**Syracuse University Social Psychology**

# Intergroup Bias Lab

## Manual of Policies and Procedures

Sara E. Burke • sburke08@syr.edu • 519 Huntington Hall

This manual provides an opportunity to make explicit some of the guiding principles of how we carry out our research together.[1] It is a living document and always subject to discussion and revision. Please note the version date in the filename and page header.

This document currently consists of three sections. Section 1 applies to everyone. Section 2 is relevant to people developing their own research projects. Section 3 is written specifically for undergraduate research assistants. If you are a current or prospective undergraduate member of the lab, I encourage you to focus on Section 3.

## Section 1: General Information

### Topics of Study

The Intergroup Bias Lab is a group of people with a shared interest in the scientific study of psychological phenomena related to intergroup bias. We conduct experiments to test ideas about stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination on the basis of sociodemographic group membership, and experiences of stigma arising from these biases.

We each have our own research interests and goals, and we support one another in pursuing a wide variety of research programs. For example, I place special emphasis in much of my work on historically underexamined social groups such as people with concealable stigmatized identities and people with characteristics that are perceived as intermediate on some dimension. Similarly, each researcher in the Intergroup Bias Lab has the opportunity to direct attention toward topics they find rewarding to study. Therefore, the lab's research topics are not predetermined, but rather inspired and shaped over time by the individual perspectives of PhD students, advanced undergraduates, and other researchers.

We value interdisciplinary research. Ideas and methods from fields other than social psychology can contribute to major advances in our work, and we make efforts to stay informed about these ideas and methods and to collaborate with people outside of our narrow specialties.

### Philosophy and Background

At its core, science is about subjecting ideas to severe empirical scrutiny. As such, we emphasize the importance of evidence in evaluating claims, and we design our studies to accumulate evidence so that we can make more nuanced distinctions among claims. In the course of doing this work, you may find yourself unsure of how to interpret a result, evaluate a theory, or

[1] I wish to thank Balazs Aczel and other contributors to "A Crowdsourced Effort to Develop a Lab Manual Template." I developed ideas for parts of this manual by reading a version of that document accessed on 2019-07-29 at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LqGdtHg0dMbj9lsCnC1QOoWzIsnSNRTSek6i3Kls2Ik/edit.

characterize a phenomenon. Being unsure is normal and acceptable. In fact, it is often the most appropriate response given a limited body of evidence.

Regardless of which elements of our theories survive severe empirical scrutiny, our experiments should be informative. In the words of Deborah Mayo, "Experimental knowledge remains." We are interested in "testing specific hypotheses in such a way that there is a good chance of learning something—whatever theory it winds up as a part of."[2] In order to ensure that the information gleaned from our efforts remains fully interpretable, we prioritize precise and transparent reporting of our methods and results. For example, in written reports, we strive to characterize our procedure with a high degree of fidelity, and to characterize our statistical analysis in ways that capture sources and degrees of doubt. Because there are inevitably unreported procedural details, we respond to queries about our methods. We also post raw data and verbatim procedure instructions publicly (see Data subheading within Section 2 below), and share these files on a case-by-case basis upon request when they are not yet posted publicly.

Our work is cooperative, not competitive. We each contribute different skills to the broader effort to learn more about intergroup bias, and we each direct our energy toward different elements of this process at different times. I sometimes wonder if I am "good enough," but I remind myself of what actually matters—that each of us makes progress toward personal growth, and that our collective effort contributes to scientific knowledge. To drive this point home, it can help to compare your current skills and knowledge to your skills and knowledge a few years ago.

Research is complex, and feeling confused is a routine part of the learning process, not something to be ashamed of. Similarly, making mistakes is a routine part of research. If you make a mistake, reach out to me or another lab member so we can work together to fix it.

As researchers who study intergroup bias, we value sociodemographic diversity in our lab group and in the world at large. We cannot think deeply about our research topics unless we are willing to listen to people who experience all sorts of stigma. If a topic comes up that pertains to experiences that you have had related to prejudice and discrimination, I encourage you to voice your experiences to the extent that you are comfortable. We all benefit from frank conversations about the differences in how we experience life in an unequal society.

Relatedly, I love working in academia in part because it exposes me to new ideas and perspectives. I hope and expect that you will question the things I say and challenge my point of view. The resulting conversations will lead to a richer learning experience for all of us. One of the most valuable features of spending some time at a university is the opportunity to make a habit of scrutinizing our own and others' beliefs.

## People

I am Sara Burke, the lab director. I have written parts of this document in the first person to distinguish my own thoughts from descriptions of the group as a whole. At times, I have also referred to you, the reader, in the second person, although you also have the opportunity to contribute to this document by suggesting additional content or revisions.

