

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA  
COLLEGE OF DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION & PLANNING  
DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR DESIGN

**IND 5633: READINGS IN DESIGN STUDIES**  
FALL TERM, 2025

Instructor: Erin Cunningham, Ph.D.  
Office: 344 Architecture Building  
E-mail: [ekc@ufl.edu](mailto:ekc@ufl.edu)  
Meeting times: F I Period 3-5 (9:35 PM- 12:35 PM)  
Office hours: MW 12:55-1:55pm, F 12:35 -1:35 or by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This class seeks to provide exposure, support and criticism for students developing their research projects. Over the course of the term each student is expected to complete a writing project, and to present that work to the class for criticism and revision. Our common topic is research in interior environments and design. Students will enter the class at different stages of work; some will begin work on a dissertation prospectus, others will use the class to push forward an M.A. thesis, while others may be presenting dissertation chapters. The common goal is to provide a stimulating environment that encourages progress on the development of a body of knowledge appropriate to the student's chosen area of study. Substantial time will be devoted to critiquing previously existing sources in the field of interior environments and design.

This course is taught in a seminar format consisting of, but not limited to, assigned readings, seminar discussions, presentations and writing. Class format will combine discussion, lectures, presentations, and assignments. The goal of this class is to create an environment for students to write, research and workshop their topics in class.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- Gain knowledge of how research is conducted in the interior design discipline
- Refine and evolve thesis/dissertation topics
- Be familiar with research databases and information resources in human environment and design research.
- Identify the various subject areas, major themes, and research issues in human environment and design research.
- Gain substantial knowledge of at least one specific area in human environment and design literature.
- Be able to critically engage with existing design literature.
- Identify the need of further knowledge in the field of interior design.

**COURSE DOMAIN/BOUNDARIES**

This course offers graduate students the opportunity to examine a specific area of environmental research and design knowledge working closely with a member of the IND faculty who has substantive interest in the proposed field of study. The subject matter of the course will relate to the student's research interests as well as the faculty

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member's area of expertise and research inquiry. The primary products of this course are an extensive literature review as well as an annotated bibliography that could serve as the foundation for the student's subsequent thesis/dissertation research. Students in a more advanced place in their degrees will designate an appropriate written product with the instructor.

Each student will be working with a faculty-mentor on the project. In the beginning of semester, we will be discussing topic and mentor selection. It is important that the research topic not be too broad so that your project is manageable. Your faculty mentor may need to assist you in narrowing your focus of study. All students during the development of their paper are required to meet or collaborate (email correspondence is acceptable) with their faculty mentor at least once in the semester.

### **Faculty Research Areas**

Bosch, Sheila: Evidence-based Design, Healthcare Design, Design of Learning Environments, Design for Older Adults

Cunningham, Erin: History and preservation of 19th and 20th century interior spaces: social settlement houses, vernacular architecture, and public housing interiors

Mejia-Puig, Luis: Design process, creative thinking, digital tools, cognitive load theory, industrial design.

Meneely, Jason: Design strategies for enhancing creative performance, Using technology to support creative problem solving, design thinking and pedagogy

Okken, Genesis: Color planning and design in corporate offices, healthcare, hospitality, residential and pop-up retail

Park, Nam-Kyu: Lighting Environments, Design for Special Populations & Therapeutic Environment, Sustainable Design, Culture and Design

Platt, Lisa: Systems Science, Healthcare Design, Infection Prevention

Portillo, Meg: Color Planning, Design Creativity, Design Pedagogy and Thought Development, Narrative Studies

Rengel, Roberto: Interaction between interior and exterior spaces, the application of biophilic principles to the design of interior environments, relationships between existential space and architectural space, environmental aesthetics in the workplace

Valipoor, Shabboo: Healthcare Design, Environments for the Elderly, Universal Design & Patient Safety

### **ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING**

Grades will be distributed as follows:

Participation **20%**

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Peer Reviews	10%
Presentations	20%
Prospectus	10%
Literature Review	15%
Draft	
Final Literature Review	25%
<hr/>	
<b>100%</b>	

### **Grading Scale**

A	93-100	4.0
A-	90-92.9	3.67
B+	87-89.9	3.33
B	83-86.9	3.0
B-	80-82.9	2.67
C+	77-79.9	2.33
C	73-76.9	2.0
C-	70-72.9	1.67
D+	67-69.9	1.33
D	63-66.9	1.0
D-	60-62.9	0.67
E	0-59	0.0

Information in regard to UF's grading policy can be found at:  
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

### **Participation**

The seminar format requires that students are present and participate actively in class. Because this class is student driven, student participation is critical to its effectiveness. Students will be called upon to teach and learn from each other. All students are expected to read, think, write, and participate in course activities. Small assignment throughout the term will be included in your participation grade.

### **Peer Review**

Peer review is an essential feature of the class. I will assign students to serve as respondents on a rotational basis, and I will expect that engaged and constructive criticism will emerge as a result.

### **Presentations**

Students will present their topics several times over the course of the term. Oral presentations will run 15-30 minutes and will be followed by a structured peer review and an open question and answer period.

### **Major Writing Assignments**

Masters level students are expected to produce a critical literature review. Doctoral students are expected to identify a project early in the semester, and then prepare a schedule for completion by the end of the semester. Writing assignments include:

- A brief (2-3pp) paper proposal outlining your proposed project, as well as your topic

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- A 4 page prospectus/introduction of your overall project
- A class presentation draft of approximately 10-12 pages
- A longer, article-length paper approximately 20 pages due at the end of the semester. This paper will include an annotated bibliography. The final paper will not be accepted on the due date or graded unless your paper has received critical review by peers. Any paper without review will be considered a failure and (0) credit will be given for the paper.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Attendance and Participation**

Student participation is a main component of this course. As such, class attendance is an integral part of your learning experience. Attendance of all discussions is necessary for the successful completion of this course, and you will be expected to stay for the entire class period.

Late assignments will be deducted one full letter grade per day. In cases of medical emergency, or other emergency where documented proof is provided, late assignments will be accepted but, depending on the situation, there may be a grade reduction. Requirements for class attendance, assignments, and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at:  
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

### **Classroom Climate**

Equitable participation in this class requires the use of inclusive language, methods, and materials. Students are expected to use inclusive language in written and oral work, and to respect diversity in viewpoints expressed by others. Students are also encouraged to identify language, methods, and materials used in this course that do not contribute to an inclusive classroom climate.

### **Academic Integrity and the UF Honor Code**

All students at the University of Florida are expected to adhere fully to University of Florida Student Honor Code, view at:  
<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>. The Honor Code outlines the expectations for student conduct in regard to academic honesty. All students should review this policy to understand the range and scope of the standards and the seriousness of any infractions of the code. The policy places full responsibility on students to know and adhere to these standards for academic integrity. All examinations, quizzes, design projects, and assignments in the Department of Interior Design are subject to this policy. Maintaining strict academic integrity is a priority of the Department of Interior Design and all instructors will fully enforce the UF Honor Code in their studios and classes. A strict adherence to the Honor Code is expected by the University of Florida and reflects the ethical standards of the interior design profession.

### **Incomplete Grades**

An incomplete grade is described in the Undergraduate Catalog. It is the instructors' discretion as to what extenuating circumstances warrant adequate excuse for not completing required course work.

### **Special Accommodations**

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Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Disability Resource Center at University of Florida Dean of Students Office, see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/getstarted.php>. The Dean of Students Office will review the case and, if appropriate, provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

### **Course Evaluations**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/>.

### **Health and Wellness**

*U Matter, We Care:* If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352 392- 1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

*Counseling and Wellness Center:* <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

*Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS):* Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

*University Police Department:* 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).  
<http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

### **Online Sessions**

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.

### **Syllabus**

This syllabus conforms to UF syllabus policy: <http://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/>

### **RECOMMENDED READING**

Williams, Joseph M. *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Becker, Howard. *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think About Your Research While Doing it*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Creswell, John. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications,. Inc.,2014.

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Grout, Linda & David Wang. *Architectural Research Methods*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 2013.

Ridley, Diana. *The Literature Review: A Step-by-Step Guide for Students*. Sage Study Skills Series. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2012.

Silverman, David. *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. London: Sage Publications, 2006.

Yin, Robert K.. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2009.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Module 1: Topic Exploration

#### Week One

F 8/22

Introduction

Discuss: Syllabus & Research Topics

#### Week Two

F 8/29

Paper Topic Presentation

Prior to class students should submit a project proposal (approximately 2-3 pages) that includes the following: An outline of your topic, a list of sources pertinent to your topic, possible advisors. The paper proposal should be uploaded to Canvas before class on Friday (9:35 am 8/30). Students should also come to class prepared to provide a 10-minute oral presentation on these proposals. Please note that this is just a proposal of your topic, and your focus may shift over the term.

#### Week Three

F 9/5

Progress Report (including recap of meeting with potential advisor) & Elevator Pitch

For class prepare a two-minute **elevator pitch** of your proposal topic. Upload your pitch to Canvas prior to class (9:35 9/6). Practice the talk; you will present these pitches, without reading, in class.

#### Week Four

T 9/12

Analytical Assignment Discussion

Upload your Analytical Assignment to Canvas prior to class (9:35am 9/13). Come to class prepared to discuss your findings.

### Module 2: Topic Development

#### Week Five

T 9/19

Class Workday

#### Week Six

F 9/26

Thesis/Dissertation Prospectus

Prior to class students should submit a 4-page prospectus that establishes the purpose of your thesis/dissertation, provides background and context, discusses the significance of your work, introduces theoretical considerations, and generally informs the reader as to what you are studying and why it matters. The prospectus should be uploaded to Canvas before class on Friday.

Students should also come to class prepared to provide a 10-minute oral presentation.

Week Seven

F 10/3

Writing Workshop

Week Eight

F 10/10

Presentations: Literature Review Draft/ Paper Draft

Please provide your responder with a reading copy of your literature review/ conference style paper, no longer than 10 pages, no later than the Sunday before class. Critics will be responsible for leading discussions.

Week Nine

F 10/17

**Homecoming: No Class**

Module 3: Topic Refinement

Week Ten

F 10/24

Writing Workshop

Week Eleven

F 10/31

Writing Workshop

Week Twelve

F 11/7

No Class: Presentation prep time

Week Thirteen

F 11/14

Final Paper Presentations

Please provide your responder with a reading copy of a conference style paper, no longer than 15 pages, no later than the Sunday before class. Critics will be responsible for reading the paper, providing editorial comments, and for leading discussions.

Week Fourteen

F 11/21

Wrap-up

Week Fifteen

F 11/28

**Thanksgiving: No class**

**Final Paper Due: TBD**