Social Psychology is the study of how other people (real or imagined) influence how an individual thinks, acts, and feels. To study this “person by situation” interaction, social psychologists use experimental designs, surveys, and observations.

In my lab, we research three primary areas: intrinsic motivation, goals, and stereotype processes, particularly as they relate to gender and achievement outcomes. Opportunities are available for students interested in assisting with in-progress research on these topics as well as designing independent projects for a senior thesis.

What is Undergraduate Study?

Selected psychology students have the opportunity to participate in research experiences under my supervision. Research experience strengthens an undergraduate degree and is strongly recommended for students interested in pursuing graduate studies in any field. Participation in ongoing research opportunities enables students to test their interest in research and interact more closely with myself and other faculty and students who share those interests.

To obtain course credit (Psychology 490R) for research experiences with me, students must have completed Psychology 100 and 223, be of at least junior status, and obtain my permission. Although it is not a prerequisite, Psychology 225 (research methods and statistical analyses II) is also recommended.

Students may sign up for varying amounts of course credit. For every credit hour taken, students are expected to work three hours per week on the research project. In general, I expect students to enroll in 3 credit hours total for one semester (9 hours a week). Amount of credit and scheduled times are negotiated with me. You and I will work out your schedule for the semester (keeping in mind your classes and other commitments) although some flexibility can be maintained.

Although not required, I often ask superior students to commit to at least 2 semesters working in the lab. Indeed, Psychology 490R may be repeated for up to 4 semesters, if you enroll in 3 credits each semester (so, 12 credit hours total earned).

What kinds of things will I do?

First and foremost, you will serve as an experimenter. An experimenter helps collect data per procedures dictated by a script. For example, you might pass out surveys or you might set up a video tape for participants. You will receive training in how to run each study. Each study session usually takes about one hour, so you should plan to have 1 hour blocks in your schedule. You might also serve as a confederate (i.e., actor) to help simulate a study experience; for example, you might pretend to drop some items so we can examine who helps you pick them up.

You will also aid in data coding and data entry using SPSS (which I will show you how to use). You might also be asked to help locate literature in the library, type up research stimuli, contact participants, train other research assistants, and other related research tasks.
Students are required to attend the bi-weekly lab meetings (usually every other week for 1.5 hours, although the exact day and time is subject to change as a function of my and the lab’s availability). During these meetings, we will talk about ongoing projects, listen to and give informal presentations, and/or read and discuss an assigned research article related to social psychology.

**How am I evaluated?**

Your grade in PSYX 490R for our M.A.D. Lab is determined primarily by three factors: reliability, professionalism, and active participation. In my experience, most students earn an A!

- **Reliability:** Specifically, you are expected to show up on time for every study session that you sign-up for (per your schedule). You can NOT miss a scheduled study session, and the onus is on you to find someone to cover for you in the event that you cannot make it. Failure to show will result in ½ letter grade reduction per session missed (e.g., A- for one session missed, B+ for two sessions missed). In the case of a documented emergency (e.g., doctor’s note) you will be responsible for contacting your participants to reschedule. You are also expected to attend every lab meeting. You can miss ONE lab meeting for any reason (good or bad!) but for each additional lab meeting you miss your grade will be reduced by ½ letter grade. If you are consistently late to lab meetings this will count as an absence. Although this sounds a bit harsh, we cannot do research without you, so if you are missing the research will suffer!

- **Professionalism:** You are expected to wear a lab coat during each study session and to act in a professional manner around participants.

- **Active Participation:** You should plan to play an active role in our M.A.D. Lab meetings, including the jointly-held meetings with the Persuasion and Affect Lab. Your input, ideas, questions and comments are what make the research experience rich and meaningful and I ask that you make an effort to be engaged at each meeting. You should also plan to do one (informal) presentation on a topic that we agree upon. For example, you might select a research article to have everyone read and then discuss or you might present ideas for your senior thesis to the group for help with your methodology.

**Interested?**

As an independent study student in psychology you will gain access to my psychology lab (Trap 408A and B) which grants you several privileges, including use of the computers, printer, phone, software, and your own mailbox.

The lab space is limited and I only accept 2-3 students each semester. Students who have worked with me in the past or taken a class from me have priority. All interested students should complete an application and partake in an interview. If accepted (and the student is still interested!) a course add form will be submitted.

**Upon acceptance, all 490R students must promptly receive appropriate training in human subjects protection.** The University has selected the on-line instruction program of the National Cancer Institute as a source of education concerning human research. After completing this on-line program entitled Human Participant Protections, Education for Research Teams. To access the course, visit the site at: [http://cme.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/learning/humanparticipant-protections.asp](http://cme.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/learning/humanparticipant-protections.asp). You must print out a copy of your “completion report” and turn into me before you can begin undergraduate study.
Special Course Permission

Student’s Name: ____________________ Sponsor’s Name: Jessi L. Smith

Semester: _______ Course Number: PSYX 490R Credit Hours: _____3_____

Descriptive Title: Social Psychology Undergraduate Research Experience: Motivation and Diversity Laboratory

Course Objectives: See Attached Syllabus

Brief Summary of Activities: See Attached Syllabus

Basis for Evaluation: See Attached Syllabus

Date: ____________ 
Student ID# : ____________

Student Signature: ____________________________
Sponsor Signature: ____________________________
Department Head signature: ____________________

Take this form to the departmental secretary (Trap 304) for further processing. Staple this page on top of the syllabus.