

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism

SRST 450-001 – Research Methods (3)  
Spring 2015

<b>DAY/TIME:</b>	W - 4:30 p.m. - 7:10 p.m.	<b>LOCATION:</b>	Robinson Hall B Room # 203
<b>PROFESSOR</b>	Dr. Christopher Atwater	<b>EMAIL ADDRESS</b>	catwater@gmu.edu
<b>OFFICE LOCATION:</b>	PW – Bull Run Hall Room: 223	<b>PHONE NUMBER:</b>	202-500-6279
<b>OFFICE HOURS:</b>	W 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.	<b>FAX NUMBER:</b>	703-993-2025

**PREREQUISITES**

STAT 250 and 60 credits.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

SRST 450 - 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 conclusion of this 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 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.
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**COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course is a designated “Writing-Intensive” (WI) course – fulfilling in part the WI requirement for all HFRR majors – therefore, each person will complete at least 3,500 words of graded writing assignments. To help make this a manageable task, we divided the course into 3 smaller writing exercises you’ll complete throughout the semester. These will be thoroughly critiqued and graded and will form the basis for your final Research Proposal. I’ll do all I can to share knowledge, skills, and techniques for success, 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’ll follow the guidelines of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) (6th ed.)*.

Unless otherwise noted, **all written papers will be submitted electronically via email.**

Assignments will be **due at the beginning of class** on the specified date due. **All written papers are to be submitted using WORD (with a .doc or .docx file extension) - .pdf or other formats are not permitted in this course. Papers received AFTER 10:30 a.m. 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, this is only applicable if pre-approved with me

(your instructor). In addition, I strongly encourage you to make a back-up copy of any work submitted since computers have been known to crash at the most inopportune times.

### **INSTRUCTOR EXPECTATIONS**

1. All assigned reading for each class is expected to be done prior to coming to class.
2. All written assignments must be typed in APA format (computer word processing is recommended).
3. Regular attendance and participation is expected. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain class materials from sources other than the instructor. Attendance will be monitored and attendance is defined as arriving on time for class and remaining in class.
4. You will be expected to check Bb regularly as well as being alert to emails from the instructor. The instructor will email you using *Bb email*.

### **CLASS ATTENDANCE**

It enhances your academic success to be in class; therefore, you should attend ALL scheduled class meetings. Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register and attend those classes **on time**. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but to the class as a whole. Because class participation is a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Texting in class is **NOT** acceptable behavior; neither is falling asleep. It is assumed that laptops are being used to take notes or to follow Blackboard power points; other use is a distraction to me and your classmates.

### **PARTICIPATION**

Respect the free exchange of thought in an academic environment and the participants therein. For example: a) do not have any sound emitting devices turned on; b) wait until the teacher/guest speaker has finished prior to gathering your belongings; and c) do not smoke, chew tobacco, eat, sleep, disrupt others by inappropriate talking, or disrespect the class schedule by being tardy. You are encouraged to a) feel free to openly and respectfully contribute your thoughts; b) listen actively to the comments of others; c) be punctual; d) ask any and all appropriate questions that you have; and e) maintain civility in your interpersonal communications. Class discussions will be conducted in a civil, informed fashion wherein disruptive students will be asked to leave the class. Your contributions are not only welcomed, they are essential.

### **ALTERNATIVE WORK**

There is NO make-up work. Only those excused absences supported by documentation will be addressed at the instructor's discretion on an individual basis (e.g. a physician's note for an illness). Alternative work due to intercollegiate athletic competitions or other legitimate university activity must be arranged **PRIOR** to due date. A grade of '0' will be assigned to all missed work unless otherwise determined by the instructor. You are strongly encouraged to hand assignments in on time.

### **GRADING**     *There will be NO extra credit.*

The instructor is solely responsible for assigning grades. As such, the instructor reserves the right to assess student performance in each of the categories identified in the EVALUATION section of this syllabus. Student non-compliance with stated academic, honor, attendance, or participation expectations will result in a '0' for the associated evaluation.

