URBDP 512: Research Design and Capstone Preparation
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Instructor: Branden Born | bborn@uw.edu

Course Description and Overview

This course focuses on introducing students to the fundamentals of applied research. Regardless of future pursuits, academic or professional, understanding how to ask and answer questions of interest to our field is a fundamental skill. This course is designed to prepare students for professional practice or academic advancement, and through the exercises in the course they will prepare a draft master's thesis or professional project proposal.

The Move from Classroom to Remote Instruction to Online Course

In the UW's shift to remote classes, Spring Quarter 2020 was truly an exercise of just getting by. Pedagogically (that is, from a teaching perspective) I would describe that shift online as "remote instruction" in which we did the best we could in short order to run our classes using a new online environment, usually Zoom. Online classes, however, are different: they are designed to be offered in the online space as the course's native environment. They take advantage of multiple online resources not often included in in-person courses, and are mostly offered asynchronously (that is, the class does not meet all together at the same time) to accommodate students in different time zones. I am going to try transitioning this class to a mostly online course, with our time spent together (synchronously) used for discussion and interactive engagement. I hope this makes the class educationally valuable, interesting, and engaging.

The class meets twice weekly online and will generally follow a "flipped" classroom model in which students are required to read/watch materials prior to class and we will use our Zoom time together for a combination of review of key points, questions, and small group work. As such, you'll need to do the reading/watching/thinking for each session BEFORE the session, at times convenient to you. There may be times when due to either the workload or specific topic material we may not hold the class Zoom session.

As we approach our in-class time, we will work to accommodate students in different time zones as necessary.

The course will begin with general considerations about research, including considering research approaches, designs, choosing topics, identifying questions, and the use of theory. We will also take into account research ethics. Next the course will cover literature reviews and general writing strategies before moving into the nuts and bolts of the capstone proposal. The material will then move through the logic and rationale of the introduction and purpose statement, as well as very practically oriented communication techniques for your work. We will explore moving your research topic to a research question, and the considerations of methods to support your questions. We will discuss qualitative,

quantitative, and design methods. While the text covers mixed methods, this course will not address mixed methods research because it is a challenging approach to a MUP capstone. If you choose that path, of course, you should read the final chapter in the Creswell text.

The course modules will cover the following topics:

Module 1: Introduction to Research Design and Capstone Options (first week, synchronous Zoom session)

Module 2: Preliminary Considerations: Research Approaches, Designs, Research Topic and Question(s),

        Preliminary Considerations: Use of Theory, Research Ethics

        Preliminary Considerations: Literature Review and Writing Strategies

Module 3: Designing your Research: Research Questions (and Hypotheses?)

        Designing your Research: Quantitative Methods

        Designing your Research: Qualitative Methods

Module 4: Practical Considerations: Writing the Proposal, Writing the Thesis, Working with Your Committee

Module 5: Communicating your Work: Posters and Elevator Pitches

        Student Poster Presentations

You can access all the course materials in sequence through the Modules link in Canvas.

The Pandemic, You, and Your Coursework

I think it is important to note that this course, along with the rest of your courses at UW, is being offered in the midst of a pandemic, and most of us did not expect to be dealing with this as background to our educational experience. The pandemic brings many stresses to all of us, and in disparate ways--most not visible or immediately obvious. It is extremely important for you to take care of yourselves as a first priority, and this may require you to be advocates for your own personal and mental health. This may be a new or uncomfortable role for you, but I strongly advise you to take it seriously. Speaking for myself and for this class, I will work with you to meet your educational goals and needs in this class while simultaneously respecting the rest of your important, complex, nuanced life. If you need assistance in approaching faculty members, or want to comment on the program itself, you can reach out to me, or the graduate program administrator, Diana Siembor, the graduate program coordinator, Rachel Berney, or the Chair of the Department of Urban Design and Planning, Christopher Campbell. I know all of us are very interested in your well-being and success.

Course Objectives

There are several learning objectives for students in this class. At the end of the class, students should:

Understand the terminology of research, including its purposes, forms, and associated methods. Have developed familiarity and skill in framing, planning, designing, executing, and presenting research in the planning field.

