students would usually participate in all of the activities of the laboratory including: literature search, reading and discussing research articles, planning new experiments, computer programming (if desired), scheduling and running subjects in experiments, analyzing data.

Name: Dave Balota, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

The interplay amongst Language, Memory and Attention and the changes that occur in these systems in both healthy older adults and in individuals with early stage Alzheimer's Disease.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

None

Description of Research:

- 1) Retrieval of information from long-term memory. In these experiments, the major interest is in the structure of long-term memory and the processes that are used during the retrieval of information from that structure. We are also interested in how retrieval processes from semantic memory are involved in visual word recognition and in reading.
- 2) Age-related and disease-related changes in executive control mechanisms. This work is directed at developing better understanding of the cognitive markers that discriminate healthy aging from early stage Alzheimer's Disease. These studies involve attention selection tasks, and more subtle measures such as reaction time variability and measures of personality.
- 3) Mental Chronometry. This work involves better understanding the moment by moment changes in cognitive processes that are reflected via reaction time distributional analyses across a variety of tasks. The goal here is to best understand how to isolate separate processes.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Research assistants will be involved in all aspects of a given research project; from collecting the data, to data analyses and interpretation. Also, assistants will have the opportunity to develop future research topics in regularly scheduled meetings.

Name: Deanna Barch, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

Studies of cognitive and emotional deficits in disorders such as schizophrenia, and the neurobiological mechanisms that contribute to such deficits. My research includes behavioral pharmacological, and neuroimaging studies with healthy and clinical populations. One line of research examines the cognitive and neural mechanisms that contribute to difficulties regulating thoughts, memories and emotional responses in schizophrenia.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Some basic computer skills would be preferred, particularly basic knowledge of how to use an Apple computer.

Description of Research:

The cognitive and neurobiological mechanisms contributing to cognitive, language, and emotional regulation deficits in individuals with schizophrenia and those at risk for schizophrenia. In these studies, we have several goals. One of our goals is to determine exactly which cognitive and emotional processes are disturbed in schizophrenia. Another one of our goals is to determine what neurobiological mechanisms contribute to such cognitive and emotional deficits, with a particular focus on dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, the anterior cingulate, and their interactions with the dopamine systems. These studies involve conducting behavioral experiments and functional magnetic resonance imaging experiments with both healthy and clinical populations.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Duties would include experiment preparation (i.e., designing stimuli and experimental paradigms), collecting data (i.e., scheduling and testing participants), data analysis (i.e., data entry and statistical analysis), and participation in lab meetings. Interested and motivated students may also become involved with conducting and analyzing functional magnetic resonance imaging studies.

Name: Ryan Bogdan, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

Genetics
Neuroscience
Psychopathology
Behavior

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Interested undergraduates should have a general background in psychology and neuroscience, as well as a general understanding of genetics. They should be especially passionate about understanding the biological mechanisms that underlie psychiatric disorders. This would be an excellent lab in which to gain experience if you are interested in pursuing graduate study in research oriented clinical psychology or psychiatrically-relevant neuroscience or genetics. While previous research experience is desirable it is in no way required. Computer skills are a plus but are not required.

Description of Research:

In the BRAIN (Behavioral Research And Imaging Neurogenetics) lab we evaluate how genetic variation and environmental experience influence brain function and behavior in order to better understand the causes of psychiatric disorders. We are particularly interested in threat and reward –related brain function and its relevance to conditions such as depression, anxiety, and substance use. We use the following methods: fMRI, EEG, molecular genetics, pharmacologic challenge, behavioral testing, self-report.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Undergraduate research assistants can be involved in a host of different tasks within the laboratory including: running research participants, analyzing genetic, behavioral, EEG and fMRI data, conducting literature reviews, attending and presenting at lab meetings. Undergraduate students will have the opportunity to work closely with graduate students on research projects. With significant experience in the lab, there is the opportunity to conduct theses and independent research within the laboratory.

Please contact Dr. Bogdan if you are interested.

Name: Tim Bono, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

Positive Psychology, Personality, and College Student Development

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Introduction to Psychology, experience with Excel, and preferably a course in research methods or statistics.

Description of Research:

I am interested in the science of well-being, especially as it relates to young adults making the transition from high school to college. Most of my work involves analyzing longitudinal data sets that college freshmen have completed during their first semesters on campus. In particular, I have an interest in the behaviors, mindsets, and approaches to college life that are associated with overall psychological health and well-being.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Research assistants may become involved in a number of activities. These include entering data, running analyses, coding transcripts, and assisting with literature reviews. Some future projects may include running participants in a lab setting. Every effort is made to tailor specific duties to the strengths and interests of each individual RA.

Name: Todd Braver, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

Cognitive neuroscience: Studies of attention, working memory and executive control using a variety of methods including behavioral analysis, functional neuroimaging, individual differences, special populations and computational modeling.

In particular, my research examines the psychological and neural mechanisms by which people actively maintain information such as goals, instructions, plans, or specific prior events for short-periods of time, and use this information to appropriately guide and control their behavior.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Responsible, reliable, and highly motivated. Basic computer skills are very much preferred, as most of the research involves computer work. Knowledge of statistics, statistical software, and computer programming is also a plus. However, any student with a willingness to learn and work hard should feel free to contact Dr. Braver.

Description of Research:

Ongoing projects examine working memory, attention, inhibition, multi-tasking and decision-making. We also focus on how cognitive processing in these domains interact with emotion, motivation and personality.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Students will conduct literature searches, read/discuss relevant journal articles, and participate in lab meetings where ongoing research is presented and discussed. They will also gain experience with data collection and analysis of behavioral and psychophysiological (e.g., pupil dilation, EMG) experiments with young adults

Particularly motivated, able and committed students may also have the opportunity to assist with:

- 1) Collection and analysis of functional neuroimaging data (fMRI)
- 2) Studies in different populations (e.g., older adults)
- 3) Simulations with connectionist (neural network) models of behavioral and physiological phenomena.

Name: Julie Bugg, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

Cognitive Control, Prospective Memory, and Aging

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Research assistants will be trained on the requisite technical skills that are required in the lab. Although prior completion of Experimental Psychology would be useful, more important is that the student is highly motivated, conscientious, and eager to contribute to the research process.

Description of Research:

Our research examines the cognitive control mechanisms that humans use in attentionally demanding situations. For instance, we examine susceptibility to distraction (e.g., trying to ignore the Facebook page a neighboring student is updating while attending to an instructor's lecture), mind wandering, and task switching. We explore questions such as: Are we less susceptible to distractors if we can anticipate their occurrence? Is mind wandering harmful or helpful? Under what conditions are there age-differences in performance on cognitive control tasks and under what conditions might older adults (60 yrs +) perform just as well as young adults (18 - 25 yrs)? How is impulsivity in real life related to laboratory tasks of cognitive control? Can we improve our ability to attend selectively to goal relevant information?

Our research also examines prospective memory, which refers to remembering to perform an action at the appropriate time in the future (e.g., remembering to attend a Psy100 research study you signed up for on Experimentrix; remembering to take medication). We are especially interested in the role of attention in prospective memory success and failure, and the processes that enable us to deactivate prospective memory tasks that have already been completed.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Research assistants assume a variety of roles, with duties varying as a function of experience in the lab. A new research assistant can expect to contribute to all of the following: data collection; data scoring; and participation in lab meetings in which members of the lab discuss the findings of ongoing studies, ideas for future studies, and relevant journal articles. With experience in the lab, research assistants have the opportunity to contribute more greatly to the conceptualization and design of new experiments, analysis of data, and possibly conduct their own study (e.g., as a thesis project or independent study).

