Welcome to Psychology 491! The purpose of this class is to provide undergraduate students with experience doing supervised research in psychology. Dr. Wells and his graduate students by conducting research studies pertaining to social psychology and the law with particular emphases on eyewitness memory and interrogations and confessions.

Students enrolled in Psychology 491 will work collaboratively with graduate students on one or more research projects that are designed to expose students to psychological research. Students can expect to help with any of the following tasks: design experiments, prepare experimental materials, run experimental sessions, perform data analyses, read articles, and attend lab meetings. Students may also have the opportunity to present research at psychological conferences.

Participating directly in the research process gives students the advantage of understanding how to scientifically study psychological issues. This is an asset when students apply for jobs or graduate school in any field. Participating in a lab also enables students to work closely with graduate students who can help Dr. Wells write a detailed and strong letter of recommendation.

Grading: Grades are determined on the basis of one overarching factor: reliability. It is essential that undergraduate research assistants demonstrate the highest level of responsibility and dependability. It is unacceptable to miss an experiment for which you are scheduled. Students who miss even just one experiment (without prior approval from a graduate student) over the course of the semester will receive a lower grade than they would have otherwise. Students who miss multiple sessions without prior approval could fail or be asked to drop the course.

Students are also expected to check their email at least once every 24 hours. Email is the primary way we communicate with our research assistants. When an email requires a reply, we expect that you respond within 24 hours of the time the email was sent. See the section on “expectations” for a detailed list of the requirements to receive an A in this course.

Procedures for Absences:
Expected absence:
If you know in advance that you are going to be absent from your scheduled lab hours,
- Contact all RAs who are trained on your study to see if they can cover for you. It is your responsibility to get your lab session covered!
  You must “cc” the graduate student in charge of the study on all email correspondence. This way we will be informed about who has agreed to cover the shift.
- You should try getting your shift covered at least one week before your scheduled absence.
- If you are unable to find a replacement for your session, you must notify the graduate student in charge of your study at least 48 hours before the session is scheduled to take place.

Unexpected absence:
If you must unexpectedly be absent from your scheduled lab hours,
- Immediately notify the graduate student(s) in charge of your study and any other 491s you are scheduled to work with.
- Contact all other 491 students to see if one of them can substitute for you. If a substitute is found, email the graduate students so we will know who has agreed to cover for you.
- Unexpected absences will be treated like absences from class; they will only be “excused” if you have proof of why you were absent or due to an extenuating circumstance.

**Procedures for Late Arrival:**
If you are running late and you will miss or partially miss an experiment that you are scheduled to cover, immediately text or call the graduate student in charge of your study and any other RAs you are scheduled with. Note that unexpectedly missing all or part of an experiment (without prior approval) could lower a student’s grade.

**Expectations:**

All Research Assistants must:
- Show up for all experiments for which you are scheduled, even if no one has signed up on SONA.
- Show up on time.
- Check your email on a daily basis (at least once every 24 hours).
- Adhere to your weekly schedule.
- Have no or very few absences.
- Behave professionally, respectfully and courteously to participants and fellow RAs.
- Be in the lab during all scheduled hours, even if a session is not scheduled.
  - While in the lab without schedule sessions, refer to the “491 To-Do List” found on the lab computers for work to complete
- Be in contact with the graduate students regarding the progress of any assigned tasks.

Research Assistants may not:
- Prioritize outside work over lab-related tasks.
- Print or copy personal materials or class assignments in the lab without permission from a graduate student.

**Getting More Involved – Posters, Presentations, Publications… Oh my!:** In our lab, we attempt to provide our students with a variety of opportunities that coincide with the outcomes they would like to result from their research experience. Students can choose to become more involved with certain research projects, and as a possible result of that extra involvement, they may be eligible to earn authorship credit on a poster, presentation, or publication. Under normal circumstances, we would prefer a full semester of participation in the lab prior to expanding your involvement on any research opportunities (this enables us to be more familiar with your strengths, interests, etc.). Be aware that authorship credit cannot be guaranteed (submissions can be rejected), and that hours spent toward earning these additional opportunities would occur outside of your required 491 hours (because you receive additional course credit for that hourly participation). If you want any more information regarding these additional research opportunities, you can talk to either Miko or Laura.

**Procedures for obtaining a letter of recommendation from Dr. Wells:** Students requesting a letter of recommendation for graduate school, internship, employment, etc., should contact Dr. Wells at glwells@iastate.edu to make the request. If Dr. Wells agrees to write the letter, then you need to provide the following materials at least 1 month before the earliest recommendation is due. Failure to follow these instructions will delay your recommendation.

(a) A completed and signed letter of recommendation request form (attached)

(b) Overview of each program (internship, job, etc.) to which you are applying. This overview should include information about the following.
1. Degree sought (e.g., MS, M.Ed., Ph.D., J.D., M.D., etc).
2. Department to which you are applying (e.g., Psychology Department, School of Education, Law School, etc.)
3. Program or area of specialty to which you are applying (e.g., social psychology, counseling psychology, etc.)
4. Deadline for receipt of recommendation
5. Whether the letter should be submitted electronically or by mail

(c) Resume or CV which includes information about your education, past employment, volunteer work, awards, honors, research experience, special skills (e.g., computer skills), and anything else that you deem relevant to your application. This information is essential to helping us write a strong letter.

(d) Personal statement and/or Statement of Purpose if you are applying to graduate programs. A rough draft is ok.

(e) Complete set of forms that need to be filled out. You need to complete ALL parts of the forms except the evaluation sections. For example, you should complete the section of the forms that asks for your name and contact information, Dr. Wells’ name and contact information, and any program information, etc. Dr. Wells’ contact information is as follows:

   Dr. Gary Wells
   W112 Lagomarcino Hall
   Department of Psychology
   Iowa State University
   Ames, IA  50011
   email: glwells@iastate.edu
   phone: 515-294-6033

(f) Envelopes for each place where you want a recommendation sent, unless recommendations are submitted online. For each envelope you must:
   1. write return address (above)
   2. write the address to where the recommendation should be sent
   3. affix a stamp on the envelope

(g) Unofficial transcripts
Request of Letter of Recommendation from Dr. Wells

Please answer the following questions and print and sign your name on the bottom.

1. What is your overall GPA?
2. What is your average GPA for psychology courses?
3. What are your GRE scores?
4. What year (e.g., freshman, junior) did you start as an Iowa State student?
5. What is the earliest deadline for the schools to which you are applying?
6. During what semesters have you been in the lab?
7. Please list all responsibilities you have completed in the lab.

I only write recommendation letters if you waive your right to see them. If you do not want to waive such rights, please ask somebody else to write your letter. By signing your name on this form, you have agreed to waive your right to see your letter.

I only write recommendation letters if you allow me to talk about your grades and your academic performance in my recommendation letters. By signing your name on this form, you have agreed to have me write about your academic performance, including your grades, in the recommendation letters.

______________________________________________
Print your name here

______________________________________________
Sign your name here

Date