Know about basic and intermediate quantitative and qualitative research methods and designs. Understand and have experience in conducting literature reviews, developing purpose

statements, and introducing others to their work.

Understand and become comfortable with the process of developing a research proposal. Understand and be prepared for the various capstone project possibilities and processes.

Materially, students will have a fully developed thesis or professional project proposal done by the end of the class. This will include the introduction, purpose statement, literature review of no fewer than 20 articles or similarly academically relevant pieces of literature, and a basic methods section. Note that this is a derivative product of the actual objectives of the course; it is not the course objective in itself.

Requirements, Grading, and Coursework (DON'T FALL BEHIND)

This class meets twice a week. There is required reading for most course days, including a textbook and articles supporting your literature review, which you will be developing over the quarter. Students are expected to listen to/watch each lecture, attend each class and/or small group session, have read the assigned material, and be prepared to discuss their work. **You should plan on approximately three hours of work outside of class per hour inside class, per week. This means about nine hours of work every week outside of class**, though it could be more if you choose to advance your thesis work accordingly. (Public Service Announcement: don't fall behind)

There will be several formal assignments and regular opportunities to work in assigned learning groups to advance your thinking on your thesis/project. *You should come to class/session fully prepared, having done the reading and the homework. If you have not done the required preparation, you will slow down your group and your own progress in the class and in your capstone project.* Ultimately, not doing homework and readings will very quickly lead to a failing grade. Of course, I don't expect any of this to happen. But be aware that it's very easy to fall behind (avoid this temptation), and very difficult to catch up.

You are strongly recommended to choose your capstone (thesis or professional project) topic and use the work of this class to develop it. The class includes a thesis proposal as an outcome, and you should be well-positioned by the end of the course to fill your supervisory committee and pursue the work necessary to complete your capstone for timely graduation.

Homework is to be submitted through the course Canvas site (you will want a copy in class and small group sessions for reference). The assignments are designed to emphasize important elements in developing research questions, methods, and proposals, and are organized in a stepwise fashion to build on each other. They provide students an opportunity to put considerable thought into, and present, meaningful professionally-oriented deliverables. **In fairness to your fellow students and the graders, we only begrudgingly accept late homework without prior accommodation; we will deduct 10% for each day homework is late, to a maximum 50% deduction. We reserve the right to not accept homework after seven days.** This also allows for more timely and constructive feedback, as well.

The class will be divided into learning groups in the first week to discuss the homework and your proposal development progress.

Grading

Grades will be calculated based on the assignments, class participation, one midterm exam, a poster for presentation of your work, and the final proposal paper and presentation as follows (this may change slightly)

Assignment Percent

      Assignments **40%**
      Midterm Exam **15%**
      Participation (class and small groups) **20%**
      Final Proposal **20%**
      Final Presentation and Research Poster **5%**

As all quarter-based classes, this one moves fast, so please stay on top of your assignments. For assignments, a 10% deduction will be made for each day late, to a maximum of 50% penalty, and we reserve the right to not accept assignments after seven days.

You will receive a numeric grade for this course. The numeric grading system used by the University of Washington relies on a decimal scale between 1.7 (low) and 4.0 (high).

For graduate courses, grades below 1.7 are recorded as 0.0 and no credit is earned. A minimum of 2.7 is required in each course that is counted toward a graduate degree. A 3.0 cumulative average in graduate work is required to receive a graduate degree.

Here are descriptions of the criteria for your performance in this class. If you meet these criteria for all your work, you will be graded accordingly, using the full four-point scale.

  4.0   Excellent and exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is consistently creative (where appropriate), thorough, well-reasoned, insightful, well written and shows clear recognition and incisive understanding of the important materials and issues. All assignments submitted are of good professional quality. The value of individual contributions to this course is considerable and positively affects the learning of all participants.

  3.7   Strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level sometimes shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well reasoned, and demonstrates clear recognition and good understanding of the important materials and issues. Assignments submitted lack professional quality but demonstrate effort and concern for quality. The value of individual contributions to the course is strong and occasionally significant.

