

Communication Research Experience Program (C-REP)

Student Guide

This guide is for students enrolled in at least one course that uses C-REP. This includes courses where participation is a course requirement and courses where participation is for extra credit.

What is C-REP?

C-REP stands for Communication Research Experience Program. C-REP is based, in part, on the premise that students in Communication who participate in research studies will learn first-hand about communication research and how it is conducted.

What are the requirements for C-REP?

COMM 1100 students and COMM1101 students are assigned to five C-REP credit hours. This requirement can be completed by participating in studies, doing alternative assignments, or completing a combination of studies and alternative assignments equaling five hours for each class. Students enrolled in both courses must complete ten hours total.

Students enrolled in other courses should consult their class syllabus or Carmen site to determine the number of credit hours and whether credit hours are for course credit or extra credit. If you have questions about requirements for a particular course, contact your course instructor.

C-REP studies are open to students aged 18 and older. Students who are under 18 and students who do not wish to participate in studies can complete alternative assignments to achieve similar learning outcomes and earn credit.

How is C-REP administered?

C-REP is administered through a website operated by SONA Systems: <https://osucomm.sona-systems.com>. Researchers make timeslots for their study. Participants (students) sign up for timeslots to participate in studies. Participants then earn credits for their participation in studies to help fulfill course research experience requirements. Completion of alternative assignments are also credited and tracked in SONA Systems.

Who administers C-REP?

C-REP Coordinator: Ms. Jessica Ryu (ryu.205@osu.edu)

A graduate assistant from the School of Communication coordinates C-REP each semester. The C-REP coordinator is a liaison between researchers, instructors, and students. They oversee the online SONA system, monitor student completion of C-REP requirements, and help troubleshoot problems with SONA. They also administer the alternative assignments that students can complete for C-REP. The C-REP coordinator can help you navigate C-REP and SONA Systems and answer any questions. **The coordinator should be the first person you contact if you have questions.**

Researchers in the School of Communication

Faculty, staff, and graduate students administer the research studies you see on C-REP. You can see the name of the person running the study on the study page under researcher information.

If you have a question or issue with a particular study, you should email the researcher listed on that study in the SONA system.

Research Chair(s): Dr. Shelly Hovick (hovick.1@osu.edu), Dr. Jesse Fox (fox.775@osu.edu)

The Chair(s) of the Research Committee are responsible for interpreting the rules and regulations concerning C-REP. They are the final authority for all decisions concerning use of C-REP.

Getting Started with C-REP

All students enrolled in courses offering C-REP credit must enroll on the associated website (known as SONA Systems) at the beginning of the semester (i.e., within 1-2 weeks of the semester starting). To enroll, you must manually set up a user account in order to be able to use the website.

1. **Register for C-REP** -- Click [here](#) to register for C-REP on the SONA website. You will sign in via the OSU authentication system using your OSU credentials. You are strongly encouraged to register early to ensure you can complete all of your credits before the end of the semester.

[Note: If you have confirmed that your username and password are entered correctly, and you are still unable to access your account, please email the C-REP coordinator.]

2. **Complete C-REP Prescreening Survey** -- If this is your first time logging in for the semester, you will be asked to complete a prescreening survey on SONA. Your responses to these questions are important as they will be used to match you to studies you are eligible for. *Please note that you cannot change your answers on the prescreening survey once you have submitted them.*
3. **View Available Studies** – To view studies, click on “View Available Studies” on the Main Menu or “Studies” in the top toolbar to view a list of studies. The list will show all studies available as well as any special requirements that may restrict your eligibility to participate in the study. You may select a specific date to view studies with available timeslots on that date. To view more information about a study, click on the name of the study.

[Note: If the message “No studies are available at this time” appears, you can log on to the system later to see if new timeslots have been added or you may have an unexcused absence (see the “What are alternative assignments?” section).]

