



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

College of Human Sciences

Department of Human Development and Family Studies

HDFS 4320-008 Syllabus - Research in HDFS

Dr. Sylvia Niehuis' SMITTEN Lab

Spring 2020

The purpose of this research experience is to provide students the opportunity to become immersed into the day-to-day aspects of planning and carrying out of research endeavors. This should not be looked upon as an easy way for course credit or a letter of recommendation. Students are also encouraged to work on their own research project under the supervision of a graduate student in the lab and Dr. Niehuis. Hours in the lab should be utilized to (1) increase productivity for the study, (2) increase academic growth for all the researchers involved, and (3) create an ethical and safe environment to conduct research. During the fall and spring semesters, students are expected to work three hours per week per credit hour of HDFS 4320, plus an additional hour for weekly research meetings (10 total hours per week). During a summer semester, due to the condensed nature of the course, students are expected to work ten hours per week per credit hour, including an hour for weekly research meetings (30 total hours per week). Lab hours will be assigned to those who are not pursuing credit hours.

Research Assistant's Responsibilities

1. Research assistants should treat this experience as a JOB. This means behaving professionally, responding to communication quickly, providing your best work, and making it a personal priority as you would with any other job.
2. All Research assistants will obtain a Certificate of Completion from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research for "Protecting Human Research Participants" *prior to starting any* work in the lab. They will be expected to abide by these ethical guidelines in addition to any further specialized SMITTEN lab ethical guidelines.
3. Research assistants are expected to attend weekly research meetings with other SMITTEN lab team members and Dr. Niehuis, which counts toward 1 of the 10 (or 30) required weekly hours.
4. Research assistants are expected to turn in a timesheet at each weekly research meeting describing how many hours were spent on different tasks during the previous week. A timesheet template will be provided.
5. Research assistants are expected to seek clarification of anything in the procedure of the study that they do not completely understand.
6. Research assistants must behave professionally at all times. They should be on time and aware of the influence they possess due to their position of authority.
7. Research assistants are expected to dress professionally when working with participants. They cannot wear revealing clothing (revealing shorts or tops), or clothes that are otherwise inappropriate for work.
8. Research assistants are not permitted to remove data from the lab at any time.
9. Research assistants are expected to use professional language while working with participants, at research meetings, or dealing with other lab business.



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10. Research assistants are expected to always be responsible with lab equipment including cameras, computers, software, data files, participant payment methods, etc. No misuse of these items is allowed, including internet surfing or checking social media sites.
11. Research assistants should not alter or tamper with the organizational structure of electronic or physical files without permission from a supervisor.
12. Research assistants are responsible of checking their e-mails daily and responding within 24 hours over lab duties.
13. Research assistants have a responsibility for the comfort and wellbeing of their participants. They should inform the researcher of any unnecessary discomfort to the participants in the study.
14. Research assistants do not have the right to change a research procedure without notifying Dr. Niehuis.
15. Research assistants may not discontinue service in the middle of the agreed upon semester without a sound reason.
16. Research assistants are expected to notify Dr. Niehuis immediately if there are any changes in lab hours or commitment to this lab.
17. Research assistants are expected to keep any information about participants completely confidential.
18. Research assistant are not permitted to take pictures inside the lab with a camera, cell phone, etc.

Letters of Recommendations/References

Many undergraduate students join a research lab to obtain letters of recommendation for graduate or professional schools. Letters of recommendation can be provided for students who have engaged in lab work for two or more semesters (1 year commitment required). Research assistants should ask for these letters of recommendation in advance. To maximize the quality of the type of letter we might write:

- A. Be a good research assistant (RA).
- B. Follow instructions carefully.
- C. Ask questions rather than make assumptions.
- D. Be attentive to your work. Do not be sloppy.
- E. Notify in advance when you are sick, can't make it, or will be late. Please do not just *fail* to show up.
- F. Carefully document your hours and time. Hours are counted when you are working in the lab.
- G. If you are very sick it may be best not to come to work. Talk to your supervisor.

This syllabus acts as a contract between the Principal Investigator (PI) and Lab Supervisor(s) and the research assistant who works in the SMITTEN Lab. If you have any questions feel free to contact:

Principal Investigator

Dr. Sylvia Niehuis

E-mail: sylvia.niehuis@ttu.edu

Phone: (806) 834-7382

Graduate Lab Supervisor:

E-mail:

Phone: