

LAA 6971 Research for Master's Thesis
LAA 6979 Terminal Project
UF Department of Landscape Architecture
Spring 2026

SYLLABUS

I. General Information

CLASS MTGS: Varies, Instructor Dependent
LOCATION: Instructor determines in consultation with student
CREDITS: 3 Credits, S/U grading scheme

INSTRUCTOR: Varies

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This series of two courses provides structure as students begin their **thesis** or **graduate terminal project (GTP)** required for MLA degree completion. All graduate students are expected to work autonomously and effectively to complete their independent project while striving to contribute new knowledge to the profession that addresses current and future challenges through thoughtful and critical engagement in the thesis or GTP.

During the fall semester, students engage in proposal writing and information-gathering in support of their independent project. At the beginning of the fall semester, students will select a project through various means.

Students may:

- A. Select a topic and research question for the pursuit of a thesis while working with a research professor; or
- B. Select a project from an internship, professional interest, or MLA professional partner who presents potential projects early in the semester for the pursuit of the graduate terminal project.

Master's students have the option of producing either a **thesis** or a **terminal project**.

Thesis: Students with a research focus are encouraged to produce a thesis. The thesis establishes a hypothesis that is tested through established research methods appropriate to the field of design. The thesis is writing-intensive and must adhere to the University of Florida's Graduate School formatting and timeline.

Graduate Terminal project (GTP): Students who are research and professional practice-focused are encouraged to engage in a GTP. The GTP includes design and research and employs critical applications of skillsets and reflective analysis. The GTP also allows for greater flexibility in formatting and does not require adherence to the Graduate School format or timeline requirements.

Once students select a project, they conduct site and user analysis, research relevant theories to apply to the project, and create preliminary design concepts. The fall instructor facilitates connections with professional mentors and guides students through the process of project selection, project management, precedent case study research, site inventory and site analysis, preliminary design, and committee chair selection. This course provides a solid foundation for the subsequent development of
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the project, which will take place during the spring semester.

Students will:

- Gain exposure to a diverse range of real-world projects and research ideas.
- Choose a project either from the options provided by invited professionals or propose their own unique project for consideration.
- Network with industry experts and researchers to establish valuable professional connections.
- Conduct research on precedent projects, and complete a comprehensive site analysis in preparation for the spring independent study course.
- Explore project management principles and organize a year-long project schedule.

Prior to the end of the fall semester, students are required to complete the required forms (THESIS - LAA 6971- Registration Form OR TERMINAL PROJECT - LAA 6979) available in the departmental office.

Students submit their forms to the Departmental Academic Coordinator. Forms include the name of the committee chair, the Title of the Thesis or Project, and a brief description of what will be accomplished in the spring semester. Students must also select one additional committee member from the Graduate Faculty within the Department. An Optional third member may be outside of the Landscape Architecture Department but must also hold graduate faculty status.

During the spring and summer semesters, students continue their project exploration under the guidance of their committee Chair and are required to complete a mid- and final review of their work.

PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Students entering their final year are expected to have developed advanced design skills and have the ability to gather and analyzing data (quantitative and qualitative) to inform design decision-making.

REQUIRED READINGS AND WORKS

Suggested readings are individually assigned to each student based on their project selection. Additional course readings may be provided on the CANVAS learning platform.

Materials and Supplies:

Students are required to have trace paper, sharpie markers and a variety of black ink pens in addition to a computer with the following required software:

MS Office (Word, Excel and PowerPoint)

Adobe Suite Products (Photoshop, Illustrator, and In-Design)

Adobe Acrobat Reader or other PDF reading software

II. Student Learning Outcomes

Each student in the LA program is expected to understand and apply the design process and continuously develop (some of the following may not apply to the selected directed study project):

- a range of approaches (creative, cultural, and/or historic) to create spatial and temporal landscape compositions,
- multiple design alternatives before synthesizing ideas into a defensible plan and

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- the ability to thoughtfully provide, receive, and respond to feedback and critique as part of iterative design decision making.

Depending on the project type and student level in the program, we expect graduate students to be able to:

- Articulate a clear research theory for the selected independent project.
- Select and apply appropriate research methods.
- Demonstrate the ability to position knowledge within the existing landscape architectural body of information to articulate the broader significance relative to advancing the field.
- Iterate design ideas and respond to feedback and critique.
- Produce a logical and professional final project.

Course learning objectives vary based on project type and student level. This course is not part of the official assessment of Student Learning Outcomes.

III. Graded Work

DESCRIPTION OF GRADED WORK

All assignments are at the discretion of the faculty member who is responsible for assessing student learning and outcomes of items listed in II. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

GRADING SCALE

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Numeric Grade	93-100	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	0-59
Quality Points	4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	0.67	0.0

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>. This course is graded as S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory). A grade of S is equal to a C (2.0) or better. Grades earned under the S/U option do not carry grade point values and are not computed in the University of Florida grade point average. Courses with a grade of S will count as credits earned in a degree program. Such grades are included in the student's permanent academic record and are reflected on the transcript.

The Department acknowledges that the student retains ownership of their documents; however, it is a necessity for the Department to retain the right to use the documents for professional accreditation purposes. Furthermore, other course-specific work, such as service-learning opportunities, may require the Department to ultimately provide work created by students to an outside organization.

Digital copies of student work for this course must be turned in at the completion of each assignment. Please follow the instructor's directions on how they will be submitted (e.g., Canvas, CD, PDF, word file, etc.).

IV. Annotated Weekly Schedule

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Week	Topics, Homework, and Assignments
Week 1	Topic: Meeting with Professor, Course Intro and Deadline review
Week 2	Topic: Meeting with Professor
Week 3	Topic: Meeting with Professor
Week 4	Topic: Meeting with Professor
Week 5	Topic: Meeting with Professor
Week 6	Topic: Meeting with Professor
Week 7	Topic: Meeting with Professor
Week 8	Topic: Meeting with Professor
Week 9	Topic: Meeting with Professor
Week 10	SPRING BREAK
Week 11	Topic: Meeting with Professor
Week 12	Topic: Meeting with Professor
Week 13	Topic: Meeting with Professor
Week 14	Topic: Meeting with Professor
Week 15	Topic: Meeting with Professor
*Schedule, topics, and dates are subject to change	

V. Required Policies - <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolices>

Please use this link (<https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolices>) to UF's academic policies and campus resources, including information on:

- Class Attendance
- Make-up Exams
- Assignments
- Accommodations/Disability Resources Center
- Grading Policies
- Course Evaluations
- Guidance on how to Provide Constructive Feedback
- UF's Honesty Policy

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- In-Class Recording

As well as academic resources, including:

- E-learning technical support
- Career Connections Center
- Library Support
- Academic Resources: ex. General study skills and tutoring.
- Writing Studio: ex. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions)
- UF Student Success Initiative: for resources that support your success as a UF student, and

Campus Health and Wellness Resources:

- UF Whole Gator Resources: for resources that are designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF.