GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
School of Recreation, Health and Tourism

SYLLABUS
PRLS 450--005

RESEARCH METHODS (3 credits)
CRN 79418
Fall 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thurs., 4:30-7:10</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joyce Johnston</td>
<td>EMAIL ADDRESS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robinson A455</td>
<td>PHONE NUMBER</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues., 3:15-4:15 or by appointment</td>
<td>FAX NUMBER</td>
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PREREQUISITES

STAT 250 (fulfills University's Quantitative Reason requirement) and 60 credits.

Other options: DESC 210, OM 210, SOC 313, OM 250, IT 290 or NVCC MTH 241, MTH 157.

NOTE: These courses have not been approved as acceptable substitutions for the University’s Quantitative Reason requirement.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Covers the development of empirical research designs for both practical and theoretical problems in health, fitness and recreation resources management. Includes literature review of hypothetical relationships and formulations of research proposals.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Define and demonstrate appropriate use of research terminology
2. Critically evaluate published research in scientific journals and the popular press
3. Formulate research problem statements
4. Enumerate the values inherent in the practice of scientific research
5. Conduct a thorough review of literature and synthesize the findings, and
6. Prepare a sound and feasible research proposal

NRPA OBJECTIVES

Further, upon completion of the course, students will meet the following professional accreditation standards of the National Recreation and Park Association Council on Accreditation:

8.14:07 Evaluation of programs/events
8.17 Ability to apply basic principles of research and data analysis related to
recreation, park resources and leisure services

8.23 Ability to utilize the tools of professional communication
8.24 Ability to apply current technology to professional practice
9A.05 Understanding of and ability to apply techniques of program evaluation and policy analysis which measure service effectiveness and the extent to which programmatic and organizational goals and objectives have been achieved

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course has been designated "Writing Intensive" (WI); that is, it fulfills in part the WI requirement for all HFRR majors. Therefore, each person will complete at least 3500 words of graded writing assignments. In order to make this a manageable task, we divide the course into FIVE smaller writing exercises that you will complete over the semester. These will be thoroughly critiqued and graded individually. The first will be a training exercise in identifying, analyzing the structure and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research. Revisions and corrections to the next four exercises will form the basis of your final Research Proposal.

I will do all that I can to share knowledge, skills and techniques for success, along with plentiful support materials on our class Blackboard site, but it will be your responsibility to study and incorporate the comments on your papers, suggestions from your colleagues and information from the text. We will all be expected to attend all class sessions, actively participate in class discussions, complete in-class exercises and critiques, and fulfill all assignments. During these classes, university policy states that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off unless otherwise authorized by the instructor. Since each assignment builds a part of the final Research Proposal, it is critically important to stay in touch with the class and never to allow yourself to fall behind in completing and submitting your work.

Assignments will be due to the Assignments area of our course Blackboard site by 10:30 AM on the specified due date. The web address is http://courses.gmu.edu. Papers submitted AFTER 10:30 AM will be considered late and receive a 20% deduction in points per 24-hour period. If you are confronted with extreme emergencies or are participating in a pre-approved university-sponsored function, exceptions may be made. However, these must be discussed with me AHEAD OF TIME to determine whether they fall into this category. I strongly encourage you to make a backup copy of any work submitted since computers have been known to crash at the most inopportune times.

Parameters for submitted work:
• Must be a Word document, saved in .doc or .docx format.
• If composed in Open Office or Mac, must be converted before submitting to Blackboard.
• Must not be composed in Microsoft Works, as it will not convert to Word or anything else.
• Must be formatted according to the guidelines of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5th ed., (APA) or the *American Medical Association*, 9th ed. (AMA.) APA is considered the basic standard for recreation and tourism, but AMA is considered the basic standard for athletic training and exercise science. You must use whichever of these two formats is appropriate for your major.
• Must also be submitted electronically to SafeAssign. A SafeAssign folder is located on the home page of our course Blackboard site. You'll be able to view your originality report after the due date of each assignment to assist in later revisions. The goal is to achieve a rating of less than 10%.

I strongly encourage you to make a backup copy of any work submitted since computers have been known to crash at the most inopportune times.

Communication is an important facet of this course. As such, I ask that you check our Blackboard site for support materials and FAQs before emailing questions to me. Also, be sure to check your email on Wednesday, before class on Thursday, for notices about materials you will need for class that week or any other special considerations. Keep a special eye out for weather-related announcements, although fall term is generally disruption-free.

Students with disabilities which may affect their academic work must be registered with the Office of Disability Resources and inform the instructor of any accommodations, in writing, at the beginning of the semester.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

In this course, we will all be held to the standards of the George Mason University Honor Code. The Code is supported by the policies and procedures of the Office of Academic Integrity. The Code itself reads as follows:

"To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this:
Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work."

REQUIRED READINGS AND CLASS MATERIALS


- Access to course Blackboard folder at [http://courses.gmu.edu](http://courses.gmu.edu)

- Handouts as provided in class

- 1 USB flash drive or similar rewritable drive which will be used during the final oral presentation (Assignment #7)

EVALUATION

This course will be graded on a point system, with a total of **500 possible points**.

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>Article Review and Research Classification</td>
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<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>Introduction, Problem Statement, Literature Review, Hypothesis, Variables and Definitions</td>
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<td>#3</td>
<td>Sampling Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>Research Design, Measurement and Data Collection (including Instrument and Cover Letter)</td>
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<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>Analysis Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>Final Research Proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>Oral Presentation of Research, with Outline</td>
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<td>#8</td>
<td>Participation</td>
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**TOTAL POINTS**

Semester Grades: Conversion of total points achieved in course to GMU grading scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>460-500</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>450-459</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>440-449</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>415-439</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400-414</td>
<td>B-</td>
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390-399  C+
360-389  C
350-359  C-
340-349  D+
310-339  D

USEFUL CAMPUS RESOURCES

School of Recreation, Health and Tourism  703.993.2060

Writing Center  703.993.1200
   Fairfax Campus - A114 Robinson Hall
   Prince William Campus - 204 Occoquan Bldg.

Ask a Librarian in the GMU library system

Counselling and Psychological Services  703.993.2380

Office of Disability Services  703.993.2474

The GMU Catalog

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