Course Objectives

This course supports students in their effort to complete the professional report (PR) component of the Master of Urban & Regional Planning (MURP) capstone requirement. The course may include lectures or workshops, guest speakers, and critiqued student presentations.

Students will learn to elevate both the quality of their analysis and the clarity of their professional communication, oral and written. Students will also review norms of professional practice. Foremost is the norm: "all deadlines and deliverables are contractual."

Specific Learning Outcomes

Through completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate the specific writing purpose of professional reports.
2. Identify the implicit and explicit expectations of professional report readers.
3. Formulate a writing focus in terms of a planning problem.
4. Recognize when institutional review is needed for human subject protection.
5. Hold planning tasks against the measuring stick of AICP professional ethics.
6. Discern and explain the differences between advocacy and decision support.
7. Justify the organization of their PR in terms of purpose and audience.
8. Access and appropriately analyze information most relevant to a planning problem.
10. Articulate a means for ongoing personal improvement of professional writing.
11. Demonstrate the conventions of effective visual and graphic communication.
12. Articulate the norms of U.S. planning practice with respect to work flow and deadlines.
13. Provide decision support for a real world planning client.

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| Week 1 | • Mechanics of the PR.  
• Know your purpose, know your audience.  
• Human subject protection.  
• Professional ethics (“AICP”) | Due ► Sunday problem statement 1.0 (working title + paragraph); advisor match preferences | Macris, chapters 1, 3-5  
Pearsall, chapters 2 (audience) and 7 (ethical writing) and  
AICP;  
Dunn & Chadwick;  
UCI (“Basic Principles”);  
Flyvbjerg |
| Week 2 | • Critique of problem statements 1.0 (submitted 10/4) with in-class peer editing. Then walk to →  
PR info resources (Julia Gelfand,  
Applied Sciences Librarian @ MRC, Ayala Science Library) | Due ► Mon “Committee Agreement” (Form 1); and revised problem statement + title (2.0) |                                                                      |
| Week 3 | • Your efforts in the landscape of previous efforts (knowledge base review), sandwiched between  
• 2-on-1 meetings (Canvas sign up) | Due ► Sunday problem statement 3.0 (working title + 350 words) | Macris, chapters 2, 6 and 7  
The Owl at Purdue re: in-text citations, reference lists |
| Week 4 | • Skeleton construction 1 (strategies, practicalities) | Due ► Fri knowledge base survey 1.0 + working title |                                                                 |
| Week 5 | • 2-on-1 meetings during scheduled class time (Canvas sign up), no regular class | Due ► Sun knowledge base 2.0, integrated with problem statement | Macris, p.10-“...Main message” |
| Week 6 | • Skeleton construction 2 (PowerPoint = outlining incognito)  
• Communicating with PowerPoint | Due ► Friday “Plan of action” (aka Outline 1.0 /Form 2). | Miller, “Seven Principles.” |
| Week 7 | • Critique of outlines  
• Presenting for a crowd  
• Pictures first—then words and numbers? | Due ► Sun Outline version 2.0 with prior text revised & fit together | Pearsall, chs. 5, 8; also helpful: “Speaking about numbers,” Miller (Chapter 12).  
Also helpful: “Speaking about numbers,” Miller (Chapter 12). |
| Week 8 | Student presentations 1.0 with critique |                                     | Macris, review Ch.7 (“Using lists”) |
| Week 9 |                                                                                 |                                     |                                                                     |
| Week 10 | Student presentations 2.0 with critique | Due ► Friday “draft half” of PR (paper and electronic) |                                                                 |
Companion Documents: (1) Read this syllabus jointly with its companion document, “Professional Report (PR) Guidelines” (current version: Macris (see reference below)). (2) Required purchase: Macris (see reference below).

Assignments and Grading

SUBMISSION FORMAT. The default format is electronic file via the Canvas drop box. I will say in advance if a print copy is also required. Nota Bene: Deadlines jump around independently of meeting dates. Submissions are due by 11:59 PM on due dates.

292A grades will be determined by the 292A instructor. Nonetheless, always keep your other committee members in the loop.

Approximate weights:

- Problem Statements (form 1)    10 points
- Knowledge Base Survey    10 points
- Outlines (form 2)     10 points
- Participation (class peer review)   10 points
- Oral presentations     10 points
- Draft half of PR     50 points

100 points

Late submission penalty: on 10-point assignments, 3 points will be deducted if submitted in the 24 hours following deadline, and one point daily thereafter; for the 50-point assignment, 5 points will be deducted if submitted in the 24 hours following deadline, and three points daily thereafter. A minimum total of 70 points is required to pass the course.

References

Purdue University (2011). The Owl at Purdue (APA formatting and style guide). http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/ [APA = American Psychological Association]
University of California, Irvine, Research Administration. Reference pages and documents; see especially the “Student Researcher” section: http://www.research.uci.edu/ora/hrpp/

**First half of PR, due**

You will complete a “draft half” (first half of the PR) this quarter (20–25 pp. double-spaced, plus table of contents, appendices, and references). The submittal must be professional in content, style, and form, and submitted both electronically and on paper.

I. **Title Page** (complete)—see template in PR Guidelines

II. **Table of contents**

III. **Introduction**
   A. Problem statement—what’s the question
   B. Intended audience (client, stakeholders)
   C. Significance—why it matters (client, stakeholders)
   D. Objectives (concretely what you promise to deliver)

IV. **Background**
   A. Provide a bigger picture or the back story for the people or place being impacted by the problem (“historical, demographic, political context”).
   B. Lessons learned from previous efforts (“info base survey”).

V. **Procedures:**
   A. Information acquisition. What information will you be collecting? Be specific: *e.g.*, case studies (where), GIS maps (where), census data (which populations), archival records (of what sort), interviews (with whom), consultants’ reports (titles and authors)? How will you acquire the necessary permissions or physical access?
   B. Plan of analysis. What will you do to analyze the data? How will the findings articulate with the decision support that you’ve promised to deliver?

VI. **Recommendations.** Mock up your *expected* recommendations. Reiterate the stakeholders (audience) to whom these recommendations will be addressed.

VII. **Figures** (photographs, graphs, maps, charts, *etc.*). Number and entitle every item with its main message; obsessively include sources.

VII. **Timeline.** Provide a week-by-week plan for accomplishing specific tasks—*use real dates!* Incorporate meetings to update your client.

VIII. **References.** Complete and in proper APA format

**Oral presentations** (10-minute limit) should consist of a professional quality *PowerPoint* presentation that summarizes key points from above.