

# THESIS I: RESEARCH METHODS

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Fall 2014 Course  
1 Unit

Fridays, Sept 9<sup>th</sup> – Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>  
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.  
200 Fayerweather

## **Introduction**

This foundation course is the first in a sequence within the research and thesis elective of the Real Estate Development Department at GSAPP. Utilizing a singular Built Environment Research text, this course examines the methods of analyzation which unite the two dimensions of real estate finance and the three dimensions of urban systems and form. This course will start with the fundamentals of research strategy and design. It will then progress into three core areas of examination: (i) the research management process and its corresponding theoretical foundations; (ii) qualitative methods; and, (iii) quantitative methods. Students are exposed to everything from how to design a case study to how to convert a business model into a testable model subject to the objectivity of scholarly rigor. Drawing the ethical and philosophical distinctions between report production and scholarly research, this course attempts to find a balance of techniques which have relevance in both professional and academic contexts. The ultimate goal of the course is for students to develop working methods to which there is an awareness of the design's relative strength and appropriateness for any given plan, problem, site or model.

Students will be evaluated on their development of a thesis topic, research strategy and the initial drafting of an abstract complete with footnotes. The course readings will be limited to one text, so as to allow the students to independently development their own research. The assigned reading is intended to refine the student's methods and perspectives. As the reading will not be tested directly, time should be properly allocated between balancing independent research and course readings.

All produced written material should be double spaced, Times New Roman, 12 Font, and should be footnoted and cited according to the Law Review standards of the 6<sup>th</sup> Edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual. Topics for each student's project must be approved on or prior to October 7th. Students are required to submit at least one working draft abstract and outline on or prior to December 2nd. There are no word and/or page minimums or maximums. Office hours are by appointment only.

## **Course Text**

Andrew Knight & Les Ruddock, Eds., ADVANCED RESEARCH METHODS IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT (Wiley-Blackwell 2008)

## **Course Schedule**

### **Introduction to Thesis**

Class 1, September 9<sup>th</sup>, Managing Research, Epistemology, Scientific Theories, Grounded Theory, Case Study/Business Model Research (Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9)

### **Real Estate Development Methods**

Class 2, October 7<sup>th</sup>, Qualitative & Mixed Methods: Construction Management, Architecture & Legal Research (Chapters 1, 2, 3, optional, 10, 11)

Class 3, November 11<sup>th</sup>, Quantitative Methods: CRE Financial-Economic Modeling, Computational Scenario Planning, Risk & Network Analysis (Chapters 5, 13, 15)

### **Thesis Reading**

Class 4, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, Seminar Reading of Thesis/Research Abstracts (Chapter 17)