

UEP 410
Advanced Seminar in
Urban and Environmental Policy

Fall 2017

Mondays
3p-5:55p
Fowler 207

Professor Bhavna Shamasunder
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*Office Hours: M, W 1-2:30p or by
appointment*

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*Office hours: Tuesday 3-5 or by
appointment*

The advanced seminar in Urban & Environmental Policy (UEP 410) is a capstone course that focuses on advanced research methods related to your senior comprehensive project for completion of the Urban and Environmental Policy major. Your work on the senior project during the UEP 410 fall semester lays the groundwork and is crucial for an overall strong comps project.

It is especially important that you identify a subject you feel passionate about. A topic that has your intellectual and emotional investment will result in a meaningful and valuable process. This level of engagement over the course of an academic year can be enormously rewarding and can provide real world skills and a sense of commitment that will stay with you after you graduate from Oxy.

This semester you will make significant progress on your comps project by:

- identifying a research topic
- developing research questions
- identifying and developing methods to answer your research question(s)
- developing a research plan
- deciding whether or not you will work with a client and who constitutes your audience
- conducting an in-depth literature review
- completing the human subjects review process for your project
- completing your literature review and preliminary writing of any background research (e.g. for case studies)
- getting started on your primary research

Class topics, discussions, and assignments will include examination of social science research methodology and applications, particularly in the fields of urban and environmental policy, urban planning and social change. You are expected to have already taken (or be concurrently enrolled in) a research methods course. We will *not* be doing an overview of methods in this course with the expectation that you have this background already. Rather, we will focus on deepening your

understanding of research methods applications as you discern which research methods are appropriate to pursue for your particular topic.

NOTE: If you plan on doing any video work, you must have completed or be currently enrolled in the documentary film or other relevant courses in Media Arts and Culture.

Class times are structured to support your individual research projects. At the same time, the goal of the course is to create a learning community where students work together as peer reviewers and research colleagues. Students are expected to complete all assignments on time and participate fully in class and in your small group discussions.

Course Materials

We will post readings and course materials to Moodle and/or hand them out in class. Please read all readings before the class for which it is assigned. You should also keep your research methods textbook handy for reference. We will also place a set of methods-related resources at the front desk in UEP.

Grading Criteria

Final grades will be assigned based on the following:

Participation (40%)

UEP 410 course is a seminar class and also a collaborative learning project. While your comps project is an individual capstone research project, much of the learning will be done with others in the class, including peer review of research and research progress. The success of the class and your project will rely on your participation in class and your commitment to the peer-review process to support your colleagues and revising your own work. In this course, we as your instructors aim to see your second and third drafts rather than a first draft. We expect writing turned in to us to have gone through a few rounds of revision on which we will base both your progress and your grade.

Final paper (60%) Due December 9 by 5:00 p.m.

The final paper will be the first portion of your senior comps. We expect that it will be 15-20 pages. It will include your research question and sub-questions, a structured literature review, a background section if you have one; your methodology, and any instruments or data sets you will be using for your data analysis and collection; and your work plan and timeline for the Spring semester.

The quality of your paper (as well as ultimately your successful comps project) depends on meeting several hard deadlines during the fall semester outlined below.

| Research objectives/Assignments Overview | Completion by: |
|---|---------------------------|
| Initial topic ideas, research question(s), and areas of focus for your literature review | Friday, September 1 |
| Peer-Review Comments due to your group members | Wednesday, September 6 |
| Revised research question/topic due in class | Monday, September 11 |
| Literature review draft uploaded | Monday, October 2 |
| Peer-Review comments due to your group member | Wed, October 11 |
| Literature review final with incorporated comments | Monday, October 16 |
| Draft Human Subjects Application | Monday, October 16 |
| Final Human Subjects applications due (to us and to HSRRC) | Friday, October 20 |
| Draft methods | Monday, October 23 |
| Peer-Review comments due to your group | Wednesday, October 26 |
| Final methods due in class | Monday, October 30 |
| Final first semester paper (Intro, Literature Review, Methods; any data sets/data collection instruments) | Monday, December 9 |

