



## Santa Rosa City Schools Course Proposal: AP Research

**Proposal Submitted By: Scott Wallach and Jerry Deakins**

**Needs Statement: Discuss how this course fits into your Site and/or the District's goals. Attach minutes of meetings where this course was approved at site or district leadership meetings.**

This course fits into both site and district goals.

At MCHS, [the graduate profile](#) includes the categories of Powerful Producer, Universal Citizen, Masterful Communicator, and Active Learner.

**Powerful Producer:** In AP Research students are expected to work well individually and together on long term projects that must meet specific checkpoints. Lastly, students must create high quality writing and presentations in order to pass the class and the AP Test.

**Universal Citizen:** In AP Research, students can choose to research topics that deal with social justice issues, local community issues, and issues facing the entire world. Students must also examine perspectives that are not their own.

**Masterful Communicator:** In order to be successful in this class students must be able to express themselves verbally and in written form at a high level. They must be able to build and then support their arguments using high level research.

**Active Learner:** AP Research requires students to make cross-curricular connections. Students must be adaptable to multiple major assessment types. One of the most important qualities of the course is critical thinking and reasoning.

AP Seminar also meets many of the goals set in the [SRCS Strategic Priorities](#).

**Embrace:** AP Research will allow students to achieve a higher level of academic achievement than was previously possible. This applies both to the skills they will learn as well as the diploma distinction after completing the AP Capstone program. This course allows students the flexibility to take an AP course that is not in a specific content area.

**Engage:** One of the biggest values of this course is that it pushes students to do high level work in a group/team setting. Students will need to build relationships with each other and the teacher.

**Empower:** AP Research allows the teacher to steer the curriculum used to learn the necessary skills in whatever direction most interests the students. This empowers them to be excited about the content they learn and take ownership of the material.

[Social Science Department](#)

[Advisory Council Meeting \(Site Level\)](#)

### **Overview:**

AP Research, the second course in the AP Capstone experience, allows students to deeply explore an academic topic, problem, issue, or idea of individual interest. Students design, plan, and implement a yearlong investigation to address a research question. Through this inquiry, they further the skills they acquired in the AP Seminar course by learning research methodology,

employing ethical research practices, and accessing, analyzing, and synthesizing information. Students reflect on their skill development, document their processes, and curate the artifacts of their scholarly work through a process and reflection portfolio. The course culminates in an academic paper of 4,000–5,000 words (accompanied by a performance, exhibit, or product where applicable) and a presentation with an oral defense.

AP Research is the second of two required courses of the AP Capstone program. AP Capstone is a diploma program from College Board that is built on AP Seminar and AP Research. Students who complete both courses and pass four other AP tests can obtain the AP Capstone distinction for their diploma. Students must take AP Seminar prior to AP Research

**Graduation Requirements: Specify which requirement is met.(High School only)**

Elective Course

**UC a-g Requirements: Specify which requirement is met. (High School only)**

G-College-Preparatory Elective

**Explain the rationale for course addition or modification. How does this fit in with district/site goals? Is this course replacing a current course, which course is it replacing and why? Will this course require new sections? Be explicit.**

This course would be a brand new course to the district and our site. It would not replace any other courses and would serve as an elective. This would be the first of two courses in the AP Capstone program. This course would require a new section.

This course is being proposed in an effort to better serve our student population. Only two other schools in Sonoma County offer the AP Capstone program (AP Seminar and AP Research). MCHS would be the third. In 2024, 436 MCHS students took at least one AP test. This accounts for roughly 25% of our entire student population. In total 996 AP tests were taken. In 2024, 84 graduating MCHS students (26%) had passed five or more AP exams. Past data fits with this trend. College Board considers MCHS a “Gold” school. The only element that MCHS does not meet to achieve the highest rank (Platinum) is in the area of the percentage of students who take at least one AP course. Currently MCHS is at 73% and needs to be at 80%. Adding AP Research (and AP Seminar) would give an additional option for students. Adding this course (and the AP Seminar course) would allow our many students who take multiple AP classes to qualify for the AP Capstone distinction on their diploma. Only about 20,000 students nationwide achieve this honor each year. This course (and AP Seminar) will help keep enrollment up at MCHS as it is a desirable distinction to earn.

