

**SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING DEPARTMENT**  
**URBP 298A: SPECIAL STUDY – PLANNING REPORT DEVELOPMENT**  
**SPRING 2025**

**Instructor:** Dr. Charles Rivasplata

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**Zoom Link:** <https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/89651697680?pwd=GQJHSVkfqA58btxtj0wr1Tcg3NOak7.1>

**Class day/  
time:** This will be an ‘asynchronous’ course with no scheduled class meetings. Students will complete modules with course assignments and meet deadlines as listed on the course Canvas page and in this syllabus. Students are strongly encouraged to be in regular contact with the instructor throughout the semester via email or Zoom.

**Office Hour:** Thu.: 9:00-10:00 a.m., by appointment (please e-mail instructor by Tue. evening)

**Classroom:** N/A

**Prerequisites:** Graduate Adviser approval

**Units:** 3

## **Course Catalog Description**

Advanced research and report writing. Students develop a plan and complete the initial research to write a planning report that demonstrates their capacity to do independent research, analysis, and writing about a complex planning problem.

## **Course Description and Course Learning Objectives**

The two-course sequence of URBP 298A and URBP 298B gives planning students an opportunity to prepare a Planning Report based upon independent research, analysis, and possibly design work about a complex urban or regional problem. Preparing this Planning Report is the capstone experience for students in the MUP program. Students draw upon the material they have learned from coursework, internships, and professional experience to demonstrate their ability to:

1. **Conceptualize problems from complex, real world situations so the problems are meaningful to clients and research-worthy.** In particular, students will be able to:
  - a. Define and clearly state a research question and/or goals
  - b. Demonstrate in-depth familiarity with relevant literature on the research subject
  - c. Design an ethical methodology appropriate to answer a research question
2. **Collect, analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources.** In particular, students will be able to:
  - a. Collect data of sufficient quality and depth to answer a research question
  - b. Perform direct, competent, and appropriate analysis to answer a research question

- c. Draw sophisticated conclusions based on the results of the analysis, which are a logical extension of the findings
  - d. Show how the analysis and findings fit into the larger context of the literature and current professional practice
3. **Communicate effectively in writing and in visual terms.** In particular, students will be able to:
- a. Organize material logically, so that a reader can easily follow the writer's train of thought
  - b. Write text that is grammatically correct and free of typos
  - c. Create and integrate into the report tables and figures that add useful/important information for readers
  - d. Design reports that are attractive and professional in appearance
  - e. Include citations where appropriate, and format footnotes and bibliographies properly

In addition to these three requirements for the Planning Report, students are encouraged to demonstrate originality and creativity in the choice of research question, methodology, and analysis techniques.

## Required Course Texts to Purchase

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 9th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. (ISBN-13: 978-0226494425). Note: although we encourage students to use the latest (9<sup>th</sup>) edition of Turabian, if you have the 8<sup>th</sup> edition, that is fine to use as well.

Other readings may be emailed to students and/or posted to the Canvas course site and/or determined in consultation with the student's adviser.

## Course Requirements and Assignments

In URBP 298A, students begin the report writing process by finalizing a research proposal; developing their research design and reviewing relevant literature on their Planning Report topic; completing an Institutional Review Board (IRB) Exclusion Worksheet and (if applicable) an IRB proposal requesting permission to work with human subjects; and drafting parts of the final Planning Report. By completing these steps, students position themselves to successfully complete the Planning Report in URBP 298B.

To complete URBP 298A and receive credit for the course, students must complete the assignments listed in the table below, and read all assigned materials.

**Class meetings:** This will be an 'asynchronous' course with no scheduled class meetings. Students will complete course assignments and meet deadlines as listed on the course Canvas page and in this syllabus. Students must take it upon themselves to submit assignments and be in regular communication with their assigned advisor throughout the semester via phone, email, and Zoom.

**Overview of assignments:** Course assignments and due dates are listed in the table below:

Assignments	Due Date	Learning Objectives
1a. Research Proposal – Version 1	Feb. 6 <sup>th</sup>	1, 3
Completed “Petition for Advancement to Graduate Candidacy Form” due to Graduate Adviser (details on Canvas)	Feb. 13 <sup>th</sup>	N/A
1b. Research Proposal – Version 2 (required only if Version 1 does not satisfy the assignment requirements)	Feb. 20 <sup>th</sup>	1, 3
2. Literature Review	Mar. 20 <sup>th</sup>	1, 2, 3
3a. IRB Exclusion Worksheet	Apr. 10 <sup>th</sup>	1
4. Research Design	Apr. 17 <sup>th</sup>	1, 2, 3
3b. IRB Protocol Materials (if applicable)	Apr. 24 <sup>th</sup>	1, 3
5. Draft report sections (4,000 words, or as decided between the advisee and adviser)	May 15 <sup>th</sup>	2, 3

Directions for all assignments are posted on the URBP 298A Canvas site.

## Grading Information

URBP 298A is graded on a Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) basis. Students will receive a grade of CR for URBP 298A if they:

- Score a grade of B or better on the research proposal (Assignments #1a or #1b) and final literature review (Assignment #3b).
- Submit an acceptable IRB Exclusion Worksheet (Assignment #2a). The assignment will be graded Pass/Fail.
- If applicable, prepare and submit an acceptable IRB Protocol Narrative and associated materials to the SJSU IRB Coordinator, requesting permission to work with human subjects (Assignment #2b). The student’s adviser must approve the application before it is submitted.
- Submit an acceptable draft report section (Assignment #4) that totals at least 4,000 words (or as decided between the advisee and adviser).