Class Topics and Readings by Week

| Date | Topic and Readings | Assignments Due |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Monday, Sept 11 | Intro Topic discussion Beginning your Literature Review | <p>You should have looked through past comps either online or hard copies (located in the UEPI conference room library).</p> <p>Each group finds one literature review and will post on Moodle by Sept. 20</p> <p>At the start of class, hand in your revised research topic/questions; 2 sets of peer-review comments; and your original submission stapled together.</p> |

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| Monday, Sept 18 | Library Resources <i>Guest: Jacob Sargent, Academic Commons</i> | Download and install Zotero free at zotero.com . Bring your laptop to class (location TBD); if you do not have a laptop, check one out of the library. You should already have started a scan of the literature on your topic. Please bring a set of articles that you can use to ensure that you are using zotero properly, and integrating with word. Note: zotero integration does not work with google docs. |
| Monday, Sept 25 | Literature reviews | For this exercise, we will create groups. Each group should identify and post a literature review on moodle <i>by Sept 20th</i> . Please read and prepare to discuss the literature reviews. You must read all of them in advance of class. Answer following questions: What are the main themes? What are the main questions the review is working to answer? What is the gap in knowledge the lit review is approaching? |
| Monday, Oct. 2 | Methods Human subjects | We will provide an example of a human subjects form for you to follow. For IRB, you will need the filled form as well as any supplementary instruments (surveys, etc..) |
| Monday, Oct 9 | FALL BREAK NO CLASS | |
| Monday, Oct 16 | Research Methods, continued | Bring three copies of draft IRB form to class Submit final IRB form to HSSRC by Fri. Oct. 20 Submit final literature review |
| Monday, Oct 23 | Research Methods, cont. | Bring two copies of draft methods section to class |
| Monday, Oct 30 | | Post final methods on Moodle |

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| Monday, Nov 6 | NO CLASS Group meetings with Prof. Cha and Prof. Shamasunder | We will be meeting with your research group this week and next. We will provide detailed feedback on your work to date and hand back your methods sections in these meetings. |
| Monday, Nov 13 | NO CLASS Group meetings with Prof. Cha and Prof. Shamasunder | |
| Monday, Nov. 20 | No Class: Thanksgiving Holiday | |
| Monday, Nov. 27 | Check in, problem solve, peer-edit | First draft of intro-methods due to peer group by Friday, Dec. 1 |
| Monday, Dec. 4 | NO CLASS | Return drafts with your edits to your colleagues by Monday Dec. 4 |
| Friday, Dec. 8 | | Turn in final paper, draft with other people's feedback. |

Course/Campus Policies and Support Services

Classroom Responsibilities

Teachers and students share the responsibility of learning and teaching. We see our responsibilities as creating the space and stimulating enthusiasm for learning, coming prepared to class, creating the goals and structure for a course, introducing concepts and ideas, and facilitating the sharing of knowledge amongst the students and between the professors and the students. Students are responsible for attending and participating in class, completing assignments in a timely manner, and being prepared to discuss readings and material in class.

Classroom Community

The comps class is designed to facilitate a co-learning community of students as researchers. Students are responsible for engaging in respectful, open, and thoughtful discussion with each other and the professors; faculty are responsible for ensuring that discussions in the classroom are inclusive and productive.

Academic Integrity

Occidental College assumes that students and faculty accept and respect the principle of academic honesty. Academic misconduct, including cheating and plagiarism, is not tolerated. The policies for cheating, plagiarism, and academic misconduct are outlined in the Student Handbook available online [here](#).

Support Services

The college provides a set of resources to students to support them in learning. The [Writing Center](#) provides writing assistance to students to develop ideas, draft, and revise papers.

Students with documented disabilities who are registered with Disability Services are required to present their accommodation letter to the instructor at the beginning of each semester or as soon as possible thereafter. Any student who experiences significant physical or mental impairments may contact Disability Services at (323) 259-2969 to learn about available services and support. More information is available at <http://www.oxy.edu/disability-services>

The Emmons Wellness Center also provides important support services and can help you address issues of stress, medical and mental health, and overall well-being. For more information, see their website at <http://www.oxy.edu/emmons-wellness-center>