MS in Natural Resources with Emphasis in Parks, Recreation and Tourism

About the Emphasis
Since virtually everyone participates in some form of leisure, the primary benefit of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (PRT) is to address quality of life issues. The unique interaction of people, places, and activities establish our profession as one of the world’s largest industries. Students learn how to manage leisure service delivery systems by combining theory with practice. This degree is designed to prepare students for advanced positions in the parks, recreation, tourism and sport profession or admission into doctoral programs.

Degree Requirements
The program consists of a minimum of 30 credits for the thesis option and 39 credits for the non-thesis option. For a full explanation of the thesis/non-thesis options, see section below on Thesis/Non-Thesis Requirements (p. 1).

Students are required to take four 8000 level courses in the PRT curriculum: all students must take PRST 8400 Constructs of Leisure and PRST 8430 Research Methods in Parks, Recreation and Tourism; students then choose two courses from the PRT 8000 level curriculum.

All students must take a graduate level analysis course (i.e., statistics, qualitative analysis, or mixed analysis).

Sample Plan of Study
Because students in the M.S. program are from a wide variety of circumstances, and pursue the M.S. at all different paces, a sample plan of study is not easily produced. Students work closely with their advisor to select appropriate coursework.

Thesis/Non-Thesis Requirements
The program offers students two options:

1. Thesis Option
The thesis option is most appropriate for M.S. candidates who aspire to pursue doctoral education in the future, desire distinct research training and experience, and/or desire research or technical writing experience. Students who complete a thesis are encouraged to publish their findings in peer-reviewed journals.

Credit Hour Requirements: The thesis option requires a minimum of 30 credit hours, which includes: a minimum of 15 hours at the 8000/9000 level; a minimum of 12 hours of 8000 level theory-based contact courses within the PRT curriculum; a graduate level analysis course; minimum 3 credits thesis research; and up to a maximum of 12 credits of independent study (Thesis Research, Guided Readings, Problems, or Independent Work).

Thesis Research Boundaries: The thesis endeavor engages content of a solid academic/theoretical need that adds to or extends the knowledge base. It typically requires the student to display original scholarship or application of an existing theory to solve a specific problem. The rigor of the thesis challenges the student to address and engage the scientific process, which includes an evaluative component of peer and academic review.

Thesis Committee: The thesis committee consists of a minimum of three graduate faculty members: two within the PRT department, and one outside the department. Emeritus and/or adjunct faculty members are eligible to serve on student committees, provided they have graduate faculty status.

Procedures: The student develops the thesis proposal with primary guidance of the committee chair. The proposal is defended in a scheduled open forum followed by committee approval or disapproval. Following proposal approval by the committee, the student conducts the research and completes the thesis paper. The student then defends the completed study in a scheduled open forum, followed by committee action to pass or fail the thesis defense. Students must submit the M-1 and M-2 forms by the end of their second semester. The M-3 form should be submitted shortly after the thesis defense.

2. Non-Thesis (Project) Option
A non-thesis option is also available that requires additional coursework and a research project. The non-thesis option is most appropriate for M.S. candidates who view the Master’s Degree as the terminal degree, aspire for practitioner work within the profession, and/or desire additional course work to balance their program of study.

Credit Hour Requirements: The non-thesis option requires a minimum of 39 credit hours, which includes: a minimum of 15 hours at the 8000/9000 level; a minimum of 12 hours of 8000 level theory-based contact courses within the PRT curriculum; a graduate level analysis course; 3-6 credits of PRST 8090 Thesis Research in Parks, Recreation, Sport and Tourism (Research Project); and up to a maximum of 12 credits of independent study (Thesis Research, Guided Readings, Problems, or Independent Work).

Non-Thesis Boundaries: The non-thesis option engages content of an academic/professional practice need that addresses issues or problems. It requires the student to display independent scholarship in the definition, review and analysis of a problem or issue under study. The rigor of the project challenges the student to engage content to professional standards, which include the evaluative component of peer and professional review.

Project Committee: The project committee consists of a minimum of three graduate faculty members (one maybe be from outside the PRT department, but not a requirement). Emeritus and/or adjunct faculty members are eligible to serve on student committees, provided they have graduate faculty status.

Procedures: The student develops the project proposal with primary guidance of the committee chair. The committee chair approves the proposal. Following approval, the student completes the project. The student then defends the completed project in a scheduled open forum, followed by committee action to pass or fail the project defense. Students must submit the M-1 form by the end of their second semester. The M-3 form should be submitted shortly after the project defense.

Admissions

Admission Contact Information
Dr. Sonja A. Wilhelm Stanis
Parks, Recreation and Tourism
105 Anheuser-Busch Natural Resources Building
Applicants are required to meet two sets of minimum qualifications for admission: the requirements of the MS in Natural Resources with emphasis in Parks, Recreation and Tourism (https://gradstudies.missouri.edu/degreecategory/natural-resources) program and the minimum requirements of the Graduate School (https://gradschool.missouri.edu/admissions/apply). Because requirements vary, you must refer to a degree program’s graduate admission page to learn about specific admission criteria, application deadlines, eligibility and application process. Your application materials will be reviewed by both the Office of Graduate Studies and the degree program to which you’ve applied before official admission to the University of Missouri.

Financial Aid from the Program

Funding is available, but assistantships are highly competitive. Prospective students must complete all the necessary application requirements to be considered for departmental funding. Contact the graduate program emphasis coordinator for more details. Applicants should also contact the faculty they want to work with to determine the availability of possible graduate assistantship positions.