

Course Information

Course Title: ARE 6746 Research Methods

Credits: 3

Faculty Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Jodi Kushins

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Note: All email communication should be through Canvas. Use the faculty's UFL email address only if you have an emergency and/or are unable to access Canvas email.

Course Description

This course is designed to facilitate the development and writing of the Capstone Research Proposal. In conversation and consultation with peers and the instructor, students will:

- select and focus their capstone research topics, goals, and questions;
- identify and read scholarly texts that inform their thinking about their topics of inquiry;
- learn about and plan to apply appropriate research methods; and
- write Capstone Research Proposals.

Students will complete a significant amount of the work required in this course independently. This includes identifying, retrieving, and examining texts that will inform their individual research interests and projects, and writing in a scholarly and professional way. Through a series of both graded and ungraded weekly assignments, students will shape their capstone research plans, and by the end of this course they will turn in their written Capstone Research Proposals for evaluation.

Course Objectives

This course is structured to assist graduate students in understanding research processes and practices and, subsequently, to prepare students for executing independent research and writing. As part of the process, students will clarify and refine a research topic area and questions. Students will explore on the context within which their topic is important through the development of a literature review that establishes precedents for each part of their project. Students will choose a set of

procedures and techniques that will allow them to carry out their study. And they will create a *viable* work plan and time table for completing of their proposed research. All of these parts will be synthesized in a high-quality document, and a short presentation of the research project proposal to instructor and peers.

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Conduct literature reviews in an area of research interest.
- Critically read research utilizing quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods.
- Identify practical and philosophical implications for choosing particular research methods and procedures.
- Identify specific research procedures and steps involved in planning their scholarly research project.

The ultimate objective of this course is for each student to prepare a detailed plan (i.e., research proposal) for a project related to his/her research interests.

Textbook and Materials

All students are required to purchase and use the **Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition**. (Published by the American Psychological Association). This book is available both on the APA website (<http://www.apastyle.org/manual/index.aspx>) and on Amazon (where you might find an inexpensive used copy).

In addition, you will need a **USB headset with mic** to fully access the live, synchronous sessions we have via Adobe Connect.

ARE 6746 will rely on selected readings from current literature on research. There are required readings that will expose you to a variety of research methods and approaches, as well as an opportunity to focus some reading to meet your needs as a researcher. Readings are on electronic reserve on UF Library ARES Course Reserves and listed within each lesson. The assigned readings for this class will represent only a fraction of what you should be reading to assist you with your proposal. **Note:** The ARES Reserves List for this course includes a number of articles and book chapters which are NOT required reading but which you might find useful as you study research methods and plan for your proposal. Access to the UF library website and your ability to search deep into your topic will be critical to your success in this course and with your capstone research overall.

Learning Activities

A variety of learning activities are designed to support the course objectives, accommodate different learning styles, build a community of learners, and help you to achieve the student learning objectives. Specific assignments and evaluation criteria may be found within the Lessons. The following are overviews to the major assignments.

Note: Due dates for all learning activities are provided in the course schedule.

Discussions

Throughout the course, you will reflect on the assigned readings and your progress towards conducting your own research as an individual and with your peers. More specifically, you will organize your reading reflections, and post your thoughts to the discussion forums whereby your classmates will comment—thus allowing us to engage in dialogue about the readings.

Initial guidelines and guiding questions for each forum will be provided when readings are assigned. Your personal approach to the content and/or author's point of view are very much welcome. PLEASE read each of the discussion prompts carefully, as they are for both your thoughts on the content, and most importantly to get you thinking about your own research. **Discussion posts for each assigned reading must follow APA format, and be between 350-500 words in length.**

In addition to posting your own personal response to the readings, you are expected to respond in a meaningful way to **at least two other postings** from your class members. Additional participation is encouraged.

In order for us to engage in meaningful discussions, it is very important for you to complete the assigned readings at the beginning of each lesson. Please know, the point of our discussions is *not* to summarize the reading assignments or to achieve *one* particular understanding of a reading or author's point of view for the whole class. Instead, our goal is to enlarge our personal understanding of the text by reading, discussing and debating what each of us understood from reading the articles or chapters.

