SRST 450 002 - Research Methods
3 credits – Spring 2020
Tuesday 4:30pm – 7:10pm – Robinson Hall B228 – Fairfax Campus

Faculty
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Office Hours: by appointment
Office Location: by appointment
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Prerequisites: STAT 250, DESC 210 OM 210, SOC 313, OM 250, or IT 250 and 60 credits.

University Catalog 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.

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. The course is divided into 5 smaller writing exercises to be complete throughout the semester. These will be thoroughly critiqued and graded and will form the basis for your final Research Proposal. Applicable guidelines are the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) (6th ed.)

Course Delivery Method
This course includes multiple instructional strategies. Individual session formats vary and may include lecture, small group/large group discussion, hands-on, interactive work, and student presentations.

Learner Objectives
This course is designed to enable students to do the following:
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.

Required Texts
Riddick, C. C., & Russell, R. V. (2015). Research methods: How to conduct research in
recreation, parts, sport, and tourism (3rd ed.). Champaign, IL: Sagamore Publishing. (RR)


Course Performance Evaluation
Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor.

A. Assignments (Guidance is attached.)                  Points
1. Hypothetical Deductive Modeling Framework            15
2. Journal Article Review and Research Classification  05
3. Introduction, Problem Statement, Literature Review, Hypothesis Variables 15
4. Sampling Plan                                        10
5. Research Design, Measurement and Data Collection    15
6. Analysis Plan                                         10
7. Final Research Proposal                               100

Total: 170

B. Final Grading Scale
Points:
97-100 = A                                            78-79 = C+
90-96 = A-                                           74-77 = C
88-89 = B+                                           70-73 = C-
84-87 = B                                             60-69 = D
80-83 = B-                                           0-59  = F

Students are allowed excused absences only. Unexcused absences or more than three (3)
excused absences for a student will drop that student's grade on the grading scale.

Professional Dispositions

See https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/
### Course Schedule

<table>
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<th>Topics/Assignments</th>
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| 1/21  | Course Overview  
Building the Scientific/Research Context  
Examining Theoretical Elements  
PRLS Theoretical Structures  
PRLS Research Structures  
PRLS Program Evaluation  
**RR** Steps: 1, 3, 4 and 5 |
| 1/28  | Research Information Processing  
Inductive Reasoning  
Deductive Reasoning  
Identification and Definition of Constructs  
**RR** Steps: 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7 |
| 2/4   | Reviewing PRLS Research Literature  
PRLS Theoretical Structures  
PRLS Research Structures  
Review of Assignment 1  
Preview of Assignment 2  
**RR** Steps: 2  
**Due:** Assignment 1 |
| 2/11  | Overview of Measurement in Research  
Operational Definition of Constructs  
Scaling  
Reliability  
Validity  
**RR** Steps: 8, 14A  
**Due:** Assignment 2 |
| 2/18  | Building the Research Plan  
PRLS Theoretical Structure (Assignment 1)  
Analysis of PRLS Research Literature (Assignment 2)  
Review of PRLS Research Framework (Assignment 1)  
Identification of PRLS Research Problem and Goal from Assignment 1  
Overview of Qualitative and Quantitative Research |
Overview of Qualitative Research Methods
The Research Problem
Analysis of the Research Framework
Specifying the Research Question
Qualitative Research Methodology
Validity
Review of Assignments 1 and 2

Overview of Quantitative Research Methods
The Research Problem
Analysis of the Research Framework
Specifying the Research Question
Quantitative Research Methodology
Validity
Review of Assignments 1 and 2

SPRING BREAK

Reviewing the Draft Research Plan
Introduction
Problem Statement
Literature Review
Research Questions/Hypothesis
Constructs/Variables

Due: Assignment 3

Building the Research Design
Measurement
Qualitative Methods
Quantitative Descriptive Methods
Quantitative Experimental Methods
Data Collection Tools
Preparation for Data collection
Validity
Ethical Responsibilities
Contact Cover Letter

Due: Assignment 3

RR Steps: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 14B Figure 12

RR Steps: 3, 4, 7 and 14B

RR Steps: 3, 4, 7 and 14B

RR Steps: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 14B

RR Steps: 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14A and 14B
3/31
Building the Sampling Plan
Probability Sampling
Non Probability Sampling

RR Step: 6

4/7
Building the Analysis Plan: Qualitative Analysis
Managing Data
Making Tentative Conclusions
Verifying Conclusions

RR Step: 14B
Due Assignments 4 and 5

4/14
Building the Analysis Plan: Quantitative Analysis
Descriptive Statistics
- Central Tendency
- Variability
- Association: Correlation
Inferential Statistics
- Population Parameters
- Hypothesis Testing
Nonparametric Methods

