

# Instructor Orientation Packet for PSYC 103 Research Requirement

*Last Updated: 8/06/18*

# **PSYC 103 Instructor Orientation Packet for Research Requirement**

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## Historical Background and Rationale of the Requirement

The psychology department at the College of Charleston has a research mission that includes the development and support of student laboratory classes, the sponsorship of student research (e.g., independent study) and the professional development of faculty through independent research programs. In order to support a growing number of research activities, it became necessary to create a participant pool mechanism to ensure that a large number of research participants would be available on a consistent basis. Prior to the Fall 2001 academic semester, the department relied on the request that PSYC 103 instructors encourage their students to volunteer for experiments in exchange for extra credit. This system was problematic for many reasons, the most important being that the student laboratory classes could not execute research projects due to a shortage of available participants.

As the result of curriculum policy changes, PSYC 103 instructors now must require that their students participate in approximately 5 hours of research conducted in the Psychology Department. **The studies must be approved by the Technology Committee and posted on SONA.** This requirement will be designated as 10 experimental credits that must be acquired, and at least 4 of the credits must be earned prior to April 2<sup>nd</sup> (Spring semester) or October 13th (Fall semester). Students who do not wish to participate as a research volunteer will be offered an equitable alternative (see Journal Article Review alternative). In addition to supporting the research mission of the department, PSYC 103 students will benefit from getting first-hand experience with psychological research.

**All instructors must recognize that this is a course requirement for every student enrolled in PSYC 103/HONS 163. Consequently, we ask all instructors not only to include this requirement on the course syllabus, but also to designate time in the second week of class to allow students time to register on SONA and view the Oaks course.** A powerpoint has been created for you to use to guide students through this process. Please know that the development of this policy was not undertaken without careful consideration for the welfare of PSYC 103 students. Following the ethical principles for psychologists (6.14.b), a requirement must not represent a portion of a student's grade so large that "such an inducement might tend to coerce participation" (APA, 1994, p. 1609). Therefore, by a departmental vote, **the research requirement for all sections of PSYC 103 will constitute exactly 5% of the student's total or final grade.** This assigned weighting (5%) is intended to adhere to APA's ethical code and also facilitate the teaching and research mission of the department by ensuring sufficient incentive for student participation.

The following sections of this packet will provide you with all of the necessary information to implement this research requirement in your section(s) of PSYC 103. Efforts were taken to minimize the impact of the requirement on teacher workload. By making these procedures standard for each section of PSYC 103, we sought to ensure that fair and equitable policies would exist for every student. The Psychology Department's Participant Pool Committee, under the charge of the voting faculty, authored these materials. This committee was folded into the Technology Committee as of August of 2013. Please direct any comments or concerns to the current Technology Committee members:

Cindi May, [mayc@cofc.edu](mailto:mayc@cofc.edu), 953-6735  
Stephen Short, [shortsd@cofc.edu](mailto:shortsd@cofc.edu)  
Chelsea Reid-Short, [reidca@cofc.edu](mailto:reidca@cofc.edu)

### **The Requirement and Associated Policies (e.g., the Penalty System)**

In order to fully satisfy the research experience requirement for this course (and earn points toward their final grade), **students must earn a total of 10 experimental credits. Students will earn 1 credit for each experiment in which they participate that is 30 minutes or less in length, and 2 credits for any study greater than 30 minutes.** For example, a 20-30 minute study will earn 1 credit, a 45-60 minute study will earn 2 credits, and so forth. Students must be sure to attend experiments for which they sign up or call to cancel ahead of time or they will be penalized (see below). Students who do not wish to participate in experiments can satisfy the requirement by completing reviews of 10 empirical journal articles.

