

Notes to Researchers

- This is the template for Minervans to submit information to the MU IRB to request official review and, if approved, receive a protocol number. Specifically, this form is for studies being submitted for Expedited or Full Review based on the [Review Categories](#).
- There should be at least one example available on the IRB website that is fully filled in, and you can copy text from that as relevant.
- Consistent with common practice across many universities, the “Primary Investigator” who submits this can NOT be an undergraduate student; even if an undergraduate student is the person leading the research (e.g., for a capstone project). There must be a qualified faculty member (or staff member, as determined by the IRB) who serves as the official “Primary Investigator” and is responsible for the ethical conduct of the research program. An undergraduate can, of course, be the person who drafts the information in this form (and then the PI can review, edit, and submit it).
- Note: [See Appendix A in this other doc](#) about whether doing HSR is the best approach for achieving your research goals.

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Administrative Information

This section contains the basic information that allows us to set up the review process, including categorizing whether the more likely track is “expedited review” (done by just one board member) or review by the full board.

Title of Research Project	Example Protocol: How “Psychology Department” vs. “Economics Department” influences Participant Behavior in Economic Games
Prediction: Expedited or Full Review?	Full Review
Broad or Narrow?	Narrow

<i>Most projects will be “Narrow” and only very experienced researchers will be able to submit requests for “Broad” approval</i>	
Are students in lead roles? (List any)	Three research assistants who have worked on previous experiments with me: • Buffy Summers • Willow Rosenberg • Xander Harris
Primary Investigator (PI)	Mark Sheskin
Minerva Academic Appointment	Professor of Social Sciences
Email	msheskin@minerva.edu
Does the PI have any conflict of interests, relevant patents, etc. (yes or no)?	no
Funding Source (or put “no costs” if no costs)	Faculty Research Funds
List of additional documents being submitted with this protocol (common inclusions are proof of training for each team member, informed consent paperwork, and experimental stimuli and measures	• Consent Form • Training completed via workshop in Jan 2023

Team Overview

This section must contain all people who will interact with participants and/or data from people. Please submit proof of HSR training for each person listed.

Title	Name	Email	Notes (including if not Minervan)
Primary Investigator	Mark Sheskin	msheskin@minerva.edu	Prof Sheskin is Chair of the IRB and so will be recusing himself from considerations of this Protocol (his alternate will chair the IRB for this protocol)
RA	Buffy Summers	bsummers@uni.minerva.edu	This project will used as a large part of Buffy's capstone project
RA	Willow Rosenberg	willow@uni.minerva.edu	

RA	Xander Harris	alexanderh@uni.minerva.edu	
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Project Overview

This section should contain a summary of all of the information that comes after it. The most notable part of this section is the last question, where YOU identify what you think will be of most concern/interest to the IRB. It is better for us to be able to identify this information as quickly as possible, so that we can address these questions promptly rather than (e.g.,) them only coming up late in the process of evaluating the details of each section of the proposal.

Duration (max 1 yr)	November 2023 to October 2024
Location(s)	Online via mturk.com
Summary	This is a narrow protocol that will be used to recruit approximately 400 people on the USA-based mturk.com platform, randomly assign them between two conditions (being told they are doing research from a "Psychology Department" or an "Economics Department") and have them play an economic game (each person decides how much to contribute in a standard Public Goods Game).
Parts most likely to need evaluation by the IRB (honestly describe here what you think the IRB is going to be most concerned about)	• Deception. We know that research should only use deception when absolutely necessary, when the costs of deception are small and the benefits high, and that deception automatically requires FULL review and that it might not be approved. There is a small part of this study plan that includes deception: we will be telling half of the participants that the study is being done by a lab in the <i>Psychology Department</i> and the other half that the study is being done by a lab in the <i>Economics Department</i>. In fact, the study is being done by the same research team for all participants, led by Mark Sheskin who is a Professor of <i>Social Sciences</i>. At the end of the study, we will tell participants this information, as well as why it was important for us to use this deception (see details elsewhere) • Different Compensation Depending on Choices. We know that research should usually provide the same compensation for all participants, and that participants are entitled to that compensation even if they decide to withdraw from the research before completing it. In this case, the base compensation of \$5 is the same across all participants and will be provided even for participants who do not finish the study. However, in addition, the study involves playing behavioral economic games and this <i>bonus</i> money will depend on choices made during the study (and stopping before making those choices means that no bonus money will be chosen). Participants who complete all tasks will

	receive a bonus of between \$0 and \$10, depending on the choices they make and others make.
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Project Details