4. **Sign Up to Participate in a Study**– To sign up to participate, click on “Timeslots Available” or the number of the study. **If the study is a lab or online synchronous study (see information on study types below)**, click on “View Time Slots for This Study.” You will be able to select the specific date and time to participate. **If it is an online asynchronous study (e.g., survey)**, click on “Sign Up” at the bottom of the study information page. The next screen will show “System Message: Signup Successful” and you will receive an e-mail confirmation.

Consult your personal schedule or calendar to make sure you do not have any time conflicts before signing up. You should not sign up for an in-person lab on online/synchronous study that overlaps with your class times, work schedule, or other appointments and obligations. Furthermore, you should treat all online studies like lab studies and designate a time in your personal schedule or calendar to participate in the study before the end of designated timeslot, which is the deadline for participation.

If you have already signed up for a study, the message “You have signed up for this study before. Duplicate sign-ups prohibited. View [My Schedule/Credits] for more information” will appear in place of the Sign-up button.

The last day to participate in studies is one week from the last day of classes. All studies must be completed before 9 PM that day.

5. **Monitor Sign-Ups and Participation** – Click “My Schedule/Credits” to see the studies you have signed up for and credits you have earned for past study participation or alternative assignments. The tab shows current credit information and your upcoming schedule of sessions. Refer to this page for the time, date, and location of your sessions. You may also view contact information for each study by clicking on the study name.

[Note: Agreeing to participate in a study is an important commitment. Please regard your sessions as appointments and avoid conflicts with your other commitments. If you show up for a research study but decide not to participate after reading and signing the consent form, you will not be penalized.]

6. **Be Timely and Prepared to Participate in Studies.** -- For all studies, double check the time (and location, if applicable) the day before participation. Be sure to check the study's requirements or preparation for any additional instructions.

For **online studies**, you should find a private place where you can participate on a desktop or laptop computer without being observed or interrupted. For example, you may need to use headphones, a microphone, or a webcam.

- For **asynchronous online studies**, you should designate a time in your personal schedule or calendar consistent with the study's duration (e.g., 30 minutes) in advance of the deadline.
- For **synchronous online studies** (e.g., Zoom), you should log into the provided link 5 minutes before your scheduled appointment time.

For **lab studies**, you should arrive 5 minutes before your scheduled appointment time. Make sure you bring a copy of the study number, researcher's name, start time, and location. If you arrived for a study on time and the researcher has not appeared for 10 minutes past your appointment time, contact the researcher by email immediately. Include your full name, the date and time of the session, and the study number.

How do I cancel a study I have signed up for?

If you are canceling 24 hours or more before the session, you may cancel via the SONA system.

In SONA, navigate to the “My Schedule/Credits” page. Click the “Cancel” button next to the session you wish to cancel. After you click this button, a confirmation page will then appear. Click “Yes” to cancel your sign-up, and the sign-up will be cancelled immediately. You will also receive a confirmation e-mail.

The system will not allow you to cancel a study *less than 24 hours* in advance. If you need to cancel less than 24 hours before the start of the study, navigate to the “My Schedule/Credits” page. Click on the name of the study to find the researcher’s name. Email the researcher directly (not the C-REP coordinator) to cancel your timeslot.

What is the C-REP no-show policy?

As a courtesy to researchers, who prepare in advance for potential research participants, please cancel any sessions that you are unable to attend. **If you do not attend and do not cancel a session at least two hours before the timeslot begins, you will be marked as an “unexcused no show” for the study. You will no longer be able to sign up for studies until you have completed an alternative assignment worth the same number of credits as the missed study.**

What kinds of studies are on C-REP?

The studies available in C-REP are designed and run primarily by Communication faculty, graduate students, and honors students. You may also be participating in a study run by faculty and students from other departments that have affiliations with Communication. The data collected are used in journal articles, doctoral dissertations, or honors theses.