Discussions are open for the duration of the lesson from which they are assigned. Thus, it's important that you post your reading responses on-time and log into the class discussion board a few times each lesson to share your responses to the readings.

Evaluation Criteria: The following criteria will be used to assess the reading reflections: (a) clarity, (b) critical analysis, (c) completeness, (d) presentation, and (e) contribution to the learning community. Additional non-graded writing assignments and discussions may be given during the term at the discretion of the instructor.

Capstone Research Project Proposal

The Capstone Research Project Proposal is the written presentation of an idea that you wish to pursue as your MA capstone project, and will eventually be presented to your research committee. **Please note:** This course will guide you through the process and provide you with experience in selecting a topic and creating a Capstone Research Project Proposal, but the work you complete for this class (i.e., the Research Project Proposal) may need to be modified before presenting to your committee. Moreover, regardless of the grade you receive for this project (in this class), your committee may not accept your research proposal.


Capstone Research Project Proposals presume that you have already thought about your project and have devoted time and effort in gathering information, reading, organizing your thinking, and developing a research question(s). This assignment is critical, and tells me (and your potential committee members) whether you are capable of planning research and adhering to the deadlines imposed by the university.

Final Presentation

At the end of the semester, you will deliver a 5-minute, high-quality presentation of your Research Project Proposal to your peers. The Final Presentation will synthesize all parts of the Capstone Research Project Proposals to include rationale, significance, supporting literature, and methodology.

Final Presentations will take place in real-time via Adobe Connect or Big Blue Button (refer to the course schedule for Adobe Connect session date and time). If you cannot attend the live session, make arrangements with your instructor ASAP to record and send your presentation with voiceover. All presentations **MUST** be submitted to the Canvas dropbox by midnight on the day prior to the live Adobe Connect meeting. **If the instructor does not have access to the final copy of your presentation by the above time, you will NOT receive credit for the assignment.** Please plan so your presentation is ready on time!

Capstone Checklist

The [Capstone Checklist](#)  will serve as a tool to help guide you through the transition from research toward your capstone project, and then into the final stages of your MA degree. You will use the Checklist throughout this course, and then refer to it again as you move through Independent Study and your Capstone Project.

The Checklist addresses the following:

- wrapping up all final edits to your Research Proposal,
- getting your Capstone Committee set up,

- getting your Professional Portfolio (website) in order,
- completing all SA+AH and IRB forms,
- checking ISIS to clear registration holds, and
- checking transcripts and program plans to see that everything is in order.

The **Capstone Checklist** is highly recommended for all students in this course. You need to start working on some of the tasks contained on this checklist during the first week of this course so download and print it out now.

Professionalism

As you move through this course, please remember teacher professionalism contains three essential characteristics; competence, performance, and conduct—all of which directly impact the teacher’s effectiveness. These qualities could also be applied to graduate students and teacher-researchers.

Professionalism is here defined as the expectation that participants will demonstrate behaviors that reflect a commitment to continuous professional performance and development, ethical practice, and a responsible attitude toward students and colleagues, the profession, and society. It becomes especially critical in a research context, and it includes respect, compassion, integrity and altruism in relationships with students, colleagues, and other stakeholders. Professionalism includes a sensitivity and responsiveness to gender, age, culture, religion, sexual preference, socioeconomic status, and beliefs. With research especially in social sciences comes responsibility to adhere to principles of confidentiality, scientific/academic integrity, and accountability. Finally, no one has all the answers, so it is important to recognize and identify limitations as well as possibilities in deficiencies in personal and peer performance and assist when possible.

Grading Policy

Final grades will be calculated based on the following percentages. Evaluation criteria used in each of these areas is provided within the lessons and assignments.

