Instructor: Asha Weinstein Agrawal
Office location: Washington Square Hall 218A
Email: asha.weinstein.agrawal@sjsu.edu (best contact method)
Telephone: 408-924-5853 (please note that I rarely check messages)
Office hours: Check http://tinyurl.com/6qdm9cw and sign yourself up for one of the listed times
Class days/time: 4:30 – 7:00 pm on Thursdays 8/28, 9/4, 9/11, 9/25, and 11/6
Classroom: DMH 347 (except class #2)
Website: Canvas (https://sjsu.instructure.com/)
Prerequisites: None
Units: 1

Course Catalog Description
Advanced research and proposal writing. Students conduct background research and develop a preliminary research proposal that demonstrates their capacity to do independent research, analysis, and writing about a complex planning problem.

Course Description and Course Learning Objectives
This course provides students with the skills and knowledge to prepare the preliminary research proposal required to enroll in URPB 298A. Students will learn how to frame effective research questions and identify appropriate peer-reviewed literature relevant to their research topic. In addition, the class explores the question of how to identify which research methods might be appropriate to answer a research question. Finally, students will develop their skills at providing constructive feedback on a colleague’s writing.

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Conceptualize problems from complex, real-world situations so the problems are meaningful to the intended audience and research-worthy.
2. Identify and summarize appropriate peer-reviewed literature relevant to a proposed area of research.
3. Prepare constructive, tactful feedback to help colleagues improve their writing.
Note that MUP students who entered the program in Fall 2012 or later must pass URBP 297P with a grade of C or higher in order to enroll in URBP 298A. In addition, if students decide that they wish to work in URBP 298A on a topic different from the one they write about for the 297P Preliminary Research Proposal, then before the semester they take URBP 298A, they must prepare a new Preliminary Research Proposal that is assessed by the URBP 298 Faculty Coordinator as being of passing quality.

Remember also that in order to register for URBP 298A, you must have passed the Writing Skills Test (WST) or have a bachelors or masters degree from a California State University campus. If you have not yet met this requirement, you should register for a WST test date immediately (http://testing.sjsu.edu/wst/).

**Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) Knowledge Components**

This course partially covers the following PAB knowledge, skills, and values components:

2.a) Research: tools for assembling and analyzing ideas and information from prior practice and scholarship, and from primary and secondary sources.

2.c) Quantitative and Qualitative Methods: data collection, analysis and modeling tools for forecasting, policy analysis, and design of projects and plans.

A complete list of the PAB Knowledge Components can be found at http://www.sjsu.edu/urbanplanning/courses/pabknowledge.html.

**Course Texts**

**Required**

This class has two required books:


In addition, I will email out additional short readings.

**Recommended**

These books are about the research design process in general. All are available as e-books through the SJSU library.


These readings will be helpful to those of you wanted to learn about qualitative and survey methods. (For advice on quantitative methods and policy analysis, the textbooks from URBP 204 and URBP 236 are a good starting place.)


LeCompte, Margaret Diane, and Jean J. Schensul. *Analyzing and Interpreting Ethnographic Data*. Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 1999. (One good place to start learning about how to analyze interview or other qualitative data.)


### Course Assignments and Grading Policy

Your grade for the course will be based on the following graded assignments and activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graded Assignments</th>
<th>% of Course Grade</th>
<th>CLOs covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Draft Preliminary Research Proposal #1</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft Preliminary Research Proposal #2</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Preliminary Research Proposal</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with the instructor</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written peer evaluations</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the graded activities listed in the table, you will complete several ungraded homework assignments designed to help you learn the course material.

### The Preliminary Research Proposal Assignments

You will write two drafts and a final version of a preliminary research proposal. The proposal will include your proposed URBP 298 planning report’s research question and an explanation of its importance, an overview of the methods you anticipate using, and an annotated bibliography of at least 25 substantive sources related to your topic. The drafts will each be graded pass (A)/fail (F),
and the final assignment will receive a letter grade from A to F. Additional instructions will be given on a separate handout.

