

SMITH PSYCHOLOGY CLUB PRESENTS...

Psychology Research:

At Smith College

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SMITH
COLLEGE

Courses

Research-Oriented Courses (as of Spring 2026)



Introduction to Research Methods (PSY 202)

Course Description: Introduces students to a variety of methods used in psychological research. All sections of this course cover the basic methodological techniques of contemporary psychology such as observational, experimental, and survey methods. Sections differ in the particular content theme used to illustrate these methods. *Priority is given to Smith College psychology majors and minors.*



Research Seminars (PSY 300-Level)

Overall Description: Catered primarily for *juniors and seniors in the psychology major*, Research Seminars give Smithies the opportunity to collaborate with professors on their personal research projects without fully committing to a lab. Offered topics depend on the semester but previous topics include intergroup relations, perfectionism, political psychology, and more! Not all 300-level courses are Research Seminars, but all Research Seminars are offered at the 300 level.



Special Studies (PSY 400)

Overall Description: Catered primarily for *juniors and seniors in the psychology major*, Special Studies give Smithies the opportunity to pursue independent, faculty-mentored research on a focused topic of their choosing and gain experience in reviewing literature, collecting and analyzing data, and writing a research paper—while still getting academic credit for their degree. It's best to ask a faculty member you've worked extensively with to be your mentor.



Honors Thesis (PSY 430D / 431 / 432D)

Overall Description: The departmental honors thesis is for *senior psychology majors* interested in conducting independent research on a particular topic. Honors students work closely with a faculty member to conceptualize, design, and conduct an empirical research project, culminating in a paper that is equivalent to a publishable journal article in quality and length (i.e., about 30-50 pages of text and written in APA style).

At the end of the academic year, Honors students present their projects to the department as a whole. Successful completion of an Honors thesis leads to departmental honors upon graduation. **Students should think carefully about whether doing an honors thesis is right for them.**

Research Labs

Undergraduate Research Labs (as of Spring 2026)



Autism & Neurodevelopment (AND) Lab



Meredith Pecukonis

Assistant Professor of Psychology

Contact mpecukonis@smith.edu

Track: Mind & Brain

Research Focus: how neurobiological and environmental factors impact the language and communication development in autism; how the brains of neurodivergent people function during live social interactions

Neuroscience of Memory & Flexible Cognition Lab



Track: Mind & Brain

Research Focus: cognitive and neural mechanisms supporting episodic memory function, using various cognitive neuroscience methods involving neuroimaging and neuromodulation

Preston Thakral

Assistant Professor of Psychology

Contact pthakral@smith.edu

Behavioral Assessment of Self-Injury Lab (BASIL)



Stephanie Jarvi Steele

Assistant Professor of Psychology

Contact ssteele@smith.edu

Track: Health & Illness

Research Focus: the risk factors of self-injurious thoughts and behaviors, such as non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI)

Society, Psychology, and Health Lab



Benita Jackson

Chair of the Psychology Department; Professor
of Psychology

Contact bjackson@smith.edu

Track: Health & Illness

Research Focus: social distribution of health-predictive psychological factors; psychosocial influences of behavior; links between affective states, subclinical disease markers, and health-related strengths/needs in under-resourced communities

Little Lab



Brianna McMillan

Assistant Professor of Psychology

Contact bmcmillan@smith.edu

Track: Person & Society

Research Focus: how children learn during interactions with their caregivers and how environmental factors, such as background noise, affect children's learning and language development

Justice, Attention, & Motivation (JAM) Lab



Yael Granot

Assistant Professor of Psychology

Contact ygranot@smith.edu

Track: Person & Society

Research Focus: explores how people develop attitudes about justice and make legal judgments, especially in the context of adolescents' experiences with school discipline and school-based policing

Reminder

These aren't the only psychology research opportunities available at Smith College. Professors who don't have official labs still conduct research and will welcome interested students—if they have the bandwidth for it. Some psychology students also get involved in biology, neuroscience, or statistical & data sciences research on campus. When in doubt, read a faculty member's bio and email them to ask questions about their research. They're usually more than happy to talk about what they're working on.