[2] Mayo, D. G. (1996). *Error and the Growth of Experimental Knowledge*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

PhD students are the backbone of much modern psychological research at universities with very high research activity[3] such as Syracuse. Graduate student members of the Intergroup Bias Lab may include students directly advised by me as well as students who have ongoing or planned research collaborations with me or other lab members.

Undergraduate research assistants (RAs) are core members of the lab and a vital part of the research process in general. Section 3 of this document is written specifically for undergraduate RAs.

Contact information for selected key personnel:

| *Name* | *Role* | *Email* | *Office* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sara E. Burke | Lab director | sburke08@syr.edu | Huntington Hall, room 519 |
| Mackenzie Ess | PhD student | mmcdon03@syr.edu | 426 Ostrom, room 303B |
| Ally Jaurique | PhD student | ajauriqu@syr.edu | 426 Ostrom, room 303B |
| Minnie McMillian | PhD student | msmcmill@syr.edu | 426 Ostrom, room 204 |
| Ben Valen | PhD student | bvalen@syr.edu | 426 Ostrom, room 204 |

## Email and Other Communication

I hope that we will freely and openly communicate with one another as a matter of routine. In particular, please do not hesitate to approach me with questions and concerns about your research projects, your role in the lab, or the psychology department.

Email me about any topic, big or small, and I will try to respond within 48 hours. If I do not reply within a reasonable timeframe or if your email is particularly pressing, you are more than welcome to send me a quick reminder email.

For immediate concerns, call or text me. My cell phone number can be found in the Google spreadsheet we use for scheduling, which you should have access to shortly after joining the lab.

## Meetings

We hold a weekly meeting of all lab members during the Fall and Spring semesters. We determine the timing of these meetings at the beginning of each semester based on the schedules of all lab members. On occasion, there are no timeslots that work for everybody, so we must update those who cannot attend in other ways.

I meet weekly with each of my PhD advisees individually. During these meetings, we discuss ongoing research projects, progress in the program, and any other topics of the student's choosing. I am willing to schedule similar meetings with PhD students I collaborate with even if they are not my primary advisees, and/or to schedule group meetings with graduate and undergraduate students involved in a specific ongoing research project.

[3] You may occasionally hear people refer to "R1" institutions as opposed to "R2" or other categories. These terms come from The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/classification_descriptions/basic.php).

The PhD students and I may arrange another semi-regular meeting time to discuss lab matters, including plans for the larger group meetings.

If you intend to miss a scheduled meeting, please let me know.

## Mentoring

One of my main jobs is to help you learn about and carry out research. Learning new things often requires trying new things. I will strive to preemptively give you the guidance you need to proceed with confidence. If you find yourself feeling like you are in over your head, let me know and we will work through it together.

PhD students are in an especially good position to mentor undergraduate RAs. If you want more involvement in this sort of mentoring relationship, let me know.

If you are an RA and want input on topics outside of our ongoing research projects, such as your personal career plans, you are welcome to talk to me or a graduate student.

## Prioritize People Over Work

Academia in general and PhD programs in particular have a history of glorifying overwork. I hope to counteract some of these tendencies by explicitly emphasizing the importance of your well-being over your research output.[4]

As a lab, we should work together to advocate for our own and others' needs. For example, I try to recognize when somebody else needs to rest, and, just as importantly, when I need to rest. I encourage you to do the same.

Our personal well-being is important. For one thing, addressing our emotional and physiological needs and managing our stress helps us think carefully and do higher quality work. On a more basic level, though, people have intrinsic value, regardless of academic accomplishments. We are more than our work.

If you find yourself feeling burned out or anxious, take steps to mitigate these feelings, even if it means delaying your work. You are more than welcome to talk to me about such feelings if you feel comfortable doing so. Knowledge of self is a worthy characteristic, more so than fast turn-around times.

We all have different workstyles. There is value in having the flexibility to experiment with different approaches to work and time management, to help figure out what works best for each of us. You may prefer to work in the office, or remotely, or both. You may prefer to take frequent breaks or to have stretches of uninterrupted work time. (Please do take at least some breaks.) You may prefer to work first thing in the morning or late at night, always at the same

[4] I wish to thank Michael Kraus and the Connecticut Social Interaction Lab for sharing elements of their lab manual that helped inspire this section (posted 2019-04-18 at https://twitter.com/mwkraus/status/1118981780521017344; see https://drive.google.com/file/d/1G0gzqaYpY1ESc6m_AzhgMQn0kxFYJHOk/view).
See also: Maestre, F. T. (2019). Ten simple rules towards healthier research labs. *PLoS Computational Biology*, *15*(4), e1006914. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1006914

time or at different times every day. You may prefer not to work on specific days, such as weekends. You may or may not plan your breaks in advance. All of these approaches are valid, and any of them could be part of your strategy for accomplishing your goals.

