URBS 428 | Undergraduate Urban Research Colloquium
CPLN 528 | Research Seminar: 21st Century Urbanism
Spring 2022

Meeting time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:15 am - 11:45 am

Meeting Room: Meyerson Hall, G-12

Instructors: Shengxiao (Alex) Li (lsx@design.upenn.edu), Stephanie Rivera Fenniri (sfenniri@design.upenn.edu)

Office Hours: Alex: Fridays, 12:30 pm-2:30 pm; Stephanie: Wednesdays, 3 pm – 5pm

Course description and objectives

Sponsored by the University of Pennsylvania’s Institute for Urban Research (Penn IUR) and the Urban Studies Department, the Undergraduate Urban Research Colloquium (UURC) offers an opportunity for advanced students interested in urban issues and research to work intensively on an urban research topic with a research mentor who is an expert in their field and research method(s). The course also presents the opportunity to learn about urban related research in an interdisciplinary setting. Student-mentor teams come from diverse backgrounds and disciplines. Through seminar discussions, guest lectures, and research exercises, students will be exposed to different research methodologies that could be used to deepen or triangulate their own research.

The course will be held as a small, interactive seminar – students are expected to actively participate in each class meeting. The seminar will feature guest lecturers working on urban research, guests who will complement the research interests of the student participants. Students will be expected to interact with lecturers and discuss presented content. Students will present their research over three class sessions: an introductory conversation in the first-class meeting, a mid-term progress report, and in a final presentation. Research mentors are requested to attend their respective student presentations.

This year’s UURC will have five main goals:

- familiarize students with the process of urban research;
- introduce qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research design;
- offer hands-on training for students to present their research outputs to academic and professional audiences;
- engage the students with the cutting-edge urban research topics, including demography change, climate change, racial justice, and urban science and analytics; and
- walk through students’ paths ahead to prepare them for careers related to urban development through guest lectures and round table discussions.
Additional writing assistance resources

This course requires several writing assignments. Please take advantage of the writing assistance resources for those who need them. The Weingarten Learning Resources Center offers writing support through 50-min sessions. For further information, see http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/.

The Marks Family Writing Center also provides writing support to Penn students. Peer and faculty writing tutors also offer writing guidance. For more information, see http://writing.upenn.edu/critical/writing_center/.

Here are some resources you can use:

- The Penn Library guide to Citation Management Tool;
- The Princeton University library guide to citing print and electronic sources;
- Harvard University's Writing Resources;

Three commonly used citation styles:

- The Chicago Manual of Style, 17th Edition;
- The APA Simplified Style Guide (Links to an external site);
- Purdue University's Online Writing Lab - Style Guide for MLA (Links to an external site);

Course Requirements

- Jan. 20 Introduction / Presentation I
- Feb 1 Literature review memo draft for workshop
- Feb 8 Literature review memo
- Feb 24 Method memo draft for workshop
- Mar 3 Method memo
- Mar 15 Mid-term Presentation
- Mar 29 Data analysis memo draft for workshop
- Apr 7 Data analysis memo
- Apr 28 Poster draft and final report deadline
- May 5 Final presentation

Grading

50% Mentor evaluations
50% Co-Instructor evaluations

The grades for this class are based on evaluations from the mentor (50%) and co-instructors (50%). The Mentor grades the student based on performance throughout the semester in the research project and the final research output.

The course instructors grade the student based on performance throughout the semester on course assignments, class attendance, and participation. To be more specific, the co-instructors’ grading consists of the following parts: three writing memos (45%), final report (20%), three presentations (15%), the final poster (10%), and participation (10%).
Workshops are opportunities for students to hear comments from instructors and peers in the classroom. We may also invite external reviewers to attend the workshops. Students are encouraged to: 1) take draft outlines or manuscripts to the class, 2) attend the office hours; and 3) meet with their mentors to get feedback on their outputs. The outputs will only be graded based on the final memo drafts. Students also have opportunities to address the comments in these memos and improve their final reports, presentations, and posters.

