**Guide to Birmingham-Southern College Psychology Department’s**

**Experiential Research Opportunities for Psychology 101 and to the On-line**

**Participant Scheduling System**



**Overview of the Experiential Research Opportunities (ERO) Component of PY101**

Students enrolled in PY101 are required to earn three Experiential Research Opportunity (ERO) credits as part of the course requirements. Participation in research is not only an important part of your educational experience in PY101, it is also important to the progress of science -- to our, and ultimately to your, understanding of human behavior and thought processes. All research projects conducted in the Psychology Department undergo an ethics review process to ensure that the studies meet the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association. Participation in research is a valuable, active way to learn about the field of psychology and about how psychological research is conducted.

**How are ERO credits earned?**

The fulfillment of EROs is a course requirement for all sections of PY101 at Birmingham-Southern College. ERO credits are obtained in two ways: (1) serving as a participant in approved research conducted by faculty and/or students in the Psychology Department; and/or (2) alternative assignments completed toward the end of the semester. You must accumulate ***a total of three ERO credits*** either by participating in research, completing alternative assignments, or a combination of the two. To explain…

**(1) BSC Research Participation:** Each ***hour*** of research participation in a study offered by a BSC psychology professor or student counts as ***one*** ERO credit. To meet the requirement, just participate in ***three hours***of approved research projects during the term for which you are enrolled in PY101. Studies that last 30 minutes or less will earn you 1/2 of an ERO credit.

**(2) Alternative Assignments:**

* **Journal article assignments**. You can read and write brief papers on specified research articles. You may earn 1 ERO credit for every satisfactory paper you write. Instructions and an article list will be provided on Moodle by your instructor in the last month of the term.
* **Online studies**. You can complete online studies for researchers from other colleges and universities. You will submit documentation for each study completed and earn ½ ERO credit for each study. Instructions will be provided on Moodle by your instructor late in the term.

***Failure to complete all 3 credit hours of research during the semester will result in a half-letter grade deduction from your final course grade for each half-hour credit you did not complete.***

**How to Use the On-line Participant Scheduling System – *Sona Systems***

The Sona Systems software provides an easy method for you to sign up for studies and track your progress throughout the term. The software’s web-based interface allows you to access the system at any time from any computer with a standard web browser.

**How do I access the system?**

An e-mail will be sent to your BSC e-mail account from the **Psychology Research Participation**

**System**with the subject heading, **“Psychology Research Participation System Login Information.”** The e-mail will contain your user ID and your password to access the research participation website. ***Please login as soon as you receive this e-mail to check that your login information works. Then please retain the e-mail with your login info, and/or record your login info in a safe place****.*

The body of that e-mail will look as follows:

Your Participant login information for Psychology Research Participation System is listed below.

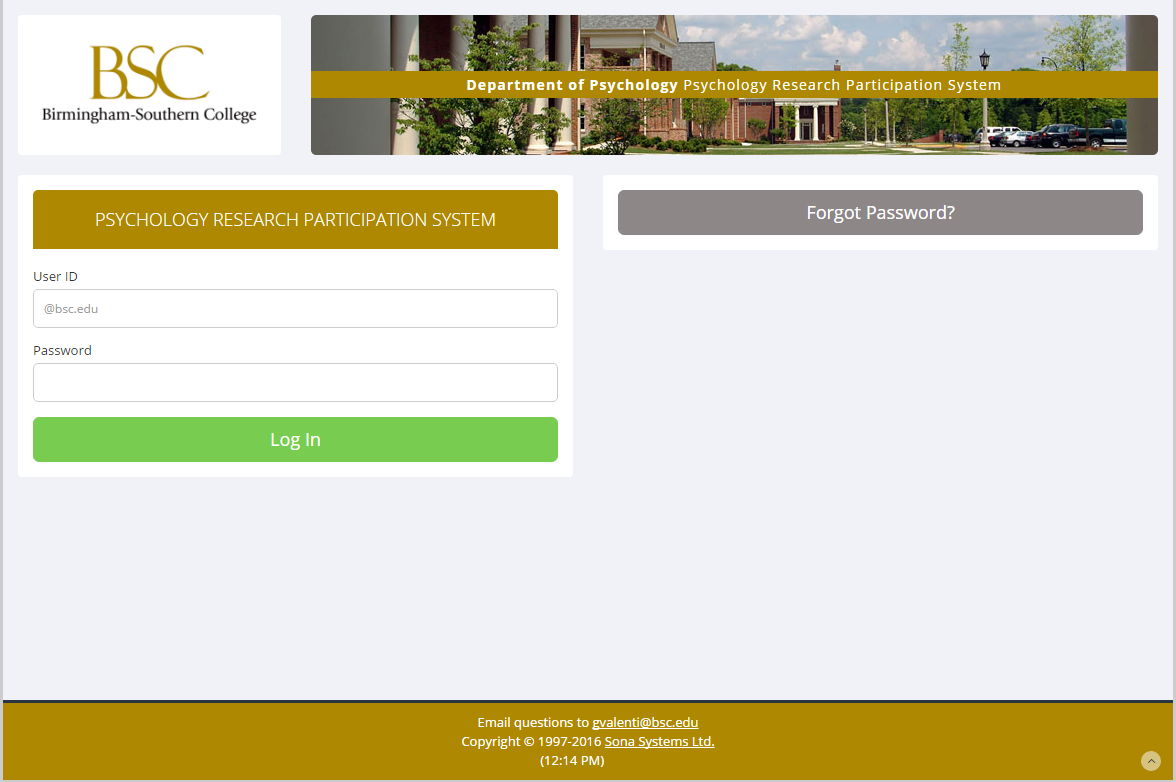
User ID: mhsample

Password: 12345678

Please go to **http://bsc.sona-systems.com** to login to the system.

**How do I log onto the system?**

1. Go to the login page for the BSC participant pool at [**http://bsc.sona-systems.com**](http://bsc.sona-systems.com) (see Figure 1).

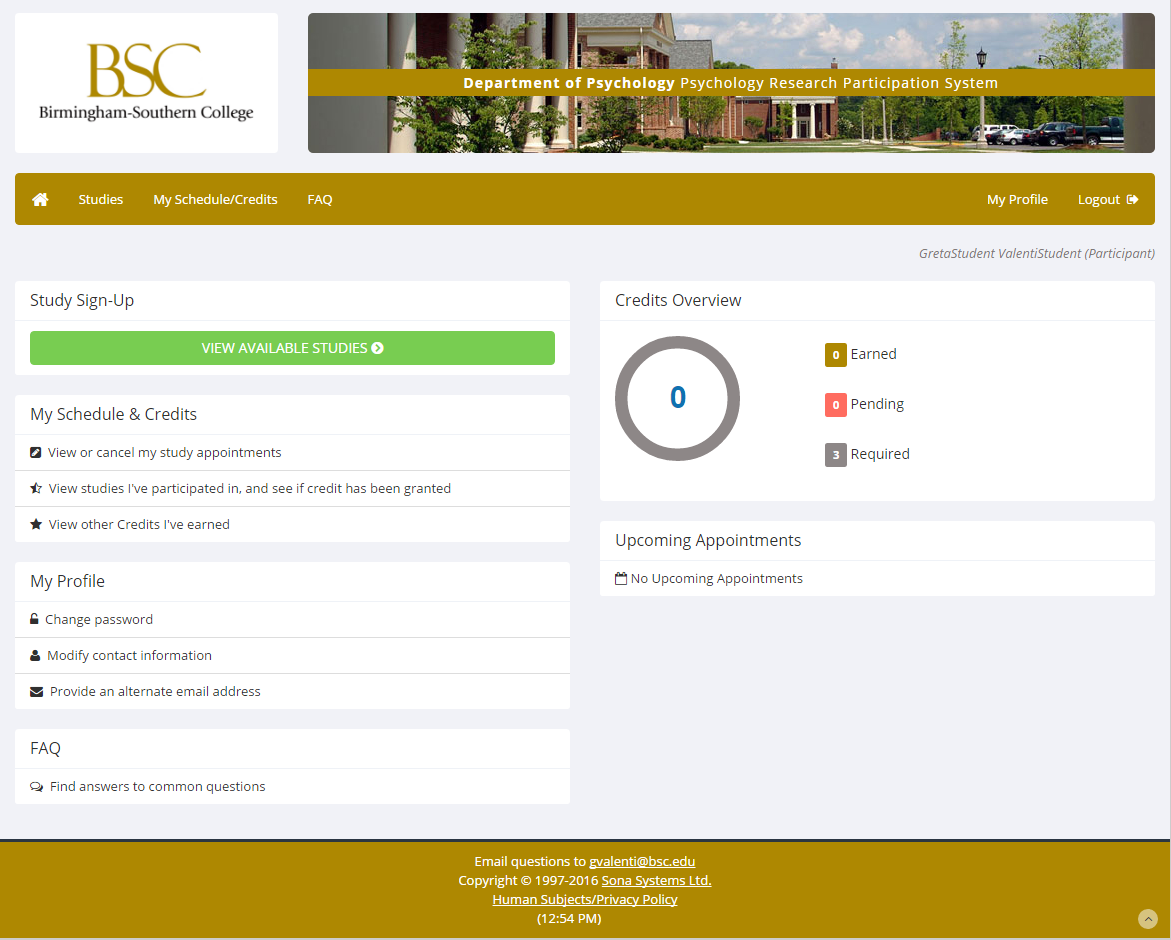


***Figure 1 – Login Page***

2. Enter the User ID and password from the e-mail that was sent to you. Your User ID is the same as your BSC e-mail ID. Your password for the research participation system is a randomly generated set of eight numbers, which you may change later.

3. After a successful login, the next screen you will see is the main menuscreen (see Figure 2).

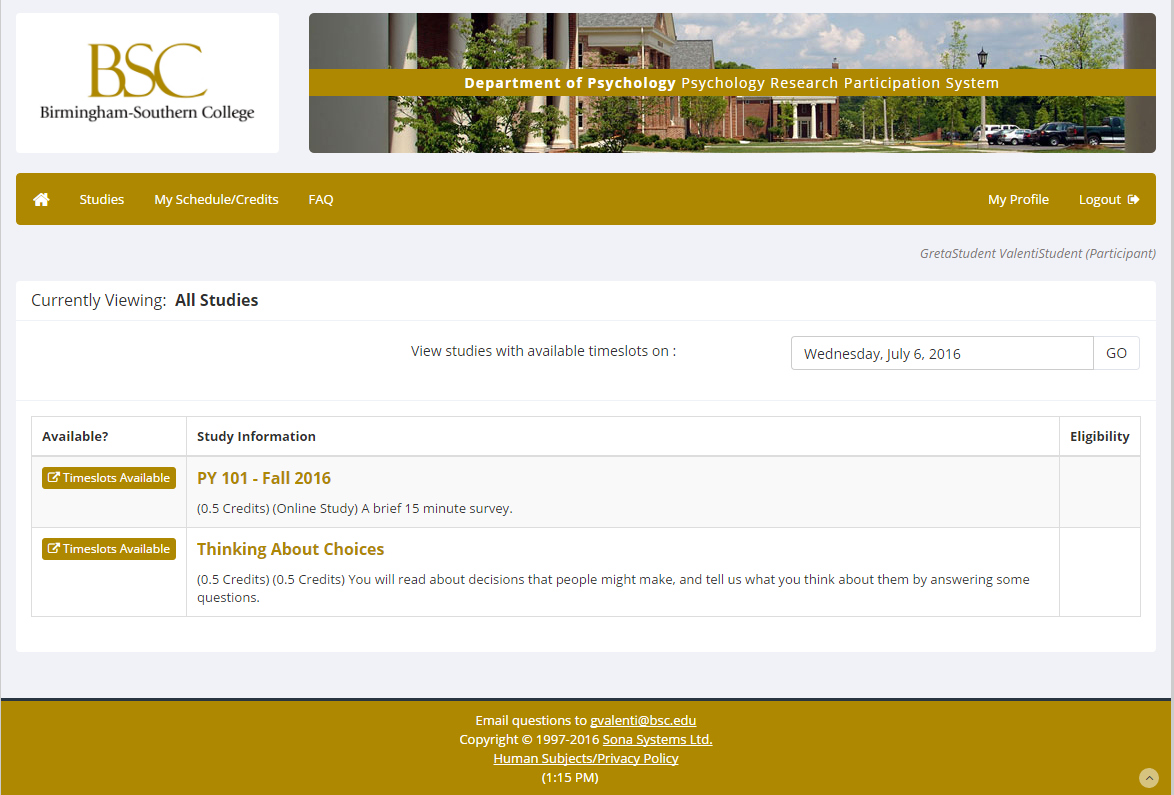
From this screen you will be able to view a list of available studies, check your participation credits, cancel your appointment for a study, change your password, and choose several other options.



