

**URP6203: Planning Research Design
Summer A, 2018**

Instructor Contact Information

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Course Statement

In your career, you might be called upon to understand research from a spectrum of fields as broad as sociology, education, civil engineering, environmental psychology, and climatology, as well as the health, political, and environmental sciences. More, planners are often expected to give evidence of current harms and future threats while collaborating on the development of evidence-based solutions. Planners work with a wide variety of stakeholders including commissioners, administrators, developers, chambers of commerce, school districts, and community interest groups, any of whom may also make use of the latest research. It is rarely enough to simply be familiar with the latest research: Planners also have to evaluate the validity of that research and assess its relevance, and usefulness in a given situation.

This course was initially developed by Dr. Ruth Steiner, an experienced planning researcher, and URP faculty member.

Course Description

This course is about how to do research in planning practice. It emphasizes the conceptualization of a research design, the selection of a study design and information-gathering and analytical strategies, including case studies, experimental and quasi-experimental design, survey methods, open-ended interviewing, and observation. It also deals with how to develop and use a conceptual framework that will assure that the information gathered is pertinent and useful to answer the questions that may be addressed in a master's thesis or that a policymaker might ask. Thus, the course focuses on defining planning problems and suitable research questions, the development of simple conceptual models, taking concepts and operationalizing them into variables, understanding the types of study designs and data collection methodologies available to understand planning problems, and developing an overall strategy for the design and conduct of research. As part of the course, each student will need to make some basic decision about your Master's Research Project.

As a planner you will be called upon identify and consider authoritative research—the latest knowledge—about planning problems. One of the best ways to understand research is to do it. Therefore, the course will be taught in the context of developing your ideas for your Master's Research Project (or terminal project). The course will involve a series of assignments where students develop and use study designs and data collection methodologies to help develop information that is potentially useful in defining a research topic and in writing a research proposal on that topic. Classes will be a combination of lecture, group exercises, and discussion.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, you should be able to:

- Summarize the research process and the variety of study designs and data collection methodologies.
- Structure appropriate and concise research questions and conceptualize the relationships within them.
- Create a study design and data collection methodology appropriate to the question being asked.

Required Materials

- *Kumar, Ranjit. (2014). Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners. Fourth Edition. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.*
- *Sommer and Sommer (2001). A practical Guide to Behavioral Research: Tools and Techniques. Fifth Edition. Oxford Publication Press. New York.*
- *Turabian, Kate L. (2007). A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (Seventh Edition). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (available in e-book format)*

Recommended Materials

- *Hart, Chris. (1998). Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Imagination. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.*
- *Williams, Joseph M. (2007). Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace, Ninth Edition. New York: Longman. Other recommended materials are referenced in the course content.*

Course Technology:

In the event that you have technical difficulties with e-Learning, please contact the UF Help Desk. If your technical difficulties will cause you to miss a due date, you MUST report the problem to Help Desk. Include the ticket number and an explanation of the issue based on consult with Help Desk in an email to the instructor to explain the late assignment/quiz/test. The course faculty reserves the right to accept or decline tickets from the UF Help Desk based on individual circumstances.

Student Support Services

For any technical issues you encounter with your course please contact the UF computing Help Desk at 342-392-HELP (4357), select option 2. For Help Desk hours visit: Information Technology–UF Computing Help Desk (<http://helpdesk.ufl.edu>).

University Policies

University policies on such matters as add/drop, incomplete, academic probation, termination of enrollment, reinstatement, and other expectations or procedures can be found in the graduate student handbook (<http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/student-life-and-support/student-handbook>) and at the Dean of Students website (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/>).

University Policy on Academic Misconduct

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>).

Netiquette: Communication Courtesy

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. Course communication should be civilized and respectful to everyone. The means of communication provided to you through e-Learning (email, discussion posts, course questions, and chats) are at your full disposal to use in a respectful manner. Abuse of this system and its tools through disruptive conduct, harassment, or overall disruption of course activity will not be tolerated. Conduct that is deemed to be in violation with University rules and regulations or the Code of Student Conduct will result in a report to the Dean of Students.

Refer to the Netiquette Guide for Online Courses (<http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>) for more information.

Student Honor Code

In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. Student and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>).

The Honor Pledge : We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

Special Accommodations and Complaints

Students requesting disability-related academic accommodations must first register with the Disability Resource Center (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>). The Disability Resource Center will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course please visit [Student Complaints](#) (Links to an external site.) to submit a complaint.

Student Responsibility and Grading

Students will be graded on four major assignments, the minor, discussions and the final presentation on their research topic. A total of 1000 points will be assigned for the semester.