Please do not sacrifice eating and sleeping for work.

If at some point you get the sense that you may have taken on too many responsibilities, let me know. There are always other options for how we structure our work, and it can help to discuss them.

Besides overwork, another aspect of scientific work that can contribute to stress is the fact that careers in academic research involve frequent rejection experiences. Writing research reports is a lot of work, and submitting the first complete version of a manuscript is a major step regardless of the outcome. It can be frustrating to learn that the manuscript was not accepted for publication at your first or second choice journal. I try to assume from the outset that a paper will be rejected several times along the road to publication, and to think of each rejection as a step along the way.

I study stigma in part because I care about mitigating its harmful effects. To that end, I emphasize that seeking professional help for mental health is an ordinary and reasonable thing to do, and many of us have at various times seen therapists and/or taken medication for psychological reasons, just as we have visited medical doctors and/or taken medication for physiological reasons. Some related student resources can be found at https://ese.syr.edu/bewell, but therapy outside of the university setting is also an option worth considering.

## Resources

We share a physical space with other social psychology lab groups on the 3rd floor of 426 Ostrom. This space, termed the Social MegaLab, features experiment rooms with computers, a waiting area, a meeting room, and several graduate student offices.

There are also a number of electronic resources, tied to our lab or to Syracuse University in general, that may be of use to you.

***Articles.*** Visit https://library.syr.edu to take advantage of your access to the online resources the Syracuse University library system has subscriptions to. To retrieve published academic work, try searching for relevant databases. For example, there is a link to the PsycINFO database near the bottom of the page at https://researchguides.library.syr.edu/az.php?a=p. After clicking that link, log in with your main Syracuse University username and password. You can also find scholarly articles at https://scholar.google.com. You should never pay to read an article. If you cannot get it via the SU Library resources, ask me or put in a request for it via Interlibrary Loan (ILL; https://illiad.syr.edu).

***Survey Design.*** Qualtrics is the survey tool I have the most experience with. Visit https://syracuseuniversity.qualtrics.com and enter your SU username and password to access your SU Qualtrics account. REDCap is an alternative that can be found at https://redcap.syr.edu.

***Shared Accounts.*** We share several accounts for various lab activities. See me if you need access to any of these accounts.

- Lab computers – m-burkelab
- Prolific (public participant recruitment platform) – sburke08@syr.edu
- SONA (Syracuse psychology undergraduate participant pool) – intergroup.bias.research

***Other Resources***

- Intergroup Bias Lab Google Drive folder – ask someone to share it with your preferred Google Drive account
- Social MegaLab scheduling spreadsheet – ask someone to share it with your preferred Google Drive account

## Reading

There is no required reading to participate in the Intergroup Bias Lab. In fact, we all benefit from reading different sources and sharing what we have learned with one another. In case you are interested, however, I have listed some books that provide useful background information about psychological theories of intergroup bias.

Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. New York, NY: Perseus Books.
Dovidio, J. F., Glick, P., & Rudman, L. A. (2005). *On the nature of prejudice: Fifty years after Allport*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
Jones, E. E., Farina, A., Hastorf, A. H., Markus, H., Miller, D. T., & Scott, R. A. (1984). *Social stigma: The psychology of marked relationships*. New York, NY: W. H. Freeman and Company.
Nelson, T. D. (2009). *Handbook of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.
Stangor, C., & Crandall, C. S. (2013). *Stereotyping and prejudice*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Also, here are some books that provide useful background information about the application of statistics in a scientific context generally.

Abelson, R. P. (1995). *Statistics as principled argument*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.
Mayo, D. G. (1996). *Error and the growth of experimental knowledge*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Reinhart, A. (2015). *Statistics done wrong: The woefully complete guide*. San Francisco, CA: No Starch Press.

# Section 2: Managing a Research Study

This section is most useful for people, primarily PhD students, who plan to design and administer their own research studies. Undergraduate research assistants may skip to Section 3, perhaps returning to this section at a later date if they plan to do an honors thesis or similar independent research project.

## Authorship and Collaboration

When we start a new research project, we should discuss authorship within the first couple of meetings. Most often, one person serves as the leader of the project, writes the first draft of the report, and is the first author listed for that report. Others actively involved in shaping the content of the project along the way will have the opportunity to be listed as additional authors. All authors should contribute to drafts of the manuscript. The first author should oversee this shared effort.

