

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY
URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING DEPARTMENT
URBP 297P – PLANNING REPORT PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL
FALL 2020

Course and Contact Information

Instructor(s):	T. William Lester, Associate Professor
Office Location:	Online
Telephone:	email preferred
Email:	thomas.lester@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Students are welcomed and encouraged to make individual meetings with the instructor by signing up online at https://thomaswlester.youcanbook.me/
Class Days/Time:	7:30 – 9:00 pm on six Thursdays 8/20, 9/3,9/17, 10/1, 10/15, 11/12
Classroom:	Online
Prerequisites:	None
Units:	1

Course 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 Format

The format of this course will be a modified hybrid/tutorial style course. The class will meet synchronously six times during the semester for approximately one hour and half over Zoom. This synchronous portion of the course will be used for brief (and I mean brief) lectures, activities, breakout discussions, and peer feedback. Parallel to this group content, this course includes a tutorial style of learning which relies on one on one learning directly with the instructor. The purpose of the one on one meetings (via Zoom) is to develop a personalized reading list and individual plan for completing the final research proposal. This allows students with specific research topics in mind to receive customized training in their methods and substantive area of interest in planning. Students must schedule at least four tutorial sessions during the semester.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

This course provides students with the practical skills and knowledge to prepare the preliminary research proposal required to enroll in URBP 298A. Students will develop a set of tools for developing a research proposal from start to finish. Students will learn tools to help take their initial ideas and passions and

translate them into answerable research questions. This begins with how to motivate your question, how to phase it in a way that will be important to policy makers and the public at large. 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 answerable.
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.
4. Understand the appropriate research methods to use (e.g. quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods) and how to explain these methods to their audience.

Note that MUP students 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 the same quality required to pass the Preliminary Proposal assignment in URBP 297P.

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook

The main textbook for this course will be: Creswell, J. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage. There are various editions of this book and it doesn't matter which one you use. There are plenty of copies available online for under \$10 used.

Other Readings

Additional readings will be required and will be curated in one on one consultation with the instructor and each individual student. Students should be prepared to read approximately 50-100 pages per week.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Idealogs: students are expected to post five short writing assignments to the discussion board in course website on Canvas. The goal of this assignment is to establish regular writing habits and to encourage the generation of multiple research questions. The first post relates to the student's personal motivations for pursuing a planning research topic. The next three posts include cover nascent research ideas, while the final requests the student to take one idealog and expand on the practical steps that could be taken to answer the question (i.e. due diligence).

Literature review plan: In consultation with the instructor, each student will map out a literature review plan and develop a personalized reading list. This document will be posted to Canvas.

Tell a story with (or without) data: This is a short (1-2) page written assignment that is intended to teach students how to motivate their research questions with some descriptive analysis using publicly available data. The document should include at least one data visualization and a clearly stated argument that helps the reader understand the importance of the overall project. For students conducting qualitative research this post can include a brief interview or narrative about a person impacted by a planning decision, or a mini ethnography from a place or neighborhood. The goal of this assignment is to tell a story.

Research Proposal Draft: Students should prepare a draft of their research proposals for 298A by November 12th.

Research Proposal: After receiving written and verbal feedback from the instructor student should submit a final research proposal on December 7th. This is the final evaluation component of this course and the goal is the have a high-quality proposal ready for enrollment in URBP 298A.

Grading Information

Assignments in this course will be graded proportionately as follows:

Assignment	% of Grade	Due Date	CLO
Idealogs	10	Ongoing	1-4
Literature review plan	10	Sept 17 th	1-4
Tell a story with data	10	Oct. 15 th	1-4
Complete 4 tutorial meetings	10	Ongoing	1-4
Research proposal draft	20	Nov. 12 th	1-4
Research proposal final	30	Dec. 7 th	1-4

Grades for the course will be assigned based on your percentage of total points earned on all assignments according to the following distribution:

A plus = 100 to 96; A = 95 to 93 points; A minus = 92 to 90 points; B plus = 89 to 87 points; B = 86 to 84 points; B minus = 83 to 81 points; C plus = 80 to 78 points; C = 77 to 73 points; C minus = 72 to 70 points; D plus = 69 to 67 points; D = 66 to 63 points; D minus = 62 to 60 points; F = 59 points or lower

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>), which is hosted by the Office of Undergraduate Education. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Recording Zoom Classes

This course or portions of this course (i.e., lectures, discussions, student presentations) will be recorded for instructional or educational purposes. The recordings will only be shared with students enrolled in the class through Canvas. The recordings will be deleted at the end of the semester. If, however, you would prefer to remain anonymous during these recordings, then please speak with the instructor about possible accommodations (e.g. temporarily turning off identifying information from the Zoom session, including student name and picture, prior to recording). Students are prohibited from recording course materials and/or distributing downloaded recordings outside of the class.

Land Acknowledgement

The San José State University community recognizes that the present-day Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, with an enrolled Bureau of Indian Affairs documented membership of over 550, is comprised of all of the known surviving American Indian lineages aboriginal to the San Francisco Bay region who trace their ancestry through the Missions Santa Clara, San José, and Dolores, during the advent of the Hispano- European empire into Alta California; and who are the successors and living members of the sovereign, historic, previously Federally Recognized Verona Band of Alameda County. The San José State University community also recognizes the importance of this land to the indigenous Muwekma Ohlone people of this region, and consistent with our principles of community and diversity strives to be good stewards on behalf of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe whose land we occupy.

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 780226816388). Copies are available in the SJSU MLK 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. The instructor prefers the latter.

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 at http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec> to establish a record of their disability.

Library Liaison

The SJSU Library Liaison for the Urban and Regional Planning Department is Ms. Peggy Cabrera. If you have questions, you can contact her at Peggy.Cabrera@sjsu.edu or 408-808-2034.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the Writing Center website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>.

SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services

The SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit Counseling and Psychological Services website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>.

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Course Schedule

Note: Students will be expected to complete additional readings based on their individualized consultation with Dr. Lester.

Class #1 8/20: Introduction

Readings:

Creswell, Chapter 1. “Chapter 1 The Selection of a Research Approach”

Creswell, Chapter 6 “The Purpose Statement”

Class #2: 9/3: Finding your Niche: Conducting an Efficient Literature Review

Due before class: Idealog post #1

Readings:

Creswell, Chapter 2. “Review of the Literature” and Chapter 3 “The Use of Theory”

[How to Write a Literature Review](https://www.scribbr.com/dissertation/literature-review/), <https://www.scribbr.com/dissertation/literature-review/>

Class #3 9/17: Designing Research and Finding Data Sources

Due before class: Literature Review Plan

Readings:

Creswell, Part II “Designing Research”

Class #4 10/1: Research Ethics and Research Impact

Readings: Creswell, Chapter 4 “Writing Strategies and Ethical Consideration”

Familiarize yourself with SJSU’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies

[\(https://www.sjsu.edu/research/irb/\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/research/irb/)

Class #5 10/15: Feedback, Revisions and the Writing Process

“Tell a Story with Data” Assignment Due

Agenda:

- Student presentations of “Tell a Story with Data” assignments
- The “Dos and Don’ts” of giving feedback
- Writing tips

Readings:

Jensen, Joli Write No Matter What: Advice for Academics (Part II: Using Tools that Work).

Class #6 11/12: Presentation of Draft Research Design

Student presentation of research proposal draft and group feedback.