Name: Robert M. Carney, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

Behavioral medicine, clinical health psychology

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

None

Description of Research:

Our studies focus on the effects of depression on the etiology, course, and outcome of coronary heart disease. We conducted one of the first studies to show that depression more than doubles the risk for mortality and morbidity in patients with stable heart disease. In addition we are conducting studies to determine how depression increases the risk for dying in these patients. Finally, we are testing tailored forms of psychotherapy and antidepressant medications to determine the most effective, safest treatments for depression in patients with heart disease. We are currently conducting a randomized, placebo-controlled clinical trial to determine whether omega-3 supplements enhance the effects of antidepressants in the treatment of depression in patients with stable heart disease.

Name: Brian Carpenter, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

Alzheimer's disease, interactions between patients and physicians, aging, and end-of-life issues.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Varies with each project.

Description of Research:

1. Teaching first-year students about aging.

In this project we are evaluating a new, interdisciplinary course for first-year students at Wash U that focuses on aging. We are following students in the class throughout the semester to see if their participation affects how they feel about older adults and aging. We are also following a control group of students not in the class. On this project we need assistance running students throughout an assessment of their implicit attitudes toward older adults.

2. How physicians tell patients they have Alzheimer's disease.

In this project we are reviewing videotapes in which physicians tell patients whether they think they have Alzheimer's disease. We are investigating whether there are certain features of the conversation between the physician and the patient that predict better or worse psychological outcomes among patients. Work on this new project involves brainstorming with the project team about what features may be important to examine in the videotapes and performing basic statistical procedures to examine their frequency.

3. Perceptions of ethical boundaries among hospice nurses.

Nurses provide hospice care to patients who are likely to die within six months. The care they provide is frequent, extensive, and emotionally intense. Sometimes hospice nurses do things for dying patients (or their family members) that may not be ethically appropriate; that is, they cross an ethical boundary. We are developing a new project to examine nurse's perceptions of what boundaries they should and should not cross in their professional work. You would help us develop this new project by reviewing previous science in this area, working with us to generate a research method and survey questions, and collect data from hospice nurses.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Depending on the project, Research Assistants will recruit participants, collect data, manage data, watch and code videotape interactions, perform basic statistical analyses, review results with the project team, and participate in weekly lab meetings where we collaborate to develop new projects.

Name: Cynthia Cryder, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

The psychology of consumer decision making.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

An introductory psychology or marketing course is a sufficient start. More exposure to research-based courses and methods is even better.

Description of Research:

Topics studied in the Consumer Behavior Lab in the Olin Business School include:

Intertemporal preferences

Happiness and well-being

Consumer spending and debt decisions

Prosocial behavior

For more information, visit the webpages of Cynthia Cryder, Robyn LeBoeuf, Steve Nowlis, and (Consumer Behavior Lab Faculty)

Duties of Research Assistant:

Attend and participate in lab meetings

Collect data in the lab

Collect data in the field

Data entry

Literature Reviews

Name: Ian Dobbins, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

Cognitive psychology, human memory, brain imaging

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Experience with spreadsheets and computers preferred, but not required.

Description of Research:

Our research primarily examines the purposeful and incidental recovery of memories. In the lab we use behavioral studies along with brain imaging methods to examine how people search for, and render judgments about, their memories. This is an excellent opportunity to learn how to program experiments and get initial exposure to functional magnetic resonance imaging of memory retrieval. Initial research duties will be geared around behavioral studies that examine how various manipulations affect subjects' confidence in their memory reports. For example, will subjects often spontaneously reverse memory reports if allowed to do so, and if so, under what conditions? Another line of research examines the role of subtle feedback manipulations in changing the willingness of subjects to report memories. These investigations will likely lead to similar paradigms that will be used while subjects are being scanned using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), where we are particularly interested in the role of prefrontal cortex (PFC) in memory retrieval and decisions about one's own memory. Examples of the types of research can be seen at pages.wustl.edu/dobbinslab.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Preparing stimuli for experiments, running participants in experiments, coding and entering data, basic statistical analyses, literature reviews.

Name: Michelle Duguid, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

Persuasion and Influence, Leadership, Power and Politics in Organization, Social Hierarchy, Organizational Behavior, Management and Human Resource Management

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

An introductory psychology course is required. More exposure to research-based courses and methods is a plus.

Description of Research:

In organizational behavior, we examine the impact that individuals, groups and structure have on behavior within organizations.

I specifically investigate how individuals' social status and power influence their perceptions, attitudes and behaviors. I also examine issues related to gender and diversity. Finally, I study group identification, development and dynamics.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Collect data in the lab
Collect data in the field
Data entry
Literature reviews

Name: Tammy English, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

emotion; relationships; aging

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Research Assistants should be responsible, conscientious, and excited to learn more about emotion research. No prerequisites or special skills are required.

Description of Research:

The Emotion & Relationships Lab focuses on how and why emotion regulation impacts social, psychological, and physical well-being across the life span. We take a multi-method approach to our research questions, conducting laboratory-based and naturalistic (e.g., daily diary) studies with assessments of self-reported experience, partner and peer reports, behavior, and psychophysiology.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Research Assistants will perform a range of tasks:

1. Conduct literature searches
2. Read and discuss lab-relevant journal articles
3. Code participant interactions
4. Attend RA meetings
5. Recruit and schedule participants for ongoing studies
6. Run study sessions

Name: Michael S. Gaffrey, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

Developmental psychopathology and emotional development in infancy and early childhood; perinatal depression and emotion regulation within the context of parenting; translational neuroscience and neuroimaging methodologies; intervention and prevention during the early childhood period (0-5 years of age)

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Interested students will have completed at least 6 hours of upper level psychology/child development courses or will discuss relevant course experience with Dr. Gaffrey. Due to the complexity of working with young children, students are asked to make a one-year commitment to the lab and to work a minimum of 11 hours per week. Ability to work with young children and infants is also required. Students interested in pursuing graduate study in research-oriented clinical psychology or developmental science are especially encouraged to apply. While previous research experience is desirable it is in no way required. Computer skills are a plus but are not required.

Description of Research:

Dr. Gaffrey has multiple grant-funded studies that examine the neurobiological mechanisms contributing to psychopathology. One of these studies focuses on brain function and organization in 4-6 year old children with and without symptoms of depression; assessments involve parent-child observational tasks, behavioral measures, diagnostic interviews, child EEG/ERP, and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scans for the child. Dr. Gaffrey is also currently conducting an fMRI study investigating functional brain activity in mothers experiencing postpartum depression while they view images and videos of their infants; assessments involve parent-infant observational tasks, behavioral measures, diagnostic interviews, and functional magnetic resonance scans for the mother. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in a clinical research program investigating the influence of a parent-mediated naturalistic, developmental, behavioral intervention for autism on parent-infant joint engagement using dyadic head mounted eye tracking technology.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Students will aid in the collection, coding, and entry of data obtained from study assessments and will help with various administrative tasks related to the organization of research materials, assessment setup, and recruitment. Students will also occasionally be asked to provide childcare when needed. Additionally, motivated students will have the opportunity to gain experience in the technical aspects of fMRI, ERP, and dyadic head mounted eye-tracking with infants, very young children, and adults. With significant experience in the lab, the opportunity to conduct theses and independent research within the laboratory is a possibility.

Name: Leonard Green, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

Choice and decision-making in people and animals (pigeons); self-control (choice of a larger-later reward over a smaller-sooner reward) and impulsivity; behavioral economics; discounting of delayed and probabilistic outcomes (gains and losses).