In many cases, the joint authors of a report have been involved in the project all along, and have discussed their roles and eventual authorship early on. In some cases, new collaborators join a project partway through. It is typically up to the first author to determine the appropriate author ordering in cases where it is not fully specified in advance, but if you feel you are not receiving appropriate credit for your work, you are welcome to discuss it with me.

An author of a research report has made a notable contribution to its content. This contribution can take the form of ideas for the design of the study, coordination of data collection, and/or interpretation of statistical analysis. All authors should participate in revising the written report and, once it is done, approve it. If you have qualms about how something is presented in a report on which you are to be listed as an author, please do not hesitate to voice them.

In many cases, the first author is the person who had the initial idea for the project. If you have an idea for research project and would like to try to implement it, schedule a time to talk to me about it.

Members of the Intergroup Bias Lab are often involved in interdisciplinary research. If you would like to involve someone from outside of the lab in one of your projects, let me know.

## Electronic Organization

I strongly encourage you to keep track of versions in the names of your files (e.g., procedure texts, analysis scripts, data files, drafts of manuscripts). Assume from the outset that there will be multiple versions and choose a sensible version numbering scheme to avoid ending up with filenames like “Document.txt,” “Document NEW.txt,” “Document FINAL.txt,” and “Document FINAL plus quick update.txt.” I suggest using either numbers or dates, making it easy to introduce a new version at any time. Dates are easiest to sort (and interpret) when the year is listed first, the month in the middle, and the day last, as in the header of this document.

The first author or project leader is typically responsible for most of the file organization. You are welcome to use something like GitHub (https://github.com) or OSF (https://osf.io) for your project, but such systems are not required. The important thing is to keep track of your files in a way that suits your workstyle.

## Beginning a Study

The following sections are not designed to walk you through the whole process of conducting research. Each step is complex and we are all gradually gaining training and experience to help

us carry them out well. Instead, these sections are collections of reminders, tips, and basic principles. I expect them to accumulate somewhat haphazardly as we think of more.

When beginning a line of research or toying with an idea for a study, it is important to read past work on the topic. Review classic studies you already know about. Search for key words or phrases on PsycINFO or Google Scholar (see the "Resources" subsection within Section 1 above). As you read, keep track of papers that you have seen cited repeatedly, then find and read them. Identify notable researchers in the subfield and check their publication histories and/or preprints. Ask me for suggestions at any step of the way.

When formulating a study plan, carefully consider what you want to learn—what question you want to answer or hypothesis you want to test—and structure the experiment accordingly.

## Study Design

Once you have a clear idea of you are trying to test and the gist of how you would like to test it, begin drafting the procedure. Be as specific as possible about everything. How exactly do you propose to phrase the instructions? Most of our studies ask participants to respond to Likert-type survey items. How will you phrase each item? In what order or orders can they be presented? I strongly suggest constructing your first draft of the procedure text in a word processor, not the final survey design program, so that your collaborators can most easily suggest edits, comments, arrangements and orderings, additions and deletions, and other changes. This procedure document is a good example of a file that is likely to have several versions worth keeping track of, as described in the subsection of this document entitled "Electronic Organization."

Once we have settled on a complete procedure, we submit it for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Having a single clearly written procedure file makes this process easier. At Syracuse University, IRB submissions are handled by the Human Research Protections Program of the Office of Research Integrity and Protections. New submissions are sent to orip@syr.edu.

Many of our experiments take the form of text and graphics sequentially displayed on a computer screen, and can be remotely deployed via the Internet. We most often use Qualtrics (https://syracuseuniversity.qualtrics.com) for this purpose. Other options include REDCap (https://redcap.syr.edu) and PsychoPy (https://www.psychopy.org). I encourage you to allow the software to quietly record the amount of time participants spend on each page, even if we have no specific plan to use this information. It is easy to collect and occasionally useful.

## Before Running a Study

Once you have created all the parts of your study the participants will directly interact with, test the whole procedure repeatedly to check for errors. In many cases, this means that you have a completed Qualtrics survey (or other interactive online procedure) and you fill it out as though you are a participant. You need not rely only on yourself for this testing—send your survey to your collaborators and even the entire lab so that we can all help make sure it works properly. If elements of the procedure depend on earlier participant responses, test it by giving extreme or unusual responses.

