

# URP 6979: Master's Research Project

## ABOUT THE COURSE

### CREDIT HOURS

3 credits; or 6 credits

URP 6979 (MRP) is a full-semester (16 week) course which will be taken for either 3 or 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.*

### TERM

Spring and Fall semesters

### REQUIRED TEXT

There are no required textbooks for purchase. Our Canvas site will contain all readings, assignments, and resources.

### CLASS MEETINGS

Virtual, asynchronous course delivery via Canvas (<http://elearning.ufl.edu/>). There will typically be 5 synchronous check-in meetings spaced strategically throughout the semester.

### 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 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, students will 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.

## PREREQUISITE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Students should have completed all required coursework in the MURP online program prior to enrolling in the course. Students should enter the course with a research proposal and committee (chair and co-chair).

## INSTRUCTORS

### KYLE DOST, AICP

Instructional Assistant Professor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning  
Director, Online Master of Urban and Regional Planning Program

**EMAIL:** [kyledost@ufl.edu](mailto:kyledost@ufl.edu)

**PHONE:** 352-294-1486

**OFFICE HOURS:** Please email to set up an appointment. Mondays 10:40-11:30am ET and Wednesdays 11:45am-12:35pm are dedicated times for office hours, but I am happy to meet outside of those hours if necessary.

**ABOUT:** Kyle Dost is faculty (Instructional Assistant Professor) with the Department of Urban and Regional Planning. He is also the Program Director for the online Master of Urban and Regional Planning degree program at UF. Prior to his roles at UF, he worked as a planning consultant in Miami. Kyle is currently pursuing his Ph.D. at UF in interdisciplinary studies, combining landscape architecture, historic preservation, and community planning. He earned his master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Florida (2017) and his bachelor's degree in Environmental Policy and Planning from Virginia Tech (2015). Kyle is originally from the Washington, D.C. area, but has been a Floridian since 2015. His primary areas of knowledge encompass water management, environmental planning, international development, cultural resources, and community engagement. He earned his AICP certification in 2021 and currently serves as the Co-Chair of the APA Sun Coast section in Tampa Bay.

### CHRISTINA GAVAGAN

Academic Program Specialist, Online Master of Urban and Regional Planning Program

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**OFFICE HOURS:** By appointment

## CANVAS

### COURSE WEBSITE

All materials are posted on the Canvas e-Learning University of Florida. The course may be accessed at:  
<http://elearning.ufl.edu/>

### COURSE COMMUNICATIONS

Send messages through Canvas for questions, guidance, or to request a meeting. Students should expect a response within 48 hours.

## COURSE POLICIES

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

### LIVE SESSIONS

Students are expected 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: Finalizing proposal, vision-setting
- Live Session #2: Writing your draft
- Live Session #3: Check-in
- Live Session #4: Defense draft finalization, defense preparation
- Live Session #5: Post-defense MRP revisions

### LATE POLICY

This course includes assignments and actions that are predetermined outside of the course. All assignments should be submitted on time to prevent administrative delays. Continually delayed submissions indicates students are not prepared to defend their research or to graduate. Late work should be submitted promptly to Canvas assignments and to faculty committee members when applicable. Committee members dictate more individualized late policies.

## COURSE 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.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/>.

## GRADING POLICIES

### GRADING

The grading scheme for this course is Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory. As such, most assignments in the course will be graded as Complete/Incomplete. For more information, see:

<https://student.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

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>).

## ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment	Required for 3cr	Required for 6cr	Notes
Apply for graduation		•	
MRP review submission	•	•	
Research proposal	•	•	Major deliverable – to committee.
Introduction	•	•	Writing benchmark
Literature Review	•	•	Writing benchmark
Methodology	•	•	Writing benchmark
Working title	•	•	Writing benchmark
Data	•	•	Writing benchmark
Initial Draft	•	•	Major deliverable – to committee. Students enrolled in 3cr close course with this assignment.
Results/Findings		•	Writing benchmark
Discussion		•	Writing benchmark
Abstract		•	Writing benchmark
Conclusion		•	Writing benchmark
Defense Draft		•	Major deliverable – to committee.
Schedule your defense		•	
Defense attendance forms	•	•	
Grant of Permissions		•	
Final submission		•	

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Module	Title	Description	Assignments
1	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.	Research proposal  Review of prior MRPs
2	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.	Introduction  Literature Review
3	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	Methodology  Data sources  Data collection

		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.	Data Analysis
4	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.	Data analysis Results Findings Discussion
5	Draft MRP document	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.	Abstract Conclusion Draft MRP doc
6	Defense preparation	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.	Defense presentation
7	Defense	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.	Defense
8	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.	Revisions to MRP doc

## ADDITIONAL COURSE STATEMENTS

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students 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 <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php>.

## ONLINE LEARNING

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 unmute 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.

## ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

Each assignment, where appropriate, has a grading rubric based on the instructions. Full credit requires the following: attending to the instructions, demonstrating a solid understanding of the course topics and goals, research and analysis if required, compelling writing and presentation, proper source attribution, and timely submittal.

Each student must submit work that is conducted by them alone, unless group collaboration is specified. Submissions must be original to this course (i.e. not the student’s work from another course, unless it is used as a reference and properly cited). The instructor will screen assignments for plagiarism using the text-matching tool Turnitin (<http://turnitin.com/static/index.html>) and may choose to screen for AI generated language.

## UNIVERSITY HONESTY POLICY

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 Honor Code](#) [Links to an external site.](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Students must follow the University's Honor Code, which includes issues of cheating, plagiarism, and honesty. See <http://www.correspondencestudy.ufl.edu/students/handbook/Plagiarism/PlagiarismAlert.html> for guidance to avoid plagiarism and other Honor Code violations.

## SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING ADVANCED AUTOMATION TOOLS (E.G. CHATGPT)

Students are expected to use technology in this class; technology can be as useful for writers as a calculator is for mathematicians. Some tools such as styles, automated cross-references, and spell check in Microsoft Word may already be familiar to you. Other tools, such as ChatGPT for summarizing articles, may be less familiar. These tools require understanding, practice, and quality-control.

If students choose to utilize automated tools (e.g. artificial intelligence, learning tools like ChatGPT) the content and utilization must be appropriately cited. Further, these tools should not be used in a copy-paste fashion; at best, they can be attributed as a collaborator. Note that assignments, unless otherwise noted, must be completed individually – i.e. products of your own, unaided mind.

Failure to properly use, cite, or collaborate with automation tools is violation of the academic honesty policies. All submissions are subject to plagiarism and aid checks.

## NETIQUETTE & RESOURCES

### COMMUNICATION COURTESY

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions, communications, and meetings: <https://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.docx>

### E-LEARNING SUPPORT

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

- [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu)
- <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2

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

### ACADEMIC RESOURCES

The [Career Resource Center](#), Reitz Union, 352-392-1601, provides career assistance and counseling.

[Library Support](#) provides various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

The [Teaching Center](#), Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or 352-392-6420, provides help with general study skills and tutoring.

The [Writing Studio](#), 302 Tigert Hall, 352-846-1138, provides help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

[On-Line Student Complaints](#) accepts complaints.

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The [Counseling and Wellness Center](#) provides a variety of services, including mental health counseling. You can contact the Counseling and Wellness Center by telephone at 352-392-1575.

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 you.

You can contact the [University Police Department](#) at 352-392-1111 (or 911 in case of emergency).

Sexual Assault Recovery Services. You can contact the Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161.

## DISCLAIMER

This syllabus represents current plans and objectives. As the semester continues through the semester, these plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunities. Any course changes will be communicated clearly and proactively, with ample time for students to adjust.