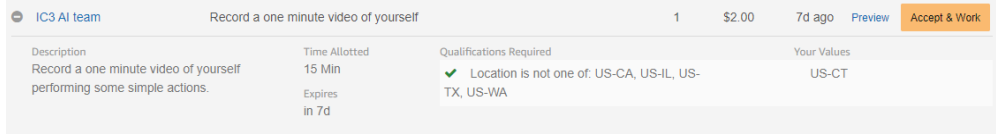
This section should include all available information about the study, except when that information appears elsewhere and including it here would take lots of space and be very redundant. Make sure that you make clear what you are doing and why, and what the participants will experience. Make sure that everything you write is understandable to a non-expert audience (IRBs intentionally include diverse membership, and your proposal may be evaluated by a team that includes people who have never thought about your research topic before).

Goals of the study	The major goal of this study is to investigate whether participants' choices in a Behavioral Economics Game are influenced by whether the research is being done by researchers from a "Psychology Department" versus an "Economics Department". If so, this would be consistent with other research showing framing effects, such as calling something "The Wall Street Game" vs. "The Community Game" (e.g., Liberman et al., 2004). The specific motivation behind the current setup is to (potentially) highlight that researchers might be influencing their results merely by the organization names (the name of their university, department, lab, etc.) used to introduce a study to participants. "Psychologists" might get systematically different responses than "Economists" and this would be important for both types of researchers to know!
Existing Research <i>This section is likely to be large, similar to an introduction or literature review at the start of a published paper.</i>	Behavioral Economic Games are used across a huge range of research (for recent reviews, see van Dijk & De Dreu, 2021; Thielmann et al., 2021), including around the world (Spadaro et al., 2022). As an example, one of the most famous is the Dictator Game, in which one person is given control of some money (e.g., \$10) and decides how much they receive and how much another person receives (e.g., \$8 for oneself and \$2 for the other person). This "game" consists of only one decision by one person, but other games are more complicated, for example the Ultimatum Game (in which the second person can reject the split, in which case both people receive nothing). Unfortunately, it can be difficult to determine what results from these games mean "in the real world". For example, Winking and Mizer (2013) performed a "Dictator Game" in the real world: a researcher pretended to be in a rush leaving Las Vegas, and handed people casino chips; even when prompted with the idea that the chips could be shared with someone else waiting at the same bus stop, ZERO people shared any chips. (For more "On the interpretation of giving in dictator games" see List, 2007). Another challenge to interpreting the decisions people make in behavioral economics games is identifying what they <i>think</i> the games are about. For example, one line of research has looked at how framing can influence the way people play the games. In a