RR Step: 14A

4/21
Reviewing the Research Proposal
Proposal Framework
Hypothetical Deductive Modeling Framework
Literature Review
Introduction, Problem Statement, Lit Review, Hypothesis Variables
Sampling Plan
Research Design, Measurement and Data Collection
Analysis Plan
Implementing the Study - Pilot Testing
Seeking Proposal Approval
Discussion and Revisions

RR Steps: 1 - 14
Due: Assignment 6

4/28
Reviewing the Research Proposal (Continued)
RR Steps: 1 - 14

5/4
Course Wrap-up
Lessons Learned Regarding Research
Next Steps for Using or Continuing Learning about Research
Due: Assignment 7
Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

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: http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/).

- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/).

- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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 with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see https://ds.gmu.edu/).

- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to tk20help@gmu.edu or https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/.

- For information on student support resources on campus, see https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:
As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially,
please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/.

- The Writing Center 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/).

- The 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 Student Support & Advocacy Center staff helps students develop and maintain healthy lifestyles through confidential one-on-one support as well as through interactive programs and resources. Some of the topics they address are healthy relationships, stress management, nutrition, sexual assault, drug and alcohol use, and sexual health (see http://ssac.gmu.edu/). Students in need of these services may contact the office by phone at 703-993-3686. Concerned students, faculty and staff may also make a referral to express concern for the safety or well-being of a Mason student or the community by going to http://ssac.gmu.edu/make-a-referral/.

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 and I will be happy to work with you to obtain approval from Mason’s HSRB.
Guidance for Assignments

1. Hypothetical Deductive Modeling Thinking Framework (15 points)
Science is a systematic process for explicating the unknown. Research consists of the tools for conducting scientific inquiries. The use of these tools is guided by information representation and processing frameworks. In this assignment students will build their information processing frameworks to serve as a map for learning and applying research methodology.

This framework will include the following:
- Representations for phenomena in the areas of PRLS
- Theoretical relationships between phenomena
- Identification of constructs representative of phenomena
- Paths of Inductive reasoning potentially supported by Qualitative Research and related methodology
- Paths of Deductive reasoning leading to hypothesis testing implemented through Quantitative Design and related methodology including data analysis, leading to applied research interventions with relation to targeted phenomena and constructs.
-Elements of PRLS Program Evaluation

2. Journal Article Review and Research Classification (5 points)
The intent of this assignment is to increase your familiarity with evidence-based peer-reviewed journal articles.
Find an article in your area of concentration. Read the article thoroughly and respond to each of the following using complete sentences (bulleted responses are not acceptable for this course):
   a. What was the topic studied?
   b. What are the key terms?
   c. What are the definitions for the key terms?
   d. What is the specific research question or problem
   e. What procedures were used to gather data?
   f. Who were the participants?
   g. What scales or instruments were used?
   h. What was the method of data analysis?
   i. What were the major conclusions and implications?

3. Introduction, Problem Statement, Literature Review, Hypothesis Variables (15 points)
The intent of this assignment is to apply your curiosity, conceptual and practical understanding of health, fitness and recreation resources to asking questions and defining research problems. This assignment will benefit you in developing an awareness of research potential in your field of interest and planning for your final research proposal. Specifically, you are to write an introduction to your research proposal and your preliminary review of literature and submit a copy of each research article used in the review.

The writing will include:
a. An **introduction** to the topic to be investigated in your study (including the background and significance of the problem);
b. A statement of the problem (which could be the last sentence in your introduction);
c. An integrated review of pertinent literature (*at least 5 current*, evidence-based/empirical and peer-reviewed research articles – do not confuse these with articles from newspapers which are not empirical nor peer reviewed);
d. Two research questions or testable hypotheses regarding the outcome of your study; and

e. Identification of key constructs in your research questions or your independent and dependent variables and definitions in each of your hypotheses.

4. **Sampling Plan (10 points)**

Having selected a problem, formulated a hypothesis and completed a preliminary literature review, describe a sample appropriate for evaluating your questions or hypotheses. Include a consideration of Probability and Non Probability sampling. This assignment is to be written in proposal format and should be specific to your proposed full study.

Include:

a. A complete definition of the target and accessible populations from which the sample would be drawn. This definition should thoroughly describe the size of these populations and relevant characteristics (e.g., age, ability, socioeconomic status, etc.).