- **Online Studies (Asynchronous):** Many online studies in C-REP are asynchronous, which means that the research participation is at a time and location of your choosing. An example of this type of research is an online survey. If you sign-up for an online study, you would be provided with a hyperlink to take the survey on your own. Please note that you may not complete your research experience exclusively through asynchronous online studies unless you are in an entirely online class (see study type requirements on the next page).
- **Online Studies (Synchronous):** Online studies can also be synchronous, which means that you will participate in the research online at specific time. An example of this type of research might be an interview or observation of an online task over Zoom.
- **Lab Studies:** Some studies are conducted in labs on campus. You will receive an extra 0.5 hours for these studies to allow for travel to and from the study site. The extra 0.5 hour is already included in the credit amount listed with the study on the C-REP site.

Two-Part Studies: Some studies are two-part studies where you must sign-up for both parts of the study at once. These studies will be clearly marked. If you are in a multiple session study, you will be given credit for the work completed at the end of each session. You will receive credit for participation in both parts of the study. If you cancel the first part of a two-part study, the second part will also be cancelled. If you cancel the second part of a two-part study, the first part will not be cancelled but you will need to ask the researcher to sign you up for the second part again if you are still eligible to participate and there are still open timeslots.

How many credits will I receive for participating in a study?

Students earn credit based on how many hours they are expected to participate in a study session. Study sessions can be 15 minutes to 3 hours long earning credit in .25 increments for every 15 minutes. Credits are always rounded up. For example, a session that is 10 minutes long is worth .25 credits. Lab studies are worth an extra .5 credits to account for any potential commute to the lab location. See below for other examples of credit breakdowns.

Study Credit Allocation			
Online Studies		Lab Studies (+.5 credits added to base credit)	
Length of Study	Credits	Length of study	Credits
15 min	.25	15 min	.75
30 min	.5	30 min	1
45 min	.75	45 min	1.25
1 hour	1	1 hour	1.5

Examples:

- Participant 1 takes a 10- minute online survey (.25 credits) = .25 credits
- Participant 2 completes part 1 of a study which is a 15-minute online pretest (.25) + part 2 of that study which is a 1-hour lab experiment (1.5 credits) = 1.75 credits
- Participant 3 completes part 1 of a study which is a 10- minute online survey (.25 credits) + part 2 of that study which is a 30-min lab experiment (1 credit) + the follow-up of that study which is a 10- minute online survey (.25 credits) = 1.5 credits

When will my credits appear in SONA?

Please allow two business days for your credit to appear in SONA. If you still have not received credit after two business days, please send an e-mail to the C-REP coordinator. **Do not forget to include your full name, the study number, and the course number for which you want to use your research credit.**

Study Type Requirements

Students participating in C-REP are expected to participate in a variety of different types of studies. Accordingly, **students enrolled in in-person or hybrid classes may earn no more than 50% of their required credits from asynchronous online studies. The remainder of the credits must be earned through synchronous online studies, lab studies or written assignments** (see more information about this requirement under "Signing up for Studies"), unless the requirement is waived in a given semester due to a lack of lab studies.

If you receive a system message saying that you cannot sign up for a study because it would exceed credit limits, it is most likely because you have completed 50% of your credits in that type of study. For example, if you have completed 50% of your credits through online asynchronous studies, you

will not be able to sign up for more online studies. The other 50% must be completed through lab studies.

Students enrolled in online-only classes may earn all of their research credits from online asynchronous or synchronous studies and/or alternative assignments. If you are in an online class, the number of credits that you are allowed to enroll in on the website will be twice the course requirement. For example, in an online course requiring 5 hours of research participation, you will be able to enroll in up to 10 credits on the website. Regardless of the number of credits available to you, you are only required to complete the number of research credits noted on your course syllabus.

You can only satisfy the C-REP course requirement by participating in research studies and/or completing the alternative assignments. We do not accept your participation in any other studies toward the requirement (including Psychology studies). If you are enrolled in COMM1100 or COMM1101, failure to complete the C-REP course requirement will result in a reduction of your grade equal to the number of credits left incomplete.

What are alternative assignments?

If you do not wish to participate in research or are not eligible for studies due to age/prescreening restrictions, you can earn equivalent credit by completing an alternative assignment. Alternative assignments are written critiques of research articles that are up to 1000 words long. You may want an alternative assignment if a) you're under 18 years old, b) have an unexcused no-show for a session, or c) just want to learn about research and fulfill the learning requirement credits without participating in a study.