1. Students who earn some credits but less than 10 will earn only a portion of the 5% toward their course grade (partial credit). For example, a student who earns 5 out of 10 credits would earn only 2.5% instead of the full 5%.
2. Students must earn four experimental credits prior to about 4/2 in Spring and 10/13 in Fall (that is, about two-thirds of the way through the course). The course instructor reserves the right to penalize students (i.e., deduct a portion of the five percent of their final grade) if they do not earn 4 credits prior to these deadlines. This penalty would be executed even if a student eventually earns ten credits, as 4 credits were not earned before the indicated deadline. *Note. Instructors are not required to factor research participation into students' midterm grades, instead they must simply keep a list of which students were on record as having participated prior to the semester deadline. Instructors are not obligated to penalize students; instructors retain the flexibility to use their discretion and take students' individual circumstances into account.*
3. Students may use the experiment scheduling web site <http://cofc.sona-systems.com/> to cancel an appointment. Cancellation deadlines vary from experiment to experiment, and students will see those deadlines on the website and also receive an email reminding them of the deadline.
4. Students who fail to show up for an experiment for which they are scheduled (without canceling) must will be penalized 1 credit (approximately a half-hour) of research participation. Students who fail to show up for a second experiment for which they are scheduled will be penalized an additional 1 credit. Also, students who fail to show up for a second experiment will no longer be allowed to sign-up for additional studies and therefore must satisfy any remaining portion of the requirement by completing the journal review alternative.
6. Most experiments end just prior to the last week of class. There is no guarantee that experiments are available to accommodate research participation extremely late in the semester (e.g., the last week of classes or final exam week). Students who procrastinate in signing up for experiments run the risk of having to satisfy the requirement by completing the journal review alternative.

## Expectations of PSYC 103 Instructors

In executing this policy, PSYC 103 instructors are required to:

**(1) Inform your students about the research requirement and the associated policies at the onset of the course. This will require that you (a) include the information in your course syllabus.**

(a) To make this easy, we have already written a standardized insert for your PSYC 103 syllabus that all instructors must use (see page 5 for the insert). **Instructors must insert these paragraphs into their syllabi, verbatim.** Because the group of PSYC 103 instructors changes each semester, this standardized insert was prepared to ensure consistency across all sections of this course. A copy of this document is provided in a subsequent section of this orientation packet (see syllabus insert on page 5). An example of how the research requirement might be incorporated into a typical grading system is provided on page 6 of this packet. This page is intended solely as an example and therefore you are in no way obligated to insert the tables into your syllabus.

Instructors need not familiarize themselves with the workings of the experimental scheduling program, nor should they spend much class time answering questions as the program has a help function and other built in support mechanisms. However, instructors should allot class time in the second week of classes to guide students through the registration process for SONA and to find the Oaks course for journal article review. Instructors should also periodically remind students of the requirement and the pitfalls associated with procrastination. The Technology Committee may periodically contact PSYC 103 instructors and/or their students by email to inform them that new experiments have been posted. We would greatly appreciate your taking a moment to announce the posting of additional research opportunities when you are made aware of them.

**(2) About two-thirds of the way through the course (about 4/2 in Spring and about 10/13 in Fall), instructors must verify which of their students have earned at least 4 research credits. This information is obtained by accessing students' research participation records using <http://cofc.sona-systems.com/>. Students also can satisfy this requirement by completing the Journal Article Review option.**

At the beginning of the semester, each PSYC 103 instructor will be provided a password and logon name to access <http://cofc.sona-systems.com/>. Click on "Course Reports" to find out how many experiment participation credits that your students have earned. For assistance, please contact a member of the technology committee.

You have the option to penalize students who do not meet the 4/2 or 10/13 interim dates if you so choose. The department suggests a penalty of 2 percent of their final grade, provided, of course, that they eventually earn all 10 of the required research credits.

