

Psychology Department | 2023-2024

Undergraduate Research Opportunities

All psychology faculty are willing to supervise students enrolled in **Undergraduate Research (PSY 4100)**—An opportunity to engage in empirical research in psychology under the guidance of a psychology faculty member). If you are not yet “ready” to engage in research, you might consider doing **Independent Study (PSY 3900)**—The study of topics in psychology through directed readings and individual instruction); you should decide whether 3900 or 4100 is the best fit for you in consultation with a faculty supervisor or your academic advisor.

Keep in mind that, sometimes, faculty have limited “spaces” available in their schedules; so, don’t wait until the last minute to approach them about these opportunities. Note also that although most faculty will want you to commit to two semesters in order to maximize learning, some will consider a one-semester supervision; if so, it has been noted.



Dr. Wesley Allan, PHYS 1065, 581-6611, wallan@eiu.edu

Research Interests: Social Anxiety; Fear of Evaluation; Test & Speaking Anxiety

Students working with Dr. Allan generally assist in his ongoing studies of social anxiety. Students must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 and should be juniors or seniors. Although two-semester commitments are preferred, one-semester commitments are possible.



Dr. Ronan Bernas, PHYS 3043, 581-6416, rsbernas@eiu.edu

Research Interests: Self-construal (how the self is perceived/constructed and its relationship with well-being); Mindful awareness/ mindfulness; Happiness/subjective well-being; Empirical testing of Buddhist philosophical/psychological concepts (e.g., the ‘empty self’ and its role in fostering well-being); Religious/spiritual thought and cognitions; Wisdom (cognitive processes involved in wisdom such as dialectical thinking and reflective judgments); Cultural differences in thinking.

Students working with Dr. Bernas may develop their own research projects within Dr. Bernas’ research interests or work on one of Dr. Bernas’ ongoing research projects. Students must have a minimum GPA of 3.0. A two-semester commitment (for three credit hours each) and completion of Research Methods (PSY 3805) are preferred, but exceptions can be made.



Dr. Caridad Brito, PHYS 3139, 581-2219, cfbrito@eiu.edu

Research Interests: Attitudes toward Aging and various other Gerontology topics; Diversity & Multi-Cultural Issues

Students working with Dr. Brito may develop their own research projects or work on projects developed by Dr. Brito. Students need to have successfully completed Statistics (PSY 2610) when they begin Undergraduate Research with Dr. Brito. Generally, students take three semester credit hours per semester, and spend about nine hours in the Lab each week. Dr. Brito will work with students as early as their sophomore year.



Dr. Gary Canivez, PHYS 1001, 581-6413, glcanivez@eiu.edu

Research Interests: Psychometric Evaluation of Intelligence; Achievement, Personality & Psychopathology Tests; Sport Psychology; Computer Applications in Psychology

Students working with Dr. Canivez may develop their own research projects related to individual interests related to psychological measurement or sport psychology. Students may also elect to assist Dr. Canivez on a funded grant project. Students need to have completed statistics and must have taken or be enrolled in research methods. In addition, students must have a minimum GPA of 3.0. Although Dr. Canivez prefers juniors and seniors, exceptions may be made for those who have completed the educational prerequisites.



Dr. Meg Floress, PHYS 1437, 581-2127, mfloress@eiu.edu

Research Interests: Evidenced-based Strategies, Classroom Management, Teacher Praise, Teacher Training, The Prevention of Behavior Problems, & Parent Training.

Students working with Dr. Floress may develop their own research projects or may work with her on ongoing projects related to school psychology or behavioral pediatrics. There are no prerequisites for students who wish to participate in an ongoing project, however, students who wish to design their own project should be enrolled in or have completed Statistics (PSY 2610) and Research Methods (PSY 3805). Behavior Modification (PSY 3765) is recommended. A minimum 3.0 GPA is required. A two-semester commitment is strongly encouraged and required for students who design their own projects. Students who are interested in working with Dr. Floress should email her to set up a virtual meeting.