Evaluation Component	Percentage of Final Course Grade
Graded Discussions	25
Research Assignments: Brainstorming Research Questions, Concept Map, Literature Review, Methods Draft,	25

Final Capstone Project Proposal	40
Final Presentation	10
Total	100%

Late Policy

Work turned in beyond a deadline will lose 10% of its full point value and **MUST** be submitted within one week of deadline for any credit. Students should inform the instructor beforehand, if circumstances prevent work from being turned in on time and reach an agreement in writing for any extensions.

Incomplete Policy

University policy dictates that an incomplete grade (or “I”) should only be given in situations in which a student is in “good standing” in a course, but is unable to complete the course requirements because of mitigating circumstances. In cases where an “I” is given, the student and faculty member must write out a contract that clearly defines what the student must do to remove the “I” grade. If the work is not completed by the end of the next term, and the “I” grade is not changed via a grade-change form, the “I” grade is automatically converted to an “E” grade.

Students considering withdrawal from the course should first consult their advisor and the university catalog. Refer to the official UF calendar for the last day to withdraw from a class.

Grading Scale

See <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx> for additional information on UF grading policies. **Please Note:** A grade of C- or below will not count toward major requirements.

95-100 A; 92-94 A-; 88-91 B+; 85-87 B; 80-84 B-; 77-79 C+; 74-76 C; 70-73 C-; 67-69 D+; 63-66 D; 60-62 D; 0-59 E.

Course Policies

Participation

Participation is key to successful learning online. Consistent and meaningful participation in class discussions is expected, and that frequency and quality of participation will affect your grade.

Students should plan to login to the course several times throughout the week. On average, you should expect to be on one of the course sites (e.g., Canvas or Adobe Connect) approximately several hours per week. As for time spent on outside study (e.g, reading, writing papers, doing online research and so on), you should expect to spend approximately six to nine hours per week (or for some people more).

This course includes both asynchronous and synchronous learning activities. During much of the term, you will engage in the course asynchronously on your own schedule. In addition, live, two-hour synchronous sessions are planned during the semester on Adobe Connect (refer to the course schedule for session dates and times). During these sessions, I will be able to talk with students about the course content in real time, and vice versa. Expectations for the course assignments will be explained, and students will be able to ask questions. Students unable to attend a live session will be able to watch a recorded (archived) video of the meeting.

Academic Honesty

All students are expected to abide by the UF Academic Honesty Policy, which defines an academic honesty offense as "the act of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information so that one gains academic advantage." In the context of this class, this means not submitting papers or projects that were created by another person(s) and **properly citing sources for any material used in completing course assignments**. Additionally, you may also want to refer to the UF Student Guide that includes students rights and responsibilities, UF's standard of ethical conduct, honor code and academic guidelines. Submitting work that has been plagiarized will result in a failing grade.

Netiquette

Netiquette, short for network etiquette, is the set of rules and expectations governing online behavior and social interaction. The 'Core Rules of Netiquette' (<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>) are excerpted from the book *Netiquette* by Virginia Shea (1994), and are a set of guidelines that all members of this course are expected to adhere to. Remember, first we are all human. Online learning environment participants that do not adhere to the netiquette expectations may result in both personal and legal consequences.

Note: The instructor reserves the right to remove any blog and/or discussion postings deemed inappropriate.

Student Support Services

As a student in a distance learning course or program, you have access to the same student support services that on-campus students have. For course content questions, contact your instructor. For any technical issues you encounter with your course, please contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-HELP (4357), or visit <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu>. For a list of additional student support services links and information, please visit <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-services>.

Students with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to register with the Dean of Students Office and submit to this instructor the memorandum from that office concerning necessary accommodations. The ADA office may be found on the web at <http://www.ehs.ufl.edu/programs/ada/> and the [Disability Resource Center](#) ; reached by phone at (352) 392-1591 TDD: (352) 392-8565. All course materials may be made available in alternative format on request.

Complaints

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course, please visit <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints> to submit a complaint.

Online Course Evaluation Process

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>

Changes to the Syllabus

The faculty reserves the right to make changes to the course syllabus and course schedule. In the event that changes become necessary, students will be notified through Canvas email.