As per Department of City and Regional Planning guidelines, the significance of letter grades is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>% Range</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>98.0 – 100</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94.0 – 97.9</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90.0 – 93.9</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87.0 – 89.9</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84.0 – 86.9</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80.0 – 83.9</td>
<td>Competent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77.0 – 79.9</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70.0 – 76.9</td>
<td>Acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>65.0 – 69.9</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 65.0</td>
<td>Failing</td>
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**Academic integrity**

Academic integrity is a central value of this course and your education. We will follow all the rules of the University and the Code of Academic Integrity. You should familiarize yourself with the Code here: [https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/).

**Late work**

Every student has one opportunity during the semester to request a one-week extension. The request should be sent by email to the instructors 48 hours before the stated deadline (unless it is a last-minute emergency).

**Detailed criteria for written assignments and presentations**

**Writing assignments**

**Literature review memo (15%):** This work aims to develop the students’ ability to clearly position their research and review the current literature. This memo should be 1,000-2,000 words (not including references, notes, figures, and tables). An excellent literature review memo should have the following characteristics:
• Clearly stating the purpose of the review, and linking the purpose clearly to the research question;
• Clearly reviewing the theoretical or practical root of the debate related to the research;
• Clearly reviewing the cutting-edge theoretical, methodological, or empirical progress in this area in the last decade;
• Using the citation manager properly;
• Identifying the research gaps.

**Method memo (15%):** This assignment aims to train the students to clearly articulate their research design. This memo should be within 1,000 words with the following contents:

• The data sources, collection methods, and limitations of the data;
• The city/neighborhood context and why the selected city/neighborhood is a good case (only for the case studies);
• The justification of using a method, and the pros and cons of a method;
• Proposed analytical roadmap.

**Note:** You do not need to present the technical details in this memo.

**Data analysis memo (15%):** This assignment aims to train students’ abilities to analyze, visualize, and present the most important takeaways of the results clearly. The memo should be 1,000-2,000 words (not including references, notes, figures, and tables). As the final memo, this memo asks students to present the most important findings and the policy take-aways. A data analysis memo should contain the following components:

• A well-structured presentation of the final results;
• Explanations of the results/theories based on the literature review;
• Discussions on the limitations of the research;
• Feasible implications for research and practice based on the research results.

**Final report (20%):** The final report will be based on the three memos. In addition to addressing the mentors’, instructors’ and peers’ comments on the memo, students should also write a concise introduction (800-1,000 words) on the importance of the work, and another final part discussing the hurdles and take-aways along the course and how they plan to disseminate the work through a proper venue.

**Presentations**

**Introduction / Presentation I (5%):** Everyone has 5 minutes to present their project, followed by a 5-minute discussion. Students are suggested to have no more than 5 slides to briefly discuss the academic and/or practical significance of the project, proposed methods and expected results, and the plan for the projects.

**Mid-term presentations (5%):** Students have 10 minutes for their mid-term presentation. Each student should focus on their current progress, especially what they have accomplished in literature review, and the implications for their research design and findings.
Final presentations (5%): Each student has 20 minutes for their final presentation. The presentation should clearly point out the significance of their research in urban studies research and practice, state what the past literature says, clearly put forward their research design, and briefly present the most important findings and policy take-aways.

Participation (10%): All students are required to attend the class and engage in class discussions. They should discuss other peer teams’ work, class readings, and also raise questions in guest lectures based on the given readings. Students can discuss in class or post their thoughts and share additional resources related to urban research in the discussion section on Canvas. Students may miss a class with the approval from the co-instructors. However, students who missed a class should use materials on Canvas and write a one-page, double-spaced reflection about their takeaways from that class. Please email the co-instructors by Friday of that week to receive credit for participation. Students are not encouraged to miss classes or workshops.

Poster

Final poster (10%): Students should make a conference-quality poster based on a provided poster template. The poster is graded by the readability and design, the coverage of main contents of the project (background, literature review, method, findings, policy implications, and selected references), and visualizations.

Course Outline

Part I. Introduction to Urban Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Th, Jan. 13</td>
<td>Introduction to the course and Introduction to Urban Research (Li and Fenniri)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Th, Jan. 20</td>
<td>Presentation I: Student project introductions</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>T, Feb. 1</td>
<td>Literature review workshop.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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To Do: Prepare your literature review draft.

Th, Feb. 3  Ethics in research: Human Subjects Research (HSR) (Guest lecturer from Penn IRB)
Readings: N/A
To Do: Access the IRB website here: https://irb.upenn.edu

T, Feb. 8  Properly cite using a citation manager (Guest lecturer: Shannon Marie Robinson, Assistant Director, Fisher Fine Arts Library)
Readings: The Chicago Manual of Style, 17th Edition; The APA Simplified Style Guide (Links to an external site); Resources for this class: Home - CPLN 528/URBS 428 Undergraduate Urban Research Colloquium - Guides at Penn Libraries (upenn.edu)
Download Zotero here: https://www.zotero.org/

Part II. Research Design

Th, Feb. 10  Quant? Qual? Or both? – Quantitative Research (Li)

T, Feb. 15  Quant? Qual? Or both? – Qualitative Research and Mixed Methods (Fenniri)

Readings:


Th, Feb. 17  Questionnaire design (Li)

T, Feb. 22  Interview Design (Fenniri)
   - Read Chapter 4: In-depth Interviewing, 101-130.
   - Read Appendix 2: Interview Guide Template, 334-336.
Th, Feb. 24  Research method workshop  
**Readings:** N/A. Prepare your memo for the workshop.

T, Mar. 1   Using archival, audio, and visual material for research (Guest lecturer: TBD)  
**Readings:** TBD

Th, Mar. 3  GIS applications and Data Visualization (Guest lecturer: TBD)  
**Readings:** TBD  
**Due:** Method memo

T, Mar. 8  *No class due to Spring Break*

Th, Mar. 10  *No class due to Spring Break*

T, Mar. 15  Presentation II: mid-term presentations  
**Readings:** N/A. Prepare for your presentation.

**Part III. Data Analysis**

Th, Mar. 17  Data analysis I: Quant (Li)  

T, Mar. 22  Data analysis II: Qual (Fenniri)  

Th, Mar. 24  Academic writing (Li)  
**Readings:** Please read the instructions for the top journal in urban research Journal of American Planning Association:  
[https://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?show=instructions&journalCode=rjpa20](https://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?show=instructions&journalCode=rjpa20)

T, Mar. 29  Data Analysis workshop  
**Readings:** N/A. Prepare your memo for the workshop.

**Part IV. Presenting your work to different audiences**

Th, Mar. 31  Presenting your research to different audiences – academia, policymakers, the general public (Fenniri)  
**Video:** [How to present to keep your audience’s attention | Mark Robinson](https://www.ted.com/talks/mark_robinson_how_to_present_to_keep_your_audience%27s_attention/talk/video)  
[TEDxEindhoven](https://www.ted.com/talks/mark_robinson_how_to_present_to_keep_your_audience%27s_attention/talk/video)

T, Apr. 5  From an idea to publication (Li)  
Th, Apr 7  
Poster design workshop (Fenniri)


Video: How to create a better research poster in less time (#betterposter Generation 2).

Poster Templates: Center for Open Science Better Poster Templates

Due: Data analysis memo

Part V. Learning from the Research Practice

T, Apr 12  
Interdisciplinary research in an aging society (Li)

Readings:


Th, Apr 14  
Understanding urban climate change (Guest lecturer: TBD)

Readings: TBD

T, Apr 19  
Towards racial justice (Guest lecturer: TBD)

Readings: TBD

Th, Apr 21  
Urban science and analytics (Guest lecturer: TBD)

Readings: TBD

T, Apr 26  
To wrap up: what is next after this course? A roundtable discussion of future possibilities in urban research and the city and regional planning profession.

Readings: N/A

Th, Apr 28  
Poster workshop

Due: Final report

Th, Apr 28  
Final presentation

Due: Final poster