Dr. Assegedetch Haile Mariam, PHYS 3041, 581-6615, ahailemariam@eiu.edu

Research Interests: ADHD in Children/Adults; Mental Health Issues in Children; Educational Achievement of English Language Learners; Cultural Influences on Child Development; and Early Intervention of Learning Difficulties.

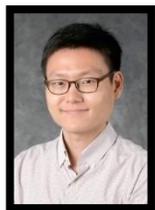
Students will be working on projects related to Dr. Haile Mariam's research interests, although they may sometimes develop their own research projects. To do so, they need to have successfully completed Statistics (PSY 2610) and Research Methods (PSY 3805), have a 3.0 minimum GPA, and commit for two semesters.



Dr. John Mace, PHYS 1153, 581-2127, jhmace@eiu.edu

Research Interests: Involuntary Memory; Voluntary Memory; Processes Underlying Remembering; Autobiographical Memory

Students working with Dr. Mace may work on projects developed by him or develop their own projects within his area or in any other area within the study of memory. Students must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 and should be juniors or seniors. Although two-semester commitments are preferred, one-semester commitments are possible.



Dr. JungSu Oh, PHYS 1440, 581-2611, joh2@eiu.edu

Research Interests: Counseling & mental health related issues; Text analysis; Quantitative research methods

Students working with Dr. Oh may develop their own research projects or may work on one of Dr. Oh's ongoing research projects. Students must have a minimum GPA of 3.0. A two-semester commitment are strongly encouraged and required for students who design their own projects. Students need to have completed Research Methods (PSY 3805). A solid understanding on statistics and statistical software is strongly preferred.



Dr. David Schena, PHYS 1051, 581-6612, dschena@eiu.edu

Research Interests: Skill acquisition and instructional methods; Autism spectrum disorders; Neurodiversity; Single-subject designs; Adult roles and responsibilities, especially surrounding financial literacy and employment.

Students working with Dr. Schena will generally assist in data collection, data analysis, and creation or revision of manuscripts for publication. Completion of, or current enrollment in, Research Methods is required. Students may develop their own research projects within Dr. Schena's research interests, though a two-semester commitment is required if students design their own project. Students must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 and may be individuals of all classes, including those in their last semester.



Dr. Steven Scher, PHYS 3143, 581-7269, sjscher@eiu.edu

Research Interests: Psychology of Religion/Prayer; Social Support; Evolutionary Psychology; Psychology of Judaism

Students may develop their own project within Dr. Scher's general research areas, or they may work on an ongoing project. Dr. Scher encourages motivated students to begin Independent Study research as early as possible in their academic career, but students generally must commit to work on a project for at least two semesters.



Dr. Jeffrey Stowell, PHYS 1055, 581-2279, jrstowell@eiu.edu

Research Interests: Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Technology

Students working with Dr. Stowell may develop their own research projects or work on projects developed by Dr. Stowell. If you wish to do undergraduate research with Dr. Stowell, you should have completed or at least be enrolled in Research Methods. Dr. Stowell will work with individuals of all classes including those in their last semester.



Dr. Anne Walk, PHYS 1450, 581-3523, amwalk@eiu.edu

Research Interests: The Relationship between Health Behaviors (Diet, Cardiovascular Fitness, Physical Activity) and Cognitive and Brain Health; Physical Activity in Schools; Neural Correlates of Learning; Multi-sensory and Multi-modal Processing; Haptic Perception; Neural Correlates of Language.

Students working with Dr. Walk may work on projects developed by Dr. Walk or develop their own projects, as long as they align with Dr. Walk's research interests. If you wish to do undergraduate research with Dr. Walk, you should have completed or at least be enrolled in Research Methods. Dr. Walk will work with individuals of all classes including those in their last semester.



Dr. Jerry Zhu, PHYS 1420, 581-6614, jzhu@eiu.edu

Research Interests: Attention and memory; stress and memory; learning and memory; memory and decision making; aging and Alzheimer's Disease.

Students working with Dr. Zhu may work on projects developed by Dr. Zhu or develop their own projects, as long as they align with Dr. Zhu's research interests. If you wish to do undergraduate research with Dr. Zhu, you should have completed Research Methods (PSY 3805). Although two-semester commitments are preferred, one-semester commitments are possible.