

Undergraduate Research Assistant for Haptic Human Behavior Study



The Harvard Biorobotics Lab seeks an undergraduate research assistant for an interdisciplinary project investigating human behavior during engagement with art objects with dynamic mechanical properties, such as stiffness and plasticity. The assistant will help analyze the data collected from a study.

This project is a collaboration between the Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, Harvard Critical Media Practice Program and the Psychology Department at Carnegie Mellon University. A soft robotics based art installation was created in which the objects dynamically changed their mechanical properties. Participants were invited to freely engage with the installation and their interactions were recorded. These videos, in which the participants performed surprising actions, were analyzed by the research team and led to novel human haptic behavior categories. In order to improve the definitions of these emergent behavior categories and to quantitatively assess their reliability, we are seeking for an assistant that is new to the project and can take a fresh look at our data. Specifically, the assistant will watch the recorded videos and label and categorize the different behaviors, using an open source coding program titled DataVyu.

Relevant Qualifications / Skills

- Motivated, reliable, organized and detail-oriented
- A demonstrated interest in the topic is recommended but not required (e.g. haven taken psychology courses, participated in interactive art projects or user studies, etc.)
- Prior research experience is helpful but not necessary. We will train you.
- You must be able to commit a minimum of 5 hours per week.

Logistical Details

- The position begins immediately and pays \$25/hour, until the project is finished.
- We expect the project to take 50-75 hours total.
- The job can be done remotely, the supervision will be conducted over Zoom.

If you are interested in getting research experience, and are specifically enthusiastic about interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research directions, this position would be a great fit!

To apply, please send a brief statement of interest and relevant experience, a current resume, and your transcript (doesn't need to be official but should be complete and accurate) to Dr. Buse Aktaş at buseaktas@g.harvard.edu.

Keywords: haptics, human behavior, observational research methods, behavioral coding



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