Students who receive an NC for URBP 298A must re-enroll in URBP 298A and:

- Re-do all assignments (draft and final versions) for which they did not receive a passing grade (B or higher) during the first semester.
- Complete course modules as determined by the adviser.
- Enroll in URBP 298A and URBP 298B over two additional semesters.

In addition, receiving an NC in URBP 298A has the following implications:

- An NC is the equivalent of failing the course. The NC will remain permanently on the student's record, though the SJSU Office of Graduate Records does not include the NC when calculating the student's GPA.
- Students who receive an NC in URBP 298A can only enroll again in URBP 298A if there is space available, with the department giving enrollment priority to students who meet the prerequisites for URBP 298A and have not yet enrolled in a semester of URBP 298A.
- Students who receive an NC in URBP 298A will be placed on Administrative-Academic Probation. To be removed from administrative-academic probation, a student must re-enroll in URBP 298A and receive a grade of CR.
- Students who receive a second NC in URBP 298A will be disqualified from the MUP program.

## Other Grading and Assignment Issues

Students are expected to submit all draft and final assignments by the due dates in the table above. Students who turn assignments in on time (including drafts) will normally receive comments from their adviser within five business days. For late papers, the turnaround time may well take ten or more business days, which could significantly impede a student's ability to pass the course.

## 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.

## University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

## Plagiarism and Citing Sources Properly

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 SJSU MLK Library provides a short (15 minutes) and informative plagiarism tutorial. The MUP faculty highly encourage all students to complete it. Details are here:

<https://libguides.sjsu.edu/c.php?g=853661&p=6111789>

Also, 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)

Finally, you can use TurnItIn.com as a tool to help you identify any text that may be plagiarized, so that you can fix the problem before submitting the assignment. When you submit URBP 298A assignments to Canvas, the system will generate a “report” that highlights all text that TurnItIn.com identifies as possibly plagiarized. The report will give you a “score” that shows how much text has been flagged. Please note that the TurnItIn.com reports are helpful but not perfect – they tend to highlight lots of material that is not actually plagiarized, and the reports can also potentially miss problematic text. Therefore, it is recommended that you ignore the numeric score and instead carefully review all text that is highlighted in the report, to see if anything needs revision.

**You are encouraged to submit draft papers to Canvas well before the assignment due date,** so that you can check the TurnItIn.com report and make any needed revisions before the assignment is due. If you submit a draft for this purpose, add a note to the instructor that says, “draft only – not for review.” (The instructors promise you that they will not look at these reports.) For instructions on how to find your TurnItIn.com reports in Canvas, see <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-3120>.

If you still have questions after using all these online resources, feel free to talk to your instructor 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*, 9th edition. 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. Check with your advisor to see which format is preferred.

## Library Liaison

The SJSU Library Liaison for the Urban and Regional Planning Department is Ms. Lauren De Celle. If you have questions, you can contact her at: [lauren.decelle@sjsu.edu](mailto:lauren.decelle@sjsu.edu) or 408-808-2621.

# URBP 298A – SPRING 2025

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>: Complete Course Module #1

- Overview of the 298A and 298B process
- Review of the 298A syllabus and course assignments
- Overview of the research proposal assignment
- Guidelines for writing the research methods portion of the research proposal
- Overview of the important “Petition for Advancement to Graduate Candidacy” form

**Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>: Assignment #1a due** (draft research proposal)

**Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>: “Petition for Advancement to Graduate Candidacy” form due**

**Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>: Assignment #1b due** (final research proposal)

### Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>: Complete Course Module #2

- Overview of the literature review assignment

**Mar. 20<sup>th</sup>: Assignment #2 due** (literature review)

### Mar. 20<sup>th</sup> Complete Course Module #3

- The Institutional Review Board (IRB) process at San Jose State University
- Overview of the IRB Exclusion Worksheet
- Tips for professional writing

### Mar. 27<sup>th</sup>: Complete Course Module #4

- Overview of qualitative research methods and research design assignment
- Reading #1. USC Libraries Research Guide. Types of Research Design (2017).  
<http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/researchdesigns>
- Reading #2. Read pages 35-53 in Booth et al. *The Craft of Research*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago (1995).  
<https://is.cuni.cz/studium/predmety/index.php?do=download&did=53831&kod=JMM003>
- Reading #3. Mario Luis Small. “How Many Cases Do I Need? On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-Based Research.” *Ethnography* 10, no. 1 (March 2009): 5–38. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138108099586>
- Reading #4. Daniel W. Turner, III. “Qualitative Interview Design: A Practical Guide for Novice Investigators,” *The Qualitative Report* 15, no. 3 (2010): 754-60.
- Reading #5 Mia Northrup, “Developing Your Interviewing Skills, Part I: Preparing for an Interview,” January 17, 2011, UXmatters. & “Developing Your Interview Skills, Part II: During the Interview,” February 7, 2012, UXmatters.

**Apr. 10<sup>th</sup>: Assignment #3a due** (IRB exclusion worksheet)

**Apr. 17<sup>th</sup>: Assignment #4 due** (research design)

**Apr. 24<sup>th</sup>: Assignment #3b due *if necessary*** (IRB protocol materials)

**May 8<sup>th</sup>: Complete Course Module #5**

- Overview of the draft report sections assignment
- What to expect in URBP-298B

**May 15<sup>th</sup>: Assignment #5 due** (draft report sections)

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