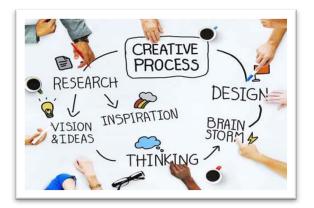# Planning Research Design

URP 6203 – Sec 4403 – Spring 2021
Wednesdays 12:50-3:50pm via Zoom

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This course is about how to do research in planning practice and academia. It is a core requirement for the Master of Urban and Regional Planning and Master of Historic Preservation degrees. While we focus on issues in the built and natural environments, the course may be useful for graduate students in other degree programs. There are no pre-requisites, however students will benefit from being ready to begin development of their master's thesis proposal.

The course focuses on defining planning problems and suitable research questions, conducting literature reviews, the development of simple conceptual models, and the selection and use of types of study designs and data collection methodologies, including case studies, experimental and quasi-experimental design, survey methods, open-ended interviewing, and observation. The course includes writing skills and templates for research proposals and reports. The course most immediately dovetails with each student's development of their thesis proposal, and it can also directly apply to research in academia and practice under the direction of other advisors and supervisors.

At the conclusion of this course, you should be able to
- Frame research questions and conceptual frameworks supported by the literature.
- Select research designs appropriate to the questions, information availability, and researcher strengths.
- Select suitable methods of information gathering and analysis.
- Write research proposals and generic full research reports.
- Make progress on your master's thesis.

The required textbook is *Research Methodology: A Step-By-Step Guide for Beginners, 5th (or 4th) Edition* (2011) by Ranjit Kumar, Sage.

The course is organized as 10 modules based on the textbook sections and final class presentations. Each module has specific learning objectives. Use them to guide your textbook reading and journaling.

1. Introduction to research in academia and planning practice
2. Step 1: Formulating a research problem
3. Step 2: Conceptualizing a research design
4. Step 3: Constructing an instrument for data collection
5. Step 4: Selecting a sample

6. Step 5: Writing a research proposal
7. Step 6: Collecting data
8. Step 7: Processing and displaying data
9. Step 8: Writing a research report
10. Class presentations and peer feedback

Classes and Communications

Classes. UF policy requires us to meet during the scheduled class times. All classes will be held through Zoom. Classes will include instructor, guest, and student presentations, discussions of the required readings, and small group exercises. We'll divide the 3-hour class into mini sessions, including individual and small group work, and breaks, to avoid Zoom fatigue. All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all class discussions and email messages. Everyone should join class with the video camera on, with the exception of recorded sessions (see next paragraph). If you cannot do this, please discuss it with the instructor.

Recordings. Our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Canvas. The course Canvas site will contain all class materials and recordings, assignments, and grades. This syllabus is subject to minor change with advance notice to students.

Instructor assistance. Office hours will be via Zoom 30 minutes before and after class, or other times by appointment. Email through Canvas is the best initial contact to ask questions or arrange an appointment. You can also reach Dr. Frank at kifrank@ufl.edu. You will receive a reply within 24 hours during the workweek and within 48 hours on weekends.

Assignments and Grading

Assignment	*Instructions (also see Canvas)*	*% of Grade*
Attendance	Virtual class attendance, preparedness, and participation in class exercises are required. Attendance will be taken randomly throughout the semester.	15%

Research journal	Apply modules to thesis examples (report and defense) and your chosen research topic, and practice free-writing	40%
Method demonstration	Demonstrate one research method by engaging class	10%
Class presentation	Present your research proposal and preliminary findings, with presentation script	15%
Introduction chapter	Write a fully developed introduction chapter for your research proposal	10%
Peer feedback and response	Provide written peer feedback for one classmate's presentation, and respond to the feedback you receive	10%

Each assignment has a grading rubric based on the instructions. In general, full credit requires the following: attending to the instructions, demonstrating a solid understanding of the course topics, research and analysis if required, compelling writing and presentation, proper source attribution, and timely submittal.

An "A" grade requires demonstration of a solid understanding and application of the course topics, reflection and analysis, clear and compelling communication, proper citations and references, and timely submittal. A "B" grade is basically sound, but has a deficiency in one of the areas above. A "C" or lower grade has significant deficiencies.

