Built Environment

PLAN4001
Research Design

UNSW | Australia's Global University
SCIENTIA
MANU ET MENTE
UNSW SYDNEY
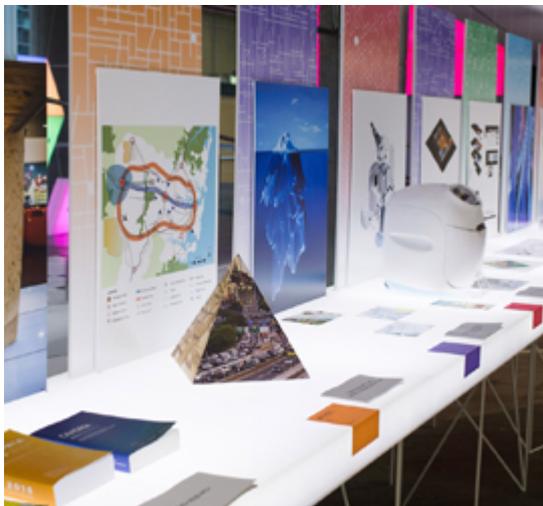
Disclaimer

Information within this document is subject to change. The full and most accurate course outline will be available in Moodle closer to the start of the term in which the course is offered.

1. COURSE STAFF

Course Contact	Dr Christine Steinmetz
Email	c.steinmetz@unsw.edu.au

2. COURSE DETAILS

Credit Points	6 units of credit (uoc)
Workload	Approx. 150 hours including class contact hours, weekly individual and group online learning activities, readings, class preparation, and assessment activities.
Teaching Times and Location	Find details in timetable http://www.timetable.unsw.edu.au

Description

Term 1, Research Design, prepares you to undertake the logical steps of planning the how and why of conducting independent research. You will complete a rigorous ethics application, a literature review, and a final proposal detailing your research design.

This course focuses on how to do research in planning. It seeks to integrate a range of relevant methodological issues into a foundation for major research investigations—starting with the basics of research design. The approach taken in PLAN4001 is pragmatic and student directed. The course considers fundamental epistemological questions about research paradigms, explores the realities of the research process, and covers practical topics such as doing a literature review, writing and presenting a scholarly piece of work, applying ethical research protocol as per induvial topics, and finally, a review of Harvard referencing. Students gain an understanding of the conceptual, methodological, and technical bases for the construction and timely delivery of research projects. The primary focus of PLAN4001 is to prepare students for the substantive research project in T3 of the BCP student candidature. Lectures, tutorials and assessments guide students towards a developed thesis proposal and plan of study for PLAN4003.

The basic teaching model in PLAN4001 is a series of lectures and small group meetings in class and one-to-one meetings with the Course Lecturers. Class times will generally involve a presentation by the Course Lecturer (2-3 hours) accompanied, where feasible, by a mix of informal discussion/workshop sessions in which students will be actively engaged—sometimes with the class divided into smaller groups appropriate to the timeframe. These components facilitate a degree of learning from your peers (you are all bringing a diverse range of professional experiences to your final year). One-to-one meetings with Course Lecturers assist with individual planning topic queries.

Aims

The principal aims are to:
1. Critically and enthusiastically engage with the role of research in planning;
2. Gain a working understanding of intellectually robust and ethical research methods, sources and protocols;
3. Assist in developing skills to translate the investigation of topical problems into coherent and feasible research strategies; and
4. Lay the groundwork for a major individual research project that is well conceptualised, theoretically rigorous, socially relevant, and technically achievable.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

At the successful completion of this course, you will be able to:
1. Critically and enthusiastically engage with the role of research in planning through scholarly research techniques;
2. Devise and contextualise a research problem based on a timely and critical planning challenge;
3. Complete a solid basis for a literature review which they will draw on for the final thesis; and
4. Prepare the groundwork for a major individual research project that is well conceptualised, theoretically rigorous, ethically sound, socially relevant, and technically achievable.

3. ASSESSMENT

Assessment task	Weight	CLOs Assessed
1. Assignment – Ethics Application	25%	4
2. Essay – Literature Review	40%	1, 2, 3, 4
3. Assignment – Thesis Proposal	35%	2, 3, 4

4. COURSE IMPROVEMENT AND FEEDBACK

Feedback from students is an integral part of improving courses and teaching approaches. One of the primary mechanisms of feedback is myExperience, which we strongly urge all students to complete at the end of term. Course convenors use the feedback to make ongoing improvements to the course. This is communicated in Moodle in the myFeedback Matters page.