**Meeting with the Instructor**

You must meet with me between September 26 and October 9 for an in-person or phone conversation to discuss my feedback on your Draft Preliminary Proposal #1. (I encourage you to meet with me additional times during the semester as well.) You will receive a pass (A)/fail (F) grade on this component of the class, based on whether or not you meet with me during the required time period.

**Peer Evaluation**

You will prepare written feedback on two or three of your classmates’ second proposal drafts. Additional instructions will be given on a separate handout. The assignment will be graded pass (A)/fail (F). Students who complete the assignment with a reasonable level of effort will receive a passing grade.

**Policy on Late and Missing Assignments**

Any student who fails to complete all graded assignments and activities listed in the table above will automatically fail the course.

Late penalties are as follows:

- For the two draft proposal assignments, late work will be penalized one letter grade for each week late (e.g., from an A to a B). (It’s very important to turn in the drafts on time so that you can get feedback from your peers during the in-class time set aside for this.)
- For the final proposal, the late penalty is one full letter grade (e.g., from an A- to a B-) for each day late.
- For the written peer evaluation assignment, you will receive a grade of C if you complete the work late but within a week of the due date; evaluations turned in later will receive no credit, but will allow you to pass the course. Making up this assignment will require scheduling time outside of class to talk with your feedback partners.

If life begins to overtake you such that you expect you will not be able to complete an assignment on time and you let me know well before the due date, we can discuss alternative arrangements that might reduce the grade penalty for lateness.

**Calculation of Final Course Letter Grade**

I calculate the final letter grade for the course by weighting the grade for each assignment according to the percentages in the table above. To do this, I first convert the letter grade for each assignment to a number using a 4-point scale (A = 4.0, A- = 3.67, B+ = 3.33, B = 3, B- = 2.67, C+ = 2.33, C = 2.0, C- = 1.67, D = 1, and F = 0). I then use these numbers and the weights for each assignment to calculate a final, numerical grade for the course based on a 4-point scale. That number is converted back to a letter grade (A = 3.85+, A- = 3.50 – 2.84, B+ = 3.17 – 3.49, B = 2.85 – 3.16, B- = 2.50 – 2.84, C+ = 2.17 – 2.49, C = 1.85 – 2.16, C- = 1.50 – 1.84, D+ = 1.17 – 1.40, D = 0.85 – 1.16, F = 0 – 0.84).
Course Workload

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of forty-five hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Since this is a 1-unit course, it is expected that you will spend at least 45 hours over the course of the semester.

Academic Integrity Statement, Plagiarism, and Citing Sources Properly

SJSU’s Policy on Academic Integrity states: “Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University, and the University’s Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development” (Academic Senate Policy S07-2). The policy on academic integrity can be found at [www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf).

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's language, images, data, or ideas without proper attribution. It is a very serious offense both in the university and in your professional work. In essence, plagiarism is both theft and lying: you have stolen someone else’s ideas, and then lied by implying that they are your own.

**Plagiarism will lead to grade penalties and a record filed with the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. In severe cases, students may also fail the course or even be expelled from the university.**

**If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, it is your responsibility to make sure you clarify the issues before you hand in draft or final work.**

Learning when to cite a source and when not to is an art, not a science. However, here are some common examples of plagiarism that you should be careful to avoid:

- Using a sentence (or even a part of a sentence) that someone else wrote without identifying the language as a quote by putting the text in quote marks and referencing the source.
- Paraphrasing somebody else's theory or idea without referencing the source.
- Using a picture or table from a webpage or book without reference the source.
- Using data some other person or organization has collected without referencing the source.

The University of Indiana has developed a very helpful website with concrete examples about proper paraphrasing and quotation. See in particular the following pages:

- Overview of plagiarism at [www.indiana.edu/~istd/overview.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/overview.html)
- Examples of plagiarism at [www.indiana.edu/~istd/examples.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/examples.html)
- Plagiarism quiz at [www.indiana.edu/~istd/test.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/test.html)
If you still have questions, feel free to talk to me personally. There is nothing wrong with asking for help, whereas even unintentional plagiarism is a serious offense.