### **NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY**

Face to face

### **TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE**

DATE			TOPIC	READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS DUE
W	January	21	- Introduction to SRST 450, Research & Research Topics - Developing Research Topics	Step 1: Decide on a Topic

DATE		TOPIC	READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS DUE
W		28 - Using our resources to conduct effective literature reviews - Hypotheses and Variables - (**Bring your RQs to class)	Step 2: Review the Literature Step 3: Identify Theoretical Underpinnings <b>Journal Article Review Due</b>
W	February	4 - Pulling together literature for your review - Research Plan and Ethics	Step 4: Develop a Scope of Study Step 10: Address Ethical Responsibilities <b>Complete CITI Training</b>
W		11 - Population and Sampling Identification	Step 6: Select a Sample
W		18 - Instrumentation - Measurement	Step 7: Choose a Design Step 8: Consider Measurement
W		25 - Data Collection - Reliability and Validity	Step 9: Specify Data Collection Tools Step 12: Conduct a Pilot Test <b>Literature Review Due</b>
W		4 - Qualitative Research - Finalizing Questionnaires and Introducing the Methods Section	Step 14B: Analyze Qualitative Data
W	March	11 - No Class – Spring Break	N/A
W		18 - Descriptive and Inferential Statistics	Step 14A: Analyze Quantitative Data
W		25 - Lab Day # 1 – Setting up databases in SPSS	Finish Collecting Data
W		1 - Lab Day # 2 – Analyzing databases using SPSS	N/A
W	April	8 - Data Analysis Session – Q&A with Professor Atwater - Interpreting Results and wrap-up	Step 15: Present Results Using Visual Aids <b>Sampling, Methods and Data Analysis Plan Due</b>
W		15 - Results – Meaning and Sample Presentation - In-Class Work Day # 1	Step 16: Deliver an Oral Report
W		22 - Research Proposal Presentations Day # 1	N/A (Mandatory Attendance)
W		29 - Research Proposal Presentations Day # 2	N/A (Mandatory Attendance)
F		May	8 - No Class – Independent Work Day

*Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary.*

**REQUIRED READINGS AND CLASS ITEMS**

Riddick, C. C. and Russell, R. V. (2013). Research in recreation, parks, sport, and tourism (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Champaign, IL: Sagamore Publishing.

Websites and handouts as provided in class.

1 USB Drive (Flash drive or similar rewriteable drive which will need to be submitted during the last 2 weeks of this course)

## EVALUATION

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

<b>Requirements</b>		<b>Points</b>
Assignments		
	<b>Journal Article Review and Research Classification:</b>	
#1	Students are required to read and review an article published in a refereed journal. Assignment requires a discussion of specific components contained therein to include; topic, procedure, participants, methods, data analysis and conclusions	25
	<b>Literature Review:</b>	
#2	The intent of this assignment is to apply a student's curiosity, conceptual, and practical understanding of their profession by asking questions and defining research problems. This assignment will help students develop an awareness of the research potential in their field of interest and is a beginning for their final research proposal. Assignment requires specific components contained therein to include; background for the study, overview of the study including a specific purpose statement for the study, integrated review of pertinent literature ( <i>at least 5 current, evidence-based/empirical and peer-reviewed research articles</i> ), conceptual models and/or related theory, synthesis of the literature, rationale for the study which clearly articulates reasons why the study should be conducted, a clear and concise statement of the problem (and/or issue) that ties to the rationale for the study, research questions (usually 3 or 4 in total), variables and definitions (independent and dependent variables should be accurately identified and clearly described for the reader), and <u>TWO</u> testable hypotheses regarding the outcome of the study.	150
	<b>Sampling Plan, Methods Plan &amp; Analysis Plan:</b>	
#3	The intent of this assignment is to continue the development of the research proposal. Assignment requires specific components contained therein to include; description of an appropriate sample for evaluating developed hypotheses, research design, measures and data collection procedures, as well as the development of an appropriate cover letter inviting participants. Additionally, procedures to be used for data analysis will be described.	100
	<b>Research Presentation and Outline:</b>	
#4	The intent of this assignment is to give students an opportunity to present their study to peers. The presentation is ten minutes in length and requires the submission of an outline of pertinent materials to the instructor.	50
	<b>Final Research Proposal:</b>	
#5	The final research proposal marks the completion of assignments. It is the synthesis of all previously graded and edited work to include all sections presented in the literature review, sampling plan, methods plan and analysis plan. Lastly considerations of ethics and study limitations will be described.	100
	Participation (primarily in-class)	
	Students are expected to attend class regularly and participate in active engaged research discussions and lectures.	75
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>500</b>

**SPECIAL NOTE:** Because the data we collect for our pilot study is for educational purposes only (i.e. we share our results as part of our process to understand research), we do not complete the Human Subject's Review Board application. Therefore, the data we collect in this course may not be presented in any context other than this course. However, if you wish to use these data for a conference presentation or as the foundation for a research process, please let me know so you may complete the appropriate forms to obtain approval from Mason's HSRB.

## GRADING SCALE

A = 94 – 100	B+ = 88 – 89	C+ = 78 – 79	D = 60 – 69
A- = 90 – 93	B = 84 – 87	C = 74 – 77	F = 0 – 59
	B- = 80 – 83	C- = 70 – 73	

## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/>].
- 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/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- 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.

### *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.