	famous paper called “The name of the game” (Liberman et al., 2004), participants were more prosocial when told they were playing the “Community Game” as opposed to told they were playing the “Wallstreet Game”. Notably, the “default” expectations or framing different participants have about a game may influence their behavior when they are not given a framing (Eriksson & Strimling, 2014). In other words, if Person A acts selfishly and Person B acts generously in a given experiment, it might not reveal anything about their selfishness/generosity in general, but rather only reveal that Person A thought the experiment was a “Wallstreet Game” (or some other competitive framing) whereas Person B thought the experiment was a “Community Game” (or some other cooperative framing). This has big implications for various research. For example, cross-cultural research using behavioral economics games might “may not be due to deep psychological differences per se, but rather due to different interpretations of the situation” (Baumard & Sperber, 2010). Our focus will in particular be on the <i>Public Goods Game</i> (PGG) in which each person can decide how much money to keep and how much to contribute to the “public good”. Money contributed to the “public good” is multiplied by a number X, in which $1 < X < N$ (N is the number of players in the game), and then divided back out among all of the players. For example, with 4 players the multiplier might be 2, such that if everyone donates \$10 the common good is $4 \times 2 \times \\$10$, which divided back out means that everyone gets \$20. The interesting aspect of this is that, because the multiplier is less than the number of players, each player takes a cost by contributing (e.g., you get back \$0.50 from each \$1.00 you personally put in). We will model some of our experiment on a recent implementation of the PGG on mturk (van den Berg et al., 2020), which we also plan to use.
References Used in “Existing Research” Section <i>Use a standard format like APA, and make the titles of papers hyperlinks to the actual paper on the internet.</i>	Baumard, N., & Sperber, D. (2010). Weird people, yes, but also weird experiments. Behavioral and brain sciences, 33(2-3). van den Berg, P., Dewitte, P., Aertgeerts, I., & Wenseleers, T. (2020). How the incentive to contribute affects contributions in the one-shot public goods game. Scientific Reports, 10(1), 18732. van Dijk, E., & De Dreu, C. K. (2021). Experimental games and social decision making. Annual Review of Psychology, 72, 415-438. Eriksson, K., & Strimling, P. (2014). Spontaneous associations and label framing have similar effects in the public goods game. Judgment and Decision Making, 9(5), 360-372. Liberman, V., Samuels, S. M., & Ross, L. (2004). The name of the game: Predictive power of reputations versus situational labels in determining prisoner's dilemma game moves. Personality and social psychology bulletin, 30(9), 1175-1185. List, J. A. (2007). On the interpretation of giving in dictator games. Journal of Political economy, 115(3), 482-493. Spadaro, G., Graf, C., Jin, S., Arai, S., Inoue, Y., Lieberman, E., ... & Balliet, D. (2022). Cross-cultural variation in cooperation: A meta-analysis. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.

	Thielmann, I., Böhm, R., Ott, M., & Hilbig, B. E. (2021). Economic games: An introduction and guide for research. Collabra: Psychology, 7(1), 19004. Winking, J., & Mizer, N. (2013). Natural-field dictator game shows no altruistic giving. Evolution and Human Behavior, 34(4), 288-293.
Methods	We will model our method closely on the research by van den Berg and colleagues (2020), including how they explain the PGG to their participants. The big changes are that we will (1) reduce from 12 variations on the PGG multiplier to just a single multiplier of 2x, (2) run the experiment via Qualtrics rather than LIONESS Lab, and (3) modify the instructions page to prominently display “Economics Lab” to half the participants and “Psychology Lab” to the other half of participants. [Ideally, there would be a link here to ALL materials, and perhaps the study implemented in Qualtrics, but that is not being included in this example]
Measures	As in the research by van den Berg and colleagues, our primary measure will be a behavioral measure of how much participants contribute in the Public Goods Game. Like them, we will have a self-report questionnaire at the end. [Ideally, there would be a link here to ALL materials, and perhaps the study implemented in Qualtrics, but that is not being included in this example]

Recruitment Details

Who will be recruited?	We will recruit approximately 400 participants.
How will they be recruited?	Here is an example of a task available (from a different organization) on mturk, showing a brief description, eligibility criteria, and compensation rate: 
Describe the consent procedure	As is standard for online studies done asynchronously (i.e., NOT a video chat interaction) potential participants will read through a consent document, have contact information to ask further questions, and
Link(s) to consent forms and/or scripts	Consent Form

Protection of Participants' Data

What is the most sensitive information that will be recorded?	• The decisions people make in the economics game (e.g., people might not want others knowing they acted "selfishly")
How will sensitive information be secured?	We will <i>never</i> have personally identifying information from participants (only Amazon knows their names). We will store and analyze the data with the participant ID from Amazon removed and replaced with a code unique to our study (if we published our dataset with their Amazon ID, that could eventually become personally identifying IF combined with information other researchers publish tied to their Amazon ID). If we ever need to reconstruct the connection to the Amazon ID (e.g., a participant contacts us 2 weeks after participating to withdraw consent) then we will be able to do that via the time stamps on participating.
What information, if any, will be made publicly available, and how will participants be informed about this and consent to it?	The actual answers will be posted on Open Science Foundation, consistent with Open Science Practices. We explain the sharing of <i>anonymous</i> data with the participants in the consent form.

