

Undergraduate Research Assistantships and Thesis Opportunities

Department of Psychology – East Carolina University

Spring 2025

Calling all Pirate Scholars!

The Department of Psychology at East Carolina University offers hands-on research experience opportunities for all undergraduate students.

Our faculty members are engaged in a variety of active research programs that span a number of specializations, methodologies, populations, and designs. Undergraduate students are encouraged to become a part of this research by assisting faculty with new and ongoing projects—an experience valuable for students who are interesting in learning more about one or more areas of psychology in greater depth, becoming an informed consumer of research, and developing skills and abilities valued by employers and graduate schools.

Undergraduate research assistants typically register for supervised course credit as an elective in psychology (e.g., PSYC 4501) in the semester or session that they are involved.

Below is a list of psychology department faculty who have demonstrated a commitment to mentoring undergraduate students in scientific research practices.

After studying this document, please complete the online application by using the following web address:

https://ecu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8hUPfb3FE7eJxAy

The deadline is Friday, October 25th.

The link to the application will become inactive after the deadline, so please complete the process as soon as possible if you are interested.

For more information, please visit <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-cas/psyc/StudentResearch.cfm>

List of Faculty Mentors

Dr. Mark Bowler

Field of Specialization: Industrial/Organizational Psychology

Research Description: For research with undergraduates, I am interested in the intersection of political beliefs and psychology. For example, research looking at the association between political ideology and vaccine hesitancy.

Note: Senior thesis option only.

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores? No

Dr. Courtney Baker**Field of Specialization:** Industrial/Organizational Psychology

Research Description: I am interested in how we perceive others related to their identities and social features, how others perceive us, and how this impacts the way in which we treat others and perceive discrimination. I would classify myself as a diversity, equity, and inclusion researcher, with a primary focus on aging, gender, and disability. I also look at leadership perceptions, perceptions of humor use, multitasking, and workplace mistreatment as some secondary areas of interest. Currently, my lab is focusing on what it means to age healthily in the workplace and designing some projects related to worker experiences based on their age categories. In my lab, I typically coordinate lab tasks based on the needs of the projects that are actively occurring, so it is hard to predict exactly what you'd be engaging in, but I try to give experiences across the research process. This means that tasks you could be helping with include, but are not limited to, pretesting surveys, coding data, literature searches, APA reference checks, and collecting participant data. I do require that research assistants attend a once per week lab meeting to coordinate tasks and a lab project. Each semester, my students in my lab help to develop and facilitate a lab project together and engage in the full research process based on my lab's research focus. For first time lab students, I would like that they register for the course credit and after that could volunteer in lab rather than taking course credit if they desire. Undergraduates who work in my lab for at least one semester are eligible to be considered for a senior thesis.

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores? Yes**Senior Thesis option?** Considered after one semester**Dr. Shahnaz Aziz****Field of Specialization:** Clinical Health Psychology

My area of interest lies in the domain of employee well-being and health, specifically, workaholism, work-life balance, work stress, and burnout. Student researchers would typically be involved in subject recruitment, data collection/entry, and discuss relevant literature.

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores? No**Senior Thesis option?** No

Dr. Matt Whited**Field of Specialization:** Clinical Health Psychology

Research Description: The Cardiovascular Psychophysiology lab is broadly interested in understanding and modifying behavioral factors that influence cardiovascular disease. You can learn more about the lab from Dr. Whited's website (<https://psychology.ecu.edu/people/whited/>). We are currently conducting a study investigating college student self-knowledge of blood pressure and BMI. We are interested in understanding how their self-knowledge relates to various health behaviors that are associated with cardiovascular disease. Undergraduate lab members will gain experience with both psychological and physiological assessment and learn about the history and background of this research project.

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores? Yes**Senior Thesis option?** No**Dr. Lisa Campbell****Field of Specialization:** Clinical Health Psychology

Research Description: The Health Disparities Interventions Lab focuses on evaluating and disseminating psychosocial interventions to improve adjustment to and self-management of chronic diseases in disparity populations. The Lab conducts research along the entire chronic disease continuum from prevention, to screening, diagnosis, treatment and ongoing disease management, and end-of-life. Current research projects are addressing preventive health behaviors, sexual health, and mental health care utilization in African American women, Latinas, and sexual minority women. Undergraduates who have worked in our lab for one semester or more may be invited to complete a senior thesis or honors thesis project in the lab.

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores? No**Senior Thesis option?** Considered after one semester**Dr. Christy Walcott****Field of Specialization:** School Psychology

Research Description: The primary efforts of the Walcott research lab are focused on enhancing school mental health practices for K-12 students. I am also finishing up research and preparing manuscripts for several projects related to attention and literacy development. Moving forward, I am interested in ideas about how better student-teacher relationships can moderate the negative behaviors of students, and examining links between academic disparities and health disparities.

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores? Yes**Senior Thesis option?** Yes

Dr. Michael Baker

Fields of Specialization: Social Psychology, Personality, Evolutionary Theory, dabbling in Psychology of Religion

Research Description: This spring I will need assistants to help with data collection for a thesis project investigating how listening to different types of music impacts puzzle solving ability. Student research assistants get hands-on experience running participants through a psychological experiment in a laboratory. Assistants are expected to attend weekly lab meetings to discuss progress on the lab project as well as assigned readings from psychological journals.

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores? No

Senior thesis option available? No