Preregistration is specifying your experimental and analytic procedure in advance, including, for example, when you will stop gathering data, how you will process the data, and what your primary statistical analysis procedures will be. Because preregistration documents are created before carrying out a study, they can help distinguish between confirmatory and exploratory elements of the results, especially in cases where the distinction is not otherwise clear or where readers may be skeptical of the distinction. Two good tools for formal online preregistration are AsPredicted (https://aspredicted.org) and OSF (https://osf.io/prereg). Before running a study, consider preregistering its procedure, particularly the analysis. This step is not mandatory, but it can be quite helpful, and in most cases does not require much time.

## Running a Study

Discuss with me how best to recruit participants. There are many strategies for recruiting specific populations. Common methods for convenience sampling include the psychology participant pool and paid online pools such as Prolific. The SU psychology participant pool is a limited but cheap resource. I have startup funds available for some projects. We may also consider applying for external funding in some cases.

Keep precise records of what text and graphics you have used to recruit participants and where advertisements have appeared.

When running a study in the lab, record as much information as you can without disrupting the procedure, especially if something goes wrong. If possible, add your notes to the data file for the study in question. If adding them directly to the data file is not straightforward, store them in a separate file but keep it with the data file.

## Data

Our scientific efforts are centered around highly structured empirical observations, and we strive to ensure that the data resulting from our studies are useful regardless of the veracity of our theories (see the "Philosophy and Background" subsection within Section 1 above).

Always keep original raw data files intact. Copy these files before making any modifications. If possible, use computer code (written for, e.g., R, SPSS, or Python) to handle all changes to data files, so that it will be easy to determine exactly what these changes were later.

In some cases, you may need to modify data but not know how to write the code to do it. I will always be happy to help you with code, in person or via email. However, you may occasionally be in a hurry, and you may recognize that it would be easy to make the desired change by manually editing the data file. If you do so, please at least keep notes of your manual changes. As a general rule, these notes should be clear enough that someone else could retrace your steps even if you were not around to walk them through the process.

In the Intergroup Bias Lab, we operate under the assumption that nearly all datasets will eventually be shared in some form. In most of our studies, we promise participants either anonymity or confidentiality, so we remove all potentially identifying information before sharing the data. In some cases, it may be impossible or impractical to share any data at all without

identifying participants, but such cases are rare. Make sure that you have had a conversation with me about what information is potentially identifying before sharing a dataset.

Retain a usable backup of the data for every study you run. Ideally, this backup should include the following elements.

- Procedure text (preferred format: .doc or .pdf). Usually, this file can be the same as the one submitted to the IRB. In some cases, a single IRB application covers several studies and you may want to separate out each study's procedure to create individual procedure files that provide the appropriate context for each data file.
- Complete raw data (preferred format: .csv; alternative formats: .RData or .sav).
- Text file containing code that takes the raw data file as input and generates a cleaned/processed data file as output (e.g., R, SPSS, or Python syntax file).
- Cleaned/processed data, ready to analyze.
- Deidentified/anonymized version of data.
- Codebook explaining each variable (spreadsheets work well for this purpose but many formats are possible).
- A copy of the preregistration document, if one exists.

Some of the items listed above can take a while to create, and you may not always have that much time. The bare minimum backup should include the **procedure text** and the **complete raw data**, and if you are going to add one file beyond those two, a good choice would be a cleaned and anonymized dataset that could be used to reproduce the statistics you are reporting elsewhere.

We maintain an archive of our study data on a shared Intergroup Relations Lab external hard drive. For every study you run, please store a data backup on this hard drive, with all the relevant files (e.g., procedure text file, raw data file) grouped in a folder together. The general organizational structure is as follows. The drive's root directory contains a folder called "Research Data Backups," which contains folders for each of our projects. A project folder typically contains individual folders for each study within the project, although some "projects" are just one study. If you are leading a project, begin the project folder name with your last name so that your projects will be sorted together. (There is no need to list all collaborators—this naming scheme is just for organization, not for citation.)

The Intergroup Relations Lab hard drive contains raw data with potentially identifying information about participants. Only authorized researchers may access it. The drive uses AES hardware encryption, and I will tell you the password if you need it. Please do not share the password with anyone else.

If you have the drive, please keep it locked in your office. When not in active use, it should always be locked in my office or in one of the graduate student offices in Ostrom.

Data files on the Intergroup Relations Lab hard drive should be assumed to contain potentially identifying information about participants except when otherwise specified.

### Statistical Analysis

Often, the project leader (first author) of a study will coordinate the statistical analysis with my assistance, but we may discuss alternate arrangements for certain projects. When you are analyzing a dataset, you are welcome to use your favorite statistical software or any statistical software you wish to gain experience with.

R has been my primary statistical analysis tool since around 2010. I have extensive experience with R and SPSS, and some limited exposure to SAS, Stata, and JMP. I am best equipped to help you with R and SPSS, but I am willing to talk through problems in other programs.

As you are analyzing a dataset, please keep track of what you do, preferably by adding to a script file, preferably with comments for organization and explanation. (Even if you prefer to use the menu system in SPSS, you can "paste" the code for each operation to a syntax file.)

### Writing a Report

Typically, the first author creates a document with an outline or initial draft and sends it to others for input. The first author then organizes everyone's work to create subsequent drafts. Currently, the easiest way for most people to participate is for the first author to maintain a Microsoft Word document and for everyone else to add their contributions and suggested changes using the "tracked changes" feature so that the first author can easily keep track.

## Section 3: Research Assistant Guide

Undergraduate Research Assistants (RAs) are core members of the Intergroup Bias Lab and a vital part of the scientific research process in general. Through running studies and assisting with projects, you will be contributing, little by little, to a valuable body of data about the psychology of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. You will also have the opportunity to see firsthand how research is conducted, practice thinking and talking about it, and enjoy the collaborative pursuit of knowledge.

If at any point you have questions or comments, please reach out to me or any of the PhD students. Up-to-date contact information and office locations should appear in the "People" subheading of Section 1 above.

If you need a reminder about which experiment rooms are reserved for your timeslot, or contact information for other lab members if something goes wrong, you can check the current Social MegaLab scheduling spreadsheet that should be shared with you on Google Drive. (Do not edit this spreadsheet without consulting me, except to update your own contact information.)

### Activities and Responsibilities

As a research assistant, your responsibilities can include:

- Administering research studies in the SU social psychology lab (426 Ostrom, 3rd floor). Typically, this entails meeting participants there, guiding them through the study procedure, and then debriefing them. Some procedures are as simple as a single computer

task; others are more complex. We will make sure you are comfortable with all study procedures before asking you to run them on your own.
- Helping design or construct study materials
- Testing out new study procedures
- Coding and/or entering data
- Conducting literature reviews / reading and discussing research reports
- Helping out with day-to-day tasks
- Brainstorming new study ideas
- Attending weekly meetings

It is a lab expectation that you will always conduct yourself in a professional manner, especially when interacting with study participants.

## Course Credit and Weekly Hours

In most cases, when you sign up to be an RA for a semester, you will enroll in either PSY 294 or PSY 494. These courses do not have a separate classroom or meeting time; they are placeholders for the research experience itself. You can think of the weekly lab meetings as the equivalent of the class meeting time.

Specific duties are assigned and scheduled based upon the current needs of the lab. You can expect to have up to three hours of research-related work each week for each credit of PSY 294 or 494 you are signed up for. In other words, signing up for 1 credit implies that you are planning for 3 hours per week, 2 credits is 6 hours per week, and 3 credits is 9 hours per week. Each week, one of those hours will be spent in the lab meeting. Any outside reading we ask you to do will also count toward your hours.

## CITI Certification

All RAs must obtain Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Certification in order to run study sessions. This involves creating a profile, indicating Syracuse University as your affiliated institution, and completing the Human Subjects Training titled "Group 4: Student Researchers." You should then retrieve a PDF of your certification and email it to Sara, Mack, or Ally.

- The CITI Homepage can be found here: https://about.citiprogram.org/en/homepage
- Instructions for registering and completing training can be found here: https://www.citiprogram.org/citidocuments/citiinstructions.htm

## General Lab Expectations

- Don't make a mess—there are many people sharing the space.
- Don't make too much noise, especially in the hallway and in room 306 (the RA room). It is easy for participants to hear conversations in nearby rooms, and we don't want our conversations to distract them or interfere with the psychological states we carefully cultivate through our study procedures.
- You can eat in the lab, but don't eat or drink messy stuff in a way that risks spills. Be careful to keep your liquids away from the computers and other expensive equipment.

- No nuts or peanut products are allowed at all. There are signs posted saying that "this is a nut-free classroom." We have a lab member with a very serious nut allergy.
- Be careful about participant privacy. Some of our studies require anonymity. Even the mere fact that somebody chose to participate should be considered private information by default. For example, do not disclose outside of the lab that a particular person was in your study, even if it seems like innocuous information.
- If someone that you know personally signs up for your study, consult the other study personnel (e.g., grad students) to see if you can still guide them through the study, or if we should arrange for someone else to do it.
- Maintain professional norms. Be polite to the participants.
- Dress and behave in a "neutral" manner to the extent that you can. The data we get from participants could be influenced by any and all aspects of the setting, including the clothing we wear. We cannot attempt to keep these things entirely consistent, but we should strive to avoid doing things that might attract special attention.
- Do not leave the lab with data unless you have permission. If you are handling paper surveys, videos, etc, keep them in the lab unless you have explicit permission from a faculty member to take the data out of the lab. When you leave the lab, be sure that all data are in a secure location.
- When you arrive to run a study, turn on the lights. This helps everyone understand which rooms are in use, and it keeps the participant experience consistent.
- When you are finished, close the door to the experiment room you're using (and be sure it locks) and put the key back.

