George Mason University  
Graduate Course Approval/Inventory Form

Please complete this form and attach a copy of the syllabus for new courses. Forward it as an email attachment to the Secretary of the Graduate Council. A printed copy of the form with signatures should be brought to the Graduate Council Meeting. Complete the Coordinator Form on page 2, if changes in this course will affect other units.

Please indicate:  

____ NEW  ____ MODIFY  ____ DELETE

Local Unit: Public & International Affairs/ADJ  
Graduate Council Approval Date:

Course Abbreviation: JLCP  
Course Number: 780

Full Course Title: Research Methods

Abbreviated Course Title (24 characters max.): Research Methods

Credit hours: 3  
Program of Record: Justice, Law, & Crime Policy

Repeatable for Credit?  

___ D=Yes, not within same term  
___ T=Yes, within the same term  
_X_ N=Cannot be repeated for credit

Up to hours

Activity Code (please indicate):  

___ Lecture (LEC)  ___ Lab (LAB)  ___ Recitation (RCT)  
___ Studio (STU)  ___ Internship (INT)  ___ Independent Study (IND)  
_X_ Seminar (SEM)

Catalog Credit Format 3:3:0  
Course Level: GF(500-600)  
GA(700+)  
_X_

Maximum Enrollment: 20  
For NEW courses, first term to be offered: Fall 2005

Prerequisites or corequisites: An undergraduate social science research methods course or an undergraduate statistics course, or instructor’s permission.

Catalog Description (35 words or less) 

Please use catalog format and attach a copy of the syllabus for new courses. JLCP 780 Research Methods (3:3:0). Prerequisite: An undergraduate social science research methods course or an undergraduate statistics course, or instructor’s permission. Introduction to the logic and methods of scientific inquiry in justice, law, and crime policy. Conceptualization of research questions, observation, measurement, research design, and principles of causality. Evaluation of extant research according to scientific principles.

For MODIFIED or DELETED courses as appropriate:

Last term offered:  
Previous Course Abbreviation:  
Previous number:

Description of modification:

APPROVAL SIGNATURES:

Submitted by:  
email: smastrof@gmu.edu

Department/Program:  
Date: 

College Committee:  
Date: 

Graduate Council Representative:  
Date: 


**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
Course Coordination Form

**Approval from other units:**

Please list those units outside of your own who may be affected by this new, modified, or deleted course. Each of these units must approve this change prior to its being submitted to the Graduate Council for approval.

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<th>Unit:</th>
<th>Head of Unit’s Signature:</th>
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Graduate Council approval: _____________________________ Date: __________

Graduate Council representative: ___________________________ Date: __________

Provost Office representative: _____________________________ Date: __________
JLCP 780
Research Methods

**Topic Description**

This course will provide students with an introduction to the logic and methods of scientific inquiry in the areas of justice, law, and crime. Topics covered will include the conceptualization and the formulation of research questions, observation and measurement of phenomena, research designs applicable to field settings, and principles of causality.

**Course Prerequisite**

A prerequisite for this course is the completion of at least one undergraduate social science research methods course (e.g., from a sociology, psychology, criminal justice, economics, or political science department), or an undergraduate statistics course, or instructor’s permission.

**Course Objectives and Learning Methods**

The objective of this course is to prepare students graduate level research activities, including their doctoral dissertation. Upon completion of this course, students should have a strong conceptual understanding the research process and be able to formula testable hypothesis derived from academic theory or practical policy concerns, and design research that will provide a valid assessment of the hypothesis. Students will understand the complexities of conducting research in natural settings and will be sensitized to the numerous ethical issues involved in conduction research involving human individuals.

The teaching methods for this course will include traditional lectures, didactic discussions, and class exercises designed to provide the students with experience applying newly learned material.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

Your grade in this class will be based two exams (a mid-term and a final), two written critiques of published research studies, and a final written research proposal. The exams will be short-answer and short-answer essay. The final exam will be cumulative.

Weight of each requirement toward the final grade:

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<tr>
<td>Written Critique 1</td>
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<td>Written Critique 2</td>
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<td>Written Proposal</td>
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<td>Mid-term</td>
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<td>Final-exam</td>
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For each written critique of a published research study, find a quantitative research article on a topic of interest to you that utilizes research methods discussed in class. Write a 3 to 5 page paper summarizing the methods and discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the design as a test of the author's hypothesis(es). Discuss changes you would make to the design if you were to conduct a similar study.

The final written research proposal (8 to 12 pages) should include an introductory section that summarizes existing research on the topic of interest and ends with a hypothesis. The second section of the paper should explain the proposed research design is sufficient detail to allow someone to actually conduct the study. A final section should discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed study.
Assigned Text/Readings


Additional readings to-be-assigned.

Outline of Topics

Week 1  Overview, language of science, problem formation
Week 2  Logic of causal inferencing
Week 3  Basic concepts of measurement
Week 4  Creating measurement instruments
Week 5  Sampling theory and methods
Week 6  Survey techniques
Week 7  Mid-term
Week 8  Logic of randomization and experimental designs
Week 9  Quasi-experimental designs
Week 10 Evaluation research
Week 11 Qualitative research methods
Week 12 Secondary data analysis
Week 13 Ethics of field research, human subjects review boards
Week 14 Final exam

JLCP 780 Research Methods (3:3:0). Prerequisite: An undergraduate social science research methods course or an undergraduate statistics course, or instructor’s permission. Introduction to the logic and methods of scientific inquiry in justice, law, and crime policy. Conceptualization of research questions, observation, measurement, research design, and principles of causality. Evaluation of extant research according to scientific principles.