Potential Risks and Benefits to Participants

Risks to Participants	All of our methods and measures will be ones that count as <i>Minimal Risk</i> as defined by the Common Rule 45.CFR.46.102(j), "Minimal risk means that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests." The biggest risks are that (1) a participant may find making the difficult choice about how much to donate unpleasant, (2) a participant may choose to donate a large amount to the public good and be sad or angry if others choose to be more selfish, and (3) participants may be unhappy about the deception.
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How will you minimize risks?	The consent document clearly indicates that decisions will be made about money, and the PGG instructions will ensure that participants understand that the other participants in their group might behave selfishly even if they cooperate, so they can freely choose to take that emotional “risk” if they want. Regarding deception, we recognize that deception always receives a high level of scrutiny from the IRB, and we are happy to know any ways to improve this debriefing message participants will see at the end of the study: “Thank you for participating in this research! We can now tell you a bit more detail: half of the people who do this study saw that it was being done by researchers from a <i>Psychology Department</i> and half saw that it was being done by researchers from an <i>Economics Department</i>. We are interested in whether people are more likely to choose more cooperative options when they see <i>Psychology</i> and more “money maximizing” options when they see <i>Economics</i>. Importantly, we should tell you that we are actually researchers in an interdisciplinary <i>Social Sciences</i> program that includes both psychologists and economists. Please do not share this information with anyone else who might participate in this research, and if you have any questions or concerns about us only providing this detail at the end, you can contact the ethics committee that oversees our work and welcomes thoughts and reactions from participants. The email address is hsr@minerva.edu”
Benefits to Participants	The benefits are that participants may enjoy the activities, may find contributing to scientific research interesting, and will receive the listed compensation for the study plus any money that results from their choices (which will always be some amount, because even if they donate everything and no one else does, they still receive fifty cents for each dollar they contribute).

Statements PI confirms by submitting this

Do not change any information in this section, but carefully read each statement as provided and type your name and date at the bottom to confirm that you agree with and certify each statement. [Attribution: some of the language in this section was adapted from an IRB template used by Yale University]

As the PI of this research project, I certify that:

- The information provided in this application is complete and accurate.
- I assume full responsibility for the protection of human participants and the proper conduct of the research.
- Subject safety will be of paramount concern, and every effort will be made to protect participants’ rights and welfare.
- The research will be performed according to ethical principles and in compliance with all federal, State and local laws, as well as institutional regulations and policies regarding the protection of human participants.

- All members of the research team will be kept apprised of research goals.
- I will obtain approval for this research study and any subsequent revisions prior to my initiating the study or any change and I will obtain continuing approval of this study prior to the expiration date of any approval period or submit a request to close the study prior to its expiration..
- I will report to the IRB any unanticipated problems involving risk to participants.
- I am in compliance with the requirements set by the University and qualify to serve as the principal investigator of this project or I have a faculty advisor.
- I will identify a qualified successor should I cease my role as principal investigator and facilitate a smooth transfer of investigator responsibilities, if applicable

IF there are any students in lead roles, I additionally certify that:

- I will train the student investigator in matters of appropriate research compliance, protection of human subjects and proper conduct of research.
- I will continue to supervise the student closely for the duration of the study, and the student will coordinate closely with me about the progress of the study (i.e., their reporting to me and coordination with me is more than what we, as a research team, are required to report to the IRB).
- I am in compliance with the requirements set forth by the University and qualify to serve as the faculty advisor of this project.
- Although I cannot be held fully responsible for student behavior (e.g., violating a policy and concealing that violation from me), I will proactively take reasonable steps to ensure that all policies and values of research are upheld, as though I were personally responsible for them.

PI Name Agreeing to the Above: Mark Sheskin

Date of Agreement: 9 October 2023