**Citation style**

It is important to properly cite any references you use in your assignments. The Department of Urban and Regional Planning uses Kate Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th edition (University of Chicago Press, 2013, ISBN 9780226816388). Copies are available in the SJSU King Library. Additionally, the book is relatively inexpensive, and you may wish to purchase a copy. Please note that Turabian’s book describes two systems for referencing materials: (1) “notes” (footnotes or endnotes), plus a corresponding bibliography, and (2) in-text parenthetical references, plus a corresponding reference list. In this class, students should use footnotes and a bibliography.

**Accommodation for Disabilities**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the AEC (Accessible Education Center) to establish a record of their disability.

You can find information about the services SJSU offers to accommodate students with disabilities at the Accessible Education Center website at [www.sjsu.edu/aec](http://www.sjsu.edu/aec).

**Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material**

Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor’s permission in writing to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.

**Library Liaison**

The SJSU Library Liaison for the Urban and Regional Planning Department is Ms. Toby Matoush. If you have questions, you can contact her at toby.matoush@sjsu.edu or 408-808-2096.

**SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The Writing Center website is located at [http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter).

**Course Schedule**

*Notes:*

- The schedule is subject to change with notice by email or in-class announcement
• Readings are to be completed by the dates listed
• Assignments are due by class time on the dates listed (or by midnight, if it’s not a class meeting day)

August 28 – Class meeting 1

Topics covered

- Introductions & course overview
- Research in planning: what is it, why do it, and how to do it?
- Overview of the Planning Report process (what to expect in 297P, 298A, and 298B)
- Overview of 297P and the Preliminary Research Proposal assignment
- How to develop a research question

Reading

- Required: Turabian, Chapters 1 and 2 (on developing research questions)
- Recommended
  - Booth et al, Chapters 1 – 4 (the purpose of research and developing research questions)
  - Johnson, Chapter 3 (developing research questions)
  - May, Chapters 1 – 3 (philosophical & intellectual debates about the research process)

September 4 – Class meeting 2

MEET IN THE MLK LIBRARY, room 213

Due: Homework #1: Using Sources Ethically

Topics covered

- Finding library resources: presentation by SJSU Reference Librarian Toby Matoush
- Using sources ethically
- Strategies for reading technical articles

Readings/viewing

- Required
  - Turabian, Chapters 3 and 4 (finding and engaging with sources)
  - UniLearnings’s “Reading Efficiently” and “Reading Critically” webpages. Start at http://unilearning.uow.edu.au/reading/1d.html. Follow the “next” buttons at the top left to read all the relevant pages. On the first page, be sure to click on the “Journal article” link at the bottom.
September 11 – Class meeting 3

Topics covered

- Choosing research methods
- Storyboarding the concept for your project (in-class exercise)

Readings

- Required
  - Johnson, Chapters 4 - 6 (designing methods)
  - To get ideas on methods books that you may wish to read for your project, review the recommended readings above and scan the UC Berkeley’s Environmental Design Library’s webpage “Thesis & Dissertation Research” list of research method texts at http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/ENVI/research_thesis.html#Methods

- Recommended
  - May, Chapters 4 - 7 (theoretical and practical discussion of various methods)
  - Rugg and Petre, Chapter 1 (nature of research and designing methods)

September 25 – Class meeting 4

*Due: Draft Preliminary Research Proposal #1*

*Due: Homework #2: Freewriting on good and bad feedback*

Topics

- How to provide constructive peer reviews
- In-class peer feedback on the draft preliminary proposals


October 30 - Draft Preliminary Research Proposal #2 due
November 6 – Class meeting 5

*Due: Written critique of your peers’ Draft Preliminary Proposal #2*

Topics covered

- More on what to expect in URBP 298A/B
- Quick review of citation formatting
- Peer-group discussion of feedback on Draft Preliminary Research Proposal #2

December 10 – Final Preliminary Proposal due