The relationship between letter grades and numeric grades is: (≥ 94.0), A- (≥ 90.0), B+ (≥ 87.0), B (≥ 83.0), B- (≥ 80.0), C+ (≥ 77.0), C (≥ 73.0), C-(≥ 70.0), D+ (≥ 67.0), D (≥ 63.0), D-(≥ 60.0), and E (<60.0). Where A=4.0, A-=3.67, B+=3.33, B=3.0, B-=2.67, C+=2.33, C=2.0, C-=1.67, D+=1.33, D=1.0, D-=0.67, E=0.0.

Student Honor Code and Academic Honesty

You MUST follow the University's Honor Code. For guidance to avoid plagiarism and other Honor Code violations, see http://www.correspondencestudy.ufl.edu/students/handbook/Plagiarism/PlagiarismAlert.html.

You must submit work that is original to this course, unless it is used as a reference and properly cited. *Turnitin* will be used to screen all assignments for plagiarism *(http://turnitin.com/static/index.html)*.

Attendance and Late Policies

Synchronous virtual class attendance is required. Readings for each module should be completed prior to the class day they are assigned in the schedule below. Attendance will be taken randomly throughout the semester. If you miss a class, check Canvas and inquire

with classmates. Absence can be waived for UF-excused reasons with prompt communication and documentation provided in advance if possible.

Late assignments will be marked down 10% of the total grade if they are not turned in by the deadline, and an additional 10% for each week they are late. *Missed class* and *makeup work* are allowed with acceptable, documented, and prompt reasons for absence, with communication with the instructor as early as possible: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx. The terms of making up missed work will be determined by the instructor in discussion with you.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

To request classroom accommodation, you must first register with the Dean of Students Office. They will provide documentation and assistance.

Getting Help

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- Learning-support@ufl.edu

- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2

- https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml

Other resources are available at http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources

- Disability resources

- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints

- Library Help Desk support

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course please visit http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints to submit a complaint.

Course/Instructor Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via https://bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

About Professor Frank

Dr. Kathryn Frank specializes in environmental, coastal, rural, and participatory planning for sustainability and resilience. At the University of Florida, she has led $1 million in funded research projects. Recent publications have appeared in the *Journal of Planning Education and Research* and *Planning Theory and Practice*. She previously worked as a planning consultant and environmental engineer.

Dr. Frank received a doctorate in City and Regional Planning from Georgia Tech. Her doctoral dissertation examined the impacts of collaborative planning processes for the Everglades ecosystem. Her master's degree is in Community and Regional Planning from the University of Oregon, with a thesis about the impacts of a project-based, volunteer wildlife monitoring program on its youth participants. Her undergraduate majors were chemical engineering and mathematics.

Schedule

Class Date	Topics	Reading Due	Assignment due Tuesday 11:59pm
Introduction to research in academia and planning practice			
Week 1 Jan 13	Course overview and class introductions Begin intro to research		
Week 2 Jan 20	Research: a way of thinking The research process	Ch. 1-2	Begin journal
Step 1: Formulating a research problem			
Week 3 Jan 27	Reviewing the literature Formulating a research problem	Ch. 3-4	Journal 1
Week 4 Feb 3	Identifying variables Constructing hypotheses	Ch. 5-6	Select method to demonstrate
Step 2: Conceptualizing a research design			
Week 5 Feb 10	The research design Selecting a study design	Ch. 7-8	Journal 2
Step 3: Constructing an instrument for data collection			
Week 6 Feb 17	Selecting a method of data collection	Ch. 9	Journal 3
Week 7 Feb 24	Collecting data using attitudinal scales Establishing validity and reliability	Ch. 10-11	Demonstrate method
Step 4: Selecting a sample			
Week 8 Mar 3	Selecting a sample	Ch. 12	Journal 4
Step 5: Writing a research proposal			
Week 9	Writing a research proposal	Ch. 13	Journal 5

Mar 10

Step 6: Collecting data

| Week 10 Mar 17 | Considering ethical issues in data collection | Ch. 14 | Journal 6 |

Step 7: Processing and displaying data

| Week 11 Mar 24 | Processing data | Ch. 15 | Journal 7 |

| Week 12 Mar 31 | Displaying data | Ch. 16 | Draft presentation slides |

Step 8: Writing a research report

| Week 13 Apr 7 | Writing a research report | Ch. 17 | Journal 8 |

Class presentations

| Week 14 Apr 14 | Student presentations | | Final presentation slides and script |

| Week 15 Apr 21 | Student presentations | | Journal 9 |

| Week 16 Apr 28 | Finals week | | Peer feedback and response Introduction chapter |