If you wish to complete an alternative assignment:

1. Contact the C-REP coordinator via email. **Be sure to include your name in addition to the course and section number for which you are seeking research credit.** The C-REP coordinator will not be able to grant you credit until the information is provided.
2. Within 48 hours of receiving your email the C-REP coordinator will email you a list of instructions and a randomly selected research article. **You do not get to select the article to critique.**
3. Write an acceptable critique that addresses the theories, methods, and general arguments made in the research article. You may earn 0.25 credits for every 125 words written, not including headings, titles, or references. Thus, a 500-word critique is worth one research credit, 750 words is worth 1.5 credits, and 1,000 words is worth 2 credits. You may earn a maximum of 2 credits per assignment. **[Note: If you are completing an alternative assignment for an unexcused no-show, you must write at least the number words equivalent to the credit offered by the session. For example, if the session was worth .5 credits, the alternative assignment must be at least 250 words long.]**
4. Submit the completed assignment to the C-REP coordinator via email. Your paper will be evaluated in 2 business days, and you will be sent an e-mail stating that you have either completed or failed the requirements and the amount of credit awarded.

Remember: The last day to request alternative assignments is one week from the last day of classes (by 9 PM) and the last to submit alternative assignments to the C-REP coordinator is the last day of classes (by 9 PM).

Alternative Assignment Criteria

To be acceptable, the paper must be: 1) a review of the study including its main purpose and methodology used, as well as an interpretation and critique of the study methods and conclusions, 2) written in good English, and 3) with appropriate length for the desired number of research credits (250 words-.5 credits, 500 words-1 credit, etc.).

If you have any questions about this requirement, please contact the C-REP coordinator. You can earn up to 2 credits per assignment unless the study you missed offers more than 2 credits.

Submitted papers will be judged as “unacceptable” if they are simple summaries and not “critiques,” if they have multiple grammatical errors or if plagiarism is present (see below). It is expected that these assignments will teach you some of the concepts you would have learned from participating in empirical research.

It is considered unethical to copy or plagiarize abstracts from any source (electronic or non-electronic) in order to complete the alternative assignment. It is also unethical to use someone else’s ideas or materials, including ideas and text generated by third parties (including computer-generated or artificial intelligence sources). Any paraphrasing, summarizing, use of ideas from other sources, and use of exact quotes need to be properly cited. **Any plagiarism will be reported through the appropriate academic channels and could result in a failing grade in COMM 1100, COMM 1101, or the course you are earning credit for, or even dismissal from The Ohio State University.**

Review of C-REP Policies

Academic Integrity

All students are subject to the Code of Student Conduct (see <https://trustees.osu.edu/bylaws-and-rules/code>). Violations of the code will result in grade penalties, and all violations will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

For C-REP, academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to):

- Having someone else fill out a survey that you will get credit for.
- Having someone else go to a lab session that you will get credit for.
- Plagiarizing alternative assignments. Please see more details about plagiarizing alternative assignments in the “What are alternative assignments?” section.

Under 18 Policy

If you are under the age of 18, you must complete alternative assignments for the research experience requirement. You may not participate in studies on C-REP. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact the C-REP coordinator.

No-Show Policies

The SONA system allows researchers to record both unexcused and excused no-shows. An *unexcused no-show* occurs when the student misses or is late to an appointment time without notifying the researcher prior to missing the study, at least two hours in advance. Absences that are excused (i.e., an *excused no-show*) require submission of documentation to the C-REP coordinator (doctor's note, note from an athletic coach, etc.).

You should receive an e-mail reminder of the study the day before from SONA. However, system glitches do occur, and the messages might not be sent. A lack of reminders is not an excuse for missing a session as it is your responsibility to note the date, time, and location of every session you sign up for. You must be on time for your studies. If you are not, they may start without you even if you are only a few minutes late. If that happens, or if you miss an appointment entirely, you will be counted as a no-show.

If you are marked as unexcused for a given study, you will no longer be able to sign up for other studies until you have completed an alternative assignment worth the same number of credits of the missed study. For example, a student that misses a study worth 1.5 credits will need to complete an alternative assignment worth 1.5 credits (Please see the section "What are alternative assignments?"). If you have a restriction on your account due to an unexcused absence, you are still expected to attend other studies for which you have already signed up.

Communicating with the C-REP Coordinator

The C-REP coordinator will send announcements via email throughout the semester regarding deadlines to earn credit (see Calendar). Students are responsible for reading these announcements.

When communicating with researchers or the C-REP coordinator about C-REP, please use complete sentences and include all relevant details (e.g., your name, the study number) in your email. If you would like to meet with the C-REP coordinator in person, please send an email including at least three times that you are available. If you send the C-REP coordinator an email, the C-REP coordinator will respond to emails within 2 business days (e.g., an email sent between 9am and 5pm on Monday should receive a response by Wednesday at 5pm).

Deception Studies

In some studies researchers cannot reveal the purpose of the study at the beginning or participants' responses would be invalid. After participation, however, participants are fully debriefed. The term debriefing means that participants are given information on the true purpose of the study and why it was considered necessary to conceal the purpose of the study at the beginning. Deception studies of this sort are needed to study communication so that we can learn how people think, feel, and act naturally without any undue biases affecting the data.

You may be able to remove your data if you no longer wish to be part of a study after learning about a deception that was used. If you choose to remove your data from analysis, you will still earn credit for participating.

Other Information for Participants

- All studies are reviewed and approved by The Ohio State University Institutional Review Board. If you would like more information about this committee, you can call 614-688-8457 or visit their web site at <http://orpp.osu.edu/irb/about/>.
- Studies begin every 15 minutes starting at the top of the hour.
- Studies can take place in a university classroom, office, laboratory buildings, or online.
- If at any time during the study session you become uncomfortable with the topic, methods, etc., you may stop participating in the study and still earn credit. Please tell the experimenter that you are leaving.
- Only the study researcher can change your credit status for a session. The C-REP coordinator does not manage attendance records. You must contact the researcher to contest the credit assignment.
- If anyone associated with a study behaves inappropriately (asks you for a date, requests that you participate beyond the scheduled time, etc.), please contact the Communication Office immediately.
- Experimenters will contact you via e-mail if they are cancelling a session. Please check your e-mail prior to attendance of sessions. If a session is cancelled or the location is changed without you being notified, you will still earn credit for participation.
- Lab studies or synchronous online studies can start as early as 8:00 a.m. and must end by 9:00 p.m. These types of studies must also occur during the week and CANNOT occur when the university is closed (e.g., holidays or scheduled breaks). Asynchronous online studies may be open the university is closed, however. Please let the C-REP coordinator know if this policy has been violated.
- DO NOT sign up to participate in studies during a time when you have class. Studies are not an excuse for missing class, and class is not an excuse for missing a scheduled session.
- Do NOT delete e-mails regarding C-REP without first reading them. All information is disseminated via the web or e-mail.

General Calendar

Beginning of the semester	
First Day of Classes	First day to participate in studies. Please sign up for C-REP and complete the prescreener.
Mid-term	
Midterm/Last Day of Session 1 Classes	Students enrolled in COMM1100 and COMM1101 must have completed half of their credits by 9:00 PM .
After Midterm/Start of Session 2 Classes	New studies added by the C-REP coordinator.
End of the Semester	
One Week Before the Last Day of Classes	Last day/time to (1) participate in studies and (2) email the C-REP coordinator to request articles for alternative assignments (9:00 PM deadline).
Last Day of Classes	Last day/time to submit alternative assignments to C-REP coordinator: (9:00 PM deadline).
First Day of Finals Week	Deadline for researchers and C-REP coordinator to assign/post all pending credits (5:00 PM deadline).
Two Days before the End of Finals Week	Deadline for coordinator to send final C-REP participation information to instructors.