

Undergraduate Research Opportunities

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

The Learning Lab

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Psychology 398B: Undergraduate Research Assistant Practicum

Students work closely with the faculty advisor and graduate students as members of a team of researchers studying the cognitive capabilities of young infants. Activities typically include:

- Participating in lab training and regular meetings.
- Searching the research literature and reading articles relevant to the research program.
- Designing experimental paradigms
- Designing and constructing experimental stimuli
- Preparing experimental documentation (such as questionnaires and consent forms).
- Recruiting participants and running child and adult testing sessions
- Coding videos of child and adult behaviors
- Entering and coding behavioral data.
- Analyzing data using SPSS statistical software.
- Developing ideas for future research studies.
- Presenting research ideas or journal article critiques to other lab members.

To achieve these goals, students meet regularly with the faculty advisor, graduate students, and other members of the research team to ensure that work on their projects continues to move forward. Regular lab meetings will be held on a bi-weekly basis and students will be asked to update the research team on their progress. Other meetings will be scheduled as a whole or in subgroups as needed. Students will practice presenting ideas, problems, and findings in front of the group as the semester progresses. Students will also be in contact via email as needed.

This course is taken on a pass/fail basis and is typically the first of a **2-semester commitment**. This progression maximizes students' opportunities to contribute to developing and conducting studies throughout all stages of the research process, thereby allow students to build on the knowledge and experience they gain during the first semester. For this course, 1 credit equals 3 hours of laboratory work. The number of credits taken each semester is negotiated with Prof. McDermott. Weekly hours will be assigned at the beginning of the semester.