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Commitment to careful, accurate, quality work. Independence, reliability, and initiative. Some experimental and relevant academic background preferred (e.g., Psy 301, Psy 361, Economics, Mathematics). Programming skills highly valuable.

Description of Research:

1. Self-Control: Our behavioral model views self-control as choice of a larger, delayed reward over a smaller, sooner reward, and impulsivity as choice of the smaller-sooner over the larger-later reward. So, too, self-control may be defined as choice of a smaller, certain (or low-risk) reward over a larger, but riskier reward. In this case, impulsivity would be the choice of the larger, risky reward. Ongoing work evaluates whether these represent a unitary trait of impulsivity or multiple impulsivities.
2. Human research on the discounting of delayed and probabilistic outcomes:
 - A. Comparisons of the discounting function for delayed and probabilistic losses as well as for delayed and probabilistic gains: This work evaluates the discounting functions for gains and losses, and explores the underlying decision-making processes. Specifically, it compares the mathematical form of the discounting function for delayed rewards, probabilistic rewards, delayed losses, and probabilistic losses, and evaluates different mathematical functions that have been offered as descriptions of the discounting process (e.g., an economic exponential model; a psychological hyperboloid function).
 - B. Discounting with and without symbolic information: In choice experiments, people typically are given symbolic information (e.g., words) to indicate different choice alternatives (i.e., the amounts and delays). In contrast, animals must learn the choice alternatives from experience. This research investigates whether the presence of symbolic information in the discounting procedure accounts for differences observed across species.
 - C. Discounting of outcomes that are both delayed and probabilistic: This work examines the effects on decision making when outcomes are both delayed and probabilistic. Most prior research has studied discounting of outcomes that are only delayed or only probabilistic. However, everyday situations often involve outcomes that are both delayed and uncertain. Will the same mathematical descriptions that describe simple choice scenarios also account for decisions involving outcomes that

- are both delayed and probabilistic? Will choices under the simple situations predict how people make decisions in these more complex choice settings?
- D. Debt-Averse and Loss-Averse Individuals: When losses are delayed in time, it typically is found that the aversiveness of a loss decreases as the delay to that loss increases (loss-averse individuals). Our lab has recently found that there is a subgroup of individuals for whom the aversiveness actually increases as the delay increases (debt-averse individuals). We will investigate this phenomenon further and develop a systematic method for classifying individuals.
 - E. Comparing discounting in older and younger adults: Our research with younger adults has shown that the discounting of delayed outcomes is fundamentally different from the discounting of probabilistic outcomes. We are now evaluating whether fundamentally different processes also underlie discounting by older adults. Furthermore, although some research suggests that older and younger adults discount delayed rewards at different rates, no research has examined probability discounting across different age groups. This is critically important as older adults often are faced with risk scenarios (e.g., retirement options, etc.) that are different from those faced by younger adults.
 - F. We will be conducting a series of online (MTurk) studies, investigating relations among delay and probabilistic discounting of gains and of losses using a newly developed discounting questionnaire. As well, we will be evaluating differences in discounting across individuals as a function of smoking status, degree of gambling, and alcohol use.
3. Discounting in animals:
- A. Discounting of rewards that are both delayed and probabilistic in pigeons: We developed a procedure to study the discounting of probabilistic reinforcers in animals, thereby allowing us to compare delay and probability discounting directly in animals. We are now investigating pigeons' discounting of food reinforcers that are both delayed and probabilistic.

Duties of Research Assistant:

- For the animal studies: handling and weighing of the animals (pigeons); running them in the experiments; recording data; plotting results; laboratory cleaning and maintenance.
- For the human studies: scheduling participants; running participants in the experiments; recording and analyzing data. With experience, RAs have the opportunity to help develop and conduct future experiments.
- Careful monitoring of the experiments is essential.
- Availability/flexibility to be in the lab and engage in research during blocks of time during the day.

Attendance at weekly laboratory research meetings and reading of assigned material required.

Name: Sandra Hale, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

Cognitive changes associated with development during childhood and aging during late adulthood. In particular, we are studying age-related changes in speed of processing, working memory, learning, face-processing, and higher-order cognitive abilities across the life span from a perspective influenced by both traditional cognitive psychology and current research concerning brain structure and brain function.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Coursework in research methods (i.e., Experimental Psychology) preferred. Coursework in one of the following areas would be helpful: cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, or the psychology of aging. Working knowledge of spreadsheets (e.g., EXCEL), word processing, photo-shop programs and/or statistical software (e.g., SPSS or SYSTAT) is desirable.

Description of Research:

The studies conducted in our Cognitive Development Laboratory usually include tests or measurements of processing speed, working memory, learning, face processing, and reasoning abilities. Participants in these studies include children as young as 7 years and extend to adults up to 100 years old. Data collection primarily takes place in the laboratory. Virtually all data is collected via computer programs developed in our laboratory.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Experiment preparation (including the designing and developing of stimuli), data collection (including scheduling and testing participants), data analysis (including data entry and statistical analysis), and participation in lab meetings. Occasional duties include poster preparation and library research.

Name: Denise Head, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

Neuropsychology of aging, structural and functional correlates of cognitive aging,

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Familiarity with computers, good social and communication skills, and basic knowledge of neuroanatomy are helpful.

Description of Research:

The overall goal of the research is to examine the neural correlates of cognitive aging. One line of research uses MRI-based measures of regional brain volumes in conjunction with behavioral measures to gain insight into the pattern of brain and cognitive changes that occur with aging. A major focus is on frontostriatal and hippocampal circuits and the role of executive control processes in cognitive skill acquisition. In addition, we are examining the role of cardiovascular health factors, such as hypertension and exercise, on cognitive and brain aging. A developing line of research is examining age differences in route learning using virtual reality (VR) technology. The goal of this research is to take advantage of VR to examine the specific aspects of route learning that are difficult for older adults and to combine VR with fMRI to assess for neural correlates of the age-related difficulties.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Students can participate in multiple phases of research projects depending on experience and interest. Involvement may include literature review and background reading, experiment preparation, behavioral testing, data processing and interpretation, participation/presentation in lab meetings. In addition, students will potentially have the opportunity to design and implement an independent project.

Name: Tamara Hershey, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

- 1) Neuropathophysiology underlying cognitive and mood aspects of Parkinson's disease and other dopaminergic disorders.
- 2) Neuropathophysiological and behavioral effects of obesity, diabetes and Wolfram Syndrome.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

- 1) Computer and statistics knowledge desirable
- 2) Detail-oriented, conscientious and self-driven

Description of Research:

Using neuroimaging (MRI, fMRI and PET) and neuropsychological techniques, we study:

- 1) effects of Parkinson's disease on cognitive and mood processes; how deep brain stimulation of the subthalamic nucleus affects brain function.
- 2) effects of severe hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia on the brain in children and adults with type 1 diabetes mellitus.
- 3) neurodevelopmental and neurodegenerative changes in Wolfram syndrome
- 4) relationship between obesity and dopamine receptors in the brain, their relationship to behavioral features and weight loss.

Duties of Research Assistant:

- 1) Scoring, coding, analyzing and entering data
- 2) Reviewing literature
- 3) Occasionally helping with studies

Name: Patrick Hill, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

Personality development and healthy aging

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Hardworking, punctual, and responsible individuals with interests in personality, developmental, and/or health psychology.

