



**UNSW**  
SYDNEY

Australia's  
Global  
University

# Built Environment

PLAN7149  
Planning Thesis



Course Outline – Term 1 & 3, 2020

## 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

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## 2. COURSE DETAILS

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

## Description

Research is a fundamental underpinning to urban planning both as a discipline and practice, and preparation of a thesis acts as the primary capstone activity for students completing the Master of City Planning degree. It enables students to deepen knowledge in an aspect of planning and urban studies and demonstrate capacity to develop and evaluate arguments, perform critical analysis and synthesis and apply creative thinking to complex problems. The focus of the research is determined by the student, and will normally have been initially developed through the preparation of a research proposal and literature review as part of a preceding faculty research design course, BENV7020. Students are assigned a supervisor, who will offer advice and provide feedback throughout the research process and thesis preparation. Students will usually undertake primary fieldwork, and put into practice core research and analysis skills developed throughout the degree. Preparation of a c15,000 word thesis also build students' capacity to recognise and demonstrate the importance of coherence, logic, structure, relevance and accuracy in written outputs, presented in a creative and compelling way [edited from UNSW Handbook, 2019].

## Aims

This course aims to enthuse student to pursue an independent research project of relevance to their specialist pathway (if applicable), and to provide the necessary direction and support for them to pursue that research interest. The structure and support provided throughout the Planning Thesis course provide the necessary tools and confidence to tackle the chosen subject matter through a well-structured, rigorous approach.

Students gain an understanding of the conceptual, methodological, and technical bases for the development and delivery of research projects. and will undertake some empirical research (for example a short survey, interviews, secondary data analysis, discourse analysis) to address their specified research questions. In framing their chosen research question and research findings, students will need to present an extensive review of relevant research and/or policy literature. The focus will be on the process of research, reporting and analysing findings, and intelligently tying those findings back to the research questions set.

Students are encouraged to choose a research topic of interest to them. This could involve returning to, and exploring in more critical depth, a topic area touched upon in previous courses. Alternatively, students may have research ideas and interests directly related to current issues or opportunities present at work (e.g. employees of local councils looking at issues of particular relevance to their locality).

## Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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

1. Translate a problem or area of interest into a coherent research program
2. Apply relevant research methods to address particular questions and contexts
3. Demonstrate a critical perspective to existing literature and use this to inform research
4. Understand the need for a balance of intellectual and policy content
5. Understand the role of research – in terms of its use, its commissioning, its strengths and weaknesses – and its contribution to future work remit as a planner
6. Develop practical knowledge of standards and techniques for investigating a research issue/argument in a creative and accessible way

## 3. ASSESSMENT

Assessment task	Weight	CLOs Assessed
Final thesis (15,000 words)	100%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

## 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.