Undergraduate Research Assistantships and Theses
Department of Psychology – East Carolina University
Fall 2019 Assistantships

- Interested in gaining hands-on research experience with a faculty member in the Department of Psychology at East Carolina University?
- 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 interested 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.
- Please review the following list of faculty who are accepting research assistants for fall 2019.
- Afterwards, complete the online application by using the following web address:
  [https://ecu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_42F6ehKM8JUquGh](https://ecu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_42F6ehKM8JUquGh)
- The deadline for completing the application process is April 2, 2019. 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](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-cas/psyc/StudentResearch.cfm)

List of Faculty Mentors

Please review the following list of faculty mentors and note your preferences.

**DR. MICHAEL BAKER**

**Field of Specialization:** Social Psychology

**Research Description:** Dr. Baker's research applies an evolutionary perspective to social and health psychology. His work examines the effects of fundamental social motives such as mate seeking, mate retention, self-preservation, affiliation, disease avoidance, and status motives on health-related behavioral outcomes. Behaviors of interest include exercise, food selection, smoking cessation, and risk-taking. Research assistants in Dr. Baker's laboratory typically contribute to this research by collecting relevant peer-reviewed articles and running participants through experimental protocols that are designed to measure or manipulate the aforementioned motives in order to increase the frequency with which healthy behaviors are performed.

Students who wish to conduct an undergraduate thesis under Dr. Baker's supervision must have at least a 3.0 GPA, have completed Research Methods in Psychology, and be willing to pursue a topic that is directly relevant to Dr. Baker's program of research.

Dr. Baker will consider students for research assistant positions (PSYC 4501). PSYC 4501 is a semester-length option, in which the student can gain research skills and work in a lab without a formal expectation of a final product. Dr. Baker is also open to considering proving early mentorship experiences for freshmen and/or sophomore students.
DR. CHRISTYN DOLBIER

Field of Specialization: Health Psychology

Research Description: I am looking for ambitious students interested in my area of research to join my research team in the Stress & Health Lab during the Spring 2019 semester. Description of lab: In the Stress and Health Lab, we attempt to address three questions. 1) How does stress affect well-being? To answer this question, we study emotional, cognitive, behavioral and physiological pathways by which exposure to stressors leads to mental and physical health outcomes. 2) Why do some people experience detrimental effects from stress and others do not? To answer this question, we investigate prior stressor exposure, protective factors and coping strategies that enable resilient (homeostatic) stress responses, as well as stress-related growth as a thriving (transcendent) stress response. 3) How can we help people reduce detrimental and enhance beneficial stress responses? To answer this question, we develop stress management interventions for vulnerable populations, and examine their efficacy to prevent/reduce detrimental effects of stress and enhance beneficial functioning, as well as their mechanisms of action.

Description of projects: I am looking for ambitious students interested in my area of research to join my research team in the Stress & Health Lab during the Summer and Fall 2019 semesters.

Description of research lab: In the Stress and Health Lab, we attempt to address three questions. 1) How does stress affect well-being? To answer this question, we study emotional, cognitive, behavioral and physiological pathways by which exposure to stressors leads to mental and physical health outcomes. 2) Why do some people experience detrimental effects from stress and others do not? To answer this question, we investigate prior stressor exposure, protective factors and coping strategies that enable resilient (homeostatic) stress responses, as well as stress-related growth as a thriving (transcendent) stress response. 3) How can we help people reduce detrimental and enhance beneficial stress responses? To answer this question, we develop stress management interventions for vulnerable populations, and examine their efficacy to prevent/reduce detrimental effects of stress and enhance beneficial functioning, as well as their mechanisms of action.

Description of projects: Currently, I am recruiting undergraduate research assistants to help with the following projects:
1) An efficacy study of a mindfulness-based stress management program with pregnant women.
2) A survey study examining stress and coping in relation to well-being in college students.

Description of research assistantship: Research assistants (RAs) read research articles related to the project they are involved with, participate in weekly lab meetings, and assist with a variety of research tasks depending on the project and phase of the project (e.g., participant recruitment and retention; data collection, coding, entry and analysis; library research and literature reviews). Mentorship and training are provided by me and graduate students in our health psychology doctoral program. Especially motivated and skilled RAs may have the opportunity to do independent research, assist with conference submissions and manuscript preparation. RAs who have worked in the lab for one semester or more are eligible to be considered for a senior thesis. RAs typically register for supervised course credit in psychology in the semesters they are involved.

Preferred qualifications: I will consider applicants at all levels (freshmen - senior) who have a solid academic record (GPA 3.0 or higher), and are detail-oriented, responsible and motivated to learn about research. I prefer that students be willing to commit at least two semesters to working in the
lab, and enroll in 2-3 credits of supervised research in psychology (which corresponds to 6-9 hours of RA work per week).