Option 1: Research Participation

Research is a fundamental component of psychological science. Learning about psychology involves learning about the research process, and research participation provides a hands-on opportunity to become familiar with how research is conducted. This option gives you experience as a participant in actual psychology experiments. You will also have the opportunity to learn more about yourself and your behavior in these studies. There are many different kinds of studies conducted in our department. For example, you might be asked to complete questionnaires, to view videos, to listen to music or conversations, to interact with others in a group, or to make judgments on a computer. All studies are reviewed and approved in advance by the Roger Williams University Institutional Review Board. When you arrive at each study, the investigator will explain that particular study to you and you will have a chance to ask any questions you may have about participation. If you decide to participate in the study, you will be given a written explanation of the study and asked to give your consent to participate. Even after you have consented and have started to participate, it is always up to you to decide whether to continue. The sign-up procedure uses a web-based system called Sona Systems which means you will sign up for studies on-line. The procedure for signing up for experiments is detailed below. If you are still confused after reading this document check the Frequently Asked Questions (on the Sona Systems Webpage).

I. Setting up an account and password. The first time you use Sona Systems, follow the steps below to set up an account for yourself and indicate your course section:

Step 1: Go to: http://rwu.sona-systems.com and under New User on the left side of the screen, click on the request an account link. Then, enter the following information:

First name: enter First Name,
Last name: enter Last Name,
User ID: enter your RWU username, (NOTE THIS IS THE USERNAME that is given to you as the prefix of your g.rwu.edu email, e.g. jsmith356),
Re-enter User ID: enter your RWU username again,
Select course: Select your course (students in multiple courses can select more than one course by holding down the SHIFT key and selecting both courses).

Step 2: A logon and password will be sent to your email account immediately with the link to Sona Systems in the email so that you can immediately login. If you do not receive a logon and password shortly (at least 24 hours) after you have signed up, it is most likely due to complications with the email address you provided. MAKE SURE YOU ARE ENTERING @g.rwu.edu. For any problems with your RWU email, try contacting the computing help desk at 254-5200.

Step 3: To login, go to: http://rwu.sona-systems.com and type in your RWU username and the password you received. Under My profile, you can change your password as well as any other information (e.g., your phone number).

If you forget your password, go to http://rwu.sona-systems.com/ and on the left side of the screen under “your password”, click on retrieve password. You will be sent your password via email.
III. Signing up for experiments

After you have set up your account, you may sign up for research projects. PLEASE PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH STUDY. If you do not meet the requirements for the study, please do not sign up to participate, you will not be allowed to do so. Also please keep track of the studies you sign up for. If you sign up, you will be expected to show up. Participants who do not show up for studies they have signed up for, and do not cancel within 24 hours before the study is to occur will incur a penalty.

Step 1: Go to http://rwu.sona-systems.com and login with your username and password. To view available studies, click on the study sign-up icon. This will bring up a list of studies and you may view the schedule of available times by clicking on the specific study. You can then view the number of credits the study awards and amount of time required. To view available time slots, click on the link provided, and you will see additional information including the location of the study.

Step 2: When you find a study that meets your schedule, simply click the Sign Up button and you will be signed up for that study. Also, please write down the day, date, time, and location of the experiment in your calendar.

Step 3: You will receive a confirmation/remind email about 24 hours before the scheduled time of the study. To receive a reminder, you need to make sure your email address is correct in the online sign-up system. To verify or change your email address, go to http://rwu.sona-systems.com and click on the “My Profile” icon at the bottom of the screen and adjust your contact information as needed. If your email address isn't there or is incorrect, you can type another address in the Alternate Email Address box. However, note that if you type in an alternate email address, all emails from the website will be sent to the alternate email address.

Step 4: On the date and time of the study, go to the location of the study. If you have any questions about the location of the study, please email the person listed as the Researcher under the study description. After arriving at the experiment, you will first be given a description of the experimental procedures and asked to sign a consent form. After you have completed the experiment, the researcher will assign you credit via the website. Please allow researchers 1 week after the study has ended to formally assign you credit on the SONA website. You can keep track of the credits you have earned by going to the website, clicking on My Schedule/Credits and logging in. The experiments you have participated in, and the number of credits you have earned, as well as any outstanding appointments will be listed there.

IV. Canceling an appointment.

If you must cancel your appointment, be sure to remove your name from the web sign-up page under My Schedule/Credits as soon as possible, so that another student may take your spot in the study. If it is more than 24 hours before the session is to begin, Go to the Sona Systems website and find your initials next to the date and time you signed-up. Click the "Cancel" button to the right of your initials. If it is within 24 hours before the session begins you must call or email the researcher. PLEASE do not call the Psychology office, systems administrator, or instructor with information about cancellations, as these people are in no way involved in this procedure.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

1. If you forget the date, time, or room number for your session, go to http://rwu.sona-systems.com, log on, and click on My Schedule and Credits. Once you log in, you can
see a list of any projects you are signed up for. You can then verify the date, time, and location, as well as the researcher's phone number and the Researcher’s email address.

2. Failure to show up for a study without notifying the researcher (described above) will result in a penalty (additional 1 credit added to the requirement for the course FOR EACH NO SHOW OCCURRANCE. In other words, if your course requires participation in 2 studies, and you do not show up for one study, you will now need to do 3 studies to meet the requirements for the course, and an addition no show would result in having to do 4, etc.).

3. You will be able to track the credits and penalties you have earned for participation in research studies by viewing the Schedule/Credits page. Check periodically to make sure that your credit has been correctly applied. If there is a problem, contact the researcher as soon as you can. If you think that the Sona system is incorrect, send an email to the system administrator.

4. Last day to sign up for research projects is THE LAST CLASS DAY EACH SEMESTER, or whichever day is stated by your professor. (*Please note that these dates do not imply the availability of studies on these dates)

OPTION 2: Writing summaries of research studies already completed.
This option is designed to give you exposure to the research that psychologists conduct by reading and reporting on already completed experiments that have been published in professional psychology journals. Students who decide on the paper option must still sign up in sona-systems and choose the paper option, under the list of available experiments. Students who do not sign up in the system will not have their papers counted. The typed papers and complete articles should be turned into your instructor by the deadline assigned by your instructor. They will be graded on a pass-fail basis. YOU MUST DO ONE SUMMARY FOR EACH CREDIT REQUIRED IN YOUR COURSE (e.g., 3 credits = 3 research reports).

Step 1. Locating a research article: Select 2 articles in a professional research journal that describes one or more experiments. Be sure to choose articles that are empirical (i.e., a study was conducted). Do not select theoretical articles. Only professional journals in Psychology are acceptable.

These journals are available in the University Library, or on-line via EBSCO. Your instructor can assist you in determining whether your articles are acceptable. Please note that Psychology Today, Science Magazine, Omni, Redbook, Reader's Digest, etc. are NOT professional journals.

Step 2. Format of Report: Please have your reports conform to the following guidelines:
   a. Include a photocopy. Turn in a complete copy of each of the articles, including the reference list provided at the end of the article.
   b. The written report of each article can be brief. Two- three typed, double-spaced pages, not including the photocopy, is acceptable.

Step 3. Coverage: Include information that responds to the following questions:
   a. What was this article about (i.e., briefly summarize the purpose, methods, results, and conclusions)?
   b. Why did you choose this particular journal or article?
   c. How understandable or usable was the article to you? (If it seems vague or impossible to understand, feel free to say so.)
   d. What did you learn as a result of your reading and how did this article relate (if at all) to class material?