

## Planning Research Design

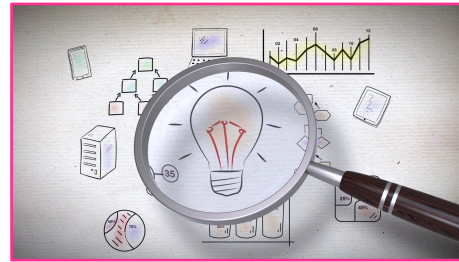
URP 6203 – 17484/Sec 4403 – Spring 2023  
 Wednesdays 12:50-3:50pm RNK 220

### Dr. Kathryn Frank

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 ARCH 460

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Office hours: Mondays 4:00-5:00pm or by appointment



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 course pre-requisites, however students will need to be ready to develop their master's thesis proposal.

The course focuses on defining planning problems and suitable research questions, conducting literature reviews, developing simple conceptual models, and selecting 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, IRB protocols, and theses. 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, and uphold the ethics regarding human subjects.
- 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*, 5<sup>th</sup> (or 4<sup>th</sup>) Edition (2011) by Ranjit Kumar, Sage.

The course is organized as 9 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

This syllabus is subject to minor change with advance notice to students.

## **Classes and Communications**

*Classes.* All classes will be held in person. Classes will include instructor, guest, and student presentations, discussions of the required readings, and small group exercises.

*Canvas.* The course Canvas site will contain all class materials and recordings, assignments, and grades.

*Instructor assistance.* Instructor office hours will be Mondays 4-5pm, 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](mailto:kifrank@ufl.edu). You will receive a reply within 24 hours during the workweek and within 48 hours on weekends.

## **Assignments and Grading**

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Instructions (also see Canvas)</i>	<i>% of Grade</i>
<i>Attendance</i>	Attend class, be prepared (do the assigned readings in advance), and participate in class activities. Attendance will be taken each week.	20%
<i>Research journal</i>	In five journal assignments, apply modules to thesis examples and your chosen research topic, consult experts for guidance, and practice writing.	25%
<i>Method demonstration</i>	In a small group, demonstrate one research method by engaging the class.	10%
<i>Human subjects compliance training</i>	Conduct the IRB-02 training and pass the exam. This requires a VPN connection.	5%
<i>Class presentation</i>	Present your draft thesis proposal for peer feedback.	10%
<i>Peer feedback and response</i>	Provide written peer feedback for one classmate's presentation and respond to the feedback you receive.	5%

Each assignment has a grading rubric based on the instructions. Full credit (“A” grade) requires following 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. 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.

### **Incomplete Grade**

UF policy states: “An incomplete grade may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor as an interim grade for a course in which the student has completed a major portion of the course with a passing grade, been unable to complete course requirements before the end of the term because of extenuating circumstances, and obtained agreement from the instructor and arranged for resolution of the incomplete grade. Instructors are not required to assign incomplete grades.” For more information see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

### **Student Honor Code and Academic Honesty**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor 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.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. To read the Conduct Code:

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult the instructor.

For specific guidance to avoid plagiarism, see <http://www.correspondencestudy.ufl.edu/students/handbook/Plagiarism/PlagiarismAlert.html>. Turnitin will be used to screen all assignments for plagiarism (<http://turnitin.com/static/index.html>). You must submit work that is original to this course, unless it is used as a reference and properly cited.

### **Attendance and Late Policies**

Class attendance is required. Readings for each module should be completed prior to the class day they are assigned in the schedule below. If you miss a class, check Canvas and

inquire with classmates. Absence can be waived for UF-excused reasons with prompt communication and documentation, which should be provided in advance when 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.

Students with extenuating circumstances that interfere with attending class, including significant illness, are encouraged to use the Instructor Notification process: <https://care.dso.ufl.edu/instructor-notifications/>. Through this process, the student can submit their information to DSO for verification. Then, DSO sends a notification to the student's instructors. The DSO has additional services to students through their Care Area: <https://care.dso.ufl.edu>

For the latest information and UF policies and procedures related to the Covid-19 pandemic, see <https://coronavirus.ufl.edu>.

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

To request classroom accommodations, you must first register with the UF Disability Resource Center: <https://disability.ufl.edu>. They will provide assistance and documentation for instructors.

### **Getting Help**

Additional UF resources are listed at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help>, including:

- IT and e-Learning
- Library
- Disability
- Counseling and wellness
- Student concerns and complaints

### **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.ua.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*, the *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 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.

**URP 6203 Spring 2023 Schedule**

<b>Class Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Reading Due</b>	<b>Assignment due Tuesday 11:59pm</b>
<b>Introduction to research in academia and planning practice</b>			
Week 1	Course overview and class introductions		
Jan 11	Begin intro to research		
Week 2	Research: a way of thinking	Chs. 1-2	Select method, groups, and date to demonstrate
Jan 18	The research process		
<b>Step 1: Formulating a research problem</b>			
Week 3	Reviewing the literature	Chs. 3-4	
Jan 25	Formulating a research problem		
Week 4	Identifying variables	Chs. 5-6	
Feb 1	Constructing hypotheses		
<b>Step 2: Conceptualizing a research design</b>			
Week 5	The research design	Chs. 7-8	Journal 1
Feb 8	Selecting a study design		
<b>Step 3: Constructing an instrument for data collection</b>			
Week 6	Selecting a method of data collection	Ch. 9	Journal 2
Feb 15			
Week 7	Collecting data using attitudinal scales	Chs. 10-11	Complete IRB-02 training
Feb 22	Establishing validity and reliability		
<b>Step 4: Selecting a sample</b>			
Week 8	Selecting a sample	Ch. 12	Journal 3
Mar 1			
<b>Step 5: Writing a research proposal</b>			
Week 9	Writing a research proposal	Ch. 13	Journal 4
Mar 8			

Week 10    Spring Break  
Mar 15

**Step 6: Collecting data**

Week 11    Considering ethical issues in data  
Mar 22    collection

Ch. 14      Journal 5

**Step 7: Processing and displaying data**

Week 12    Processing and displaying data  
Mar 29

Chs. 15-16

Week 13    Begin student presentations  
Apr 5

Presentation slides

Week 14    Continue student presentations  
Apr 12

**Step 8: Writing a research report**

Week 15    Writing a research report  
Apr 19

Ch. 17      Peer feedback

Week 16    Course conclusion  
Apr 26

Week 17    Finals week  
May 3

Thesis proposal (due  
Wednesday 5/3)