Additionally, this course will enable the students who take it to have a higher level understanding of research methods, critical thinking and reasoning, argumentation, and collaboration. College Board reports that completing the AP Capstone program (which AP Research is the second stage of), “is a powerful indicator of college readiness on a student’s transcript and helps students stand

out to colleges in the application process”. College Board also reports that, “Research has found that students who take AP Capstone courses are more likely to persist in college and earn higher first-year college GPAs”.

### Explain the measurable learning outcomes

Students will be able to...

- Produce Scholarly Work
  - Establish Argument: Demonstrating the significance of one’s research by explaining the rationale behind the choices made in the research process and logically connecting the findings to one’s conclusions or new understandings
  - Select and Use Evidence: Evaluating the significance of the findings, results, or product to the purpose or goal of one’s inquiry and strategically choosing such evidence to effectively support claims
- Employ Research Practices
  - Research Design: Narrowing a focus of inquiry and identifying an aligned, ethical, feasible approach or method to accomplish the purpose of the research question and/or project goal
- Analyze Sources and Evidence
  - Understand and Analyze Argument: Analyzing evidence for what is known about one’s topic of inquiry to further focus and situate one’s research question or project goal
  - Evaluate Sources and Evidence: Evaluating the credibility, relevance, and significance of sources and evidence to the choices made in the inquiry process
- Understand Context and Perspective
  - Understand and Analyze Context: Contextualizing the purpose and significance of one’s topic of inquiry within a broader field or discipline
- Communicate (interpersonal and intrapersonal)
  - Engage Audience: Choosing and employing effective written and oral communication techniques, considering audience, context, and purpose to convey and defend conclusions or new understandings
  - Apply Conventions: Choosing and consistently applying an appropriate citation style and effective conventions of writing
  - Collaborate: Working constructively with others to accomplish a team goal or task
  - Reflect: Identifying challenges, successes, and moments of insight throughout one’s inquiry, which transformed one’s own thinking and reasoning

## Course Description (To be used in the course catalog)

AP Research, the second course in the AP Capstone experience, allows students to deeply explore an academic topic, problem, issue, or idea of individual interest. Students design, plan, and implement a yearlong investigation to address a research question. Through this inquiry, they further the skills they acquired in the AP Seminar course by learning research methodology, employing ethical research practices, and accessing, analyzing, and synthesizing information. Students reflect on their skill development, document their processes, and curate the artifacts of their scholarly work through a process and reflection portfolio. The course culminates in an academic paper of 4,000–5,000 words (accompanied by a performance, exhibit, or product where applicable) and a presentation with an oral defense.

<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/ap-research-course-and-exam-description.pdf>

## Detailed Course Design

(Course design should include the objectives, activities, assessments, and standards to be addressed in this course.)

### Course Overview:

This course is organized around five “Big Ideas”

#### Big Idea #1: Question and Explore

Inquiry and investigation begin when students encounter information about ideas, complex issues and problems that stimulates their intellectual curiosity. They then continue the research process by developing a critical question about one or more of those complex issues or ideas. Seeking answers to such questions requires exploration of numerous, often competing perspectives; the context surrounding those perspectives; and the reliability and credibility of the perspectives. Through this exploration, students begin to develop their own perspectives, rather than simply accept those of others. They consider the purpose of their research — what is supposed to be achieved and why. Ideally, they also develop additional questions that lead to further inquiry. The intrinsic value of asking and answering questions cannot be overstated. Giving students the opportunity to dig deeper and feed their curiosity makes for meaningful discoveries and discussions.

#### Essential Questions:

- How does the context of a problem or issue affect how it is interpreted or What do I want to know, learn, or understand?
- What questions have yet to be asked?
- How does my research question shape how I go about trying to answer it?
- How does my project goal shape the research or inquiry I engage in to achieve it?
- What information/evidence do I need to answer my research question?

#### Big Idea #2: Understand and Analyze

Developing understanding starts with comprehension of the concepts and perspectives under examination. Being able to summarize by identifying and explaining the salient ideas in a text is foundational. When students summarize and explain an author’s perspective to others, they are building understanding. Students must comprehend a perspective or argument in order to be able to analyze it. That analysis — including consideration of the author’s point of view and purpose, the reasoning and details the author selects, develops, and conveys, and the way the author

chooses to situate those details — in turn leads to greater understanding of the topic or concept being explored. Students evaluate the validity of an argument by examining the strength of the line of reasoning and the quality of the evidence the author uses. This level of understanding allows students to recognize the implications and predict the consequences of an argument.

**Essential Questions:**

- What strategies will help me comprehend a text?
- What is the main idea of the argument or artistic work and what reasoning does the author use to develop it?
- What biases may the author have that influence his or her perspective?
- Does this argument acknowledge other perspectives?
- How can I assess the quality or strength of others' research, products, or artistic works?

**Big Idea #3: Evaluate Multiple Perspectives**

Understanding the complexity of an issue, idea, or problem requires students to compare and contrast different perspectives. These multiple perspectives, which may support, oppose, compete with, or otherwise vary from one another, come together to create the conversation on the issue. Students must consider the biases and assumptions behind those perspectives in order to evaluate their relevance and importance in the conversation. Evaluating multiple perspectives and arguments allows students to better understand the complexities of an issue or topic.

**Essential Questions:**

- How might others see a problem or issue differently?
- What patterns or trends can be identified among the arguments about this issue?
- What are the implications and/or consequences of accepting or rejecting a particular argument?
- How can I connect the multiple arguments? What other issues, questions, or topics do they relate to?
- How can I explain contradictions within or between arguments?
- From whose perspective is this information being presented, and how does that affect my evaluation?

**Big Idea #4: Synthesize Ideas**

Once enough information is gathered and evaluated, students synthesize their accumulated knowledge, emerging ideas, and perspectives to form conclusions of their own. Students must consider other points of view but also analyze material to develop their own perspectives and scholarly works. The goal is for students to think critically about the information and then add to, not simply repeat, the ideas of others. In this way, students establish a unique, creative voice within the larger conversation.

**Essential Questions**

- How do I connect and analyze the evidence in order to develop an argument and support a conclusion?
- Are there other conclusions I should consider?
- How does my scholarly work emerge from my perspective, design choices, or aesthetic rationale?
- How do I acknowledge and account for my own biases and assumptions?
- What is the most appropriate way to acknowledge and attribute the work of others that was used to support my argument? How do I ensure the conclusions I present are my own?

**Big Idea #5: Team, Transform, and Transmit**

Collaboration, communication, and reflection are skills that provide opportunities for students to develop their learning. When collaborating, students draw upon their own strengths and the strengths of teammates to achieve a common goal. An argument is effectively communicated when its purpose is clear, it is tailored to a specific audience and context, and it is conveyed through a medium appropriate and appealing to the intended audience. Adhering to standard language conventions and engaging delivery techniques establishes a writer's or speaker's credibility with his or her audience. Whether working alone or in a group, students reflect on their work and learning processes, which can lead to personal growth as well as even more effective inquiry, learning, and collaboration.

### **Essential Questions**

- How can I best appeal to and engage my audience?
- What is the best medium or genre through which to reach my audience?
- How might I adapt my written and oral presentations for different audiences and situations?
- How might my communication choices affect my credibility with my audience?
- Which revision strategies are most appropriate to developing and refining my project at different stages?
- How do I provide feedback that is valuable to others? How do I act upon feedback I have received?
- How can I benefit from reflecting on my own work?

### **General Course Timeline:**

- August-September: Students choose a topic/issue, carry out preliminary research, develop an annotated bibliography, and finalize a research question and proposal.
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- September-October: Students present a preliminary inquiry proposal for peer review; identify the need for, recruit, and begin communication with expert advisers; finalize and submit a proposal; and reflect on feedback received.
  - Formative Assessments:
    - Rubric and Evaluation of Papers: Apply assessment rubric components for the academic paper to sample student papers and identify the different levels of achievement evidenced in those samples
    - Annotated Bibliography I: Topic of Inquiry Background-Effectively search for and identify a broad range of perspectives and scholarly sources of information for the chosen field of study.
    - Focused Topic of Inquiry: Exhibit knowledge of the field of interest and develop a narrow, novel, researchable problem, topic, or idea.
- October-November: Students complete the background component of their inquiry and finalize the choice and design of their inquiry method. If necessary, they submit a revised version of their proposal for final approval. Proposals should be approved by the teacher no later than November 30.
  - Formative Assessments:
    - Peer Review of Research Questions: Differentiate between well- and poorly formed research questions, and offer/receive feedback on research question drafts.
    - Finalization of Research Question and Purpose of Inquiry: Develop a clearly articulated research question that is capable of being researched at this level and clearly articulate the purpose/goals of the inquiry.
    - Annotated Bibliography II: Discipline Specific Style with Literature Review: Perform an in-depth literature review that outlines the scholarly source

materials used and how the materials offer information and views relating to the question. Demonstrate comprehensiveness of the literature review as exhibited by breadth, relevance, currency, availability, and authority within chosen resources, using the discipline-specific style common to the field of study

- Annotated Bibliography III: Inquiry Methods of the Field of Study: Identify the research question, variables, measurements, and limitations within published quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research studies. Differentiate between the purpose and components of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies.
- Poster Presentation of Research Proposal: Effectively articulate the focused topic of inquiry, research question, overview of the knowledge of the field, gap the chosen inquiry fills, and selected or designed method of inquiry to collect data to address research question or inquiry topic.
- November-January: Students implement their inquiry methods while engaging in progress and reflection interviews with the teacher to ensure challenges with methods and time management are addressed. Students curate the inquiry process, writing, and reflection artifacts from September to March in their process and reflection portfolios (PREP).
- January-March: Students write, proofread, peer review, and submit their academic papers, ensuring all components are present and meet rubric criteria. Students finalize additional scholarly work or product if such was required as a result of their inquiry
  - Formative Assessments (Nov-March)
    - Inquiry Method Design: Describe procedures used for analysis in sufficient detail to permit understanding of how the data were analyzed and the processes and assumptions underlying specific techniques. Evaluate the fit between the purpose of the proposal, its research design, and its data collection strategy
    - Biweekly Work in Progress Interview: Exhibit regular maintenance of a research portfolio to record revisions, amendments, and reflections during the inquiry process. Prepare and periodically update timetable or project plan that clearly outlines what activities must be accomplished and the deadlines by which the objectives of the course must be achieved.
    - Biweekly Peer Review: Review and revise the elements of the academic paper with attention paid to the purpose, research question, and research method to ensure clarity and alignment and to address peer, teacher, and expert adviser feedback.
- March-April: Teachers score and students present their work.
  - March 15–30: Students complete papers.
  - April 1–15: Students prepare, practice, and deliver presentations with oral defense. Students must arrange for viewing of additional scholarly work by teacher and panelists prior to giving their presentations and oral defense (where applicable).
  - April 15–April 30: Students finalize and upload academic papers in the AP Digital Portfolio.
    - Formative Assessments
      - Practice Presentations: Exhibit polished articulation and effective presentation of the inquiry performed.
      - Peer Panels: Exhibit depth of knowledge of topic of inquiry and articulation of choices made in design and interpretation/synthesis

of evidence through the research project through responses to feedback and suggestions for revision.