  3.3   Competent and sound work for a graduate student. Work is well reasoned and thorough

but not especially creative or insightful. The student shows adequate understanding of the important materials and issues although that understanding may be somewhat incomplete. Work submitted is competent but not remarkable. The value of individual contributions to the course is such that they do not influence the quality of the course one way or the other. This grade indicates neither exceptional strengths nor exceptional weaknesses, but is the grade for "average" graduate performance.

3.0   Adequate work for a graduate student. Work is moderately thorough and well reasoned, but with some indications that some of the important materials and issues is less than complete and perhaps inadequate for graduate study. The value of individual contributions to the course is minimal. However, the work is above the minimal expectations for the course.

2.7   Borderline work for a graduate student. Work barely meets the minimal expectations for the course and may occasionally fall below them. Understanding of the important materials and issues is incomplete or has not been demonstrated. There is little positive value in the individual contributions to the course and there may even be negative effects on the overall learning.

Disabilities and the [Virtual] Classroom

Differently-abled students are always welcome in my class. If you have a disability that makes it difficult for you to carry out the coursework as outlined and/or requires accommodations, such as recruiting note takers, readers, or extended time on exams or assignments, please contact Disabled Student Resources through the UW website, and they will be able to provide you with information and arrangements for reasonable accommodation. The Canvas LMS also offers several alternative formats for accessibility.

Academic Integrity

It should go without saying, but the work you do in this class represents you, and any work submitted must, in fact, be yours. I encourage you to make it of the highest quality—it will benefit you in many ways to do so, not the least of which will be to significantly advance your required thesis or professional project. Cheating or plagiarism of any kind will not be accepted and students found in violation will be referred to the CBE Dean's office following CBE policy. Notice: The University has a license agreement with SimCheck, an educational tool that helps prevent or identify plagiarism from Internet resources. I may use the service in this class by requiring that assignments are submitted electronically to be checked by SimCheck. The SimCheck Report will indicate the amount of original text in your work and whether all material that you quoted, paraphrased, summarized, or used from another source is appropriately referenced.

My Expectations of Us

The classroom is a special environment for collaborative learning--and the online "classroom" is pretty new to all of us. So be patient with your colleagues. This is a unique time in all of our lives and will require a level of self-awareness, patience, and kindness not normally present in university classrooms. My classroom style is relatively casual and (hopefully) friendly though demanding--I think this carries

over to the online environment (but I'm on this side of the computer--it may be a different experience for you). Sometimes I can be quite frank in my assessments, and our TA will be offering regular critique to your work. We expect that you will take these comments seriously and adapt your work as necessary.

It is important for you to understand that you need not agree with me, nor other students in the class. However, it is essential to the learning environment of the classroom that respect for others and the general goals of academic freedom of inquiry are maintained. The (virtual) classroom is a place in which differences of opinion should be expressed in a manner that supports the learning process of everyone in the class. As a shared cultural space, I hope we build the class to be a learning environment in which students and faculty may collectively and individually learn to reason with clarity and compassion, and share of themselves without losing their identities. There is much to be learned in studying how to

design--how to think about--research. Student (and faculty) conduct must be consistent with these classroom norms.

Religious Accommodation

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for the accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at **Religious Accommodations Policy (https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious accommodations-policy/)** Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the **Religious Accommodations Request form https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-reques/**

Required Texts and Resources

John Creswell, 2014. Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches, 4 edition. Sage. (Required, and 5th edition ok, too, buy used if you want to save some bucks!) Sections from Paul Leedy's Practical Research, posted to Canvas as necessary. Pat Thompson's writing blog, Patter: **https://patthomson.net** Raul Pacheco Vega's resource pages/blog: **http://www.raulpacheco.org/resources/**
University of Wisconsin Writer's Handbook:
https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/index.html
Strunk and White, The Elements of Style. (Own this. Available for less than five bucks). Not the best for style, but good basics. Move beyond it when you are ready. Not before. UW's Mendeley (or choose another) citation manager page:
http://guides.lib.uw.edu/research/mendeley Tips and resources shared with this class in previous years: **$WIKI_REFERENCE$/pages/tips-and resources**