UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS NEEDED
Spring 2019

The School of Communication both welcomes and encourages undergraduate student involvement in the research programs of faculty and graduate students by serving as undergraduate research assistants. Research assistants play a vital role in the research of any university, by helping with data collection and analysis, computer programming, library research, and writing of research reports for presentation and conferences and for publication.   Undergraduates in the social sciences with research experience (especially in the form of an undergraduate thesis) and who meet other entry requirements are often highly sought out by graduate schools, including the graduate program in the School of Communication at The Ohio State University. Furthermore, people with research skills are also sought out in industry and the corporate world. Thus, serving as a research assistant can give you a competitive advantage in your quest for furthering your education in the social sciences or obtaining employment upon graduation.   **If you need a letter of recommendation from a faculty member for graduate school or a job, you will get a much stronger letter if you work in a faculty member's research group.** Because there is no such thing as too much experience, we especially encourage students to get involved early in their education, *at least* a year before graduation. It sounds a lot better for a faculty member to say that that you worked in their lab for two, three, or even four years than only a semester.

The School of Communication is currently recruiting undergraduate research assistants for ongoing research projects described below. You may earn 'independent study' course credit by working on these projects or get involved on a voluntary basis—details are to be discussed with the faculty/project contacts. **If you see a project description that interests you, please contact the faculty member directly (unless otherwise indicated in project description).** Most projects fill on a first-come basis until full.

The application deadline for all positions is January 11, 2019.

Spring 2019 School of Communication Projects

Project Title: Children's Understanding of Astronomy
Faculty supervisor: Alex Bonus
Contact information: bonus.1@osu.edu   717-222-1638
Email: bonus.1@osu.edu
Total number of research assistants sought: 2-3
Project location: Center of Science and Industry (COSI), 333 W Broad St, Columbus, OH 43215

Minimum commitment per week: 3-4 hours

Preferred qualifications: Experience and comfort working with children aged 4-9; reliable transportation to COSI

Project description: This study examines children's learning from educational science television. Research assistants would be responsible for conducting interviews with children and their parents at the Center of Science and Industry. Project tasks would include: (1) interfacing with the public as they explore COSI, (2) describing the basic features of the study to interested guests at COSI, (3) recruiting participants for the study, and (4) completing 20-minute interviews with study participants. Research assistants would be expected to work a minimum of 3-4 consecutive hours at least one day per week on either weekdays (Wed, Thurs, or Fri) or weekends (Sat or Sun). Scheduling is flexible.

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Project Title: Video Game Avatars and Performance
Faculty supervisor: Brad Bushman
Contact information: Michael Gilbert
Email: gilbert.611@osu.edu
Total number of research assistants sought: 2
Project location: Journalism Building and Derby Hall

Minimum commitment per week: 3 hours/week

Preferred qualifications: Previous research experience and flexible schedules are preferred, but not required.

Project description: This study is a controlled experiment looking at outcomes related to video game avatars. We are seeking RAs to help run participants for this laboratory experiment in the SP 19 semester. RAs will be responsible for collecting participant consent forms, guiding participants through each step of the study, and for debriefing participants at the end. Work times can be flexible to fit around your weekday schedule. Future RA work involving or related to this study may continue in future semesters.

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Project Title: Evaluating photo tools on social media
Faculty supervisor: David DeAndrea (deandrea.1@osu.edu)
Contact information: Megan Vendemia
Email: vendemia.1@osu.edu
Total number of research assistants sought: 2-4
Project location: Journalism Building

Minimum commitment per week: 3 hours

Preferred qualifications: n/a

Project description: This study explores how the construction process and distribution of selfies might interact with features of newer media to affect female producers. In particular, I will focus on how specific types of photo modification and the nature of audience feedback received on one's images can exert influence on women's state self-objectification and body image concerns. I will conduct a 3 x 2 between-subjects experiment to explore the type of photo modification (appearance-based photo modification, nonappearance-based photo modification, or control) and nature of audience feedback (appearance-based commentary vs. nonappearance-based commentary). The findings of this study will contribute to the literature on objectification and provide a more comprehensive understanding of how women are impacted by what they share online.

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Project Title: Coding & Online Research
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Kelly Garrett
Contact Information: Dr. Kelly Garrett
Email (link for application is below; do not email to apply): garrett.258@osu.edu
Total number of Research Assistants sought: 2-3
Project Location: A few meetings at Derby Hall; most work done on your own

Minimum commitment per week: 3-6 hours

Preferred qualifications: Attentive to detail; strong organizational skills; ability to self-manage and make steady progress on long-term projects without constant supervision.

