

## CIRP 5380 Research Questions in Planning



**Fall 2013 – Monday, 7:00 – 9:50pm, 01 University Hall.**

*“Application of research issues, writing, and communication skills in planning. Designed to assist students in preparing their research for master’s thesis or professional report. All M.C.R.P. students must enroll in CIRP 5380 Research Questions in Planning in their penultimate semester to prepare for the Thesis or Professional Report”*

**Instructor:** Dr. Ivonne Audirac, [iaudirac@uta.edu](mailto:iaudirac@uta.edu), 546UH, (817) 272-3338; Office Hours: Tuesday & Thurs. 2 to 6 PM.

### TEXTBOOKS

Walliman, Nicholas. 2011. *Your research project*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

\*Turabian, K.L. 2007. *A manual for writers of research papers, theses, and dissertations*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

\*Note: This is an inexpensive publication that will be consulted in this class and that should be useful in any other class or situation requiring effective written communication in your career. I recommend students to keep it as a reference book.

### OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this course are to:

- Understand the difference between a thesis and a professional report;
- Produce a thesis or professional report **proposal** with a schedule of deliverables for final defense and graduation by Spring 2014—adhering to UTA Graduate Catalog’s calendar and in accordance with MCRP’s [Preparation Guidelines for Thesis or Professional Report](#) (click view shared files);
- **Defend** proposal and procure **approval** from the chair of your graduate committee;
- Produce a draft of the first three components of the thesis or professional report.
- Identify a chair and members of the student’s thesis or professional report committee.

### Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course students should be able to:

- Differentiate between types of research approaches
- Select and apply the appropriate research method to their planning question
- Plan and execute a research action plan leading to a thesis or professional report proposal
- Comply with Institutional Research Board requirements
- Orally present a research proposal, accurately and clearly
- Apply accepted academic and professional standards for writing, citation, style, and format.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**A Research Topic.** For a thesis or professional report to be a stimulating and enjoyable experience, the topic must engage your imagination, interest and passion. If you are lukewarm about your topic, if you'd rather spend hours looking at internet memes than talking for a second about your topic, find a new one. If you spend the time writing a thesis or professional report that does not stir your interest and research imagination, you may become disappointed with your choice of profession and may have little to be proud of or to show at a job interview. That said, in this course you must formulate a researchable question no later than the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of class.

**Research Methods.** Since this course is taken in the penultimate semester, you are expected to have previous knowledge of graduate level qualitative and/or quantitative research methods. Although we will review some of this knowledge, in this course we will be mostly applying it to the T or PR proposal. Therefore, this course is not designed to provide or remediate the requisite competency in research methods.

**Major Professor.** Students *must* work closely with their major professor and committee members during their involvement in this course. This course is designed to guide you and coach you through the process of conceptualizing and producing your terminal project via: the development of a thesis (T) or professional report (PR) proposal; a draft of the first three components of the T or PR; and an action plan for fulfilling the requirements of graduation by Spring 2014.

This course will be conducted as a seminar, which will serve as a 'support group' designed to guide you on the technical aspects of research design and proposal development. However, students *must* consult with their major professor to determine the appropriateness of researchable topics. As your instructor, I cannot make this determination for you. The structure and objectives of the seminar are fairly standard and agreed to by most faculty. Even so, and particularly in a thesis, you need to be aware of your major professor's preferred structure, content, and sequencing of proposal sections and content; it may differ from information provided in class.

It is important that you and your Major Professor and I communicate, and that you live up to your promises to accomplish various steps of your T or PR on time. It would be unreasonable to cause delays in the process and expect your Major Professor and/or readers to make up the lost time in reviewing your work.

**Review, Revise, & Polish it Off.** The process of T or PR proposal development is intensive in writing and oral communication. This seminar requires first and foremost to be passionate about your topic and to formulate a researchable question by the third week of the course. However, by the same token, the process also requires the ability to take criticism and review of your work constructively and to turn the feedback into an effectively revised product.

### WHAT IS A PROPOSAL?

Your proposal consists of Chapter 1: Research Question, Chapter 2: Literature Review, and Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter 1 makes a problem statement, research question, justification, and research objectives.

Chapter 2 reviews 10-12 secondary sources. Reviewing a secondary source requires understanding the questions it asks, the methods it uses, and the conclusions it makes.

Chapter 3 concerns your proposed methodology. How are you going to achieve your research objectives? Where will you get data from and how will you collect it and analyze it?

## COURSE STRUCTURE

The course is organized into four modules:

Module	Dates	Topic	Deliverable
1	AUG 26-SEP 16 (4 weeks)	Stating the Problem /Research Question, Formalizing a Committee, and Devising the Action Plan.	Research Question and Action Plan (Chapter 1) <b>20%</b>
2	SEP23-OCT 14 (4 weeks)	The Literature Review	A Review & Annotated Literature (Chapter 2) <b>20%</b>
3	OCT 21-NOV 11 (4 weeks)	Research Methodology	Proposed Methodology (Chapter 3) <b>20%</b>
4	NOV 18-DEC 9 (3weeks)	Defending, Revising and Submitting the Proposal and First Three Components. Action Plan for Graduation in Spring 2014	Final Revised Proposal (Chapter 1 through 3) and Action Plan for Graduation <b>20%</b>

## ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance and participation in this seminar is of the essence and worth 20% of the grade. Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of the class.

In the development of your T or PR proposal there are four written components each worth 20%:

1. Statement of the problem & supervisory committee formalization.
2. Annotated literature and review
3. Research methodology
4. Final revised draft of the proposal containing the three above sections and incorporating revisions suggested by your committee chair and oral defense.

Each of these components will be orally presented to the class and the fourth one will be the equivalent to defending your T or PR proposal before your committee. Presentations will be videotaped in class and recordings available for student playback and review through Blackboard (Bb). It is of outmost importance to be ready and prepared for this activity.

**Grading Scale:** A: >90.6; B > 78.6 – 90.6; C > 69.6 – 78.6; D < 69.6.

### Lateness Policy

Late papers will conflict with our review process, so they are not acceptable. If extenuating circumstances prevent you from meeting a deadline, please contact me immediately.

### Course Deliverables

Incomplete grading or extensions are not available unless severe illness or documented extenuating circumstances justify it.

### Expectations for Out-of-Class Study

Beyond the time required to attend each class meeting, students enrolled in this course should expect to spend at least an additional 9 hours per week of their own time in course-related activities, including reading required materials, completing assignments, and preparing for class.

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) TRAINING MODULES

If your research involves human subjects, such as in surveys or focus groups, your research protocol will require UTA-IRB approval before you can initiate the research. The *UTA Investigators Handbook* and training modules are available at <http://www.uta.edu/ra/oric/human/criteriaforapproval.htm>.

## CONTACT ME

If at any time you feel the need to discuss any issue related to the class or your performance in this class, do not hesitate to email me or to schedule an appointment during my office hours (shown on the first page). If you need to meet outside office hours, e-mail me or call to set an appointment. Do not leave it until later if I can help make this course a fun and fruitful learning experience.

## IMPORTANT NOTES

**A. Seminar** – The course will be run as a seminar with active student-instructor interaction. Students are required to attend class and to make high-quality presentations and contributions to the class discussion. Students will be expected to have read the assigned material thoroughly and to have thought through its relationship to material from previous sessions.

**B. Blackboard** – The syllabus and other materials for this course will be available from Blackboard.

**C. Writing Quality** – Written assignments and presentations for this class must be of professional quality. Students should carefully edit and proofread all written work for typing, stylistic, spelling, and grammatical errors, and for clarity. Writing quality will affect the student's grade. It is very important to consult Turabian, K.L. (2007). ***A manual for writers of research papers, theses, and dissertations***, (7th edition), which provides detail guidance in this matter and in the use and application of the Chicago Manual of Style.

Other useful sources by John R. Trimble:

Writing with Style: <http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~rhart/courses/materials/papers/trimble.html>

Revising for Clarity and Conciseness:

[http://mooreschool.sc.edu/UserFiles/moore/Documents/Revising\\_for\\_Clarity\\_x\\_Conciseness.pdf](http://mooreschool.sc.edu/UserFiles/moore/Documents/Revising_for_Clarity_x_Conciseness.pdf)

Language: Revising for Clarity and Conciseness : <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/648/02/>

**D. Class Rubrics** – Oral presentations, written assignments, and the final T or PR proposal defense will be assessed using the following rubrics (available in Bb).

MCRP Term Paper Rubric (writing skills)

AACU Oral Communication skills

Professional Report/Thesis (document & defense)

Please consult these rubrics and use them as guidance for preparing your work in this class.

**E. Academic Honesty** –“It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University.

Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.” (Regents’ Rules and Regulations, Series 50101, Section 2.2).

<http://www.uta.edu/studentaffairs/conduct/saiconstitutes.html>

[http://library.uta.edu/tutorials/JA\\_Plagiarism/](http://library.uta.edu/tutorials/JA_Plagiarism/)

**F. What is PLAGIARISM?** – Although most students will be familiar with the term and would not deliberately incur in plagiarism, it is always important to review the following description to make sure your assignments uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Basic examples of plagiarism include:

- Word-for-word copying of sentences or paragraphs without quoting and citing the source and page number;
- Closely paraphrasing sentences or paragraphs without clearly citing the source; and
- Using another person's ideas, work, data, or research without appropriate acknowledgment or citation of the source.

“If five or more words in sequence are taken from a source, those words must be placed in quotes and the source referenced with author's name, date of publication, and page number of publication.

If the author's ideas are rephrased, by transposing words or expressing the same idea using different words, the idea must be attributed to the author by proper referencing, giving the author's name and date of publication.

If a single author's ideas are discussed in more than one paragraph, the author must be referenced at the end of each paragraph.

Authors whose words or ideas have been used in the preparation of a paper must be listed in the references cited at the end of the paper.

Students are encouraged to review the plagiarism module from the UT Arlington Central Library at <http://library.uta.edu/tutorials/Plagiarism> “ Source: College of Nursing, Student Handbook, p. 8, accessed 8/16/2013 from: [http://www.uta.edu/nursing/handbook/msn\\_policies.php](http://www.uta.edu/nursing/handbook/msn_policies.php)

**G. Student Feedback Survey** – At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory shall be directed to complete a Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>

**H. Students With Disabilities** – The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

### **I. Library Resources**

The following is a list of commonly used library resources:

Library Home Page	<a href="http://www.uta.edu/library">http://www.uta.edu/library</a>
Subject Guides	<a href="http://libguides.uta.edu">http://libguides.uta.edu</a>
Subject Librarians	<a href="http://www-test.uta.edu/library/help/subject-librarians.php">http://www-test.uta.edu/library/help/subject-librarians.php</a>
Database List	<a href="http://www-test.uta.edu/library/databases/index.php">http://www-test.uta.edu/library/databases/index.php</a>
Course Reserves	<a href="http://pulse.uta.edu/vwebv/enterCourseReserve.do">http://pulse.uta.edu/vwebv/enterCourseReserve.do</a>
Library Catalog	<a href="http://discover.uta.edu/">http://discover.uta.edu/</a>
E-Journals	<a href="http://utalink.uta.edu:9003/UTalink/az">http://utalink.uta.edu:9003/UTalink/az</a>
Library Tutorials	<a href="http://www.uta.edu/library/help/tutorials.php">http://www.uta.edu/library/help/tutorials.php</a>
Connecting from Off-Campus	<a href="http://libguides.uta.edu/offcampus">http://libguides.uta.edu/offcampus</a>
Ask A Librarian	<a href="http://ask.uta.edu">http://ask.uta.edu</a>

The City and Regional Planning Librarian is: Mitch Stepanovich 817-272-2945 [stepanovich@uta.edu](mailto:stepanovich@uta.edu)

**CIRP 5380 RESEARCH QUESTIONS IN PLANNING\***

Week	Date	MODULE 1 -- The Research Question and Plan	Assignment
1	8/26	<b>Introduction</b> — Difference between the thesis (T) and the professional report (PR) and <b>important T &amp; PR deadlines for graduation:</b> <a href="http://grad.pci.uta.edu/about/catalog/current/calendar/">Preparation Guidelines for Thesis or Professional Report</a> <a href="http://grad.pci.uta.edu/about/catalog/current/calendar/">http://grad.pci.uta.edu/about/catalog/current/calendar/</a>	
2	9/2	Refining the research topic and research question. Forming a graduate committee. Reading: Walliman, Chapter 1	Assignment # 1 one-page 'Statement of the Problem' Formalizing a committee
3	9/9	What is your question, again? Reading: Walliman, Chapter 2	Assignment #2 three page problem statement, research question, justification, and research objectives
4	9/16	Problem statement, research objectives, justification, tentative secondary sources, and tentative research plan (pre-proposal) and tentative chapter 1 of your T or PR. Reading: Walliman, Chapter 3. (In class presentations)	Assignment # 3 four page statement presenting a problem statement, the objectives of your research, the justification, and tentative secondary sources (5-7 texts), and research plan
<b>Module 2 – The Literature Review</b>			
5	9/23	Literature Review: finding useful sources and engaging the sources. Reading: Walliman, Chapter 4.	<b>Assignment # 4</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> Draft (pre-proposal) to your Committee Chair &amp; Plan of Action.</b>
6	9/30	Sort your notes from the literature into building the evidence. Reading: Walliman, Chapter 5 pp. 172- 208	Assignment # 5 Annotated bibliography.
7	10/7	Revising draft into Chapter 1 & 2. Presenting the evidence from the literature review. Reading: Walliman, Chapter 5 pp. 209-237	Assignment # 6 Revising Assignment #4 (Chapter 1) and developing Literature Review (Chapter 2)
8	10/14	Polishing off Chapter 1 & 2. Submitting a draft to Major Professor. Walliman, Chapter 6	<b>Assignment # 7</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Draft to Committee Chair: Chapter 1 &amp; Chapter 2</b>
<b>MODULE 3 – The Research Methodology</b>			
9	10/21	Identifying appropriate methods and research design. Reading: Walliman, Chapter 7 (In class presentations)	
10	10/28	Plan for empirical evidence and data collection.	Assignment # 8 Plan for data collection.
11	11/4	Plan for data analysis.	Assignment #9 Plan for data collection with chair input.
12	11/11	Polishing off Chapter 3. Submitting draft to Major Professor.	<b>Assignment# 10</b> <b>Submit completed revised draft of Chapter 3-Methods Plan</b>
<b>MODULE 4 Defending, Revising, and Submitting the Proposal</b>			
13	11/18	Finalize thesis or professional report proposal. Edit format, source citation, and style.	Assignment # 11 incorporate revised Chapter 3 into proposal
14	11/25	Revise and prepare to defend proposal (Thanksgiving Week)	Submit draft to Committee Chair
15	12/2	Proposal defense. (In class presentations).	<b>Assignment # 12</b> <b>Proposal defense. Submit final completed revised proposal to instructor and Chair.</b>
16	12/9	Post-defense revision and final submission.	

\*As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course.