

50:830:494 / 50:830:495 – Independent Study in Psychology

General Information

Updated January 28, 2026

Instructor: Dr. Robrecht van der Wel, 311 Armitage Hall, room 349;
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Readings: Articles and chapters posted through a link on the lab's website:
<https://vanderwel.camden.rutgers.edu/cognition-in-action-cia-laboratory/>

Course Description

The Independent Study in Psychology is a mentored research experience designed for advanced undergraduate students who wish to engage deeply in empirical psychological research. Students work as members of the Cognition in Action (CiA) Laboratory, contributing to research on perception, action, and social cognition.

Students engage in the full research cycle: generating research questions, designing experimental paradigms, collecting data, analyzing results, and synthesizing outcomes in written form. The course meets departmental expectations for supervised undergraduate research, including regular faculty contact, clearly articulated learning outcomes, and defined assessment criteria.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Students will learn about and be involved in:

- Formulating theoretically grounded research questions
- Designing and implementing experimental paradigms
- Collecting and managing behavioral data ethically
- Analyzing data using appropriate quantitative methods
- Critically engaging with empirical Paper
- Synthesizing research experience in a written reflection

Assessment

Evaluation is based on participation, data collection reliability, engagement with analysis, and a final five-page reflection paper integrating theory, methods, data, and lessons learned.

Draft Schedule

Jan 28 – Orientation and project planning

Feb 11 – Background Paper: Self-efficacy (Jason)

Feb 18 – Background Paper: Action Units and Face Processing (Abby)

Feb 25 – Background Paper: Sense of agency, Temporal Binding, and Actions (Fatemeh)

Mar 4 – About data collection and analysis

Mar 11 – Background Paper: Embodied Face Processing (Lexus)

Mar 18 – About data collection and analysis

Mar 25 – Background Paper: TBD

Apr 1 – About data collection and analysis

Apr 8 – Background Paper: TBD

Apr 15 – About data collection and analysis

Apr 22 – Background Paper: TBD

Apr 29 – About data collection and analysis

May 6 – Wrap-up and reflection