MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY
COURSE SYLLABUS OUTLINE

SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE

COURSE NUMBER: AGR 735
CREDIT HOURS: 3

I. TITLE:

Research Methodology

II. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

A graduate study in selection, planning, and conduction of investigation with reference to alternative scientific methods. Oriented toward all disciplines of agriculture. Prerequisites: Acceptance into a program of graduate study at any college or university.

III. PURPOSE:

Research Methodology is designed to help beginning graduate students learn research principles that are equally applicable to all disciplines in which the scientific method is used for the solution of problems and the pursuit of truth. This course is also designed to help students read and interpret research literature. Statistical techniques will be briefly reviewed from the standpoint of which techniques are more commonly used for various types of problems. But, this is a course in research design and methodology, not a course in statistical methods.

IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course will approach research and research methodology from a broad perspective. In addition to satisfying a course requirement, this course is designed to help students learn principles that will help them throughout their lives. The principles of research methodology allow thoughtful analysis of daily situations and problems. More specific objectives are:

A. Learn the fundamentals of research and how to apply them to the preparation of a research proposal. The research proposal forms the basis for the first three chapters of a research project of thesis. This also involves the technical details of style, format, and organization. The proposal will be submitted to your graduate advisor at the end of the course.

B. Read a minimum of two research studies related to your area of research interest. Submit a critique of each study to gain experience in reading and interpreting research.
C. Become familiar with qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Students will focus their study on the methodology that applies to their particular academic interest. For example, a student interested in animal science or agronomy might focus more on quantitative methodologies, while a student interested in business management, might focus more on qualitative methodologies.

V. CONTENT OUTLINE:

A. What is Research?
B. Tools of Research
C. The Problem: The Heart of the Research Process
D. The Review of Literature
E. Planning Your Research Design
F. Writing the Research Proposal
G. Qualitative Research
H. Historical Research
I. Descriptive Research
J. Experimental and Causal-Comparative Designs
K. Statistical Techniques for Analyzing Quantitative Data
L. Technical Details: Style, Format, and Organization of the Research Project

VI. INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Because this is a web class, it is critical that students carefully study the text, review all examples and make use of the numerous online resources available to support the text. *Practical Research* was selected because it follows a broad-spectrum approach suitable for all academic disciplines. In addition, the Companion Website developed by Prentice Hall provides valuable online learning assistance.

VII. FIELD AND CLINICAL EXPERIENCES:

Frequent communication with the instructor and other class members via Blackboard. Murray State University provides access to Blackboard for those enrolled in the course.

VIII. RESOURCES:

B. Personal computer with printer and web access.
IX. **GRADING PROCEDURES:**

A. Writing assignments  
   25%

B. Web based communication and discussion  
   25%

C. Written research proposal  
   50%

Total 100%

*The instructor expects a timely response to web assignments.

*You will probably be consulting periodically with your graduate advisor as you prepare the research proposal, and your graduate advisor will be given a copy of the research proposal. Therefore, it is imperative that you be intimately familiar with all details of the development and preparation of the proposal.

Grading scale

- 90 – 100 = A
- 80 – 89 = B
- 70 – 79 = C
- 60 – 69 = D
- Below 60 = E

X. **ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Please refer to the most current copy of the Murray State University’s *Graduate Bulletin.*

XI. **ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY:**

(Adopted by the MSU Board of Regents)
Cheating, plagiarism (submitting another person’s material as one’s own), or doing work for another person which will receive academic credit are all impermissible. This includes the use of unauthorized books, notebooks, or other sources in order to secure or give help during an examination, the unauthorized copying of examinations, assignments, reports, term papers, or the presentation on unacknowledged material as if it were the student’s own work. Disciplinary action may be taken beyond the academic discipline administered by the faculty member who teaches the course in which the cheating took place.

NOTE: The School of Agriculture Faculty have adopted and implemented an Academic Honesty Policy in addition to the University Honesty Policy, which can be found in the current *Graduate Bulletin.* The policy sets guidelines regarding acts of dishonesty and the procedure to follow should an event occur. It is each Agriculture student’s responsibility to obtain and read a copy of this document. The School’s Academic Honesty Policy can be obtained by asking for a copy from any Agriculture Faculty member or the Secretary.
XII. TEXT AND REFERENCES:


D. Murray State University’s library home page. Click on indexes for Agricultural and Biological Sciences and many other reference materials.

XIII. PREREQUISITES:

Acceptance into a program of graduate study at any college or university.

XIV. STATEMENT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:

Murray State University endorses the intent of all federal and state laws created to prohibit discrimination. Murray State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, veteran status, or disability in employment, admissions, or the provision of services and provides, upon request, reasonable accommodation including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford individuals with disabilities equal access to participate in all programs and activities. For more information, contact Sabrina Y. Dial, Director of Equal Opportunity, Murray State University, 103 Wells Hall, Murray, KY 42071-3318. Telephone: 270-809-3155 (voice), 270-809-3361 (TDD).

XV. MSU SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE CELL PHONE POLICY

The School of Agriculture recognizes that in today’s world cell phones are a familiar and often necessary form of communication for students.

It shall be the policy of the School that no cell phone usage shall be allowed in class and/or labs without the prior consent of the course instructor. This shall include verbal calling, incoming calls, email, text messaging, and use of cell phone calculators on tests and quizzes.

Cell phones must be kept off and out of sight (i.e. secured to a person’s belt or kept in a bag or purse away from desks and lab counters).
Should a student’s cell phone be visible, ring, or other form of unauthorized usage that is interruptive to the class or lab, the student may be asked to leave class and not return for that class/lab period.

Upon prior consent of the instructor, a student may obtain permission to have their phone on in case of an emergency or in critical family situations.

This policy also includes pagers and other electronic equipment such as blackberries and/or computers/laptops.