ARC6913: Capstone Project Proposal (Research Design in Sustainability 2)

Sections 04A9/145E

2 Credits

Instructor:	Michael Kung, Ed.D.
Office:	ARCH 130
Phone:	352-294-1420
Class meeting time:	TBA in the ARC331 Conference Room
Office hours:	Open (ARC130) or by appointment
E-mail:	mkung@dcp.ufl.edu
Skype:	mk.dcp

Research Topics in Sustainability is the second of two courses that help students in the Masters in Sustainable Design Degree Program develop the foundations for a research topic for their Thesis or Masters Research Project (MRP). This course provides a structured environment that encourages students to establish a line of research into topics that supports their particular interests in sustainability that can be successful completed in allotted time. It emphasizes the conceptualization of a research design, the selection of a study design and information-gathering strategies typically used in practice, including case studies, experimental and quasi-experimental design, survey methods, open-ended interviewing, and observation. It also deals with how to develop and use a conceptual framework that will assure that the information gathered is pertinent and useful to answer the questions that may be of interest to policymakers or addressed in a master's thesis. Thus, the course focuses on defining planning problems and suitable research question, the development of simple conceptual models, understanding the types of study designs and data collection methodologies available to understand problems, and to the overall strategies for the design and conduct of research.

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to frame research questions, understand the research process and the variety of study designs and data collection methodologies, be able to conceptualize relationships within the research question, choose a study design and data collection methodology appropriate to the question being asked. While this course will help develop the skills to design a research proposal, it is not a substitute for the simple decision making that is required in defining a thesis or research project.   That is, the instructor can help you think about how to define the topic but ultimately each student will need to make some basic decision about what s/he wants to research and how to approach that research. The subject matter will be addressed through lectures, targeted readings, and discussion sessions. In addition, technical issues of producing a thesis or MRP are covered. By the end of the course, you will have prepared the first three chapters of a thesis or MRP.

Structure of the Course

Students learn methods best by doing them. Therefore, the course will be taught in the context of developing your ideas for your Master's research project or thesis. The course will involve a series of assignment where students develop and use the study designs and data collection methodologies to help prepare the first three chapters of your thesis or project. Please keep in mind that you are still free to change or modify your final project idea should you decide to do so. However, time is also limited so it may be best to choose a similar topic if you decide to switch so that you can reuse some of your existing work. Instruction will use a combination of taped lectures, PowerPoints, in-person discussions, and written assignments.

Course Readings

The following book is required for all students.

Kumar, Ranjit. (2014). Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners. Fourth Edition. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

The following books are recommended for all students. I highly recommend the Hart book, which describes how to do a literature review, and is useful in organizing and expressing ideas, and mapping and analyzing ideas. The Booth book had been used as a primary text in the past. However, some of the best parts of it have been incorporated into the Turabian book. It remains among the best sources on making an argument and supporting it. The Creswell texts are an alternative to the Kumar text and explain the research concepts differently, so may be useful if you are having difficulty with the Kumar text. I have also placed a list of references to books and other research-related resources under the Resources tab on Canvas.

- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.

- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

- Sommer, Robert and Barbara Sommer. (2002). *A Practical Guide to Behavioral Research Tools and Techniques, Fifth Edition.* New York: Oxford University Press.

- Turabian, Kate L. (2013).*A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Eighth Edition). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (available in e-book format)

- Hart, Chris. 1998. Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Imagination. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

- Booth, Wayne, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2008. The Craft of Research: Second Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (available in e-book format).

- Given the timeframe for our course, we will use the guidance provided by S. Joseph Levine at: http://www.learnerassociates.net/dissthes/#8.

All other reading materials are posted on Canvas or located on a public domain website.

1) **Formulating a Research Question/Writing an Introduction to Your Research (Complete tasks by February 29; 65% of grade))**
   a) Readings:
      i) Kumar, Chapters 1-4 (review), 5-6 (read)
      ii) Supplemental Readings on Literature Review
         (1) University of Toronto. (2013). "Literature Review: A Few Tips on Conducting It" Retrieved from: http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/literature-review

    (2) University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Writing Center. (2010-12). "Literature Reviews" Retrieved from: http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/literature-reviews/

    (3) Harvard College Writing Program. (2013) "What's Wrong with Wikipedia?" Harvard Guide to Using Sources. Retrieved from: http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k70847&pageid=icb.page346376