Description of Research:

Our lab is currently involved in multiple projects along four primary research topics:

- 1) Understanding what it means to have a purpose in life, including the physical and psychological health benefits associated with a sense of purpose
- 2) Identifying the processes that underlie personality development at different stages of the lifespan
- 3) Uncovering the behavioral, affective, and cognitive mechanisms linking individual dispositions to health outcomes
- 4) Examining the potential benefits and detriments associated with pro-social dispositions, such as trait forgiveness and gratitude

Duties of Research Assistant:

Depending on the ongoing lab projects, research assistants would contribute by running participants in experimental studies, assisting with literature reviews, coding audio and visual recording data, and attending weekly lab meetings that involve reading assignments and in-group discussion of ongoing studies.

Name: Josh Jackson, Ph.D.
Office: Psychology, 315B
Phone: 314-935-7160
E-mail: j.jackson@wustl.edu

General Area of Research:

Personality assessment and personality development

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Successful research assistants are conscientious (hardworking, responsible) and have an interest in personality/development/health/educational psychology.

Description of Research:

Our lab is currently involved in three different but overlapping research topics.

First, we are interested in understanding the patterns and mechanisms involved in personality development across the life span. Does your personality change over time? If so, what are some of the experiences or reasons that may be responsible for this change? Topics of investigation include romantic partners, educational experiences and health.

Second, the lab studies how best to assess or measure personality. Some topics include deciding what questions should be included in personality questionnaires. For example, do we need to know whether a person likes to go to parties to meaningfully understand their personality? Additional topics look at how others perceive personality and how personality manifests itself in real world behaviors.

A third line of inquiry involves the predictive validity of personality. Simple personality questionnaires can predict how long you live, how much money you make, and how long your marriage will last – decades in advance. Current studies attempt to understand the intervening mechanisms that relate personality with divorce and health, for example.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Depending on the type of projects that are currently being run in the lab, research assistants would contribute by: Running participants, performing data management tasks, coding of data (e.g., videos, audio files), and facilitating the collection of materials for meta-analyses. Additionally, weekly lab meetings will include reading assignments based on research being conducted in the lab.

Name: Alan J. Lambert, Ph.D.
Office: Psychology, 319B; Attitude and Decision Making Laboratory
(311/313)
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I am a social psychologist, and like most researchers in the field I have a broad interest in attitudes and emotions, and how these factors can affect social judgment and behavior.

Over the last few years my interests have gravitated towards a variety of more specific issues, as follows:

Political psychology, broadly defined

- Factors that induce “shift to the right” effects—which would include the tendency for liberals to temporarily respond in a more conservative manner
- Rally ‘round the flag effects (e.g. after the 9-11 attacks)
- Consequences of mortality salience for political judgment
- Cognitive and affective biases surrounding choices for political candidates
- The psychology of the “undecided voter”

Biases in Judgment and Decision Making

- “Wishful thinking” effects
- The role of expertise in increasing and decreasing judgment bias
- Personality dynamics behind “conspiracy theories” (e.g. what type of person tends to hold such beliefs?)

“The justice motive”

- The role of “just world beliefs” in driving judgment and behavior
- Emotional consequences of revenge
- “Sins of the father effects”; how and why people transfer blame across generations
- Perceptions of fairness
- Distribution of wealth and resources across ethnic groups (e.g. Whites vs. Blacks vs. Hispanics)

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Some basic computer skills would be helpful but is not mandatory.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Assist in the planning of experiments, “running” the experiments with undergraduates, helping to enter, analyze, and interpret data from experiments.

Name: Randy Larsen, Ph.D.
Office: Psychology, 206
Phone: 314-935-6567
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General Area of Research:

Emotion in general, with specific interests in how people cognitive process emotional stimuli, and whether emotional stimuli (words, pictures, objects such as spiders) evoke specialized cognitive processes.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

High level of motivation and responsibility.

Description of Research:

Currently I am studying the interaction of cognition and emotion. For example, do some kinds of emotional stimuli attract and hold attention longer than non-emotional stimuli? Do we have lower perceptual thresholds for detecting threatening stimuli in our environments (i.e., can we spot a snake in the grass faster than we could spot a stick in the grass?). Or why is our memory for how we felt about some event longer lasting than our memory for the facts of the event? Are subliminal effects stronger for emotional stimuli than factual stimuli? In what other ways do “hot” and “cold” cognition differ? In the past I have also studied topics such as mood variability, vulnerability to positive and negative moods, and strategies for the self-management of emotion and mood and still have some interests in these areas of research. Some emphasis is on understanding how and why individuals differ from each other in terms of their emotional lives.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Assist with running subjects, coordinate with graduate students, attend lab meetings

Name: Eric J. Lenze, M.D. Professor of Psychiatry
Office: Washington University School of Medicine, 600 South Taylor Ave. (1st Floor), St Louis 63110
Phone: 314-362-5154
E-mail: brownst@psychiatry.wustl.edu (Stephanie J. Brown)

General Area of Research:

We are a clinical and transdisciplinary research group at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri, led by Eric J. Lenze, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry. We have ongoing federally-funded treatment studies for older and younger adults with anxiety disorders and for older adults with depression. Our research seeks to: prevent the negative effects of anxiety and depression on health and cognition, understand personalized treatment for these disorders, create novel interventions, and develop precise and innovative measurement of outcomes.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Students must be responsible, mature, willing, and motivated to assist on a variety of projects and tasks. A professional demeanor and interpersonal skills are essential. Organizational skills and computer literacy are also helpful. A psychology major or minor is preferred but not required.

Description of Research:

We are currently starting a multi-site study (in collaboration with UCSD) looking at the effectiveness of pairing Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and exercise for cognition/memory of older adults.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Undergraduate research assistants will be responsible for ongoing data entry or data coding tasks, literature reviews or summaries of coded data, organization of study materials, participant monitoring, and any other clerical or administrative tasks. Given that the lab's research projects are in different stages of development, you may be working on multiple projects on as needed basis. We appreciate your flexibility in this matter.

*We are currently looking for students working for class credit in Spring 2017 and Summer 2017 only.

Name: Joan Luby, M.D. Professor of Psychiatry (Child)
Office: Early Emotional Development Program
4444 Forest Park Avenue, Suites 2100 and 2500
Phone: 314-286-2730
E-mail: Julie Mallin, mallinj@psychiatry.wustl.edu
OR lubyj@wustl.edu

General Area of Research:

Developmental Psychopathology and Emotional Development in Early Childhood—Preschool Children/ Mood Disorders

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Research Assistants must have completed 6 hours of upper level psychology courses or discuss course experience with Dr. Luby. Because of the intense training required to work with this unique study sample, we ask students to make a 2-semester commitment to the lab. Learning our procedures is time consuming and students often take most of the first semester simply learning the procedures in the lab. Thus, RAs gain better experience by spending two semesters in the lab. Often, in the second semester students are given more responsibility and have the opportunity to learn new skills. We also ask RAs to work a minimum of 11 hours per week.

Description of Research:

The EEDP has several on-going, grant funded studies. RAs are involved with a study evaluating early therapeutic interventions in preschoolers with depression. Participants eligible for treatment receive 18 weeks of a treatment intervention called Parent Child Interaction Therapy – Emotion Development (PCIT-ED). Student RAs are also involved with assisting in the administration, data collection, and data entry of a supplemental study examining treatment response and neural markers of emotion development and treatment response to PCIT-ED using EEG and fMRI.

RAs are also involved in the third follow-up phase of a longitudinal study of mood disorders (depression and mania) in children. At the beginning of the study, children were preschool ages 3.0-6.0 from a large community based sample. In the current phase, we are re-assessing our original sample children who are now ages 12.0-16.0. Assessments include dyadic observational tasks, a diagnostic psychiatric interview, cognitive measures, and EEG and fMRI.

With each of these studies, research assistants gain “hands on” experience using state of the art assessment techniques, are exposed to current trends in diagnostic assessment, and become familiar with diagnostic criteria for mental disorders in young children. Students will gain understanding of the logistics of conducting research and with the administration of study protocols in a research setting.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Research assistants have a very important role in our research. Students’ responsibilities include assisting in the collection, coding, and entry of data obtained from parent and child assessments. Students also have various administrative duties such as organizing research related materials, assisting in the quarterly newsletter, and obtaining the most current published data. Students are often relied upon heavily to assist in assessment set-up and take an active role interacting with subjects during assessments, including subject childcare.

Name: Patrick Lustman, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

Mind-body interactions in health and disease with a focus on the interaction of diabetes with psychiatric illnesses including substance use disorders.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Interest in research, ability to work with people, some knowledge of DSM-based psychiatric diagnosis, computers and statistics.

Description of Research:

Our research group studies the impact of psychiatric and substance use disorders on the risk and progression of cardiometabolic diseases. As these mind-body interactions frequently are bidirectional in nature, we also study the impact of cardiometabolic disease factors on the risk and progression of psychiatric substance use disorders. The work seeks to identify biopsychosocial mechanisms involved in these mind-body interactions. Clinical trials provide a setting for these investigations and allow us to contribute to efforts to improve the potency of psychiatric and psychological treatments in persons with medical comorbidity. Our current project is a randomized controlled depression treatment trial to determine optimal management of treatment resistant depression.

Duties of Research Assistant (RA):

Will assist the PI in conducting research projects involving the interaction of diabetes, depression, and substance use disorders. Tasks include data entry and management, miscellaneous filing and clerical tasks. The RA assists in literature searches and manuscript preparation as assigned.

Name: Lori Markson, Ph.D.
Office: Psychology, 235E
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E-mail: markson@wustl.edu

General Area of Research:

Cognitive development

Prerequisites/Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

A course in Developmental Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, or Cognitive Science is useful, but not essential. Primary requirement is an interest in experimental research, and in particular, the development of social cognition and language and conceptual development. Experience with children is not necessary, but you should be comfortable/open to interacting with young children, parents, and preschool teachers.

Description of Research:

Research in the Cognition & Development Lab investigates how infants and children think, reason, and learn about the world around them, with a focus on the development of conceptual and social-cognitive capacities. Some of our current projects explore how children learn the meanings of new words, social reasoning in infants and preschoolers, and children's knowledge of linguistic and cultural conventions.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Research assistants typically participate in all aspects of the lab including maintaining our child database, recruiting participants, experimental design and stimuli construction, testing children in experiments, data coding and analysis, and attending lab meetings where current research is discussed. A minimum 1-year (two-semester) commitment is required, and 2 hour blocks of time in the morning is strongly preferred.

Name: Mark McDaniel, Ph.D.
Office: Psychology, 235 F
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E-mail: mmcdanie@artsci.wustl.edu

General Area of Research:

Human learning and memory

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Comfortable interacting with people; attentive to details; like working with numbers; course work in statistics useful but not required

Description of Research:

Prospective memory. A common memory task in daily activities is remembering to perform some intended action at a particular point in the future (termed prospective memory). We have developed several laboratory paradigms to study prospective memory, and we are using these paradigms to conduct experiments investigating different aspects of this important memory process in both younger and older adults.

Encoding and Retrieval Processes in Memory. We study the kinds of encoding and retrieval processes that support good memory. Much of our work focuses on educationally relevant materials and tasks, including how different encoding tasks (such as embedded questions, outlining, note-taking) can enhance learning and memory for low-ability versus high-ability readers. In a similar vein, we are focusing on the effects of testing on subsequent learning and retention as it applies to educational and classroom applications (test-enhanced learning)

Concept Learning. We are engaged in both laboratory and classroom research that is exploring how learners acquire and represent concepts. Our work is showing that some individuals tend to focus on learning and remembering the particular examples presented to illustrate the concept, whereas other learners tend to focus on abstracting the underlying rule or theory that captures the commonalities of the examples. These differences appear to persist across various laboratory concept learning tasks, and they fundamentally affect transfer performance on new examples. We are investigating how these differences might impact students' learning in the classroom.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Assist with data collection (e.g., testing subjects in experiments), scoring data, entering data into computer files, materials development, and participate in interpretation of results.

Name: Kathleen McDermott, Ph.D.
Office: Psychology 343 B
Phone: 314-935-8743
E-mail: Kathleen.McDermott@wustl.edu

General Area of Research:

Human memory

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

We prefer students with strong interests in cognitive psychology. We will consider those without extensive class backgrounds in psychology.

Description of Research:

The work in my laboratory focuses on human memory, which is studied primarily with behavioral (psychological) techniques, although we also use neuroimaging techniques (specifically, functional magnetic resonance imaging, or fMRI). One line of research examines how practicing retrieval of a set of information facilitates our ability to remember it at a later time. Why does this occur?

Another question of interest centers on the relation between remembering and envisioning the future in a specific way. For example, when you remember last New Year's Eve and envision this upcoming New Year's Eve, you draw upon very similar processes. In essence, you use memory to construct viable scenarios that could unfold in the future. Our lab is interested in understanding more about the relation between remembering and future-thinking.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Research assistants will assist graduate students or postdoctoral fellows in conducting research projects. Typically, the undergraduate research assistant will be asked to do some background reading in a certain topic area, will be included in discussions with the graduate student(s) or postdoc(s) and with Dr. McDermott involving the design of a new experiment, and will help to test participants, code data, and analyze data. Appropriate guidance is given at all stages, such that the most important qualities we look for are eagerness to learn about the research process. Although some knowledge of statistics or experimental design can be helpful, they are by no means necessary for a successful semester in the lab.

Name: Amy McQueen, Ph.D.
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E-mail: amcqueen@dom.wustl.edu

General Area of Research:

Co-Director of the Health Communication; Social Psychology and Public Health Research focused on Health Behaviors, specifically Cancer Prevention

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

- Junior or senior psychology major with a minimum 3.0 GPA
- Excellent organization and communication skills
- Attention to details
- Ability to work independently

Description of Research:

Through multiple studies, Dr. McQueen examines the association of psychosocial factors on health behaviors and tests interventions designed to impact intermediate outcomes (e.g., psychosocial factors like attitudes, self-efficacy) and ultimately change health behaviors (e.g., cancer screening, smoking cessation). Research areas of particular interest are: 1) defensive information processes (i.e., rationalizations, biases) that inhibit behavior change and intention to change, 2) health communication strategies (e.g., testimonials) as potential interventions to reduce defensive processing and increase motivation for behavior change, and 3) examining the mediating and moderating pathways of influence to better understand the impact of interventions on both perceptions and actions.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Dr. McQueen is happy to talk with students interested in gaining research experience and tailor their internship to best suit their needs and goals. Ongoing data entry or data coding tasks, literature reviews or summaries of coded data, and/or other “mini” projects may be assigned to research assistants. Advanced assistants may interact with participants and/or conduct basic data analyses, perhaps for a research presentation of their own.

Name: Tom Oltmanns, Ph.D.
Office: Psychology, 353B
Phone: 314-935-6595
E-mail: toltmann@wustl.edu

General Area of Research:

Multiple-Source Assessment and Longitudinal Course of Personality Disorders

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

At least six credits of psychology, and preferably a course in methods or experimental design and statistics.

