COURSE DESCRIPTION
Supervised research leading to the preparation and completion of a master’s thesis in partial fulfillment of the MPS in Sport Management degree requirements. Prerequisite: SPG 401 before 502, 502 before 503, and the approval of the Program Director. Credit: 3 semester hours.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES
All materials are here: http://facpub.stjohns.edu/~gerstneg/spg502/spg502.htm.

GRADING POLICY
- SPG 502:
  - Proposal 50%
  - Literature review 50%
- SPG 503:
  - Final draft 100%

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Any cases of academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Dean of College of Professional Studies for further action, which may include a written reprimand, academic probation, suspension, or expulsion from the University. Details about the University’s academic discipline procedure can be found in the St. John’s University Student Handbook (http://www.stjohns.edu/campus/handbook).
In this course, the primary issue of integrity surrounds the potential for plagiarism. Be advised that your work will be submitted to TurnItIn (http://www.turnitin.com) on a regular basis to test for originality. Your work needs to be your own, and it is important the references be properly cited. If you have any questions or concerns about what, when, and how to cite please ask the instructor.

THE THESIS PROCESS

Before embarking on your thesis, you should read and understand the contents of the MPS in Sport Management Thesis Guide (available at http://facpub.stjohns.edu/~gerstneg/spg502/spg502.htm) and ask the instructor if you have questions.

Everything in this course should be submitted as WORD 2007 (*.docx) email attachment, unless told otherwise by the instructor. Set 1” margins, double-space, and use a 12-point Times New Roman font (same as this document).

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES – SPG 502

1. **Identify potential topics.** Before your initial meeting with your instructor, think about the general nature of your thesis (marketing, finance, coaching, etc.). Also consider if there is a specific sport you want to investigate, or if your thesis will be applicable to all sports.

2. **Determine your timeline.** At our first meeting, we will agree on a timeline for submission of everything from start to finish. This timeline may be modified, but be aware that the timeline was created with a specific graduation date in mind. If you do not adhere to it you may not graduate when expected.

3. **Define your topic and problem statement.** The whole purpose of a thesis, what makes it different than an essay, is that a thesis addresses a specific problem. The problem statement should be only one or two sentences, and succinctly describe the reason that you will devote 50 to 100 pages to analyze it.

4. **Do a brief literature review.** See what other researchers have found – you should limit your searches to peer-reviewed journal articles. It will also be useful to see how other students, in their theses and dissertations, have approached the topic. If you are having trouble finding articles, you should seek help from a reference librarian for assistance. Your instructor can recommend a librarian with expertise in sport.

5. **Determine your methodology:**
   a. Quantitative, qualitative, or mixed method – and the reason for choosing it.
   b. Specify the population, sampling techniques, and estimate the sample size.
   c. Identify any potential problems – low response rate, non-cooperation, not enough time to collect data, etc.

6. **Determine if your study will require IRB approval.** Discuss this with me – if you need approval, you will have to go through the IRB approval process. With the nature of sport management research, this is usually not a major hurdle, but will take at a minimum several weeks. **IMPORTANT: If your study requires approval, you cannot collect any data until the IRB approves your application. Acting otherwise is a serious breach of University regulations and could result in your having to start the entire thesis process over again, from scratch. See the section on IRB approval below.**

7. **Write your proposal and submit it for approval.** I will return it within 72 hours with my comments. Once it is approved, you can go on to step 7.

8. **Download and review the thesis template.** Embedded in the file are several tips for writing each chapter, and you will also see what the final document will look like. At this point, do not paste anything in to it, you will start doing that later.
9. **Start writing your literature review.** Before you receive a grade in SPG 502, I want to see that you have made substantial progress in your lit review (specifically, that you are more than 50% complete). Please send me a work in progress after you have written the introduction to the literature review for my approval. Include your reference list at the end. Refer to Creswell on how to write a good literature review.

**SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES - SPG 503**

1. **Finish your literature review if you have not yet completed it.** You should wait until I have approved it before moving to the next step. If you have completed it properly, you will not need to revisit it.

2. **Start collecting your data and write chapters 1 and 3.** You can adapt the introduction and methodology chapters from your proposal. You can do these activities concurrently or serially, depends on if there are time constraints with your data collection (e.g. you only have a certain window to interview subjects). At this point, you can start pasting your work into the thesis template, you have chapters 1-3 complete. Use the following filename format: lastnameyeardraftversion.docx, so Jane Smith’s second version would save her file as smith2012draft2.docx. When I approve your thesis, I will delete the draft!

3. **Write chapters 4, 5, 6, 7.** Submit to me along the way as you make substantive changes.

4. **Get your final draft ready.** Make sure the cover page has your name (as it will be listed on your diploma) and my name in the right places. Write your abstract. Cross check your references and citations (all items cited need to be in the reference list, and all items on the reference list need to be cited). Make sure the references are aligned with APA guidelines. Make sure that your page numbering coincides with the Library requirements (e.g. no number on the abstract page, small Roman numerals for the TOC, etc.). Make sure you update the TOC and that all of your primary and secondary headings show up there.

5. **Submit and resubmit until approval.** You will be required to sign hard copies of the cover page which we will provide. There is no need for hard copies, we will prepare the hard copy on the proper paper for binding. You will receive one bound copy, my treat, if you want extra copies they will be $10 each. You have to request them when your thesis is approved.

**IRB APPROVAL**

All universities have an institutional review board, which is charged with ensuring that all research carried out by faculty and students meets generally accepted ethical principles. In general, if you are interacting with human subjects in any way during the data collection process, your study will need to be reviewed by the IRB before you carry out your research. “Interacting with human subjects” includes face-to-face interviews, mail surveys, telephone calls, emails, internet-based surveys, etc. If your study is strictly a quantitative analysis of publicly available data, you will most likely not need approval. Once your methodology is determined, we will decide how to proceed.

If you do need approval, all the materials that you need are available at the STJ IRB web page, [http://www.stjohns.edu/irb](http://www.stjohns.edu/irb). This is what you will need to do:

1. **Complete the NIH certification exam.** From the IRB home page, click the link to “IRB Certification Exam through NIH.” This is a multiple-choice exam which you take in stages on your own time. Most students finish in a couple of hours. You are required to pass the exam before submitting your IRB application. Print out your certificate, and also the URL link you will need it later. If you forget or lose anything, you can always log back in to the NIH site and retrieve it.
2. **Download the IRB application.** Most studies will require only the “Exempt application” but some may need a full review. I will recommend which form to fill out. If only a PDF is available, let me know I have the WORD format so you can fill it out directly.

3. **Fill out the application.** Do the best you can, if you are unsure ask me and I will assist you. All applications need to have your survey (or interview) questions attached, along with an “informed consent” document. I can send you a sample that you can adapt for your study. You will also need the link to your NIH certificate. Email everything to me for review.

4. **Submit the application and wait.** You will submit as per the instructions in the application, the expedited process is a little different than the full process. Expedited review usually takes 2-3 weeks, full review can take up to 2 months. Once approved, you can begin collecting your data.

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**WRITING/REFERENCE/APA TIPS**

Your final paper must adhere to APA style – and it must be perfect. I will be correcting you along the way, but ultimately it is your responsibility come the final draft. Everything I have below is covered in the APA Manual, but I might be able to save you some headaches:

1. **Periods and spacing.** The APA recently changed their standard and two spaces after each sentence period is required. If you are not sure how you wrote your paper, do this in WORD: >Replace>. >. >Replace all. Then >Replace>. >. >Replace all. That will take all doubles and make them a single, and then take the singles and make them doubles. If you don’t do it that way you will have triples, so just trust me on this one.

2. **Tables and figures.** You can put all of your tables and figures, if you have any, at the end of the paper and before the references. They must have a specific format (see the APA Manual) and I can give you a template with the proper “lines” and headings.

3. **Citations.** You must cite anything that you have from another source. If you use quotations, you must include a page number (or a paragraph number if there are no pages).

4. **Reference list formatting.** The reference list can be single space. Format with hanging indents – don’t use hard returns or tabs it will be a mess. Mark your text in WORD: >Paragraph>Special>Hanging>0.5”

5. **Electronic references.** Use the DOI when possible for all journal articles. Handy web pages are [http://www.doi.org](http://www.doi.org) and [http://www.crossref.org/guestquery](http://www.crossref.org/guestquery)