URBDP 512 A Au 24: Research Seminar

DEPARTMENT OF URBAN DESIGN AND PLANNING

URBDP 512 RESEARCH SEMINAR

Course Description and Overview

This course focuses on introducing you 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 you for professional practice or academic advancement. During this course you will also learn the basics of how to prepare project communication documents for research, projects and grants, including introductions, basic literature reviews, and basic methods descriptions. This knowledge will help you when you create these products for your professional projects, theses, APA conference proceedings, and beyond.

Course Logistics

The class meets twice weekly and will generally follow a "flipped" classroom model in which you are required to read/watch materials prior to class and we will use our class 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.**

The course will begin with general considerations about research, including considering research approaches and designs, choosing topics, identifying questions, and using theory. We will also consider 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 the challenge of moving your research topic to a research question and consider methods to support your questions. We will discuss qualitative, quantitative, and design methods. While the text(s) mention mixed methods, this course will not address mixed methods research because it is a challenging approach to a MUP capstone given your time limitations.

The course modules will cover the following topics:

1. Topic 1, **Introduction** to Research Design and Capstone Options (first day!)
2. Topic 2, **Preliminary Considerations**: Research Approaches, Designs, Research Topic and Question(s),
3. Topic 2, **Preliminary Considerations**: Use of Theory, Research Ethics

4. Topic 2, **Preliminary Considerations**: Literature Review and Writing Strategies
5. Topic 3, **Designing your Research**: Research Questions (and Hypotheses?)
6. Topic 3, **Designing your Research**: Quantitative Methods
7. Topic 3, **Designing your Research**: Qualitative Methods
8. Topic 4, **Practical Considerations**: Writing the Proposal, Writing the Thesis, Working with Your Committee

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

Course Objectives

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

Be familiar with and understand the research terminology, including its purposes, forms, and associated methods.

Have introductory experience 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 the purpose of literature reviews and have experience writing them, developing purpose statements, and succinctly 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.

While this class is designed to assist you with your eventual capstone thesis/professional project, you are not expected to have or use your capstone project as the basis of the assignments. You may do that and could find it beneficial, but that is neither the intent nor a requirement.

Requirements, Grading, and Coursework

This class meets twice a week. There is required reading for most course days, including a textbook, supplemental articles, and blog posts emphasizing class material. Students must listen to/watch each lecture, attend each class and/or small group session, read the assigned material, and be prepared to

discuss their work. **You should plan on approximately two to three hours of work outside of class per hour inside class, per week. This means about six to nine hours of work every week outside of class**, though it could be more if you choose to advance your thesis work accordingly.

There are regular assignments, in-class short writing sessions, and opportunities to work in learning groups to advance your thinking on your work for the class. Accordingly, y*ou should come to class/session fully prepared, having done the reading and the homework.*

Homework is to be submitted through the course Canvas site (you may 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 allow students to put considerable thought into and present meaningful, professionally-oriented deliverables. Assignments have specific deadlines aligned with the class's progress, but **you may turn in assignments one class late without penalty,** except that you may receive less feedback due to the difficulty placed on the grader. **Importantly, this is a hard limit to the grace period, after which you will not receive credit for the assignment.** In any case, you should do your homework on time as a rule—you will be discussing it in most classes.

Grading

Grades will be calculated based on the assignments, a midterm exam, and class participation. Class participation will include in-class writing sessions regular bar trivia/gameshow-inspired questions for the small groups. Your cumulative point totals will be added to the midterm exam and final grade scores.

Assignment Percent

Assignments: 40%

Participation (class and small groups,

including quizzes and exercises): 30%

Midterm Exam: 30%

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.

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 are 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.

Illness Considerations

This class is conducted in person; **students who feel ill should not come to class** and should consider immediate COVID testing. Please feel free to wear a mask in this class, especially if you are recovering from or feeling a bit off. Students are expected to participate in class to fully benefit from course activities and meet the course's learning objectives. If you must be absent, it is your responsibility to inform the instructor and TA in advance (or as close to the class period as possible in the case of an unexpected absence) and to keep up with coursework. For chronic absences, the instructor may award an incomplete grade after the 8th week or recommend the student contact their academic adviser to consider a hardship withdrawal (known as a Registrar Drop).

You may be eligible for an accommodation administered by the Disability Resources for Students (DRS) to take classes remotely if you are:
a. Immunocompromised
b. Experiencing other diagnosed physical or mental health conditions that preclude you from participating in class in person.

If you think you may qualify for formal accommodation, we encourage you to visit Disability Resources for Students (DRS) and apply by completing the necessary steps as soon as possible.

Disabilities and the 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 Disability Resources for Students 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, including preparing you for a 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. **Cheating includes inappropriate use of AI for completing your assignments. We will discuss the appropriate use of AI for this class. At a minimum, you must 1. say if you used AI, 2. tell me which program/platform you used and why, 3. describe how you used it, that is, what for and in what ways (before, after, ideas, outlines, etc.), and 4. you cannot use AI generative writing to DO the work, though you might use it in numerous ways to ASSIST you in doing the work.**

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. I also reserve the right to use AI detection software.

My Expectations of Us

The classroom is a special environment for collaborative learning. In that process, you will provide and receive feedback. Instructors will offer regular critiques of your work. **We expect that you will take these comments seriously and adapt your work as necessary. Iteration is a crucial component of developing quality research designs/proposals.**

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 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 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/)** (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-request/)** (https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/) .

Required Texts and Resources

Stuart Farthington, 2016. **Research Design in Urban Planning: A Student's Guide (https://www.amazon.com/Research-Design-Urban-Planning-Students-ebook/dp/B017RCLML4)** . Also **available (https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/research-design-in-urban-planning-stuart farthing/1126361368) elsewhere (https://www.abebooks.com/book-search/title/research-design urban-planning/author/farthing-stuart/)** and available through the UW library as an ebook. Pat Thompson's writing blog, Patter: **https://patthomson.net (https://patthomson.net)** Raul Pacheco Vega's resource pages/blog: **http://www.raulpacheco.org/resources/ (http://www.raulpacheco.org/resources/)**

University of Wisconsin Writer's Handbook:

https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/index.html (https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/index.html)

Strunk and White, The Elements of Style. (**Own this**. Available used for less than five bucks). Not the best for style, but good basics. **Move beyond it when you are ready. Not before**. Natalie Macris, Planning in Plain English. Available on reserve in CBE library.

UW's Mendeley (or choose another) citation manager page:

http://guides.lib.uw.edu/research/mendeley (http://guides.lib.uw.edu/research/mendeley)

Tips and resources shared with this class in previous years: **$WIKI_REFERENCE$/pages/tips-and resources (https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1752517/pages/gfafa71c3c15c4e73ac69719fcf310e39)**

Optional but highly recommended for those interested in research in professional or academic settings:

John Creswell, 20xx. Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches. Sage. (save money by getting the cheapest of 4th or 5th edition)