Description of Research:

I am interested in the assessment of personality disorders, particularly with regard to discrepancies between people's descriptions of themselves and the ways in which they are described by others. Most of my work lies directly at the intersection of personality psychology and psychopathology research. It depends heavily on methods and concepts developed by investigators studying interpersonal perception, and it is concerned with the link between personality and consequential outcomes in people's lives. My lab is currently conducting a prospective, longitudinal study of the stability and impact of personality pathology in later life. The project is concerned with connections among personality traits, personality disorders, health, and social adjustment in a representative, community-based sample of 1,600 persons between the ages of 55 and 64---those approaching the challenges of later life. It will identify ways in which personality and personality disorders influence the ability to adapt successfully to important life transitions. For more information, see: <http://psychnet.wustl.edu/SPANLAB/>

Duties of Research Assistant:

Research assistants may become involved in a number of activities. Most involve the multi-faceted process of data collection. Responsibilities of an undergraduate RA include a variety of tasks, ranging from phone recruiting and administrative duties, to running participants follow-up and attending our weekly lab meetings. Because our lab offers a wide range of opportunities for undergraduates, we will attempt to cater to your strengths as best we can. We expect that each RA will devote a minimum of 4 hours per week to the project.

Name: Thomas Rodebaugh, Ph.D.
Office: Psychology, 219B
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General Area of Research:

Psychopathology, interpersonal aspects of, and treatment of social anxiety disorder and the anxiety disorders in general; behavioral economics; cognitive behavioral therapy; psychotherapy outcome and process; mindfulness, acceptance, and related psychotherapies.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

No prerequisites or special skills are required. The following are helpful, but expected: (a) Having taken one or more classes related to clinical psychology (e.g., Abnormal Psychology). (b) Computer skills, including standard Microsoft software, as well as data entry and some familiarity with the use of statistical packages (such as SPSS). (c) Experience with clinical populations.

Description of Research:

Several research projects are ongoing. Here is one primary area of current work:

Interpersonal aspects of social anxiety disorder. We know that people with social anxiety disorder report their relationships are worse, but we know little else about the situation. Are they “correct” that their relationships are worse in any objective sense? For example, would the other person in the relationship or outside observers agree? Do people with the disorder act any differently during interactions with relationship partners? Currently we are working on gaining a better understanding of what, if anything, distinguishes the interactions of people with versus without the disorder.

The research conducted in the lab varies semester to semester and depends greatly on the interest of current graduate students. Updated descriptions of our research interests can be found at any time on www.anxlab.com

Duties of Research Assistant:

Basic duties include coding videotaped interactions, data entry, data management, and running experimental sessions in which undergraduates take part. Research assistants also attend laboratory meetings. More advanced research assistants will take on additional duties commensurate with ability and demonstrated level of responsibility. The most senior research assistants may assist with studies involving clinical populations (e.g., people with social anxiety disorder) and matched control participants.

Name: Henry L. Roediger, III, Ph.D.
Office: Psychology, 235C
Phone: 314-935-4307
E-mail: roediger@wustl.edu

General Area of Research:

Cognitive Psychology, particularly human memory.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Interest in processes of human memory; willingness to work hard and carefully.
Completion of Psychology 300 and 301 is preferred, but not required.

Description of Research:

My research interests lie in human learning and memory. Although I am interested in many different topics in this broad area, my current research is primarily concerned with several interrelated issues.

A question of central interest (in my lab, but also in the field at large) is how people can improve their memories. What strategies for learning can show significant improvements? Over the years, we have studied many factors that enhance retention.

A closely related line of research is concerned with applying what researchers know about learning and memory to education. In particular, laboratory studies have shown many strategies and techniques that promote better learning and retention, yet not many of these have made their way to educational practice. A second program of research attempts to bridge from laboratory studies to educational practice to enhance student learning.

On the same theme of improving memory, I study people with superior memories (mnemonists or “memory athletes,” Jeopardy contestants, Bible verse memorizers and others).

On the flip side of the above interests, I am interested in memory illusions and the occurrence of false memories. Memory illusions are cases in which recollection of an event systematically deviates from the event’s actual occurrence in the past. In the most striking case, people remember events that never happened to them. My students and I have developed several laboratory methods of inducing false memories and we are interested in uncovering the processes involved. Some of this research has practical applications (e.g., for eyewitness testimony in legal cases).

My students and I have been investigating processes involved in eyewitness memory, such as the best way to present faces in a lineup. We are also interested in the issue of confidence and memory: When is confidence a good guide to our accuracy and when is confidence misplaced? That is, we are highly confident that we are remembering something correctly but actually we are wrong – the event did not happen that way.

Finally, I am also interested in social and collective memory processes, of how processes may differ when people remember as part of a group rather than when alone. Collective

memory refers to how groups of people (e.g., Americans) use salient events from the past as indicators of their identities, for example, how most Americans identify with events from the Revolutionary War in 1776 and from more recent events such as 9/11. Currently, my students and I are working on collecting data from people in 11 different countries on how they remember events of World War II and how they apportion responsibility for winning (and losing) the way.

Name: Cynthia Rogers, M.D.
Office: Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Washington University Department of Psychiatry
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General Area of Research:

Perinatal Mood Disorders. This project aims to address perinatal mental health symptoms, particularly depression, in the early postpartum period.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

We are looking for Undergraduate RAs that have a genuine interest in research, are responsible, energetic, and who are able to work independently after completion of training. Experience working with participants from diverse backgrounds is preferred. RA should also have basic computer skills including Microsoft Word and Excel.

Description of Research:

Postpartum depression is a significant public health issue with rates reported between 10% and 15% in the general population. Data from the Missouri Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System reported that 14% of mothers reported postpartum depression symptoms.

The Perinatal Behavioral Health Service (PBHS) project has two aims. It provides screening for perinatal mood disorders to pregnant mothers in the outpatient OB clinic, mothers of infants in the St. Louis Children's Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and all women giving birth at Barnes Jewish Hospital. Project staff coordinates referrals for mental health and substance abuse treatment and supportive services provided by the BJC hospital system and community partners.

The research component of this program will help determine if this program is effective for screening and referring mothers for treatment who have symptoms of postpartum depression. The study will examine the risk factors for postpartum depression and will also show what percentage of mothers had symptoms of postpartum depression, were referred for treatment, and followed up with services.

Duties of Research Assistant:

RAs will be involved in several activities essential to our research. Most involve data entry and cleaning. More advanced students will be trained to follow up with patients over the phone and work on program development initiatives. RAs will also assist in doing literature search for studies related to postpartum depression and contacting community agencies that offer services specific to our area to which we can refer patients. Sometimes students will be asked to help out with daily administrative tasks like preparing and mailing study materials, working with confidential files etc. It is possible to register for academic credit by enrolling in PSY 333(Independent Study). You must receive approval from Dr. Rogers and complete the Petition to Enroll form. It is expected that 3-4 hours per week for 15 weeks will be devoted to aspects of the research for each unit of credit to be earned (e.g., 9-12 hours per week for 3 units of credit).

For more information about becoming involved in the Perinatal Mood Disorders program, please contact our research coordinator, Tara Tinnin, at tinnint@wustl.edu

Following is a second project being conducted by Dr. Rogers:

General Area of Research:

Early Childhood Psychopathology: This project aims to investigate the rates of early childhood psychopathology and neuroimaging correlates in a cohort of preterm infants.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

We are looking for undergraduate RAs that have a genuine interest in research and are responsible, energetic, and who are able to work independently after completion of training. RA should also have basic computer skills including Microsoft Word and Excel. Prior knowledge of basic statistics and REDCap is helpful but not necessary.

Description of Research:

Preterm infants are at increased risk for childhood psychiatric disorders including autism, anxiety disorders, and ADHD. Additionally, they are at increased risk for both alterations in early brain development as well as exposure to adverse early life stressors like exposure to parental psychopathology and child maltreatment. The Washington University Neonatal Research Program follows cohorts of high risk infants including infants born prematurely. These longitudinal studies include follow-up evaluations at ages 2, 5 and 8-9 that assess development including social and emotional development. Maternal psychopathology and parent child interaction are also assessed. These infants underwent MRI evaluation during the neonatal period and this data is analyzed for alterations in brain development which are also related to later child social-emotional development. The children will undergo MRI again at school-age.

Duties of Research Assistant:

RAs will be involved in several activities essential to our research. Most involve data scoring, entry and cleaning for the neurodevelopmental follow-up of our preterm infants and control subjects. Sometimes they will be asked to help out with daily administrative tasks like preparing study materials, mailing study materials, working with confidential files etc. RAs are also welcome to observe neurodevelopmental follow-up testing. It is possible to register for academic credit by enrolling in PSY 333 (Independent Study). You must receive approval from Dr. Rogers and complete the Petition to Enroll form. It is expected that 3-4 hours per week for 15 weeks will be devoted to aspects of the research for each unit of credit to be earned (e.g., 9-12 hours per week for 3 units of credit).

For more information about becoming involved in the Early Childhood Psychopathology program, please contact our research coordinator, Rachel Paul, at paulr@wustl.edu

Name: Mitchell Sommers, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

Speech perception and auditory processing in young listeners, older adults, and Alzheimer's patients. Hearing impairment and its effects on speech perception.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Some experience using computers and software packages (word processing, spread sheets) would be useful but is not essential.

Description of Research:

My research focuses on establishing how changes in both cognitive and auditory processing abilities contribute to speech perception difficulties in older adults and individuals with Alzheimer's disease (AD). The goal of the investigations is to determine the specific sensory and cognitive capacities that decline with age and AD and specify how such changes might affect speech perception. In addition to examining older listeners and patients with AD, the experiments also examine auditory and speech processing in cochlear implant patients. Current work in the lab is now exploring how and why speech perception improves when individuals can both see and hear a talker, compared with listening alone.

In addition to work on speech perception, I have also recently started investigating factors that can improve people's ability to learn vocabulary in a second language. This work is directed primarily at examining how acoustic variability (e.g., having words spoken by one talker versus many talkers) can promote second language vocabulary acquisition.

Duties of Research Assistant:

The duties of research assistants in my lab include scheduling and conducting experimental sessions with younger and older adults, scoring experimental results, and doing some data analysis.

Name: Michael J. Strube, Ph.D.
Office: Psychology, 317A
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General Area of Research:

Social and personality psychology, with particular interest in the self, applied decision making, measurement, research design and statistics.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

High motivation, attention to detail, willingness to learn.

Description of Research:

My current research is focused on the implications of self-knowledge for self-esteem, particularly the flexible ways that people construct their identities to maintain positive views of themselves. I am also investigating the impact of recent performance changes on self-esteem, questionnaire response biases, value congruence and its impact on well-being, and threat vigilance.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Research assistants help with all phases of research including library work, development and testing of experimental material, conducting experimental sessions, data management, and report preparation.

Name: Renee Thompson, Ph.D.
Office: Psychology, 235D
Phone: 314-935-8251
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General Area of Research:

emotion; depression; anxiety; adults

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Research Assistants should be responsible, committed, and excited to learn more about emotions and psychopathology! We are seeking conscientious, mature, and friendly research assistants to work in the lab and with students and adults recruited from the community.

Description of Research:

Research in the lab centers on understanding the everyday emotional experience of adults, with a special focus on those who are depressed and/or anxious. Much of our research incorporates experience sampling—a method in which participants carry around a hand-held electronic device, such as an iPod Touch, and answer questions multiple times over a specified period of time. Collecting data using this method allows us to examine patterns in the experiences over time. We also assess participants' physiological and endocrine (e.g., cortisol) responses to laboratory tasks and measure their levels of low-grade inflammation (e.g., C-reactive protein). This multi-method approach helps us to paint a nuanced picture of the emotional experiences and functioning of those with depression and/or anxiety.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Research Assistants will perform a range of tasks:

- 1) Conduct literature searches
- 2) Read and discuss lab-relevant journal articles
- 3) Attend select lab meetings
- 4) Recruit and schedule participants for ongoing studies
- 5) Run study sessions, including those involving physiology equipment
- 6) Quantify qualitative participant data and/or evaluate findings from empirical papers

*Research Assistant opportunities will be available in SPRING 2017

Name: Rebecca Treiman, Ph.D.
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Phone: 314-935-5326
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General Area of Research:

Reading, spelling, and language skills in children and adults.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Reliability, attention to detail, ability to work well with children (for the studies with children). A car would be helpful for some of the studies with children, which are carried out at local schools and daycare centers.

Description of Research:

The research focuses on the cognitive and linguistic skills that are involved in reading and spelling. Participants in the studies range from 3 year olds to college students. Some of our ongoing studies look at children's spellings. Other studies analyze data that have already been collected and that are available on computerized data bases. For example, we look at parent-child conversations about writing and reading and at data on how long it takes adults to read different kinds of words. Still other studies involve testing college students in spelling and reading tasks.

Duties of Research Assistant:

The undergraduate RA will help in the testing of participants or will help in analyses of already collected data.

Name: Kristin Van Engen, Ph.D.
Office: Psychology, 421A
Phone: 314-935-4945
E-mail: kvanengen@wustl.edu

General Area of Research:

Speech communication; speech perception, particularly in challenging conditions.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

- Reliable, attentive to detail, willing to learn
- Able to interact professionally with research participants
- Basic computing skills (e.g., Microsoft Word and Excel)

Description of Research:

Understanding spoken language requires listeners to map acoustic signals onto cognitive-linguistic representations. Those signals, however, are notoriously variable: the acoustics of individual phonemes, for example, vary substantially from speaker to speaker and across the phonetic contexts in which they are produced. While listeners are remarkably adept at handling this variation, the success and ease that typically characterize human speech communication can be modulated by aspects of talkers and listeners (e.g., whether they are native or non-native speakers; whether they have normal or impaired hearing) and the spaces in which they communicate (e.g., noisy vs. quiet, with or without visual information). These challenging intersections of perception and cognition form the locus of my research. Drawing on the tools and insights of linguistics, psychology, speech science, and cognitive neuroscience, my work investigates how acoustic-phonetic variability affects speech recognition and memory. I am guided by particular concerns for 1) how linguistic experience shapes speech perception and processing and 2) how signal-intrinsic (e.g., accent) and signal-extrinsic factors (e.g., noise) interact to modulate the success of communication.

Duties of Research Assistant:

- Experiment preparation (e.g., literature searches, development of stimuli)
- Data collection (scheduling and testing participants)
- Data management (entry, statistical analysis, reporting)
- Lab meeting attendance

Name: Desiree A. White, Ph.D.
Office: Psych., 321A; Developmental Neuropsychology Research
Laboratory, 307/309
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General Area of Research:

We explore cognitive and behavioral issues within the context of neuroimaging findings in children with disorders affecting the brain. Most specifically, the focus of our research is the development of executive abilities (e.g., working memory, inhibitory control, strategic processing) in children with frontal brain dysfunction. The utility of various treatments is also examined, such as blood transfusion and hydroxyurea in children with sickle cell disease and sapropterin dihydrochloride in children with phenylketonuria. In addition, Dr. White is Director of the Developmental & Behavioral Assessment Unit of the Washington University Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities Research Center, which provides assessment services to investigators studying children with a range of developmental disorders (e.g., autism, premature birth, traumatic brain injury).

