

# URP 6979 Master's Research Project

## Instructor and Contact Information

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## Course Description

The Master's Research Project (MRP) is intended to serve as a capstone experience for the MURP program, and to demonstrate a broad and deep understanding of planning processes, impacts and interventions.

The MRP focuses on study design, interpreting findings, and disseminating findings in written and oral communications. The specific research methodology is intended to be based on previous knowledge learned in URP 6203, Planning Research Design. The report format is developed in consultation with the course instructor and the student's committee. *Committees must be finalized prior to the start of MRP.*

The following is a breakdown of the instructor's and committee's role, their descriptions, and intended contributions:

- **Instructor (NON-COMMITTEE)**
  - o Guides students through course modules
  - o Ensures students are meeting deadlines and providing deliverables
  - o Facilitates dialogue and meetings between the students and their respective committees
- **Chair: must be URP faculty**
  - o Serves as main topical editor/point of contact for research project
  - o Position typically involves 3-4 meetings, intensive editing of drafts, defense presentation participation and feedback
  - o Ultimately signs off on pass/fail for Final Exam/MRP
- **Co-Chair: must be URP or LAA faculty**
  - o Serves as secondary editor/point of contact for research project
  - o Position typically involves 1-2 meetings, light editing of drafts, defense presentation participation and feedback
  - o Ultimately signs off on pass/fail for Final Exam/MRP
- **Special Member: anyone can serve; will need to get a UFID and Gatorlink**
  - o Serves as point of contact for any questions or local insight needed
  - o Position typically involves 0-1 meetings, editing of final draft, light participation of defense presentation and feedback

For those students who desire to complete a more formal master thesis (perhaps as a prelude to doctoral research), this course can assist in preparation of key elements of the thesis, although all requirements for a thesis, including submission processes and deadlines set forth by the Graduate School must be adhered to.

The MRP will demonstrate the student's understanding of planning knowledge, professional skills, ethics, critical thinking skills, effective communication and professionalism, and research methods. An abstract and literature review, including application of relevant precedent and theory, is required and 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.

## Course Objectives

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

1. Demonstrate an understanding of human settlement, historical and contemporary practice, and policy and processes relevant to urban and regional planning concepts and theories.
2. Demonstrate oral, written, and critical thinking skills required of master's students within their area of specialization.
3. Display ethical behaviors, cultural sensitivity, teamwork, professional conduct and communication.
4. Demonstrate ability to conduct a planning analysis through independent research and analysis that has potential utilization in a real world context

## Course Credit

URP 6979 (MRP) is a full-semester (16 week Fall and Spring; 13 week Summer) course which will be taken for 6 credits. Because of the workload intensity, the MRP course is intended to be taken as a standalone course in the student's final semester.

*Per the Graduate School: students must enroll in at least 3 credits of URP 6979 in their final semester. If students do not complete the Master's Research Project in one semester, they will be required to enroll in an additional 3 credits of Master's Research Project in order to complete their degree.*

## Course Outline

This course is organized around a series of scheduled deliverables that bring student work from proposal stage to a final product. The student will be responsible for submitting all work into the Canvas by the set due dates listed.

Students will have access to the course content from URP6203: Planning Research Design to help design and complete the MRP. This content can be found in the "Files" section on the left-hand navigation menu.

**MODULE 1**    Research Proposal and Reviewing MRPs

*VISION  
SETTING*

Students begin by perusing research resources and previously-submitted Master's Research Projects in order to influence their Research Proposal, which is due at the end of the Module. The Research Proposal will be shared with committee members once completed. Topical areas of research will be established and solidified. A synchronist Zoom session will be held in order to conduct introductions, go over semester progress timelines, discuss administrative items for graduation, and share research topics. Interaction in this module includes discussions with Chair and Co-Chair.

**MODULE 2**    Introduction and Literature Review

*WHAT ARE  
YOU  
DOING  
(AND  
WHY?)*

Students prepare an introduction and literature review (as illustrated in previous PRD coursework) which include statements about their project, with an expanded bibliography. At this stage, students should fully hash out where they are gathering data, if they have not already. An "elevator pitch" is formulated, which helps to condense and distill the research project aims.

**MODULE 3**    Data Sources, Collection and Methodology

*HOW ARE  
YOU  
DOING IT?*

Based upon the introduction and literature review, students will provide a summary of their selected data sources and research methods to be employed, and write about their process of analysis. Students will provide this information in an appropriate format, either by a narrative discussion of data sources or an explanation of a distinct methodology that will enable them to complete the project. Ongoing communication with Co-Chairs and Chairs at this point is strongly encouraged.

Students will consult the Graduate School template to help prepare for development of the report draft.

**MODULE 4**    Results, Findings, and Discussion

*WHAT DID  
YOU FIND?*

Students will work and finalize the Results, Findings, and Discussion sections of their research project. By this point, students should be working closely with their committee. Students should continue to refine previously completed sections of their research project. There will be a synchronist Zoom session to go over current progress, hurdles, and upcoming tasks; students will present their elevator pitch.

**MODULE 5** Draft Submission

*DRAFT MRP*

Students will complete their paper by finalizing the Conclusion and Abstract sections of their research paper. Students will submit a completed draft, which will ultimately be sent to committees for review prior to defense presentations.

**MODULE 6** Defense Presentation Preparation

*DEFENSE  
PREP*

Students will spend time creating and finalizing a defense presentation to go over their research project holistically. Students will watch 2 prior defenses to gain insight into how the presentation is conducted. Presentations should be no more than 20 minutes, and will be recorded. Final presentations will be scheduled over the course of a week at times selected by both students and faculty. A final synchronist Zoom session will be held prior to defenses.

**MODULE 7** Defense Presentations

*DEFENSES*

Students will deliver their defense presentations to their committee and any present students and faculty. At the terminus of the presentation, the committee will determine if the student's work is satisfactory, and provide feedback to incorporate into the final paper.

**MODULE 8** Revisions to MRP

*REVISIONS*

Students will incorporate any edits or revisions their committee has submitted. There will be intense collaboration and back-and-forth between students and their committee during this Module.

Students will submit their final report, approved by their committee, with edits and changes finished. This final report date is not flexible and is an integral part of getting each student cleared for graduation at the University level administration. At the conclusion of your Masters Research Project, students will be required to submit your final document to the University of Florida Library system for distribution, publishing, and archival.

## Missed Deadlines

Notify your instructor if you are struggling to meet the set deadlines.

**If the student fails to maintain submission deadlines, they may be required to take an additional 3 credits of URP 6979 the following semester in order to complete their research.**

## Course Technology

In the event that you have technical difficulties with e-Learning, please contact the UF Help Desk. If 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. For any technical issues you encounter with your course please contact the UF computing Help Desk at 342392-HELP (4357), select option 2. For Help Desk hours visit: Information Technology-UF Computing Help Desk.

## Student Support Services

As a student in a distance learning course or program, you have access to the same student support services that on campus students have. For course content questions contact your instructor. Other resources are available at the Information Technology Helpdesk (<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.

## Online Learning Environment

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.

## 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

(<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>).

## Netiquette: Communication Courtesy

All students are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all e-mail messages, threaded discussions and chats. Course communication should be civilized and respectful to everyone. The means of communication provided to you through e-Learning (e-mail, 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.

## 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 (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>).

## 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 Accommodation

Students requesting disability-related academic accommodations must first register with the Disability Resource Center (<https://drc.dso.ufl.edu/>). The Disability Resource Center will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

## Course Evaluation

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/publicresults/>.

## Course Grade

### Live Discussions and Participation:

Students are required to participate in live discussions with the faculty and peers scheduled below. It is encouraged for students to use a webcam to maximize your engagement. Students are also required to engage with the Chair and Co-Chair faculty, for the benefit of the project and the student research. The Instructor will be available to answer all forms of contact through Canvas or email.

- Live Session #1 Topic: Finalizing proposal, vision-setting
  - Agenda:
    - Introductions, schedule and goals of the semester, “taking your proposal to a draft”, “identifying next steps”, “picking up your research from PRD”, “data collection and knowing what your limitations are”, student questions
  
- Live Session #2 Topic: Writing your draft
  - Agenda:
    - The “next steps” for students going to the draft step, including the grad school templates, examples of elevator talks (or the 3 minute PhD presentation awards), student questions
  
- Live Session #3 Topic: Check-in
  
- Live Session #4 Topic: Defense draft finalization
  
- Live session #5 Topic: Defense presentation preparation
  - Agenda:
    - Students will present their elevator talks to the group, Instructor will review how to summarize and communicate in online presenting, “how comments can be integrated and how your revisions should be conducted”, reminder about the final submission and graduation deadlines
  
- Live Session #6 Topic: Post-defense MRP revisions

Assignments:		100 points
Ongoing	Live Discussion and Participation	(10 pts)
Module 1	Revision of Proposal	(5 pts)
Module 2	Project Abstract + Literature Review	(20 pts)
Module 3	Data Sources Methodology	(15 pts)
Module 4	Working Title and “Elevator Talk”	(5 pts)
Module 6	Defense Draft Submission	(20 pts)
Module 6	Defense Presentation	(10 pts)
Module 8	<b>Finalized Submission of Report [along with Grant of Permissions]</b>	<b>(15 pts)</b>

## Grading Scheme

Grades for URP 6979 are on a Satisfactory (S)/ Unsatisfactory (U) grading scheme. The final course grade has no impact on student grade point averages (GPAs). Most assignments will be marked as complete/incomplete in the Canvas shell.

There are two major grades for the course. Both must be completed as Satisfactory by the deadlines in order to graduate:

- (1) Final Exam Milestone (i.e. Defense)
  - a. By final exam milestone deadline (roughly 2/3 of the way through the semester)
  - b. Determined by entire committee (chair, co-chair, special member).
  - c. Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory
- (2) Course Grade (i.e. Final Paper)
  - a. End of the semester
  - b. Determined by chair
  - c. Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

For greater detail, see the Grades section of the Graduate Catalog for the University of Florida (<http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=1996>). It also contains the policies and procedures, course descriptions, colleges, departments, and program information for UF. You can also review information regarding frequently asked questions about minus grades (<https://student.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>).