**(3) At the end of the semester, instructors must access students' research participation records using <http://cofc.sona-systems.com/>.**

Using your password and logon to access the "Course Reports" page, you will have access to student research participation records. Reports can be viewed on-line and printed. A CSV file output can be downloaded for direct importing into word processing or spreadsheet programs. Credits and penalties are reflected immediately in the students' records. Students' participation is tracked automatically for you, as assignments of credits and penalties are posted and updated throughout the semester. Instructors must incorporate this information into their grading by verifying whether or not each student has satisfied the research requirement (earning a net total of 10 credits) and assigning their final grade accordingly.

**(4) For those students who do not wish to participate in research, PSYC 103 instructors must verify that these individuals have completed the journal review alternative satisfactorily. Instructors also will need to keep a record of students' journal review forms throughout the semester, so that the research requirement is taken into account when computing students' final grades.**

Each semester, the Technology Committee, with the help of experimenters, will select journal articles for students to review as an alternative to participating in research. A standardized review form has been developed for student and instructor use that can be accessed using a special OAKS page. To ease instructors' administrative load, the review form is brief, and students' responses can be compared to an answer key that is made available to instructors. Instructors will receive these keys by email by the end of the semester. You may wish to select your own article(s) for the purpose of the journal article alternative to research participation. If you are interested in doing so, please contact one of the members of the Participant Pool.

## Syllabus Insert:

### PSYC 103 Research Requirement:

Students enrolled in PSYC 103 must fulfill a research requirement, which constitutes 5% of your course grade. In order to fully satisfy this requirement, you must earn 10 research credits. Research credits are earned by **A)** participating in research studies offered by the Psychology Department, and/or **B)** reading psychology articles about research and then filling out review forms about them. You may choose to fulfill your requirement by any combination of these options.

At least 4 research credits are due before April 2nd (Spring semester) or October 13th (Fall semester), or else you will be penalized a portion of your grade. In addition, at least 6 credits are due by April 15 (Spring semester) or November 14 (Fall semester), or else you will be penalized a portion of your grade. All 10 research credits are due on the last day of class. After the last day of class, if you have earned some credits but less than 10, you will earn only a portion of the 5% toward your course grade.

#### Option A: Participating in Research Studies within the Psychology Department

Student and faculty researchers in the Psychology Department conduct scientific investigations on many of the topics covered in this course. You are encouraged to participate in psychological studies for several reasons: The experience is educational, allowing you to learn "first hand" about psychological research. In addition, your participation helps to train advanced psychology majors about how to conduct scientific investigations (under faculty supervision). You may sign up for studies at <http://cofc.sona-systems.com>. Only studies approved by the Technology Committee and posted on SONA may be used to fulfill Option A of this requirement. You will earn 1 credit for each study that is 1-30 minutes long, 2 credits for any study that is 31-60 minutes long, and so forth. Be sure to attend studies for which you sign-up or else cancel ahead of time. Otherwise, you will be penalized by losing 1 credit (in addition to not receiving any credit for the study). Any student who fails to show up without cancelling twice will no longer be allowed to sign-up for studies.

#### How to get started?

- 1) Go to <https://cofc.sona-systems.com/>
- 2) In the lower left-corner, below "New Participant?", click "Request an account here"
- 3) Fill out all of the information. Your "userid" is a name of your choosing. **Be sure to select the correct course, matching both your professor's name and the time that your class meets.**
- 4) You will receive an email with your logon information.
- 5) If you are under 18 years of age, you must have a signed parental permission form in order to participate in research studies. See [http://psychology.cofc.edu/student-ops/research\\_requirement/103\\_docs/under\\_18](http://psychology.cofc.edu/student-ops/research_requirement/103_docs/under_18).

#### How to schedule a study?

- 1) Login at <https://cofc.sona-systems.com/>
- 2) Click "Study Sign-Up"
- 3) Follow the instructions to view and sign up for any available studies. Note that there are sometimes few or no studies to choose from, but more timeslots will be added soon. If that is the case, check back later.
- 4) You will receive an email confirmation of your sign-up.