***Figure 2 – Main Menu Page***

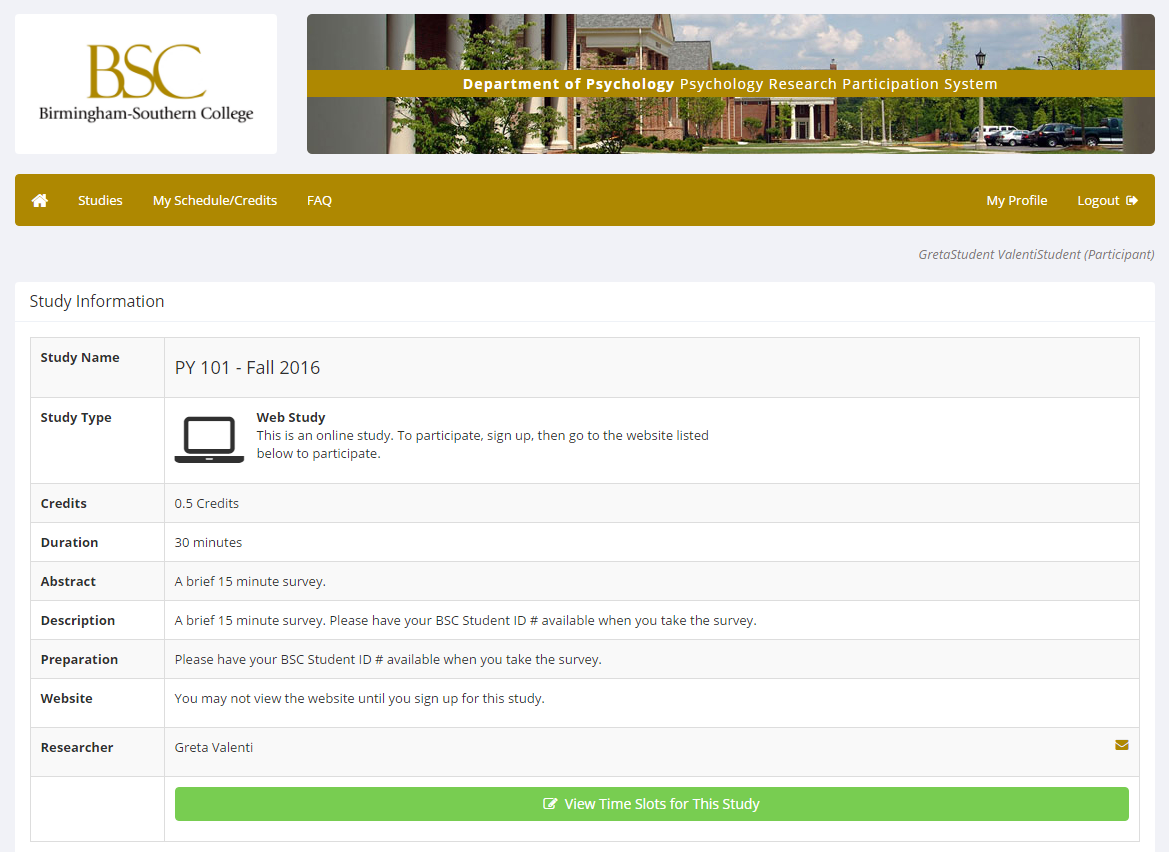
**How do I sign up for a study?**

1. From the main menu screen (see Figure 2, above), click the green **VIEW AVAILABLE STUDIES** box(or the “Studies” link from the top menu bar). A list of studies will then be displayed (see Figure 3 on p. 4). If a study is an online study, it will indicate so underneath the study name, next to the number of credits. (More details on online versus in-person studies will appear on the next few pages of this document).



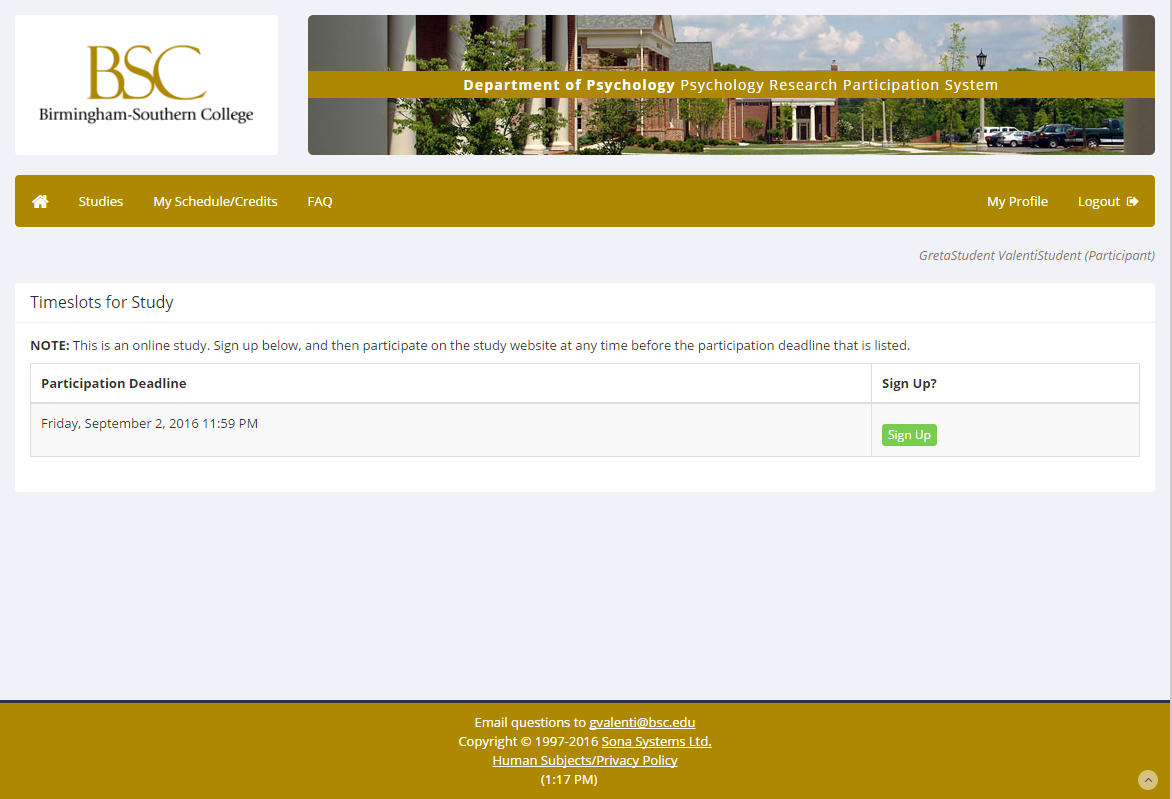
***Figure 3 – Viewing Studies***

2. If you are interested in participating in a given study, click the **Timeslots Available box** or click on the name of the study (e.g., **PY 101 – Fall 2016**). You will see a brief description of the study and a list of any special restrictions or eligibility requirements (see Figure 4). Please read all of this information carefully.

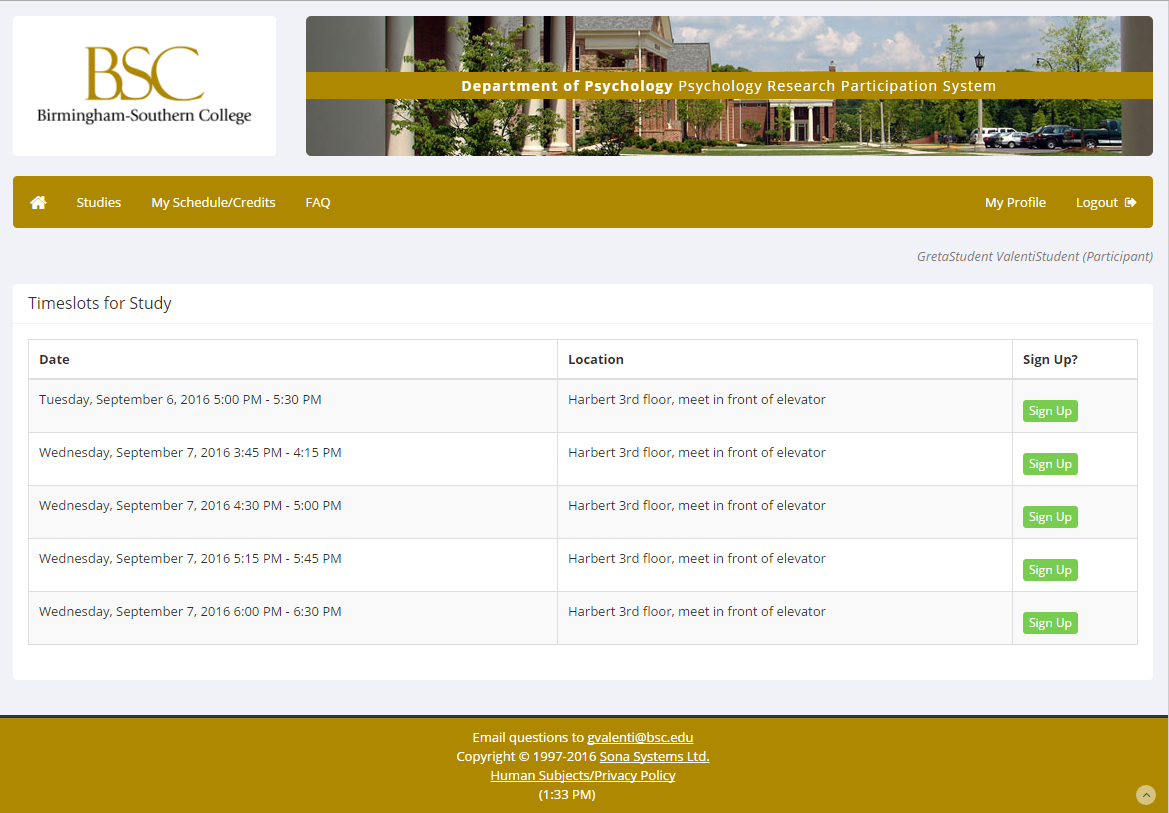


***Figure 4 – Study Information***

3. Next, click on the green **View Time Slots for This Study** box. If the study is an online study, you will see the deadline by which you must complete the online survey for the study, if you choose to sign up. If the study is an in-person study, you will see a list of available timeslots and may choose whichever timeslot is most convenient for you. To sign up for an online study or for a particular timeslot for an in-person study, click the green **Sign Up** box (see Figures 5 and 6). After you click **Sign Up**, you will see information displayed confirming the time and location of the study in which you plan to participate.

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***Figure 5 – Study Timeslots for Online Study***

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***Figure 6 – Study Timeslots for In-Person Study***

4. Congratulations - you are now signed up for the study! *Please make a special note in your calendar the exact day, time, and location of the study, and any additional information you need for participation*. You will receive an e-mail confirmation of your sign-up within a few minutes of signing up, and an e-mail reminder of your appointment one day prior to your appointment.

For online studies, the study’s Detailed Description information will indicate whether you will receive a separate e-mail with the online survey link *or* whether you will access the website by clicking on the “Complete Survey Now” box. Please read the Detailed Description for additional instructions.

**How do I cancel an appointment?**

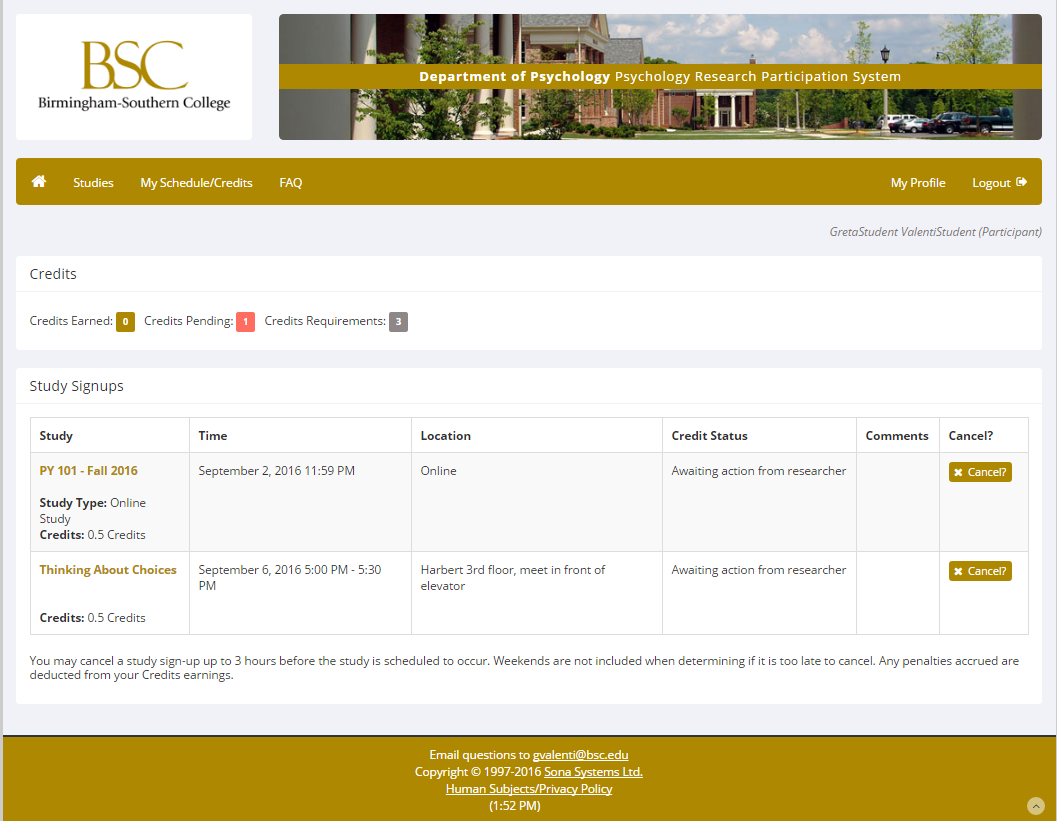
***If you must cancel a study appointment, you must do so at least 24 hours before your appointment time to insure that a penalty does not occur.*** If you must cancel your appointment, follow the procedures below in order to not receive a penalty.

1. Login to Sona Systems ([**http://bsc.sona-systems.com**](http://bsc.sona-systems.com)).

2. Click on **My Schedule/Credits.**

3. You will see listed all the studies you have signed up for, as well as any that you have completed. Studies you have signed up for but for which the appointment time is in the future will have a ***Cancel*** button next to them.

4. Select ***Cancel*** next to the study you need to cancel (see Figure 7).



***Figure 7 – My Schedule/Credits***

**What are my responsibilities as a participant?**

*Keeping Appointments*. All research studies require that you make an appointment for participation. **When you make an appointment it is extremely important that you show up on time.** When you make an appointment, the researcher is reserving a spot for you. If you fail to attend, you have treated the researcher's time as unimportant and you have taken a spot that another student could have filled. If you cannot make your scheduled appointment you should cancel it through the on-line system at least 24 hours in advance. To do so, see the “How do I cancel an appointment?” section on page 6 of this document.

*Following Instructions*. As a participant, it is incumbent upon you to treat the researchers with respect, listen carefully to and follow all directions, and to take your participation seriously. In this spirit, it is imperative that all cell phones, iPods, and other personal electronic devices of that nature be *turned off* during your participation. Please make sure to read the study description online carefully, prior to signing up and prior to participating in the study, and to carefully read all instructions during the study itself.

**What happens if I do not show up for an appointment or if I am late?**

If you do not cancel your appointment 24 hours prior to your scheduled appointment, you will receive a penalty equivalent to the number of credits the study was worth, which will be subtracted from the credits you have accumulated for participating in studies. For example, if you need three credit hours of research, sign up for a one-credit study but fail to show up or cancel on time, you will now need *four* credit hours of studies to meet the requirement. Similarly, if you have completed participation in two credits to date, sign up for an additional one-credit study, and fail to show up or cancel properly, you will now have only one ERO credit.

