

CP 8990: Applied Research Paper

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Structure: Register for 2 credits in the Fall and 2 credits in the Spring. If you would like to do something different than this, you should ask me, explaining why this might be appropriate. The assignments and grading weights below will be predicated on a 2/2 credit registration regardless.

Grading: The Fall semester grade will be based on the following deliverables and weights:

Communication & professionalism	10%
Brief proposal on 2-3 topics	5%
Detailed workplan and bibliography	25%
Draft prospectus	30%
Complete and coherent prospectus	30%

If Spring-Fall schedule, 5% peer review comes out of draft prospectus grade

The Spring semester grade will be based on the following deliverables and weights:

Communication & professionalism	10%
Preliminary results described	15%
Full draft paper	20%
Peer review	5% (added to prelim results if none)
Final paper	50%

Recommended Reading:

- The Introduction Formula: <http://blogs.ubc.ca/khead/research/research-advice/formula>
- Booth, Colomb, & Williams (2014). *The Craft of Research*. University of Chicago Press.
- Neumann. (2011). How to Review the Literature and Conduct Ethical Studies. In *Social Research Methods*. 7th ed. Pearson.

Writing Guidance: Professional quality writing is a significant focus of the option paper. All “drafts” should meet a minimum standard for quality. They should be thoroughly reviewed by the writer, and I suggest having an external editor (this could just be a colleague or friend). If English is not your first language, you may require more frequent and extensive assistance from an editor.

The stylistic requirements for the option paper are outlined in the SCaRP Writing Guide (MCRP Student Manual). This guide is a useful resource for the option paper and your other writing. Please review in detail prior to commencing any writing for this course.

Communication & Professionalism: Both are essential to a smooth ARP process. I expect prompt responses to email during work hours. If you fail to communicate for a significant period of time, but show up with a paper at the end of the semester you may still fail the course.

SPRING SEMESTER

The spring before you begin

IDENTIFY 2-3 POSSIBLE TOPICS

I will not accept Applied Research Paper Students until this task is complete.

Begin by writing a very brief essay describing your proposed research question(s) and how you hope to go about answering some or all of these questions. Your questions should number no more than a few and all of these should be related to each other. Generally, the approach should be deductive – start out with a general question and add a few more specific, concrete questions to make your research statement more focused. Do not overreach. You do not need to attempt to answer the hardest question, or even the most important question. You are looking for a question that interests you and that is feasible to address in a limited amount of time. How do you come up with an interesting question? You read, and read, and read some more. Conduct some targeted Google Scholar searches on the topic you are interested in. Look at what has been published recently.

Be sure to spend some time looking through old option papers here:

<https://planning.gatech.edu/mcrp-research-papers>. Ask some faculty if they can suggest one or two very good papers that have been done in recent years.

FALL SEMESTER

Students will meet with the Professor on the week following the assignment date based on scheduling with the group.

By Final Friday of August DRAFT BRIEF PROPOSAL ON 2-3 TOPICS

For each topic you should describe as best you can the research question and general research approach you are thinking of using. This should be no more than 1-2 pages.

5% of semester grade. 25% deduction for being late. Not accepted after one week late. Meeting the week following submission. (Meeting 1)

By 2nd Friday of October DETAILED WORKPLAN AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1) A detailed work plan that provides some background on the research topic, more clearly articulates the research question(s), and identifies how you will go about addressing these questions (including describing the basic research design and methods, any existing data that will be obtained, and any data to be collected).
- 2) A bibliography on your topic with at least 30 references (this means you will have skimmed more than 30). This should include any relevant formal scholarly literature but also any applied “gray” literature, important media coverage, etc.

25% of semester grade. 25% deduction for being late. Not accepted after one week late. Meeting the week following submission. (Meeting 2)

By 2nd Friday of November FIRST DRAFT OF PROSPECTUS

A first draft prospectus for your project which must include the following annotated outline for the full paper, understanding that this may change considerably later.

The annotated outline should incorporate:

- a. A placeholder for the introduction (will write at the end).
- b. A draft literature review/background section. If you do not know how to write a literature review, look at some in the *Journal of Planning Literature*. At this point, I will accept a detailed outline of this section.
- c. A fully developed outline and discussion of the remaining work plan and the research design.
- d. A description of all data sources to be used. If you are using “off the shelf” (e.g., census data), then you should describe the fields/variables you will need and the geographies. If new data are to be collected via a survey, a draft survey instrument should be included. If interviews are planned, a draft list of interview questions should be included.
- e. A description of all methods that will be used to analyze the data.
- f. Placeholders for results, discussion, and conclusion sections as needed.
- g. A References section with all works cited.
- h. Appendices as needed.

30% of semester grade. 25% deduction for being late. Not accepted after one week late. Meeting the week following submission. (Meeting 3)

By 1st Friday of December COMPLETE & COHERENT FULL PROSPECTUS

A full prospectus for your project which must include all elements from the draft prospectus plus a completed literature review/background section. Revise all sections as possible. By this time you should be collecting your data already and you should describe them.

30% of semester grade. 25% deduction for being late. Not accepted after one week late. Meeting the week following submission. (One on one meeting as needed)

SPRING SEMESTER

By 1st Friday of February **PRELIMINARY RESULTS DESCRIBED**

- 1) Basic description of empirical results (summary statistics; analytical/inferential statistics; maps; interview results; etc.)
- 2) Revised, full outline of complete paper that incorporates my suggestions and the preliminary results.

15% of semester grade. 25% deduction for being late. Not accepted after one week late. Meeting the week following submission. (Meeting 4)

By 2nd Friday of March **FULL DRAFT PAPER**

This should be a *complete* and *coherent* draft paper, and not a description or collection of preliminary results. While length may vary greatly depending on the type and nature of the paper, I generally expect something in the range of 10,000 to 18,000 words including tables, figures, and references. The draft should include all references.

20% of semester grade. 25% deduction for being late. Not accepted after one week late. Meeting the week following submission. (Meeting 5)

By 3rd Friday of March **PEER REVIEW OF FULL DRAFT PAPER**

Students will complete peer review for at least one other option paper. This feedback will be submitted as a Word document showing comments and suggestions through track changes. Student reviewers will also write a 2-3 paragraph review summary commenting on:

- 1) The paper addresses an issue of major concern for planning research and/or practice.
- 2) The paper makes a significant and/or original contribution to that issue.
- 3) Methods are explicit, sound, and appropriate for the submission.
- 4) Writing and any additional aspects of the paper (e.g., graphs, tables, etc.) are direct, clear, and effective.

While review for grammar and writing style may be appreciated, the focus should be primarily on content and organization of ideas.

5% of semester grade. 25% deduction for being late. Not accepted after one week late. Meeting the week following submission. (Meeting 6)

By 2nd Friday in April **FINAL PAPER (INCLUDING ALL REVISIONS SPECIFIED BY ME)**

The final product should be revised, edited and proofread.

50% of semester grade. 25% deduction for being late. Not accepted after one week late.