### **AP Research Assessment Overview**

- **AP Research Through Course Performance Task:** Students design, plan, and implement a yearlong, in-depth study or investigation in an area of personal interest through a chosen or designed inquiry method and develop a well-reasoned argument based on the evidence collected in an academic paper of 4,000–5,000 words. As a culmination of their research, students deliver (using appropriate media) a presentation and orally defend their research design, approach, and findings. Students whose academic paper is accompanied by an additional piece of scholarly work (e.g., performance, exhibit, product) must arrange for the teacher and panelists to view this work prior to the presentation and oral defense. Throughout the inquiry process, students communicate regularly with their teacher and, when appropriate, consult with an internal or external expert.
  - Academic Paper (4,000-5,000 words): The body of the academic paper must contain the elements listed in the following table. These elements should be presented in a style and structure appropriate to the discipline in which the topic resides (e.g., psychology, science, music). Abstracts, if included, are not considered part of the body of the academic paper and are not assessed. The academic paper must be written for an educated, non-expert audience.
    - Introduction and Literature Review: Introduces research question/project goal and reviews previous work in the field. Synthesizes the varying perspectives in the scholarly literature to situate the research question/project goal within a gap in the current field of knowledge.
    - Method, Process, or Approach: Explains and provides justification for the chosen method, process, or approach and its alignment with the research question.
    - Results, Product, or Findings: Presents the findings, evidence, results, or performance/exhibit/product generated by the research method.
    - Discussion, Analysis and/or Evaluation: Interprets the significance of the results, performance/exhibit/product, or findings; explores connections to original research question/project goal.
    - Conclusions and Future Directions: Articulates the new understanding generated through the research process and the limitations of the conclusion or creative work. Discusses the implications to the community of practice. Identifies areas for future research.
    - Bibliography: Provides a complete list of sources cited and consulted in the appropriate disciplinary style.
  - Presentation and Oral Defense: All students will develop a 15–20 minute presentation (using appropriate media) and deliver it to an oral defense panel of three evaluators. It is suggested that students’ oral presentation be no longer than 15 minutes to ensure at least 5 minutes for the oral defense. The presentation and oral defense should take no longer than 15–20 minutes total. Like the academic paper, the presentation provides an opportunity for students to showcase their research by communicating effectively and succinctly to an audience of educated, non-experts. Students whose academic paper is accompanied by an additional piece of scholarly work (e.g., performance, exhibit, product) must arrange for the teacher and panelists to view this work prior to the presentation and oral defense.
    - Following the presentation, an oral defense panel will ask three questions of the student. The panel must consist of the AP Research teacher and two

additional adult panel members (preferably expert advisers or discipline specific experts) chosen by the AP Research teacher. This evaluative component is designed to assess a student's articulation of the inquiry process, understanding of results and conclusions, and reflection on the research experience.

**Budget-** budget figures must be included even if they are an estimate.

Projected Costs	Start-up	Ongoing
Personnel (Not to include classroom instructor unless a new section is needed)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Instructional Material Supplies per student (textbooks, software, etc.)	40 copies of <i>Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches</i> . \$44.99 per copy, \$1799.60	\$0.00
Services (training, equipment maintenance, contracts, etc.)	\$0.00 AP Research training can be funded through each specific site council.	\$0.00
Capital Outlay (remodeling, technology, etc.)	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Projected Costs</b>	<b>\$1799.60</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

**Instructional Materials-** must include an estimate for new materials even if none have been selected. Place in the chart above.

Type	Publisher	Title	ISBN	Author	Copyright	# Have/Need
Textbook	SAGE Publications	<i>Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches (6th Edition)</i>	978-1071 817940	John Cresswell, J David Cresswell	2022	Have 0 Need 40

**Funding Source(s) for Costs and Instructional Materials**

Grants (indicate specific grant and grant timeline)	
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Categorical Funds (include related programs)	
Career Technical Education (must be for an approved CTE course)	
Department Funds	
Other (be specific)	

**District Principal Review and Approvals:**

<b>Principals' Signatures</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Approved / Not Approved</b>
	Elsie Allen High School	
<i>Amy Wiese</i>	Maria Carrillo High School	Approved
<i>April Santos</i>	Montgomery High School	Approved
<i>Andrea Correia</i>	Piner High School	Approved
<i>Donna Garibaldi</i>	Ridgway High School	Approved
<i>Monica Fong</i>	Santa Rosa High School	Approved

**District Department Chair Review and Approvals:**

<b>Department Chair Signatures</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Approved / Not Approved</b>
<i>Mike Charpiot</i>	Elsie Allen High School	Approved
<i>Jerry Deakins</i>	Maria Carrillo High School	Approved
<i>Matt Hillestad</i>	Montgomery High School	Approved
<i>Sean Sutherland</i>	Piner High School	Approved
<i>Jordan Lewis</i>	Ridgway High School	Approved
<i>Ashley Bell</i>	Santa Rosa High School	Approved