    (4) Harvard College Writing Program. (2013) "What Constitutes Plagiarism?" Harvard Guide to Using Sources. Retrieved from: http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k70847&pageid=icb.page342054

b) Lectures
- Overview of Research (from Fall 2016)
- Formulating a Research Problem (from 2016)
- Introductions (from Fall 2016)
- Literature Review (from Fall 2016)
- Concepts and Variables
- Constructing Hypothesis/Defining Research Questions

c) Assignments (65% of your grade)
    i) Review Major Assignment 2 from Fall 2016 – Formulating a Research Question
    ii) Minor Assignment 1 - Identifying Variables and Constructing Hypotheses (5% of grade; due January 22)
    iii) Major Assignment 1: First Draft of Introduction (25% of grade; due by January 29)
    iv) Major Assignment 2: First Draft of Literature Review (35% of course grade; due by February 26)

2) Conceptualizing a Study Design (Complete Task by April 23)
  a) Readings:
    i) Kumar, Chapters 7-12 and 18
    ii) Supplemental Reading on Interviewing:
        (1) Patton, Michael. (2002). Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods. Chapter 7: Qualitative Interviewing. Thousands Oak, CA: Sage Publications.
        (2) Flynn, Pat. (2013) Top 10 Tips for "Conducting an Exceptional Interview" The Smart Passive Income Blog with Pat Flynn. Retrieved from: http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/how-to-conduct-an-exceptional-interview/
        (3) Wallace Foundation. (2013). Workbook G: Conducting In-person Interviews Retrieved from: http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/collecting-and-using-data/Documents/Workbook-G-%20In-Person-Interviews.pdf (see pages 17-19 (on writing questions) and pages 26-29 (on in-person interviews and probing)
    iii) Kansas, University of, Work Group for Community Health and Development. (2013). "Conducting Interviews" The Community Tool Box. Retrieved from: http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_main_1047.aspx (good overview of various types of interviews; see box on "Points to Remember".)
    iv) Supplemental Materials on Surveys and Sampling
        (1) Kansas, University of, Work Group for Community Health and Development. (2013). "Conducting Surveys" The Community Tool Box. Available at: http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_main_1048.aspx
        (2) Taylor-Powell, E. (1998, May) "Sampling" University of Wisconsin-Extension Program Development and Evaluation. Retrieved from: http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Assets/pdfs/G3658-03.pdf (click "view pdf" in lower left of screen)

(3) Taylor-Powell, E. and Hermann, C. (2000, May) "Collecting Evaluation Data: Surveys" University of Wisconsin-Extension Program Development and Evaluation. Retrieved from: http://learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/G3658-10.PDF (click "view pdf" in lower left of screen)

  v) Robert Mayer and E. Greenwood, The Design of Social Science Policy Research, 1980: Chapter 7: Conceptual Framework, pp. 121-154. (on reserve)

  vi) Taylor-Powell, E.& Steele, S. (1996, August) "Program Development and Evaluation, Collecting Evaluation Data: Direct Observation" University of Wisconsin-Extension Program Development and Evaluation. Retrieved from: http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Assets/pdfs/G3658-05.pdf

  vii) Jacobs, Allen. "Looking at Cities" Places 1, 4 (1984) Retrieved from: http://escholarship.org/uc/item/12x6z4vr

  viii) University of North Carolina Writing Center. (2014) "Argument" Retrieved from: http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/argument

b) Research Design

  i) Study Design – overview and quantitative methods

  ii) Qualitative Study Designs – Case Study, Action Research, and Relationship of Study Design and Data Collection Methodologies

  iii) Data Collection Methods

  iv) Big fuzzies, mapping and trace measures, content analysis, personal documents and archival data

  v) Observations

  vi) Interviews

  vii) Surveys

  viii) Validity and Reliability of Research

  ix) Selecting a Sample

  x) Evaluation Research

  xi) How to Write a Research Proposal/Grant

  xii) Research methodology and Practice Evaluation

  xiii) Putting It All Together

c) Assignments (35%)

  i) Minor Assignment 2 – Conceptualizing a Study Design (5% of grade; due March 26)

  ii) Minor Assignment 3 – Conceptualizing a Research Instrument/Data Collection Strategy/Selecting a Sample (5% of grade; due April 2)

  iii) Major Assignment 3 – Research Methodology (25% of the grade; due by April 23)

3. Review the Rules and Thesis (ongoing)

  a) Visit the UF Graduate School's website to review the rules for thesis/MRP construction and filing deadlines

  b) You should also familiarize yourself with the University of Florida's thesis requirements and deadlines as set forth at: http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/graduation/thesis-and-dissertation

Grading

I expect that all graduate students should be able to accomplish the basic requirements for the course -- a "B" grade, but do not hesitate to mark lower when a student does not meet the expectation of adequately showing understanding of the material. "A" grades require performance beyond the minimum or average -- e.g., quality, depth, synthesis of ideas, originality or creativity. Meeting

deadlines matters, too! The university allows me to give a grade of "A," "A-," "B+," "B," etc. An "A-" means that a student almost, but not quite, achieved "A" work.