Assignment	POINTS
Major Assignments	
• Major Assignment 1: Defining a Researchable Planning Problem	150
• Major Assignment 2: Literature Review	150
• Major Assignment 3: Interviewing	150
• Major Assignment 4: Research Design	250
Minor Assignment	
• Minor Assignment I: Schedule of Activities	10
• Minor Assignment II: Strategy for Literature Review	10
• Minor Assignment III: Review of Completed Thesis/Master's Research Project	10
• Minor Assignment IV: Identifying Variables and Constructing Hypotheses	10
• Minor Assignment V: Conceptualizing a Study Design	10
• Minor Assignment VI: Conceptualizing a Research Instrument/Data Collection Strategy/Selecting a Sample	20
• Minor Assignment VII: Review and Critique of the Work of a Colleague	20
Discussions and Participation	10
Presentation of Research Design for peer review	200
TOTAL	1000

All written assignments must be typewritten and turned in through the Canvas system. Like all professional work, all assignments must be turned in on time. Grades on late assignments may be lowered by one grade for each day they are late. See details on assignments below. All students in the Urban and Regional Planning program are required to attend at least two master's thesis or project defenses before they graduate from the program. As a part of the attendance and participation portion of this course, students are required to attend one thesis or project defense during the semester.

Grading Scheme

LETTER GRADE	PERCENTAGE	GRADE POINTS
E	Below 55%	0.00
A	93-100%	4.00
A-	90-92.9%	3.67
B+	88-89.9%	3.33
B	83-87.9%	3.00
B-	80-82.9%	2.67
C+	78-79.9%	2.33
C	73-77.9%	2.00
C-	70-72.9%	1.67
D+	68-69.9%	1.33
D	58-67.9%	1.00
D-	55-57.9%	0.67

Modules

Week 1: Module 1: Overview of Research Process, Resources, and Developing a Research Topic

- In this module, we will learn about the role of research in professional activities, how to begin to organize and track your own research, and how to develop a research topic for your master's research project.
- ***Student Learning Objective:***
 - Understand the role of research in professional planning practice.
 - Understand the steps in conducting research.
 - Select a broad area of research interest and identify potential research questions related to that area of research.
 - Plan your progress on your master's research project for this semester and the rest of your program.
 - Differentiate differences and similarities in problem framing based upon the perspective of the participant in the public policy discussion.
- ***Required Readings:***
 - Kumar, Chapters 1 and 2
 - Sommer and Sommer, Chapter 1
 - Turabian, Chapters 1, 2, 15, 18 and 19
- Additional Readings
 - The University of Wisconsin – Madison Writing Center. (2009). APA Documentation. (2009). Retrieved from: <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPA.html>
 - The University of Wisconsin – Madison Writing Center (2010, January 20). American Psychological Association (APA) Documentation. Retrieved from: [http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/American_Psychological_Association_\(APA\)_Documentation_M.pdf](http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/American_Psychological_Association_(APA)_Documentation_M.pdf)
 - American Psychological Association (APA) (2015). APA Style. Retrieved from; <http://www.apastyle.org/>
 - Harvard College Writing Program. (2013) “What Constitutes Plagiarism?” Harvard Guide to Using Sources. Available at: <https://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/>
- **Assignments and Submissions**
 - **Minor Assignment I (due on Wednesday of Week 1):** Develop a schedule of activities related to your thesis with a focus on this semester. This assignment can be in any format you choose, but at a minimum it should show the activities you plan to complete each week, including class assignments, readings, and presentations; this means that you should identify a format that is consistent with the manner in which you organize your activities. It should also include a general overview of the activities you plan to complete in each of the subsequent semesters until you graduate. In this assignment, you should not simply copy the course syllabus and show the readings; I already know your assignments. I want to know what you are going to do that is related to your thesis including the class assignments.
 - **Major Assignment 1 (Due on Saturday of Week 1):** Defining a Researchable Planning Problem you are interested in conducting research.

Week 2: Module 2: The Literature Review

- In this module, we will learn how to identify sources of materials for your research, strategize about the types of keywords you will use in your literature review, and begin to prepare questions for your in-person open-ended interview-guide interview.
- **Student Learning Objective:**
 - Understand the role of the literature review in your research
 - Develop a strategy for identifying literature sources related to your research
 - Identify and evaluate authoritative research as a part of your literature review
 - Understand the process of conducting interviews
 - Select a broad area of research interest and identify potential research questions related to that area of research
 - Create sample questions to review with your colleagues in preparation for scheduling an interview with an expert in your area of interest.
 - Review and critique questions for your interview with members of your group.
- **Required readings:**
 - Kumar, Chapter 3
 - Sommer and Sommer, Chapter 3
 - Turabian, Chapters 3 and 4
- **Additional Readings (review):**
 - Hofstee, Erik. (2006) “Literature Review” Constructing a Good Dissertation: A Practical Guide to Finishing a Master’s, MBA or PhD on Schedule. Available at: <http://www.exactica.co.za/book-chapters.php>
 - University of Toronto. (2013). “Literature Review: A Few Tips on Conducting It” Available at: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/literature-review>
 - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Writing Center. (2010-12). “Literature Reviews” Available at: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/literature-reviews/>
 - Harvard College Writing Program. (2013) “What’s Wrong with Wikipedia?” Harvard Guide to Using Sources. Retrieved from: <https://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/whats-wrong-wikipedia>
- **Assignments and Submissions**
 - **Minor Assignment II:** (Due – Wednesday of Week 2) Develop a strategy for your literature review.
 - **Minor Assignment III:** (Due – Friday of Week 2) Review of Completed Thesis/Master’s Research Project

