COURSE COORDINATOR: Program Director

INSTRUCTORS: TBD

CREDITS: 4

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is designed to immerse students in the planning and designing of a research study and the writing of a research proposal. Students will be matched with a local research advisor who is an expert in their chosen field of research, who will assist in the development of a research question, research design and student placement in a research project. Students will receive lectures in research methodology and design, as well as write two drafts and a final proposal and give an oral presentation on their proposal.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
The objective of this course is to instruct the student in the necessary procedures for the undertaking of a scientific research project in an area of interest. This is an excellent opportunity to learn how to write a research proposal that includes how to: a) identify and concisely define a feasible research problem, set its context and importance and show what has been done on this or related problems; b) divide the problem into a set of proper sub-problems (objectives); c) design a planned methodology that properly defines variables, how you plan to measure those variables with data, and your plan for analysis of data; d) show a timetable of planned activities; f) a proposed budget of itemized costs covered by each funding source and g) if needed, describe protection strategies to be used with confidential information and/or human subjects for use and approval by the ACM Ethics Panel or, if need be, your home college Institutional Review Board (IRB).

REQUIRED TEXTS
To be determined

COURSE CONTENT

Module 1: Course Introduction
Course schedule and requirements. What is Research? Framing a question (defining the problem).

Module 2:
Synthesizing existing knowledge (review of the related literature; Introduction).
Module 3:  
Designing a study (Methods). Variables and their Definitions. How to Measure Variables.

Module 4:  
Writing the research proposal. Suggestions for technical writing. Discussion on plagiarism.

Module 5:  
Ethics of inquiry: research projects that involve “human subjects.” How, when and where of IRB requirements (protection of participants in a research project in terms of minimizing risk, protecting privacy, and securing informed consent).

Module 6:  
Recording and managing data (field notes, databases, etc.). Quantitative Research and Analysis in Natural Sciences.

Module 7:  
Quantitative Research and Analysis in Natural Sciences cont.

Module 8:  
Sharing your ideas: how to give a presentation.

ASSESSMENT
Grading: The final grade will be calculated as a percentage earned out of 500 possible points. Please see the documents “Research Proposal and Proposal Oral Presentation Guidelines”; “Research Proposal Grading Rubric”, and “Proposal Oral Presentation Grading Rubric” found in the “Student Academic Resources” Dropbox folder.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Possible Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final research proposal</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal oral presentation</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture assignments (5 x 20 pts.)</td>
<td>100</td>
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Total points possible 500

ACM POLICY ON ACADEMICS
All academic pursuit depends on trust. All of us should be able to trust that we will be treated with honesty and respect—respect for our ideas and for us as persons. As a participant in an ACM program, you will be expected to conduct yourself with the same level of honesty and openness as is expected on your home campus.

The following academic policies apply to all students participating in an ACM program:

Course load. You are required to carry the full load of courses and credits as determined for the ACM program in which you are enrolled.
Class attendance and participation. You are expected to attend and participate fully in all classroom sessions, site visits, and field trips. Instructors typically take into account attendance and class participation when assigning final grades. Please remember that these are academic programs: it is not appropriate to miss classes because you are traveling or hosting visitors; you are expected to participate in all program activities unless otherwise excused.

Grade Choice. All ACM courses will be graded and reported to home schools on an A-F grading scale. If a student wishes to take a class or classes on a pass/fail basis, the student must contact their home school’s registrar.

Completion of course work. All class assignments (including final papers, presentations and feedback to communities) must be completed and submitted before the end of the program. Any assignments or work submitted after the final day of the program will receive a “0” and this will be factored into the final grade for the course. ACM does not record/report an “Incomplete” grade for courses. Late work will have an automatic deduction of 10% of the final grade.

Academic honesty. Actions of dishonesty are destructive to the well-being of the academic community, and ACM staff respond to them vigorously. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic theft will result in a failing grade for that assignment and may result in failure for the course. Extremely serious incidents of cheating or other actions destructive to the classroom community may result in expulsion from the program. Instructors who encounter plagiarism or other forms of cheating in an ACM program will report such episodes to the Director of Off-Campus Study, who will investigate and hold a review according to the ACM Student Conduct Procedures. Students who are aware of academic dishonesty on the part of other students are expected to report that information to the Director of Off-Campus Study.

Grading policies related to off-campus study. You should consult your home campus registrar’s office for off-campus grading policies in effect on your own campus.

Graduating seniors. Students who expect to graduate at the end of the term of the ACM program should discuss graduation requirements with an advisor at their home school prior to the start of the program. If you need to make special arrangements (e.g., if grades need to be reported by a specific date), you should share this information with the ACM program director at the beginning of the program.

Retention of syllabi, course work, and other course-related materials. Because home campus advisors may wish to review course work to determine how to assign credit for a particular course or courses taken abroad (and because, occasionally, course grades can be misreported), it is important that students bring back to their home campuses all materials from courses taken abroad. This is particularly important for courses taught by an on-site (i.e., non-ACM) faculty member, where it may be difficult to contact the faculty member after the semester or program has ended.

Release of student grades. ACM staff will only release grades to your home campus once all program, financial, and student conduct obligations are complete.

ACM POLICY ON NON-DISCRIMINATION
The Associated Colleges of the Midwest does not discriminate in the operation of its educational programs, activities, or employment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, color, religion, national origin, age, veteran status, marital status, or disability.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT
Laptops, tablets and mobile phones are strictly forbidden during class time.