GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism  

PRLS 450 – 002 Research Methods (3)  
Fall 2014

DAY/TIME: T/R 10:30 – 11:45 AM  
LOCATION: PW – 252 Bull Run Hall

PROFESSOR: Ms. Marcie Fyock, MS, ATC  
EMAIL ADDRESS: mfyock@gmu.edu

OFFICE LOCATION: 210 Bull Run Hall  
PHONE NUMBER: 703-993-7118

OFFICE HOURS: By appointment  
FAX NUMBER: 703-993-2025

PREREQUISITES  
60 credits and one of the following: STAT 250, DESC 210 OM 210, SOC 313, OM 250, or IT 250

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 hypothesized relationships, and formulation of research proposals. Fulfills writing intensive requirement in the major.

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.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION STANDARDS: Upon completion of this course, students will meet the following professional accreditation standards from the  

*Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions* (COAPRT):  

| 7.02 | Students graduating from the program shall be able to demonstrate the ability to design, implement, and evaluate services that facilitate targeted human experiences and that embrace personal and cultural dimensions of diversity. |

Commission on the Accreditation of Athletic Training Education competencies met

| PD 13 | Describe and differentiate the types of quantitative and qualitative research and describe components and process of scientific research (including statistical decision-making) as it relates to athletic training research. |
| PD 14 | Interpret the current research in athletic training and other related medical and health areas and apply the results to the daily practice of athletic training. |
| PD 4  | Develop a research project (to include but not limited to case study, clinical research project, literature review) for an athletic training-related topic. |

COURSE OVERVIEW  
Writing-Intensive Designation  
As this course has been designated “Writing-Intensive” (WI) – fulfilling in part the WI requirement for all HFRR majors – you are required to complete at least 3,500 words of graded writing assignments. A series of writing exercises will be completed throughout the semester, thoroughly critiqued, and graded. Together, these will form the basis for your final research proposal. It is to your benefit to study and incorporate the comments given, as each assignment builds upon the next.
**Attendance and Participation**

Attendance is **required** for this class. Arriving to class late or leaving early will be counted as an absence. Students are expected to show up prepared to class and participate during class activities. Students who know they will need to miss a class for a legitimate reason should contact the instructor before the class. Students who unexpectedly miss a class for an excused reason should contact the instructor within 24 hours of missing the class. Make-up tests, quizzes, assignments, or other grades will be granted for excused absences only. Excused absences include: serious illness, official university excused absences and extenuating circumstances. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor in order to obtain the make-up work.

**Academic Load**

In addition to attending the lectures there will be regular assignments that may require anywhere from 5-15 hours of work per week. Additionally, regular readings will be assigned to students. Students are expected to complete all outside work on time. Extensions will not be granted on assignments unless an extenuating circumstance arises. The purpose of the assignments is to aid students in learning the material.

**Honor Code**

Students are held to the standards of the George Mason University Honor Code (see [http://honorcode.gmu.edu](http://honorcode.gmu.edu) for details). Violations, including cheating and plagiarism, will be reported to the Honor Committee. Student assignments may be put through plagiarism detecting software.

**Assignments**

All assignments must be typed unless specifically told not to. A loss of points will occur for improper grammar and spelling. It is recommended students save all assignments on their personal computers and/or a back-up device.

**Class Delivery**

The course is a mix of a lecture and discussion course. However, other approaches may be used to facilitate learning. These include: videos, demonstrations and in-class activities. Overall this will be a highly interactive class and students will be encouraged to participate.

**Technology Use During Class**

As per GMU policy, all sound emitting technology is required to be turned off during the class meeting time. No sound emitting technology (e.g., cell phones, smart phones, iPads, Tablets, pagers, etc.) is allowed at any time during the class period. Students who are observed using any form of technology inappropriately (e.g., sending text messages from cell phones, visiting social networking sites from laptops, etc.) will be dismissed from class for the day, counted as an absence, and not permitted to make up missed assignments.

**Correspondence**

The preferred method of communication outside of class is email. Emails should originate from a George Mason email account and be in a professional format (i.e., emails should not look like a text message!). If email does not originate from a George Mason University account, the instructor will not reply to the email. Emails should be written in proper format. If the suggested proper format is not followed, the instructor reserves the right to not reply to the email. The suggested format is as follows:

Dear Dr. XXXX *(Beginning salutation)*

I have a question regarding one of the assignments. *(Text body)*

Regards, *(Ending Salutation)*

“John Doe” *(Your name)*

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

GMU is an Honor Code University; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated
gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? First, it means that when you are responsible for a task, you will be the one to perform that task. When you rely on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives and traditions. When in doubt, please ask for guidance and clarification.

GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES:
Written communication is one of the foundation requirements of Mason’s general education curriculum. Mason’s nationally recognized writing program emphasizes writing as a process: it is not simply a way of communicating already formulated thoughts, but a way of discovering, exploring and developing new ideas. On your way to completing you proposal, you will go through the recursive processes of researching, drafting, and revising and will engage in critical thinking at all stages.

As part of the written communication component and in addition to our course objectives, upon successfully completing this course, you will be able to:
- Analyze and synthesize research using methods appropriate to Recreation, Health, and Tourism (RHT);
- Make reasoned, well-organized arguments with introductions, thesis statements, supporting evidence, and conclusions appropriate to RHT;
- Use credible evidence to include, as applicable, data from credible primary and/or secondary sources, integrated and documented accurately according to AMA style;
- Employ rhetorical strategies suited to the purpose(s) and audience(s) for the writing, to include appropriate vocabulary, voice, tone, and level of formality;
- Produce writing that employs the organizational techniques, formats, and genres typical to RHT; and,
- Produce writing that demonstrates proficiency in standard edited American English, including correct grammar/syntax, sentence structure, word choice, and punctuation.

For additional information, please see [https://assessment.gmu.edu/Genedassessment/outcomes.cfm](https://assessment.gmu.edu/Genedassessment/outcomes.cfm)

REQUIRED READINGS

Additional readings/articles assigned. These will be posted on Blackboard.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL
Supplementary materials will be used in class and posted on Blackboard/MyMason Portal. Please print these materials and bring them to class so that you have access to them when needed.

EVALUATION
Quizzes - Short quizzes and exercises may be given for each class.

Research Proposal – The creation of a research proposal is a requirement of this course. The research proposal includes a series of tasks that will be thoroughly critiqued and graded. Together, these will form the basis for your research proposal. It is to your benefit to incorporate the comments given into your final research proposal. The guidelines and grading criteria for these tasks will be available on Blackboard.

This course will be graded on a point system, with a total of 900 possible points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 Topic Selection</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 Article Review &amp; Presentation</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 Introduction, Literature Review, Problem Statement, Hypotheses</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4 Sampling Plan/Methods</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Assignment Summaries

Note – All assignments will be due prior to the start of class on the day they are due (unless otherwise stated). They must be submitted via Blackboard.

1. Topic Selection Assignment
The intent of this assignment is to encourage an early start on your research proposal including your topic selection and literature search.

2. Article Review and Presentation
The intent of this assignment is to increase your familiarity with quantitative evidence-based peer-reviewed journal articles. Select one of the articles you are planning to use for your research proposal. Read the article thoroughly. Summarize and critique the article. You will present (5 minutes) a summary of the key points from your article. This will serve as an opportunity to improve your oral communication.

3. Introduction and Review of Literature
The intent of this assignment is to apply your curiosity, in addition to your conceptual and practical understanding of your topic to asking questions and defining research problems. Specifically, you are to write an introduction to your research proposal, a specific statement of the problem, an integrated review of the pertinent literature, identification of variables, and testable hypotheses.

4. Sampling Plan and Methods
The intent of this assignment is to describe the population, the sampling design, and the target sample size appropriate for evaluating your hypotheses. In addition, you will identify the research design to be used, measurement tools available and detailing the data collection procedures. This assignment also includes a discussion of how you would validate and confirm the reliability of your instrument, in addition to a discussion of the possible ethical problems and their solutions for your study.

5. Analysis Plan
The intent of this assignment is to develop data analysis plan on how you would proceed to analyze your data if you were to conduct your proposed study. Your plan must include the appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics.

6. Presentation
The intent of this assignment is for you to share your research proposal with your colleagues via a 10 minute PowerPoint presentation. This assignment will allow you to gain experience in oral presentation skills. As part of the experience, your colleagues & I may ask questions about your study, and I will offer a summary critique intended to help you improve your final written proposal.

7. Final Research Proposal
The intent of this assignment is for you to apply your conceptual and practical understanding of your research topic to prepare a final and complete research proposal. Your proposal should illustrate your familiarity with problem formation and hypothesis development, review and critical analysis of the scholarly literature related to your study,
justification of appropriate methodology, and consideration of the implications of your research. This assignment is a revision and extension of all content included in previous assignments.