Week 3: Module 3: Writing Research Statement; Constructing Hypotheses, Identifying Variables

- In this module, we will learn how to identify concepts in your research, operationalize concepts into measurable variables, construct hypotheses, and develop conceptual models that identify relations between concepts in your research.
- **Student Learning Objective:**
 - Develop operational definitions of variables of importance to your research.
 - Identify concepts used in your research and their relationship to each other.

- Construct a conceptual model of the relationships between variables in your research.
- Identify variables in your research and construct a hypothesis about their relationships to each other
- **Required Reading (Identifying Variables):**
 - Kumar, Chapter 5
- **Required readings (Conceptual Modeling):**
 - Kumar, Chapter 6
 - Robert Mayer and E. Greenwood, *The Design of Social Science Policy Research*, 1980;
- **Review:**
 - Sommer and Sommer, Chapter 1, pp. 1-12.
- **Assignments and Submissions**
 - **Minor Assignment IV** (Due – Friday of Week 3): Identifying Variables and Constructing Hypotheses
 - **Major Assignment 2** (Due –Saturday of Week 3): Literature Review

Week 4: Module 4: Types of Study and Selecting a Study Design

- In this module, we will learn the steps in research design and the differences between qualitative and quantitative research and the various types of study designs that are used in research.
- **Student Learning Objective:**
 - Understand the components of a research design
 - Identify the differences and similarities between qualitative and quantitative study designs
 - Recognize various types of study designs
 - Assess the applicability of various study designs to the Florida Traffic and Bicycle Safety Education Program
 - Produce a study design
 - Identify the strengths and weaknesses of your research design and the potential data collection methodologies
- **Required readings (The Research Design):**
 - Kumar, Chapter 7
 - Turabian, Chapter 5
- **Additional Readings:**
 - Hart, Chapter 4
- **Required Readings (Selecting a Study Design: Action Research, Case Studies):**
 - Kumar, Chapter 8 (review)
 - Sommer and Sommer, Chapters 7, 13 and 14
- **Recommended reading:**
 - Yin, Robert. 2003. “Introduction” and “Designing Case Studies” Chapters 1 and 2 in *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. (on reserve)
- **Review**
 - Sommer and Sommer, Chapter 1, pp. 1-12.
- **Assignments and Submissions:**
 - **Major Assignment 3:** Interviewing assigned (Due – Friday of Week 7)

- As a part of Major Assignment 3: Develop at least six questions for your key informant and bring them to class on Wednesday, February 21. Note that for the final assignment, you will develop additional questions (See Kumar, Chapter 9)
- **Minor Assignment V** (Due –Friday of Week 4): Conceptualizing a Study Design

Week5: Module 5: Selecting a Method of Data Collection

- In this module, we will learn various data collection methodologies: secondary data collection (using data from Census) and primary data collection (including survey method, key informant interviews, focus group research, observation method), and and sampling.
- **Student Learning Objective:**
 - Judge the applicability of various data collection methodologies to research design
 - Identify the strengths and weaknesses of potential data collection methodologies
- **Required Reading Selecting a Method of Data Collection – Interviews; Questionnaires and Focus Group Discussion**
 - Kumar, Chapter 9
 - Sommer and Sommer, Chapter 9
- **Additional Readings:**
 - Flynn, Pat. (2013) Top 10 Tips for “Conducting an Exceptional Interview” The Smart Passive Income Blog with Pat Flynn. Available at: <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/how-to-conduct-an-exceptional-interview/> (good checklist for how to prepare for an interview.)
 - Wallace Foundation. (2013). Workbook G: Conducting In-person Interviews Available at: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Workbook-G-In-Person-Interviews.pdf> (see pages 16-19 (on writing questions) and pages 26-32 (on in-person interviews and probing); much of the rest is about training interview teams)
 - Kansas, University of, Work Group for Community Health and Development. (2013). “Conducting Interviews” The Community Tool Box. Available at: http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_main_1047.aspx (good overview of various types of interviews; see box on “Points to Remember”.
- **Required Reading Selecting a Method of Data Collection – Surveys and Sampling**
 - Kumar 10 and 12
 - Sommer and Sommer, Chapters 9, 10 and 17
- **Additional Reading:**
 - Kansas, University of, Work Group for Community Health and Development. (2013). “Conducting Surveys” The Community Tool Box. Available at: http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_main_1048.aspx (good overview of various types of interviews; see box on “Points to Remember”.)
 - Taylor-Powell, E. (1998, May) “Sampling” University of Wisconsin-Extension Program Development and Evaluation. Available at: <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Assets/pdfs/G3658-03.pdf> (click “view pdf” in lower left of screen)
 - Fink, Arlene. *The Survey Handbook Second Edition* Volume 1 of *The Survey Kit Second Edition* 2003, Sage. Chapter 1: What is a Survey: When Do You Use One?, pp. 1-25.