#### Option B: Reading Articles and Filling Out Review Forms

Approved journal articles are available through OAKS. After reading an article, complete the Journal Article Review Form, and turn it in to your psychology professor before the last day of class. Each review is worth 1 credit. To access the materials for the Journal Article Review:

- 1) Log on to OAKS (<https://lms.cofc.edu/>)
- 2) Click on the course called "Intro Psychology Journal Article Review" under the current semester
- 3) Click on the Content icon
- 4) Under Option B, download the article that you want to read
- 7) Under Option B, download the Journal Article Review Form.
- 8) Remember that **you must read the entire journal article and answer the questions on the Journal Article Review Form in your own words.** Plagiarism and/or simply reading the abstract will not be tolerated.
- 9) Turn in the Journal Article Review form to your psychology professor before the last day of class.

For additional research requirement information, see [http://psychology.cofc.edu/student-ops/research\\_requirement/students.php](http://psychology.cofc.edu/student-ops/research_requirement/students.php).

## **Instructions for Accessing Students' Research Participation Records via Sona Systems**

- (1) Go to <http://cofc.sona-systems.com/>
- (2) Type in your logon and password as given to you by email at the beginning of the semester.
- (3) Click on "Course Reports"
- (4) Choose your course and the type of student records you'd like to examine.
- (5) View, print, and/or download the records.

### **Other important Information**

- Please keep in mind that some students may accidentally register for the wrong section and/or wrong professor.
- Please feel free to email one of the members of the technology committee with any questions or concerns (see page 1 for current committee members).

### **Summary of Program features**

- Detailed reports of participation for instructors are provided to instructors and other members of the department through password assignments.
- Reports can be viewed on-line, printed, or downloaded.
- CSV file output is provided for import into word processing or spreadsheet programs.
- Credit is reflected immediately in the student's record.
- Credit for participation is tracked automatically



## Journal Critique Form

1. Within the discipline of psychology, scientists use APA formatting to list the citation to an article. In APA format, the authors are listed first, followed by the year the article was printed, the title of the article, the journal title, the volume, and finally the page numbers. Here is an example:

Beran, M. J., Evans, T. A., Klein, E. D., & Einstein, G. O. (2012). Rhesus monkeys (*Macaca mulatta*) and capuchin monkeys (*Cebus apella*) remember future responses in a computerized task. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Animal Behavior Processes*, 38, 233-243.

Please give the citation for the article you read, following the APA format above.

2. Was the study experimental or correlational? How do you know?

3. What variables were being studied? How were they measured or manipulated?

4. Main Hypothesis (Why was the study conducted? What questions did the investigators examine)?



## Procedural checklist for PSYC 103 Instructors

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I have inserted the description of the research requirement into my PSYC 103 syllabus and I have distributed it to my students.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ In the **second week** of classes, I have reviewed the powerpoint detailing how to register on SONA and access the Oaks course for journal article reviews. I have allotted a few minutes in class for students to register on SONA.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ About two-thirds of the way through the course [prior to April 2<sup>nd</sup> (Spring semester) or October 13th (Fall semester)], I have accessed students experiment participation records by logging onto the "course reports" page at <http://cofc.sona-systems.com/>. I have made sure that students have participated in at least four credits prior to this deadline. I have noted this information in my grade book along with students who may have opted to satisfy this requirement by completing four journal article reviews prior to this deadline.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ I have examined students' journal article reviews by comparing their answers to those on the review form keys. I realize that students have been instructed to read the entire journal article, not just the abstract, and that they have been instructed to answer in their own words. I have recorded which students have completed this alternative to satisfaction by tabulating this information in my grade book.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ At the semester's end, I have accessed students experiment participation records by logging onto the "course reports" page at <http://cofc.sona-systems.com/>. I have made sure that students have a total or balance of ten credits, in light of any penalties they may have incurred.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ I have incorporated the extent to which each student has met or failed to meet the research requirement into the computation of their final grade. In doing so, the requirement contributed toward 5% of their final grade.