



**Informed Consent Agreement**  
**Research Experiments for Students in Psychology and Social Science Courses**  
**Department of Social Science, Worcester Polytechnic Institute**

**Introduction:** You are enrolled in a psychology and/or social science course where you are asked to fulfill a research participation requirement. Psychology is relatively unique among the sciences in that students can learn about the discipline with direct experience.

**Purpose of the research studies:** You are asked to participate in psychology and social science experiments in return for credit toward your course grade. These experiments are designed to increase our knowledge of psychological theories and processes and to provide students with an understanding of the research methods used by psychologists.

**Alternatives to participating in these studies:** If you do not wish to participate in these experiments, alternate assignments that are equivalent in time and effort are available from your instructor or the Participant Pool Chair (Dr. Jeanine Skorinko). For example, the assignments involve reading research articles and preparing summaries for them.

**What you will be required to do in these studies:** At the beginning of the term, you may be asked to fill out a survey on the web that takes about 30 minutes, e.g., about your personality and attitudes. You are not required to do this, but if you do you will receive credit towards the requirement. If you do not participate in this “pretesting”, you may be ineligible for some later experiments. You will sign up for subsequent experiments on a web page run by the Participant Pool Chair. You will be asked to sign a separate consent document for each study in which you choose to participate. The purpose of each study will differ, but you will be given a choice to participate and be given the opportunity to give informed consent prior to participating.

**Time required:** You will need to participate in 2-5 hours throughout the term (depending on the number of available studies and the professor’s requirements) of research participation and/or equivalent alternate assignments.

**Risks to Participants:** A WPI Institutional Review Board (Ethics Board) has reviewed and approved each study considering ethical considerations, the protection of human participants, and minimizing risks to participants.

**Benefits to Participating:** The major benefit of participating in these studies is to provide you with first-hand experiences in the research process and a deeper understanding of how psychological research is conducted. There is no other direct benefit of participation in these research studies.

**Confidentiality:** In some studies, the information you give will be anonymous. If so, you will not be asked to write your name on any form other than the consent form (which cannot be linked to research data). In other studies, the information that you give will be handled confidentially. In this case, your information will be assigned code numbers. The list connecting your name to this number will be kept in a locked file. Any data collected will be used only for statistical analyses. Names will not be used in any report. Whether the information you give is anonymous or confidential will be stated on the consent document for each study.

**Voluntary participation:** Your participation in these studies is completely voluntary. There is no penalty if you decide not to participate. If you do not wish to participate in these experiments, you should notify their instructor, and you may complete the alternate assignment that involves equivalent time and effort.

**Right to withdraw from the studies:** You have the right to withdraw from any study at any time without penalty. Even if you withdraw, you will receive credit for the study.

**How to withdraw from studies:** The consent form you sign for each experiment will tell you how to withdraw from the study. In most cases, you simply inform the experimenter and quietly leave the room.

**Obligation to appear for appointments:** Once you decide to participate in a study, you have an obligation to appear for the experiment at the proper time and place. If you sign up for an experiment and fail to keep the appointment, and fail to notify the experimenter 24 hours in advance, you will be penalized for an amount of time equal to the amount of time that the study would have taken. For example, if you miss a study that takes a half-hour, you will be asked to do an additional half-hour of experimentation. *Once you arrive at the study, you may withdraw at any point without penalty. This penalty applies only if you do not show up (or show up substantially late) for a scheduled appointment.*

**Payment:** Experimental credit is given based on the number of studies completed. If you do not complete the required number of research studies and/or papers about journal articles there will be a penalty that has been described to you by your instructor; for example, your final grade in the course may be reduced one grade step, such as from a B+ to a B.

**Whom to contact if you have questions about the studies:** Dr. Jeanine Skorinko, Participant Pool Chair, WPI, Dept. of Social Science, 100 Institute Rd., Worcester MA 01609 Tel: (508) 831-5451, Email: skorinko@wpi.edu

**Whom to contact about your child’s rights in these studies:** Chair of the WPI Institutional Review Board (Prof. Kent Rissmiller, Tel. 508-831-5019, Email: kjr@wpi.edu) or WPI’s University Compliance Officer (Michael J. Curley, Tel. 508-831-6919).

**Agreement:** I agree to participate in the studies described above. [If you do not agree, simply do not return this form]

Your Name [printed] \_\_\_\_\_

Your Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by WPI IRB From: 09/09/2008 To: 09/08/2009
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