Project description: We are seeking research assistants to help with content analysis of online discussions in a variety of venues, including Reddit, Twitter, and the comments section of major news sites. Our goal is to use an existing coding system to assess several conversation qualities, including civility, diversity of viewpoints, and coherence. RAs will begin by spending several hours coding practice documents and meeting with other coders to ensure that assessments are consistent across the group. RAs also will have the opportunity to help improve the codebook. Once training is complete, RAs will

code discussion threads independently. Please note that the material to be coded is unfiltered, taken from the source websites verbatim. It is almost certain that coders will encounter some content expressing ideas and language that they find offensive.
To apply for this position, please fill out the following link:
https://osu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bpT3zaGRDOgZYHP

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Project Title: SEMI-ME Research Lab
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick
Contact Information: George Pearson (pearson.325@osu.edu), Dr. Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick (knobloch-westerw.1@osu.edu)

Minimum Commitment: 6 hours per week.

Preferred Qualifications: Strong interest in social scientific research, specifically communication and media. No previous research experience necessary although beneficial. We like to have motivated, reliable, friendly people on the team. GPA > 3.5 preferred but not a requirement. (Some projects may have specific qualification requirements, see below).

Project Descriptions:
The SEMI-ME Lab in the School of Communication is looking for a number of undergraduate researchers to work on various research projects led by graduate students and faculty. The lab's research focuses on a number of areas including: social media, politics, journalism, gender identity, self-perception and other media related issues. Information on specific projects being recruited for are below.

- How does the visual design of a website influence the credibility of information found on the website? Does the visual appeal of a website alter what news we choose to consume? Research assistants wanted to design stimuli, create Qualtrics surveys, test experimental designs, run lab sessions with participants. Experience with design software (e.g. Photoshop) or knowledge of CSS desired but not required.
- How do different motivations influence what message we choose to read and how we interpret the message? Do our thoughts and feelings about ourselves change the type of message we prefer and how it can influence us? Can some messages invoke certain kinds of thoughts and feelings we have about ourselves? Research assistants wanted to compile and proofread stimuli, create Qualrics surveys, test experimental designs, and run lab sessions with participants. Experience with Qualtrics, design software (e.g. Photoshop), and working with people desired but not required. Understanding of online health & lifestyle blogs is a plus.

- How does the presentation order of online news articles along with social cues associated with the news articles influence the perceived importance of the news topics? Does the perceived importance of a news topic alter what news articles we choose to view? Undergraduate research assistants wanted to test experimental designs and run lab sessions with participants. No experience required.

Undergraduate researchers usually work on one or two projects, and are assigned to work with the lead researcher on that project. However, they will also spend time contributing to other projects in the lab (for instance, by testing research designs) and helping with wider lab tasks.

Experience Gained
Undergraduate research assistants can expect to gain experience in the following areas:

- Certification in conducting Human Subjects Research
- Assisting with developing research procedures
- Setting up research procedures
- Experience and knowledge with research procedures such as experiments, coding, literature review
- Brainstorming and creating research
- Discussing and presenting research publications

Undergraduate researchers are also invited to attend the weekly lab meetings where we discuss and review ongoing projects. However, attendance at the weekly meetings is not required.
The Entertainment Lab has had a number of undergraduate researchers present work at the Denman Undergraduate Research Forum and we are always happy to support students looking to achieve this.

Getting In Touch
The SEMI-ME lab is a collaborative research group with a diverse range of interests. We are looking for enthusiastic, friendly, undergraduates looking to learn more about research and gain new skills.
For some projects, it may be possible to earn class credit (via COMM 4998: Undergraduate Research). However, enrollment in COMM 4998 is not required, and voluntary participation is encouraged. Enrollment in COMM 4998 will be discussed with undergraduate researchers individually and is at the discretion of the research team.

If you are interested in any of the above research projects, or working with the SEMI-ME lab in general, email George Pearson at pearson.325@osu.edu. In your email include: projects you are interested in working on, your Major, your GPA, any relevant research experience you have, and any other useful skills you may have (e.g. coding, graphic design). You may include a resume/CV if you wish, but this is not required.

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Project Title: Supportive communication on social networking sites
Faculty supervisor: April Li
Contact information: 3058 Derby Hall
Email: li.6836@osu.edu
Total number of research assistants sought: 2
Project location: Derby Hall

Minimum commitment per week: 3-6 hrs/week

Preferred qualifications: Great attention to detail; Good reading comprehension skills; A minimum GPA of 3.3; Research experience with content analysis.

Project description: This project examines how people exchange social support on social networking sites. Research assistants will be trained to interpret and code support-seeking messages. The messages will be coded, or broken down, into manageable code categories for analysis.

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Project title: Patient Understanding of Online Health Information
Faculty supervisor: April Li
Contact information: 3058 Derby Hall
Email:
April Li, Faculty Supervisor: li.6836@osu.edu
Rachel McKenzie, Graduate Student: mckenzie.367@osu.edu
Total number of research assistants sought: 1
Project location: Derby Hall

Minimum commitment per week: 3-6 hrs/week

Preferred qualifications: Having website development experience; Capable of constructing a website.

Project description: Development of an interactive, online health literacy intervention to determine if patient understanding of an online health article on healthy eating influences the number and types of questions patients ask their doctor regarding the article.