RESEARCH FOR MASTER'S THESIS

URP 6971

1-15 CREDIT HOURS

INSTRUCTOR: Chair of the student's thesis committee.

REQUIRED TEXT: Typically, there are no required readings for this course.

PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS: This course is the capstone for the student's degree in urban and regional planning.

PURPOSE OF COURSE: The thesis allows the student to explore an area of interest that has a strong foundation in the student's knowledge of planning and skills learned through the program. In general, the first essential is that the thesis begins with a problem; the second that a hypothesis be formulated for its solution. If there is no hypothesis, stated or implied, then whatever the product may be, it is not a thesis. Third, the thesis must possess validity, which simply means that it must be what it purports to be. The satisfactory completion of six credits of URP 6971 is a condition of the requirement of the on-campus degree of Master of Urban and Regional Planning.

COURSE GOALS AND/OR OBJECTIVES: This course demonstrates the student's understanding of planning knowledge, professional skills, ethics, critical thinking skills, and effective communication and professionalism, and research methods. The literature review, including application of relevant precedent and theory, should inform the final product. The methodology and recommendations are reflective of and incorporate planning ethics. The results of research, analysis, synthesis are defensible and logical, and significantly inform the final product. Professional skills are demonstrated in the areas of visual, oral and written communications. The methodologies, results of the research findings, and conclusions are appropriate to the research focus.

HOW THIS COURSE RELATES TO THE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING: As the capstone course for the graduate program, Research for Master's Thesis allows students to demonstrate their planning knowledge and skills and as such relates to all three departmental student-learning outcomes. These are:
- Demonstrate an understanding of human settlement, historical and contemporary practice, and policy and processes relevant to urban and regional planning concepts and theories.
- Demonstrate oral, written, and critical thinking skills required of master's students within their area of specialization.

- Display ethical behaviors, cultural sensitivity, teamwork, professional conduct and communication.

COURSE POLICIES:

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Meetings as set collaboratively by the student and the chair/committee.

MAKE-UP POLICY: None.

ASSIGNMENT POLICY: Benchmarks and submittal of materials set collaboratively by the student and the chair/committee.

COURSE TECHNOLOGY: The technology required varies based on the student's topic.

UF POLICIES:

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Disability Resource Center (https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

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 at https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-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. http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf

GETTING HELP:

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

- helpdesk@ufl.edu

- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2

- http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/

Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Other resources are available at https://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.

GRADING POLICIES:

GRADING SCALE: The grading scheme for this course is S/U. For more information, see: https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/

COURSE SCHEDULE:

The schedule is based on the goals the student sets for completion with timing and other review requirements set by the student's chair/committee. These additional requirements apply:

- "The student's supervisory committee should be appointed as soon as possible after the student is admitted to Graduate School, and no later than the second term of graduate study" (see the *University of Florida Graduate Catalog*).

- You are required to submit a one-page thesis proposal outlining your topic at least one week prior to the beginning of your second year in the program. You can use the proposal you developed through PRD, provided, of course, that is still your topic. On that proposal, you will also need to indicate your top four choices for committee members, which members will serve as chair and co-chair, and distribute your proposal to them. The relevant faculty will review your document and respond to let you know whether they agree to participate on your committee so that you can prepare the supervisory committee form and submit it to Vanessa to place in your student record.

- Keep in mind - you cannot set up your committee during your final semester here. If you do so, it will no longer be your final semester. The URP Selection of Supervisory Committee Form for setting up your committee is available in the main URP office. Fill it out, have your committee members sign it, and return it

to Vanessa. She must have this form in order to make it official - in order to enter your committee members' names into the system.

- Provided your chair agrees, you only need two URP Graduate Research Faculty (GRF) on your thesis committee. If your chair determines that given your topic, a third member is recommended, that member can come from outside of URP. If you only have two members, they both need to be URP GRF. If you have a third member who provides additional expertise relevant to your topic, that person can be outside the department, even outside the college or university. If the member is outside the university, you need to get that person's resume in order for them to be appointed a special member. Please get that resume to Vanessa so that she can generate the necessary paperwork to get that special member appointed. So consider your topic and choose your committee accordingly.

- Given the amount of research and writing involved, we highly recommend that you conduct thesis work over two semesters. In fact, you can break up your 6 required thesis credits over two semesters - you do not need to take all 6 required credits at one time. Thus, if you have completed one year in the program, you should sign up for thesis credits for the spring semester. The professor reviewing your work and giving you your grade will be the chair of your committee.

- When you take thesis credits with your chair, be sure to communicate with that professor when the semester begins to learn what is expected for the thesis credits. There are forms that you must fill out, have signed by your chair, and submitted to Vanessa in order for you to take those credits. The professor cannot issue you a grade without having an opportunity to review the work you have accomplished toward your thesis during the course of the semester. If the professor receives nothing from you, you will receive an "I" (incomplete) or a "U" (unsatisfactory) for the semester. Be aware that "I"s become punitive after one semester.

- Choose a style manual, and use it consistently to provide direction on proper citation and on structuring your reference list or bibliography. Recent style manuals will provide you with direction on how to address issues such as citations of material found on the web. The department recommends the APA Style Manual (that is the American Psychological Association), which is the same guide used by authors who have their work published in the *APA Journal* (that is the American Planning Association). You can buy the manual, look at it in the library; go on-line to see frequently asked questions at http://www.apastyle.org/ or sites such as http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/.

- Provide your chair and committee members sufficient time to review drafts of your thesis or terminal project – a minimum of one week to ten days. Your committee members are a resource to provide you feedback on the substance of your analysis, the organization of your draft, the soundness of your methodology, and so on. If you need help with your writing, there is a University Writing Studio on campus (info at https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/), or if

you need help editing your paper (style and grammar); you can hire an editor (info available at the Graduate School).

- If you are planning to finish this semester, you need to work closely with your chair to discuss a workable schedule that will result in completion by the deadline. Keep in mind again, that you need to provide at least 7 to 10 days to allow committee members to review drafts of your work. At your defense, you will receive recommendations for revisions to your document. You need to allow yourself 7 to 10 days to make these revisions, and then allow sufficient review time to confirm that your thesis or project is acceptable and complete and final signatures can be secured for your exam form and signature pages.
- Please note that many professors are on a 9-month contract with the university and conduct research full-time during the summer and are not available to work with students at that time. If you cannot finish during the spring, you should make plans to complete your work during the Fall term. For more information about thesis requirements, check out the Graduate School website at: http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/about-us/offices/editorial/thesis-and-dissertation/

The Thesis culminates with a formal defense. Digital copies of the entire report must be given to all committee members, the departmental archives, and the University of Florida Library.