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Prerequisites include successful completion of Statistics and Experimental Psychology courses. Research assistants should have an interest in the neuropsychology and the relationship between brain function and cognition. A willingness to work with children across a broad age range and with a variety of disorders and disabilities is required. Special skills include familiarity with basic computer operating systems and programs.

Description of Research:

Most of our research is conducted with medical patients recruited through the Washington University School of Medicine. Collaborations with programs in Pediatrics, Psychiatry, Neurology, Medical Genetics, Hematology/Oncology, and Radiology are ongoing. A primary goal of our research is to elucidate the neural mechanisms underlying the development of executive abilities, with a focus on the frontal lobes and the related white matter that interconnects brain regions. Standard neuropsychological measures are used to estimate levels of general cognitive and executive ability, whereas experimentally designed measures are used to provide a finer level of detail as to the cognitive processes contributing to the development of executive abilities. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and diffusion tensor imaging (DTI) are used to examine relationships between brain integrity/function and executive abilities.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Research responsibilities include participation in the following activities: Experimental task development, administration and scoring of standard and experimental tasks to research participants, participant scheduling, data entry and analysis, literature search and review.

Name: Denise Wilfley, Ph.D.
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wilkinsh@psychiatry.wustl.edu

General Area of Research:

Dr. Wilfley's research program at Washington University focuses on the causes, prevention, and treatment of eating disorders and obesity, as well as the interface of the eating disorders and obesity fields. Both eating disorders and obesity are significant and cause marked functional impairment and reduced quality of life. Eating disorders are associated with considerable impairment in health and social adjustment. Obesity, which is increasing at alarming rates worldwide, carries major health consequences such as diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, gallbladder disease, psychosocial problems, and certain cancers. Dr. Wilfley's laboratory integrates clinical and research components, and offers students a unique opportunity to contribute to an exciting and innovative line of research.

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Interns:

Students must be responsible, mature, willing, and motivated to assist on a variety of projects and tasks. A professional demeanor and interpersonal skills are essential, as students will be working in a clinical environment and as a member of Dr. Wilfley's research team. Organizational skills and computer literacy are also helpful. A psychology major or minor is preferred but not required. Students interested in completing an honors thesis are encouraged to apply.

Description of Research:

Dr. Wilfley's research team is involved in a wide range of studies within the fields of eating disorders and obesity. The following research projects are currently underway. For more information, **please see Dr. Wilfley's lab website:**

<https://healthyweightandwellness.wustl.edu>

- The Wilfley lab has a recently-funded NHBLI project titled The Effectiveness of Family-based Weight Loss Treatment Implemented in Primary Care, which aims to translate an evidence-based family-based weight loss treatment for childhood obesity (FBT) into primary care settings using co-located interventionists to serve as a model for care delivered within a patient-centered medical home. The results of this study will inform future dissemination and implementation of FBT into primary care settings.
- The NIMH-funded grant Using Technology to Improve Eating Disorders Treatment will deploy the Healthy Body Image Program and examine the efficacy of a technologically-enhanced, guided self-help program for students with eating disorders on college campuses in comparison to usual care. Thirty colleges from around the U.S. will participate in this study. Students who screen positive for an

- eating disorder will be recruited. Results from this study will help to determine whether this program produces measurable and significant improvements in access, costs, and outcomes for eating disorder treatment over usual care.
- A project titled Harnessing Technology for Training Therapists to Deliver Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT), funded by the National Eating Disorders Association, involves developing an online training platform for IPT. We are conducting a pilot study to evaluate the feasibility and accessibility of this approach, and will examine whether the power of the internet can be utilized to train therapists to deliver a proven interpersonal psychotherapy for Bulimia Nervosa and Binge Eating Disorder.
 - The Wilfley Lab is working to develop an online intervention for childhood obesity called Staying Fit that will be piloted in a middle school in Branson, Missouri. This targeted universal intervention will serve as a model for delivering online interventions for middle schools around the country.
 - We are also working with BJC healthcare on My Way to Health: an Evaluation of the BJC Employee Weight Management Program. Our evidence-based treatment has consistently been shown to help families lose weight and maintain their weight loss by establishing healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. Our approach is unique because of the careful attention we give each family to individualize their treatment and the depth at which we work with them to build social networks that support healthy behaviors.
 - The lab's Implementation of Evidence-Based Treatments for On-Campus Eating Disorders study focuses on how best to train therapists in the use of new treatments, specifically interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT). This psychotherapy has been shown to be effective for the treatment of eating disorders and depression, two common problems on college campuses. We are interested in comparing two different methods of training therapists in a new treatment and evaluating patients' improvement over time and how well the therapist's new skills are maintained over time. The costs of implementing the two training programs will also be compared. This research will be vital in determining how best to put new, evidence-based treatments into practice so that patients can receive the most appropriate, up-to-date care from their therapists.
 - Additionally, there is great public need for increased access to evidence-based pediatric obesity treatment. However, despite national recommendations and strong evidence, most children who need care do not receive it. Reimbursement for obesity services is currently inadequate, representing a major barrier to care. Our team is working to advocate for improved access to high-quality evidence-based pediatric obesity treatment at the state and federal level.

Duties of Research Assistants:

Duties include assisting with participant recruitment, participant screening, organization of study materials, participant monitoring, data collection and management, literature searches, and clerical or administrative tasks. Given that the lab's research projects are in different stages of development, some projects may be unavailable at the time of inquiry. We appreciate your flexibility in this matter.

Name: Heike Winterheld, Ph.D.
Office: Psychology, 416D
Phone: 314-935-8111
E-mail: winterheld@wustl.edu

General Area of Research:

Social/Personality

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

- Required: Psych 100B
- Preferred: Psych 300 and 301; either Psych 315 or Psych 353
- Must be highly motivated, diligent, reliable, and detail-oriented
- Must be available for a minimum of 6 hours/week
- Experience with Qualtrics and/or SPSS desired, but not necessary

Description of Research:

Dr. Winterheld conducts research on close relationships. In current projects, she examines how personality-related characteristics shape interpersonal dynamics in dating or married couples, and how these dynamics undermine or promote partners' psychological and physical health. She uses a variety of research methods including experimental methods, experience sampling (daily diary) methods, behavioral observation methods, and questionnaires or surveys.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Research assistants must attend weekly meetings. Duties will be adjusted to your level of experience, and may include screening, recruitment, running, and payment of research participants, contacting recruitment sites, coding of videotaped interactions or written responses, doing library research and assisting with literature reviews, preparing study materials for projects, assisting with the design of studies, data organization and management.

Name: Jeff Zacks, Ph.D.
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General Area of Research:

Cognitive psychology, cognitive aging, understanding video, mental spatial transformations, fMRI

Prerequisites/Special Skills Required of Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Experience with computers, Psychology 301, Psychology 360 are all helpful but not necessary.

Description of Research:

Our research focuses on two topics in human cognition: *event understanding* and *spatial cognition* using behavioral and neuroscience methods.

In many experiments we ask people to watch computer-driven video or listen to stories and respond to these stimuli (by pressing keys, by talking, by stopping and starting). We also ask people to learn how to perform new tasks based on the video. We also use eyetracking and functional MRI to investigate these behaviors. Recently, we have started using transcranial direct current stimulation, a brain stimulation technique.

Current foci of interest include: aging and Alzheimer disease, spatial navigation, post-traumatic stress disorder, the perception and memory of movies, and story comprehension.

Duties of Research Assistant:

Students will be involved in all aspects of the research: literature review, data collection, data analysis and interpretation. Students who are involved with the lab for more than a semester will have the opportunity to develop projects of increasing independence.