   This is based on your proposed study.

b. A description of how you will determine the sample size. Include a summary statement that indicates the sample size that will be selected and justification for this size. Be sure to identify your anticipated response rate and cite your source.

c. An explanation of the procedural techniques by which you would select the sample and form it into groups (if appropriate). This technique should be described in detail, including justification of the technique selected. For example, if using “stratified sampling”, do not just say that stratified sampling will be used; indicate on what basis (i.e. characteristic) the population will be stratified and how group members (and how many) will be selected.

d. Indicate the possible sources of sampling bias.

5. **Research Design, Measurement & Data Collection (15 points)**

The intent of this assignment is to continue development of the research proposal, specifically identifying the research design to be used, measurement tools available and detailing the data collection procedures. Having selected a problem, formulated a hypothesis, completed a preliminary literature review, and described your population and sample, identify the measures and data collection procedures to be used in this study and design an appropriate cover letter and survey instrument. This assignment is to be written in proposal format (with cover letter and instrument in appendices). You are to address the following:

**Measurement, Design and Data Collection**

I. Briefly describe the data to be gathered and the measurement instrumentation to be used. Discuss the basis for establishing the reliability and validity of the instruments. In
other words, if you plan to use one or more already existing scales or measures, describe each. Explain, as well, how you plan to check the validity and reliability of scores obtained with your instruments. If you plan to use an existing instrument, summarize what you have been able to learn about the validity and reliability of previous results.

II. Identify and describe the research design, Qualitative or Quantitative to be used in this study (go back to your reading on “Research Designs”). Describe why the design was selected; potential threats to internal validity (e.g., subject characteristics, location, instrumentation, maturation, subject attitude, and implementation) and how you have designed the study to minimize the potential effects of these threats.

III. Describe the procedural technique(s) by which you would collect the data for a complete study (e.g., structured face-to-face or telephone interviews; mail, fax or email surveys; pre/post). The specific data collection technique(s) should be described in detail (when, where, how long, etc.). Indicate the exact procedures for how you will make contact with subjects and the advantages and disadvantages of your chosen method of collection. Justify why you selected the technique you did.

IV. Identify any possible ethical problems in carrying out such a study and how the problems could be remedied. Be sure to include: possible harm to participants (if any); possible problems of confidentiality (if any); and possible problems of deception (if any).

Instrument and Cover Letter Development
Develop an appropriate cover letter written to your theoretical participants that will reference the collection procedures you have determined. This letter must include, but is not limited to the following:

a. Letterhead, date, name and address, greeting, signature and title;

b. What the study is about and why it is useful;

c. Why the recipient is important and why they should complete your questionnaire;

d. A promise of confidentiality or anonymity and an explanation of a numbering system if used; and,

e. Assurance that the information will be used, incentives that will be given, if appropriate, and a thank you.

6. Analysis Plan (10 points)
The intent of this assignment is to develop a plan for analysis of data. The data analysis is for Qualitative or Quantitative research designs.

For Qualitative designs discuss the following:

a. Managing data
b. Making tentative conclusions
c. Verifying conclusions

For Quantitative designs discuss the following:

a. Descriptive Statistics
   - Central Tendency
   - Variability
- Association: Correlation
b. Inferential Statistics
- Population Parameters
- Hypothesis Testing
c. Nonparametric Methods.

7. Final Research Proposal (100 points)
The intent of this assignment is to apply your conceptual, and practical understanding of your profession to asking questions and defining research problems. This assignment will help you develop an awareness of the research potential in your field of interest and will serve as a beginning for your final project or thesis that you will complete during future independent studies.

Guidelines:

- **All work in this course should be written in the third person** using complete sentences.

- **Use subheadings** appropriate to the assignment (e.g., Introduction, Literature Review, Statement of the Problem, References, etc…) to serve as a guide for “piecing together” your final proposal and to help you be sure you have responded to all requirements of the assignment.

- **At least ten of your references must be research articles appearing in refereed journals.** Additional references providing support for significance and definitions may come from other literature sources.

- ** Appropriately cite all sources following the current APA guidelines.**

- **Create an APA-style cover page** with running headers throughout the document.

- **Create an APA-style references/works cited page.**

Grading:

- **Overall, grading will be based on completeness of responses, clarity and accuracy of written presentation. See rubric for details.**

- Proposal should be developed through the integration of material from your courses, readings and practical experiences, and should demonstrate independent thought and attention to detail (e.g., grammar and spelling).

**FINAL PROPOSAL ASSIGNMENT DUE:** *No later than TBD 5/4/2020 @ 5:00pm.*
Papers received AFTER that will be considered late and will receive a 20% reduction in points per 24-hour period after noon (Saturdays & Sundays are included).
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