

UVA Wise Existential Motives Research Lab

I am an experimental existential social psychologist. This means that I look at the larger questions associated with living (e.g., death, religion, meaning in life), to see how these constructs affect our thoughts and behaviors. I primarily work through a terror management theory (TMT) lens, although I have branched out more recently into other fields of study. For example, I have become intrigued by implicit images (mental representations of gods and supernatural agents), existential isolation (feeling of being alone in one's subjective experience), and attachment needs (how we relate to others). I explore these and other topics by designing and testing research questions, usually among undergraduate students, but also among different groups in ethnographic style projects. For example, in the past, this has consisted of religious people, military spouses, competitive athletes, cults, and serpent handling sects. One of the expectations for the undergraduate research assistants in the lab is to be familiar with my research and feel comfortable talking about it with research participants, other scientists, and laypeople.

As research assistants, I will have you take part in a variety of activities around the lab. Most substantially, this involves collecting data for studies, coding and entering this data, and helping as needed. Typically, most of my research is conducted in a laboratory where you (as the experimenter) run participants through an experimental design. You will also gain experience in writing a grant for research funding through the PSI CHI international honor's society for psychology. We also encourage you to join me on presentations for local, regional, and even national psychology conferences, which is beneficial for you to add to your CV/resume and gain experience communicating scientific research to other scholars and laypeople. There is also funding available for my lab students in many cases to cover costs to go to these conferences. I furthermore, hold regular lab meetings to discuss research, concerns with participants, and general needs within the lab. Moreover, I strongly encourage Honors students and McNair scholars to join my lab and conduct your projects with us. Even if you're not in one of these programs, I am always excited about students who have their own research ideas they'd like to pursue with me.

I ask that all RAs commit a maximum of 9 hours each week to the lab, especially those who receive credit. However, I understand that this can vary from week-to-week and typically involves far less time.

Just as I have expectations of you, I hope that you also will have expectations of me – Dr. Arrowood. I encourage you to consider me as a resource to assist you as you explore and apply for graduate schools, jobs, and internships, and as you pursue your interests in psychology, research, and/or academic affairs more broadly. I am always happy to write letters for my research assistants and am capable of writing stronger letters for those who work more closely with me. My door is always open, and I look forward to providing you with whatever help I can.

If you like the sound of my research and my expectations, I would like to hear back from you! Please complete the RA application, and return it to me via email or in person. Thank you for your interest in working with me. I look forward to hearing from you!

Dr. Robert B. Arrowood
Primary Investigator

Existential Motives Lab RA Application

NAME: _____

EMAIL: _____

YEAR (and Expected Graduation Date): _____

MAJOR: _____

Overall GPA: _____

Major GPA: _____

PROJECTED AVAILABILITY (what times will you be available to work in the lab):

MON:

TUES:

WED:

THURS:

FRI:

Why do you want to join this lab?

Have you read anything that this lab has published or presented? _____ YES _____ NO

If so, what? _____

What did you find interesting about it?

Do you have specific interests in social psychology? Be descriptive. Describe why you find this interesting. Why do you want to work with this topic?

