

Course Syllabus

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URP6203: Planning Research Design

Faculty Contact Information

Ferdinand Lewis, Ph.D.

Email: fslewis@ufl.edu

Phone Number: (352) 392-6098 ext. 471

Office Hours: by appointment

Course Website

<https://lss.at.ufl.edu/> [\(https://lss.at.ufl.edu/\)](https://lss.at.ufl.edu/)

Course Communications

Your instructor is generally available by e-mail through Canvas. The instructor will try to respond within 24 hours during the regular work-week. Please do not expect responses on the weekend. The instructor is also available by appointment. Please contact the instructor by email to arrange a call or chat.

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.
- Yin, R. K. (2013). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Sage publications.
- 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.

Some Topics Covered

Module**Topics Covered**

Module 1: Overview of Research Process, Resources, and Developing a Research Topic
The role of research; the steps in conducting research; the broad area of research interest and potential research questions; your master's research project.

Module 2: The Literature Review
Identifying sources; strategizing the literature review.

Module 3: Constructing Hypotheses, Identifying Variables
How to identify concepts related to your research and develop operational definitions, building a conceptual model for your research, analyzing the relationships between identified variables to understand what data you need to collect in your research

Module 4: Types of Study Designs
Components of research design; differences between qualitative and quantitative designs; suitability of various study designs

Module 5: Selecting a Method of Data Collection
Choosing the appropriate method for data collection, the level of formality in interviews and surveys, and selecting samples; qualitative research and evaluation research

Module 6: Selecting a Method of Data Collection
Speculations and claims, reasoning and evidence; role of theory.

Module 7: Putting it all together; Ethical Issues in Research, Validity and Reliability in Research
Understanding ethical issues in research design, using the Institutional Research Board for research involving human subjects, understanding threats to internal and external validity in research

Make-up Work

All other work must be completed and submitted by the designated time in Canvas or grades will be lowered accordingly.

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 e-mail 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.

Course Communication

Email is the primary form of synchronous communication between instructor and student in this course. Office hours can be arranged by appointment, for a video or conference phone call.

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) (<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) (<http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/student-life-and-support/student-handbook>) and at the [Dean of Students website](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/) (<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/) (<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) (<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/) (<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

Students requesting disability-related academic accommodations must first register with the [Disability Resource Center](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) (<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.

Complaints

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course please visit [Student Complaints](http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints) (<http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints>) to submit a complaint.

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

For greater detail, see the Grades section of the [Graduate Catalog for the University of Florida](http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=907&hl=grade&returnto=search#grades) (<http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=907&hl=grade&returnto=search#grades>). It also contains the policies and procedures, course descriptions, colleges, departments, and program information for UF.

You can also review [ISIS](http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html) (<http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>) regarding frequently asked questions about minus grades.

Assignments Summary:

Date	Details	
Wed Apr 15, 2015	 In-class Presentation 4-15-15 (https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900620)	due by 11am


Date	Details	
Wed Apr 22, 2015	 Assignment 13: Final Presentations https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900608	due by 11am
	 Notebook Assignment 7: Review and Critique of Work of a Colleague 4/15 https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900623	due by 11am
Mon Apr 27, 2015	 Notebook Assignment 7: Review and Critique of Work of a Colleague 4/20 https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900624	due by 12pm
Tue Apr 28, 2015	 Individual Notebook/Blog/Working Files https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900621	due by 12pm
	 Notebook Assignment 7: Review and Critique of Work of a Colleague 4/22 https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900625	due by 12pm
Fri May 1, 2015	 Class Attendance and Participation https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900619	due by 11:59pm
Wed Oct 21, 2015	 Assignment 1: Issue Statement https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900609	due by 11:59pm
Sun Oct 25, 2015	 Assignment 2: Defining a Researchable Planning Problem https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900610	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 1, 2015	 Assignment 3: Review of Completed Thesis/Project https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900611	due by 11:59pm
Wed Nov 4, 2015	 Assignment 4: Strategize the Literature Review https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900612	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 8, 2015	 Assignment 5: Write a Literature Review https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900613	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 15, 2015	 Assignment 6: Constructing Hypotheses and Operationalizing https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900614	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 22, 2015	 Assignment 7: Conceptualizing a Study Design https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900615	due by 11:59pm
Mon Nov 30, 2015	 Assignment 8: The Data Collection Strategy https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900617	due by 11:59pm
Fri Dec 4, 2015	 Assignment 9: Review a Presentation of a Classmate's Proposal https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900618	due by 11:59pm
Sun Dec 6, 2015	 Assignment 10: Project Proposal (Draft) https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900616	due by 11:59pm


Date**Details**

Sat Dec 12, 2015

 **[Assignment 10: Project Proposal Memo \(Final\)](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900604)**
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900604>)

due by 11:59pm

 **[Assignment 11: Working with the FTBSEP](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900605)**
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900605>)

 **[Assignment 12: Observation of a Neighborhood in Your Community](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900606)**
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900606>)

 **[Assignment 12: Peer Reviewed Proposal Draft](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900607)**
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900607>)

 **[Major Assignment XX: Key Informant Interview](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900622)**
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900622>)

 **[test](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900626)** (<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/323373/assignments/2900626>)