**I went to a study and the researchers were not there. What do I do?**

If you show up for a study and a researcher is not there, you should wait until 5 minutes after the scheduled time of the study. If the researcher does not show up after 5 minutes you should immediately send an e-mail to the researchers in charge of the particular study you had an appointment for. You can find the researcher’s name on the study information page as depicted in Figure 4 on page 4 of this document. Use the BSC directory to look up the researcher’s e-mail address. In your e-mail, make sure to include *your full name, the time of the scheduled study, the location at which you were waiting for the study, and the name of the study*. If the no-show is confirmed by the researcher, you will receive credit for the experiment. If the no-show is not confirmed by the researcher, you will be contacted about the discrepancy to further investigate. You must report the no-show during the time you were to participate. Often, students have gone to the incorrect location, so please double-check the location of the study beforehand.

**I lost my password. How do I retrieve it?**

If you have misplaced your password, then you can have your password e-mailed to you by the system. You will see a **Forgot Password?** link on the main login page (http://bsc.sona-systems.com). Your password will be e-mailed to you shortly after you submit the form. It will be sent to your BSC e-mail unless you provided an alternate e-mail address. Do not ask your professor or the system administrator for this information if you misplaced it; please use the Forgot Password? link.

**I participated in a study, but I have yet to receive credit. How do I receive credit?**

The researcher must grant you credit. This is usually done shortly after your participation. If it has been *more than two weeks* since your participation and you have still not received credit, contact the researcher for the study you participated in. You can find the researcher’s name on the study information page as depicted in Figure 4 on page 4 of this document.

**How do I find out how many credits I have earned? (Tracking Your Progress)**

Login to Sona Systems ([**http://bsc.sona-systems.com**](http://bsc.sona-systems.com)) and select **My Schedule/Credits**. At the top of this page you will see the number of credits you have earned so far, the number of credits you have pending (i.e., studies you have signed up for that will either take place sometime in the future, or that took place recently and for which you are awaiting credit), and the number of credits you are required to earn for the semester (typically, 3). Below this information is a list of all the studies that you have signed up for, with your credit status for each. *Please do not**ask your professor how many credits you have earned or where or when a study is to take place.* Your professor is unlikely to know that information but the My Schedule/Credits screen provides this information.

**How do I change my password or other profile information?**

If you would like to change your password or other information about yourself, choose **My Profile** from the main menu or from the top toolbar. If you would like to change your password, type your new password (twice, for confirmation) in the provided boxes, as well as your current password.

**I never received the e-mail with my User ID and password. How do I get one?**

Please go to the Sona Systems site (bsc.sona-systems.com) and click on the “Forgot Password?” link on the login screen. It’s possible that you did in fact receive an email with your user ID and password, and simply misplaced it. If this link does not work for you, then please email the system administrator, Dr. Pitts ([spitts@bsc.edu](mailto:spitts@bsc.edu)), and copy your instructor on the email – in your email, please include a message indicating that you cannot access your Sona account and would like your User ID and password resent, *and please include your full name, BSC e-mail address, and PY 101 section letter* (e.g., PY 101 **C**).

**How do I fulfill the requirement if I do not want to participate in studies at BSC, or if I cannot attend enough of them to earn all the required credits?**

As explained on page 1 of this document, there are two options for alternative assignments that you may complete if you cannot or do not wish to complete all three ERO credits through BSC-sponsored studies. Your instructor will provide additional instructions on how to complete these alternative assignments in the last month of the semester, so please follow up with your instructor with any questions you have.

**If I have a question that I cannot find an answer to in this document, who do I contact?**

Contact the researcher directly for any questions about an individual study. Please do not ask your instructor questions regarding the date/time/place of an upcoming study, etc. Research is conducted by many members of the department and your instructor will not be aware of the details of the studies or the operation of the scheduling system. If you have questions not directly related to a particular Sona study, then your instructor is a good person to ask.

*Last updated 1/8/20*