

PPD 292A: M.U.R.P. PROFESSIONAL REPORT
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, POLICY, AND DESIGN -- UC IRVINE

Course Objectives¹

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.
9. Negotiate an advance schedule for regular client consultation.
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.

¹The legacy from Kris Day's earlier versions of this course is gratefully acknowledged. All else is © [REDACTED]. The original content of this course (including but not limited to lectures, exams, handouts, and electronic files) is protected by copyright. Duplicating course material for profit without the written permission of the instructor is prohibited. This includes giving or selling material to commercial firms for further distribution.

DATE	TOPICS or ACTIVITY	DELIVERABLES	REFERENCE READING
The due ▶ dates jump around!			
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanics of the PR. Know your purpose, know your audience. Human subject protection. Professional ethics (“AICP”) 	Due ▶ Sunday [redacted] 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;
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 [redacted] “Committee Agreement” (Form 1); <u>and revised</u> problem statement + title (2.0)	Dunn & Chadwick; UCI (“Basic Principles”); Flyvbjerg
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your efforts in the landscape of previous efforts (knowledge base review), sandwiched between 2-on-1 meetings (Canvas sign up) 	Due ▶ Sunday [redacted]: problem statement 3.0 (working title + 350 words)	
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skeleton construction 1 (strategies, practicalities) 	Due ▶ Fri [redacted] knowledge base survey 1.0 + working title	Macris, chapters 2, 6 and 7 <u>The Owl at Purdue</u> re: in-text citations, reference lists
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-on-1 meetings during scheduled class time (Canvas sign up), no regular class 	Due ▶ Sun [redacted]: knowledge base 2.0, integrated with problem statement	Macris, p.10- “...Main message”
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skeleton construction 2 (PowerPoint = outlining incognito) Communicating with PowerPoint 	Due ▶ Friday [redacted]: “Plan of action” (aka Outline 1.0 /Form 2).	Miller, “Seven Principles.”
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critique of outlines Presenting for a crowd Pictures first—then words and numbers? 	Due ▶ Sun [redacted]: Outline version 2.0 with prior text revised & fit together	Pearsall, chs. 5, 8; also helpful: “Speaking about numbers,” Miller (Chapter 12).
Week 8	Student presentations 1.0 with critique		Macris, review Ch.7 (“Using lists”)
Week 9	[redacted]		
Week 10	Student presentations 2.0 with critique	Due ▶ Friday [redacted]: “draft half” of PR (paper <u>and</u> electronic).	

Companion Documents: (1) Read this syllabus jointly with its companion document, “Professional Report (PR) Guidelines” (current version: [REDACTED]). (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	<u>50 points</u>
	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

- American Planning Association. *AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct* (Revised April 1, 2016) <http://www.planning.org/ethics/ethicscode.htm>
- American Planning Association. *AICP Ethics Cases of the Year*. <http://www.planning.org/ethics/caseoftheyear/>
- Dunn, C. M. & Chadwick, G. L. (1999). “Historical Perspectives in Human Subjects Protection,” Chapter 1 in *Protecting Study Volunteers in Research*, 2nd Edition. Boston: Thomson.
- Flyvbjerg, Brent (2013). “How planners deal with uncomfortable knowledge: the dubious ethics of the American Planning Association.” *Cities* 32(June): 157-163.
- Gaber, John and Sharon Gaber (2007). *Qualitative Analysis for Planning & Policy: Beyond the Numbers*. Chicago: Planners Press <https://www.planning.org/store/books/>. Available in e-formats.
- Macris, Natalie (2000). *Planning in Plain English: Writing Tips for Urban and Environmental Planners*. Planners Press <https://www.planning.org/store/books/>. Available in e-formats.
- Miller, Jane. 2004. “Seven Basic Principles,” Chapter 2, in *The Chicago Guide to Writing About Numbers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pearsall, T. E. (2010). *The elements of technical writing*, 3rd edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- 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/>

Xia, Rosanna, Rong-Gong Lin II, and Doug Smith. "Tower project exposes gaps in L.A.'s oversight—community activists, not city planners, take the lead in bringing Hollywood fault concerns to light." *Los Angeles Times*, August 15, 2013.

■ **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.