I use the following grading scale:

Grade	Percentage or Points Earned on Assignments	Grade Points
A+	97.5-100	4.0
A	93.5-97.4	4.0
A-	90.0-93.4	3.67
B+	87.5-89.9	3.33
B	83.5-87.4	3.00
B-	80.0-83.4	2.67
C+	77.5-79.9	2.33
C	73.5-77.4	2.00
C-	70.0-73.4	1.67
D+	67.5-69.9	1.33
D	63.5-67.4	1.00
D-	60.0-63.4	0.67
E	<59.9	0.00
WF		0.00
I		0.00
NG		0.00
S-U		0.00

For greater detail, see the Graduate School Grade Policy regulations at
http://gradschool.ufl.edu/archived-files/policy-manual-archived-copy.html#3.1.0.0

Every effort will be made to provide timely and appropriate feedback for your performance. If you have questions about your grade, you may schedule a conference to review your scores, attendance, and performance. Final grades will reflect the University of Florida policies for assigning grade points, which can be found at https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx. An incomplete grade may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor as an interim grade only in cases of extreme extenuating circumstances. Note that as this is a required course, you will not be allowed to graduate without completing the course with a passing grade. Please also note that the Graduate School states that a passing grade is a C or better. Graduate students must maintain a B or better cumulative grade point average in order to graduate.

Use of Reference Material
All references should follow the format used by the American Psychological Association (APA). Citations should appear in the text as follows: (Meyer & Miller, 2014) when using an idea from the text; or (Meyer and Miller, 2014, p. 2-33) when using a specific quote on the indicated page (in this case, page 2-33). A good source of information on the APA format can be found from the Purdue Online Writing Lab: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/. Students from other departments may use a commonly accepted format for citations from their own field; please discuss this option with the instructor before you complete the outline of the paper.

Assistance for Writing Papers

The online resources to assist you in writing are extensive. The Dial Center for Written and Oral Communication (http://cwoc.ufl.edu/) and the Writing Program (http://writing.ufl.edu) at the University of Florida can assist you in several different aspects of writing. You can use the writing lab to get one-on-one help on every area of composition from basic grammar and mechanics to topics like essay organization, style, and argument.

Many other universities offer online handbooks on writing. I have found the following three particularly useful: the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/), the University of Wisconsin (http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/), and Purdue University (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/). I found the following handouts particularly helpful while editing papers; http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/CommonErrors.html and http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/ClearConciseSentences.html. The online handbooks described above discuss many aspects of writing papers. Students at the graduate level should be prepared to write a critical argument rather than simply describe relationships. If you have any questions about what is expected at the graduate level, please see the instructor.

Academic Honesty:

Students MUST follow the University's policy regarding cheating and the use of copyrighted materials. Students are responsible for reading and abiding by the University's Student Code of Conduct and Conflict Resolution (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/conductcode.php) and the University Honor Code. Under the Student 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'" (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/conductcode.php). In particular, there are rules governing plagiarism and the unauthorized use of materials and resources ("cheating"). If you directly quote someone or use an idea from another source, you must attribute that idea or those words (this includes providing a complete citation to the author(s) in a List of References at the end of the document). If you submit "substantially the same paper or project to satisfy another academic requirement and do not receive express authorization to resubmit or simultaneously submit the paper or project" you will be considered to be "cheating" (see (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/conductcode.php).Failure to follow the rules in the Student Honor Code will result in failure on that paper and consequently may result in a failure in this course. In addition, possible disciplinary action may be brought under the Judicial Process for Academic Honesty Violations. You can also consult the above website and the graduate catalog for further information. In the context of this course, if you directly quote someone or use an idea from another source, you **must** attribute that idea or words. Failure to follow the rules regarding Integrity in Graduate School may result in a failure in this course and possible disciplinary action under the Judicial Process for Academic Honesty Violations. If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or other aspects of academic honesty, please make an appointment with the instructor.

Help for Student/Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The instructor will respect the needs for accommodations for students will disabilities consistent with the University's policy on such accommodations. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. I am happy to provide reasonable accommodations for students who register with the DRC, and ask that students inform me of any request no later than the end of the second week of the course.

At times students may experience periods of increased stress when challenges related to decisions, goals and relationships arise. Often these experiences are accompanied by thoughts and emotions that produce sadness, anxiety, frustration, anger and confusion. If you are experiencing excessive stress in your life that are affecting your ability to meet the deadlines for this course, please speak to the instructor or contact the Counseling and Wellness Center (http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx; (352) 392-1575) to make an appointment or contact the University Police Department at 352-392-1111 or 911 for emergencies.. If you observe of know of anyone in distress, please reach out to U Matter, We Care (www.umatter.ufl.edu), 352-294-CARE (2273) or #UMatterUF

Information on this syllabus may change. The instructor will notify the class if there are any changes.