## Accessing the RA Room and Experiment Rooms

The Ostrom building locks after 5pm. If you need to be able to get in after hours, let me know and I will put in a request. Once you are authorized, you will be able to get into the building by swiping your ID card at the entrance.

Our lab space is on the 3rd floor. When you reach the top of the stairs, you will be in the participant waiting area (see below). The first room you will want to enter is room 306, which serves as a central hub for most of your RA responsibilities. There is a lock box on the door, and we will share the code with you. Open the lock box, retrieve the key, use it to unlock the door, and then put the key back in the lock box.

The keys to all of the experiment rooms are hanging on lanyards on tacks behind the door of room 306. Each tack is labeled. Find the key or keys you need for your study sessions, then put them back in their proper locations when you are done.

While you are waiting for participants, you can sit in room 306. You should be able to see the participant waiting area from there.

When you are sitting in room 306, please do not play sounds (such as music or videos) out loud from any electronic devices, and keep conversation to a minimum to avoid disturbing experiment sessions. (Rooms 301, 302, and 308 are very close to room 306, and even if you are not running a study in one of those rooms, someone else might be.)

There are two computers available in 306 for your use, but they are temporarily out of order as of August 2019.

## Participant Waiting Area

The lobby area at the top of the stairs is our waiting room. There should always be several chairs there. Participants should sit in those chairs while waiting for a study. (If at some point you notice that the chairs are all occupied, you can invite some participants to sit in room 306 with you while they wait, but most of the time the waiting area should be sufficient.)

You should call participants by name based on their SONA registration in order to get the right person for the right study. They do not always remember the name of the study they signed up for, so you should plan to request them by name, instead of relying on them to know the name of your study.

If you find a lost participant, in most cases you should send them to the waiting area. However, there are several other labs in the same building, such as Natalie Russo's lab on the first floor. Sometimes, a participant shows up looking for a study that is supposed to take place on the first or second floor—if the study they are looking for is not listed on the whiteboard, ask them to check SONA to see if they are on the wrong floor of the building.

## RA on Duty Procedures

In an effort to make sure the rooms are always locked when unattended, we have a log of the "RA on Duty" on the whiteboard in room 306. When you arrive at the lab, if there is no current "RA on Duty" (i.e., nobody from another lab is already there running a study), then you should fill in your own name on the whiteboard. There may be a name left over from the previous day—if so, erase it and write your name instead.

The purpose of the RA on Duty designation is to double-check a few key things:

- When you are the RA on Duty, check the participant sign-in sheet (see section below) and make sure there is a new, blank page with the current date.
- Make sure the lights are on in the waiting area. (They should already be on anyway.)
- When you are ready to leave the lab, check if there is another RA there. If so, let that person know that they are the new RA on Duty, and replace your name with theirs on the whiteboard.
- If you are the RA on Duty when you leave (i.e., you are the last person to leave), please make sure all of the doors are closed and all of the lights are off, and then record the time on the whiteboard. (This system is a way of guaranteeing that someone is always responsible for locking the doors.)

## Participant Sign-In Sheet

- There should be a sheet on the table in the participant waiting area with boxes for the appointment time and participant's first name and checkboxes for specific studies.
- When they arrive, participants should sign in on the sheet by filling in their time and name and indicating which study they signed up for (if they remember it).

- Check SONA ahead of time to keep track of which participants you are expecting. When you see their information on the sign-in sheet, confirm that they are present and then use the sharpie on the table to black out their name. At this time, write your initials in the right-hand column marked "RA Initials."
- If the top sign-in sheet fills up, please move it to the closet of room 306 and begin a new sign-in sheet. (If the day is over, start a new sign-in sheet even if the old one is not full.)

## Unexpected Events

If something unexpected happens during a study, make a note of it without disrupting the study procedure. For example, if a participant finishes a 15-minute paper survey in 3 minutes, make a note of it to share later with the grad student or professor working on that study, but don't comment on the timing unless it's part of the established plans and procedures. If you do make a note about something, don't make it obvious or otherwise let it disrupt the procedure.

If an adverse event happens, please report it to Dr. Burke or one of the graduate students. For example, if a participant seems anxious or stressed or starts crying, tell us about it. In the unlikely event that a participant does something that makes you uncomfortable, you can leave the situation—your safety and well-being are more important than the study procedure.

## Late Arrivals

If a participant shows up late, they may or may not still be able to complete the study. When you are trained on a particular study's procedure, Dr. Burke or one of the graduate students will tell you how late they can be before you should just mark them as a no-show.

If a participant shows up for a study and the RA who is supposed to run that study is not present, ask the participant for (a) their name, and (b) the name of the study they signed up for on SONA. Have them look up the study name on their phone if necessary. Then, relay this information to a grad student or professor in the lab. If the RA does not show up within five or ten minutes of the study's start time, reassure the participant that we made a mistake and they will get their credit anyway.

## Research Assistant Rights and Protections

This section of the manual is intended to ensure that all research assistants in the Intergroup Bias Lab are treated with dignity and respect at all times. We take these guarantees seriously.

Many of the protections described in this section were adapted from Karen Naufel and Denise Beike's "Bill of Rights" for research assistants.[5] Some were added in response to anecdotes from research assistants at various institutions. Credit is due to Mack Ess for conceiving and writing the bulk of this section.

In general, it is important for all lab leaders and graduate students to recognize the influence they have as people of authority in research spaces. That being said, lab leaders and graduate students must be careful not to coerce or influence research assistants to conduct a task or be put in a

[5] Naufel, K. Z., & Beike, D. R. (2013). The ethical treatment of research assistants: Are we forsaking safety for science? *Journal of Research Practice*, *9*(2), M11. http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/360/318

situation that makes them uncomfortable, violates their privacy, or causes them harm in any way. Just as we work hard to ensure the protection of our participants, we must work equally hard to ensure that our research assistants have autonomy and safety. In this way, we can build a welcoming space for students to learn about the research process and grow as researchers.

1. **Research assistants have the right to opt out of conducting research that makes them uncomfortable.**
    a. Research assistants have the right to opt out without fear of retaliation.
    b. Research assistant have the right to opt out without fear of social or physical ostracism (Faulkner, 1998; Williams, 1997).
    c. Research assistants have the right to opt out without being asked to disclose why they are choosing to do so.
    d. Research assistants have the right to opt out of running a study at any point during the timeline of data collection.
        i. In other words, a research assistant may consent to data collection on a study and then realize it is having harmful effects later on. The research assistant has the right to withdraw from data collection and be put on a different task regardless of their previously given consent.
    e. If a research assistant chooses to exercise this right, they will be given an alternate assignment in its place.
    f. Research assistants have the right to opt out of conducting research altogether at any point during the semester and still receive proper compensation.
        i. If a research assistant opts out of conducting research altogether, they must be compensated appropriately and fairly for the hours they worked in the lab. For example, if a research assistant chooses to drop out halfway through a semester in which they were signed up for 2 credits, they will receive 1 credit for their transcript.

2. **Research assistants are only required to work the number of hours they have signed up for, based on their number of credits in the lab.**
    a. For example, if a student is signed up for three credits with the lab, they should never be asked to work more than nine hours each week.
    b. Time spent in lab meetings must be included as part of the hours worked in the lab each week.
    c. Lab work hours do not "roll over." In other words, a lab leader or graduate student cannot say "I only gave you four hours of work last week, so I'm giving you extra work this week to make up for that." Students sign up for a specific number of credits based on the number of hours they are available each week. It is disrespectful to their time to assume that additional hours can be added, for any reason.

3. **Lab leaders and graduate students may not forbid research assistants from taking part in any legal extracurricular or recreational activities, on or off campus.**
    a. Additionally, it is inappropriate for a lab leader or graduate student to use their authority to coerce or influence the activities of research assistants outside of the lab.

4. **Research assistants have the right to informed consent regarding their involvement in research.**
    a. When a research assistant begins data collection on a new study, a lab leader or graduate student must explain the study in as much detail as possible.
    b. If a research assistant is to act as a confederate or perform any type of deception, the risks of doing so must be clearly described, for example, the emotional and physical health risks associated with lying repeatedly (DePaulo, 2004; American Psychological Association, 2012).
    c. The only situation in which information about a study can be intentionally withheld from a research assistant is in the case that withholding the purpose is essential for the validity of the study.

5. **Research assistants have the right to be evaluated accurately and fairly for their duties performed.**
    a. More specifically, lab leaders and graduate students cannot threaten to withhold or lie in official documents of evaluation, such as letters of recommendation.

6. **Research assistants have the right to be trained on all tasks or procedures necessary to perform their duties.**
    a. Research assistants cannot be held liable for a mistake caused by lack of proper training on the part of a lab leader or graduate student.