Week 6: Module 6: Selecting a Method for Data Collection II:

- In this module, we will continue to learn various data collection methodologies: secondary data collection (using data from Census) and primary data collection (including survey method, key informant interviews, focus group research, observation method), and and sampling.
- ***Student Learning Objective:***
 - Judge the applicability of various data collection methodologies to research design
 - Identify the strengths and weaknesses of potential data collection methodologies
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- ***Required Reading Selecting a Method of Data Collection – Content Analysis, Big Fuzzies, Personal Documents/Archival Data and Secondary Sources***
 - Kumar, Chapter 9 (Review)
 - Sommer and Sommer, Chapters 4, 5, 11, 12 and 15
- ***Required Reading Selecting a Method of Data Collection – Observation and Evaluation Research***
 - Kumar, Chapter 9 (Review)
 - Sommer and Sommer, Chapter 4
 - Taylor-Powell, E.& Steele, S. (1996, August) “Program Development and Evaluation, Collecting Evaluation Data: Direct Observation” University of Wisconsin-Extension Program Development and Evaluation. Available at: <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Assets/pdfs/G3658-05.pdf>
 - Jacobs, Allen. “Looking at Cities” *Places* 1, 4 (1984) Available at: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/12x6z4vr>
- ***Assignments and Submissions:***
 - **Major Assignment 4:** Research Design assigned (Due – Presentation due on Friday of Week 7 and Research Design Paper due on Saturday of Week 8)
 - **Minor Assignment V:** (Due –Wednesday of Week 6) Conceptualizing a Study Design
 - **Minor Assignment VI** (Due – Saturday of Week 6): Conceptualizing a Research Instrument/Data Collection Strategy/Selecting a Sample

Week 7: Module 7: Ethical Issue in Research, Validity and Reliability in Research

- In this module, you will learn about ethical issues in the conduct of research, including how to ensure that you conduct research that is valid and reliable and that you provide informed consent for participants in your research.
- Student Learning Objective
 - Describe the University of Florida Institutional Review process
 - Produce Institutional Review Board documents, as necessary, as a part of research proposal
 - Explain the various aspects of internal and external validity, reliability and replicability in research design.
- **In this module, students will complete draft of the final proposal presentation for peer review. Research and will get feedback from the instructor and peer group members.**
- **Required Readings (Validity and Reliability in Research):**
 - Kumar, Chapters 11
 - Sommer and Sommer, Chapters 16

- Turabian, Chapters 6 – 8 (skim).
- **Required Readings (Ethical Issue in Research):**
 - Kumar, Chapter 14
 - Sommer and Sommer, Chapter 2
- **Review:**
 - Kumar, Chapters 7-10
 - Sommer and Sommer, Chapters 4-15
- **Assignments and Submissions:**
 - **Major Assignment 3:** Key Informant Interview (Due – Wednesday of Week 7)
 - **Major Assignment Student Presentation:** Proposal presentation for Review (Due – Saturday of Week 7)

Week 8: Module 8: Putting it all together: Proposal that works

- In this module, you will learn about how to prepare research proposals, how to put together the various sections of your Master's research project and how to sharpen the claims, evidence, warrants and qualifications that you use to produce the arguments in your research.
- Student Learning objective
 - Describe the sections of a research report
 - Identify issues and best practices in the preparation of research reports
 - Produce a variety of speculations and theories related to identified research questions
 - Compare, contrast and critique the applicability to various theories to the presented facts
 - Apply speculations and theory-building to individual research topics
- **Required Reading (Proposal that works)**
 - Kumar, Chapter 13-17
 - Sommer and Sommer, Chapter 20-22
 - Turabian, Chapters 6 – 8 (skim).
- **Assignments and Submissions:**
 - **Minor Assignment VII:** Review and Critique of the Work of a Colleague (Due – Wednesday of Week 8)
 - **Major Assignment 4: Research Design (Due Saturday of Week 8)**