**Class Activities & Assignments**
In-class activities will be assigned during the class meeting and due at the end of the course meeting. Out of class assignments are listed on the syllabus and will be submitted at the beginning of the corresponding class meeting time. **NO LATE assignments will be accepted!**

**Final Grades:**
Once your FINAL GRADE at the end of the semester is posted on mymasonportal, you will have 24 hours to inquire about it. After that period, your grade will be posted as final.

**NAME**
Your name MUST be on your papers/exams when you turn them in. Failure to put your name will result in a 0 for the assignment/exam.

**Blackboard REQUIREMENTS**
Every student registered for any ATEP course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, (see above assignments) to Blackboard (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in Blackboard. Failure to submit the assessment to Blackboard will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required Blackboard submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

**GRADING**
Every attempt will be made to grade and return assignments in a timely manner to provide students with constructive feedback. To provide students the opportunity to fully assess the feedback provided on graded assignments, the professor will be happy to answer any questions at the next class period following the return of the assignments or during the professor’s office hours. The professor acknowledges the passion with regards to grades, but unprofessional and uncivil behavior either in person or through other modes of communication will not be tolerated.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 26</td>
<td>Introduction to PRLS 450 &amp; Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 28</td>
<td>Retrieving Information; Using the library productively; Developing the Problem and using the literature; Developing Research Topics, Interpreting the research In-Class Activity – Article review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 2</td>
<td>Examples of Current Research; In-Class workday – Proposal Topic Assignment</td>
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<td>Sept 4</td>
<td>Ethical considerations in research; When to believe what you read; Quiz #1</td>
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<td>Sept 9</td>
<td>Presenting the Problem; Overview of Research Methods - Matching questions and methods</td>
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<td>Sept 11</td>
<td>Article Summary Presentations</td>
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<td>Sept 16</td>
<td>Writing the Review of Literature</td>
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<td>Sept 18</td>
<td>Finding appropriate research- Guest Lecture</td>
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<td>Sept 23</td>
<td>In-Class Workday- Review of Literature</td>
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<td>Sept 25</td>
<td>Developing the Research Proposal; Sampling; Introduction; Methods</td>
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<td>Sept 30</td>
<td>Getting good data; reliability, validity, trustworthiness, credibility and other issues</td>
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<td>Oct 2</td>
<td>Quantitative Research Design</td>
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<td>#13</td>
<td>Oct 7 Qualitative Research Design &amp; Mixed Methods</td>
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<td>Oct 9 Action Research Design</td>
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<td>#15</td>
<td>Oct 16 Methods; Qualitative Research</td>
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<td>Oct 21 In-Class Workday – Proposal &amp; Methods Assignment</td>
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<td>#17</td>
<td>Oct 23 Descriptive Statistics &amp; Inferential Statistics</td>
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<td>#18</td>
<td>Oct 28 In Class Activity: Proposal Data Analysis Plan</td>
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<td>#19</td>
<td>Oct 30 Defending your research; Research conferences</td>
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<td>#20</td>
<td>Nov 4 Reviewing research</td>
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<td>Nov 6 Workday – Presentations &amp; Proposal</td>
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<td>#22</td>
<td>Nov 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>#23</td>
<td>Nov 13 Giving a Professional Presentation</td>
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<td>#24</td>
<td>Nov 18 Pulling Together Your Final Proposal</td>
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<td>#25</td>
<td>R Nov 20 Student Presentations &amp; Feedback Session</td>
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<td>#26</td>
<td>T Nov 25 Student Presentations &amp; Feedback Session</td>
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<td>#27</td>
<td>T Dec 2 Student Presentations &amp; Feedback Session</td>
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<td>#28</td>
<td>R Dec 4 Student Presentations &amp; Feedback Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>#29</td>
<td>T Dec 9 Reading Day – Final Proposals</td>
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</tbody>
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Note: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the course syllabus and/or schedule at any time. Students will always be informed of any changes made.

**Student Expectations**

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/].

- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See http://ods.gmu.edu/].

- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html].

- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.

- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

**Campus Resources**

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students’ personal experience and academic performance [See http://caps.gmu.edu/].

- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/].

- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism, please visit our website [See http://rht.gmu.edu].

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR: Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.
CORE VALUES COMMITMENT: The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles.

[George Mason University logo]

School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism