Undergraduate Research Assistantships and Theses
Department of Psychology – East Carolina University
Fall 2023 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 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.

- Please review the following list of faculty who are accepting research assistants for
  summer/fall 2023.

- Afterwards, complete the online application by using the following web address:

- The deadline for completing the application process is Friday, March 31st.

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

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.

Willing to mentor senior thesis? NO
Available to Freshmen/Sophomores? YES

Dr. Mark Bowler

Field of Specialization: Industrial/Organizational Psychology

Research Description: I am currently focusing on (1) Employee burnout and turnover; willingness to take leave and health promoting leadership. (2) Counterproductive worker behavior. (3) Political beliefs, attitudes, and personality. [This is the best area for undergraduate student theses.]

Note: Senior thesis option only.

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores?: No

Drs. Christy Walcott and Brandon Shultz

Field of Specialization: School Psychology

Research Description: The Early Supports for Student Success (ESSS) project is a multisite, grant-funded study examining innovative strategies for delivering high-quality behavioral health programming in elementary schools. Our aim is to strengthen existing problem-solving practices in schools and improve academic and behavioral outcomes. Lab research assistants will attend weekly lab meetings, assist with data entry and school-based data collection in Pitt Co Schools, perform literature searches, assist with writing research posters or papers, and other tasks as assigned.
Available to Freshmen/Sophomores?: Yes

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 searchers, 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

Dr. Shanaz Aziz

Field of Specialization: Industrial/Organizational Psychology

Research Description: My area of interest lies in the domain of employee well-being and health, specifically, workaholism. Student researchers would typically be involved in subject recruitment, data collection/entry, and discuss relevant literature. Undergraduates who have worked in our lab for one semester or more are eligible to be considered for a senior thesis.

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores?: No
Christyn Dolbier, PhD

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 fall 2023 semester. Research conducted in the lab focuses on areas pertinent to the fields of health psychology, clinical health psychology, and clinical psychology.

Description of projects:
Currently, I am recruiting undergraduate research assistants to help with two projects. In your application, please indicate which of these projects you would be most interested in helping with.

• An online survey study of stress and mental health in college students.
• Development of a mindfulness-based stress management intervention adapted to optimize relevance and accessibility for underrepresented groups.

See our lab website for more information about our group.
https://sites.ecu.edu/dolbierstressandhealthlab/

Description of research assistantship:
Research assistants (RAs) read research articles related to the project they are involved with, participate in regular lab meetings, and assist with a variety of research tasks depending on the project and phase of the project (e.g., study document preparation; 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 clinical health psychology doctoral program. Especially motivated and skilled RAs may have the opportunity to do independent research and 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).

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores?: Yes
Dr. Matt Whited, PhD, FSBM

Field of Specialization: Clinical Health Psychology

Research Description: Dr. Whited's lab is broadly interested in behavioral risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Our next project is to examine knowledge of blood pressure risk among emerging adult undergraduate students. We are seeking research assistance to help us collect and examine blood pressure risk knowledge. This would involve in person meetings with participants where their blood pressure can be measured. Undergraduate research assistants will spend about 9 hours per week collecting data, participating in lab meetings, and learning about the extent research. Students of all levels of experience are welcome to apply. Undergraduates who have worked in our lab for one semester or more are eligible to be considered for senior thesis.

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores?: Yes

Dr. Aimee W. Smith

Field of Specialization: Pediatric Psychology

Research Description: We do research with youth and young adults with chronic illnesses (like sickle cell disease, epilepsy, diabetes, hemophilia, and chronic kidney disease) and their parents. In Fall 2023, we will be collecting data for a grant related to youth and family's experience with Medicaid (public health insurance), which will include surveys, focus groups, and Photovoice methods. If you are selected for this lab, you will need to complete several trainings before collecting data, including HIPAA training, CITI training, and Brody Clinical Training, which includes proof of a flu shot and TB test (this information is handled by Brody and not by Dr. Smith personally). Data collection frequently takes place in hospital settings and currently requires the use of a mask. We typically meet weekly to monthly. You will have the opportunity to work with Dr. Smith and her graduate students. Undergraduates who have worked in our lab for one semester or more are eligible to be considered for senior thesis.

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores?: Yes
Dr. Michael Baker

Field of Specialization: Social Psychology

Research Description: Dr. Baker's current research explores how situational and life history factors interact to impact decision-making by individuals. For example: Do people spend money differently depending on whether they had to earn it or not and how do the conditions that they experienced during childhood impact these choices?

The general goal is to enhance our understanding of human action by applying evolutionary and economic perspectives. Recently we have been focusing on factors such as time perspective (how one feels about their past, present, and future) and the childhood environment (harshness/deprivation and stability) on economic choices. We also examine the effects of fundamental social motives such as mate seeking, mate retention, self-preservation, affiliation, disease avoidance, and status motives on behavioral outcomes. Behaviors of interest include financial choices, exercise behavior, food selection, and risk-taking.

Research assistants in Dr. Baker's laboratory typically contribute to this research by reading and 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. A weekly lab meeting is held every Friday afternoon and assistants are required to attend.

Please note that applications are typically very competitive as student interest is often high and space in the lab is limited.

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.

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores?: Yes