

## **CRP 8580 / 860x**

### **Summer Assignment: Starting Your TP/Thesis**

**This assignment is designed to get you started on your TP/Thesis. You should complete it over the summer. You will need to share the completed assignment with your TP/Thesis advisor in order to secure a meeting with them in the fall.**

#### **Overview**

One of the most difficult things about the TP/Thesis process is gaining sufficient mastery about a subject so as to enable you to ask and answer a workable question that can be addressed with about 5 months of work. A workable TP/Thesis question first requires you to have a basic understanding on the three components to applied planning research: a.) immediate context (community or location impacted by your question, e.g. Anderson, SC Main Street), b.) substantive framework (e.g. affordable housing, transit oriented development, green infrastructure), and c. data generating research technique (e.g. secondary data analysis), available data resources (e.g. census data), location of data (e.g. sampling US census data for the last 30 years), and type of data analysis (e.g. statistical analysis, GIS investigation).

The three applied research components come together like this:

- Analyzing affordable housing (substantive),
- in Anderson, SC on Main Street (immediate context),
- conducting a focus group investigation (data generating research technique)
- with local homeowners who live in a 1 mile radius of Main Street (sampling strategy),
- looking at general qualitative themes among local residents (data analysis).

One way to gain this mastery is by reading what others have said and done on your topic and preparing a thoughtful and organized written review of it. The initial forays into any new subject are often intimidating and confusing because they are in different formats (books, academic articles, government reports, etc.), use discipline-specific terms, and are written from a wide range of perspectives (practitioner, scientist, advocate, etc.). In this assignment, you will 1) explore the literature in your area of interest in a few specific places, 2) identify and read a set of relevant publications, and 3) answer some specific questions about those publications.

#### **Instructions**

##### **1. Identify relevant publications**

Identify the most relevant publications (e.g. journal articles, books, practitioner reports and best practices) for your interest area from those in Table 1 below. It is highly recommend (but

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not required), for everyone to start their search with *List 1* and look at relevant planning profession publications.<sup>1</sup> In planning, *JPER* and *JAPA*, are the flagship journals. Next, channel your search to *List 2* and review substantive publications that are closest to your interest area. If you are unsure of your interest, you can search through the publications in *List 3* that are broader in scope. Your goal is to identify ten publications. Ideally, it would be great that at least three identified publications are within the planning profession (e.g. *JPER*, *JAPA*, *Town Planning Review*) that are relevant to your interests. The best way to identify relevant publications is by reading both the title AND the abstract since titles alone can be misleading. You can also skim the article quickly to determine its relevance.

## 2. Read publications

Read through each of the ten publications that you identify. Do not be surprised if you feel lost or confused at times (see the note about different terminology and perspective above). If you decide after reading a publication that it absolutely does not relate to your interest then you can find a replacement, but do this cautiously since the relevance is not always clear every step of the way. You may decide to re-read some or all of the publication to be sure that you understand it.

## 3. Answer these questions

For all ten publications that you read, answer the following questions in a word document that you can share with your advisor in August.

1. Give the citation for the publication in APA style as described on this page:  
<https://clemsun.libguides.com/c.php?g=230447&p=1530712>
2. In one sentence, what was the main question that the publication was trying to answer?
3. In 2-3 sentences, describe the sources of data that the author(s) used to answer that question. Examples might include data on housing value from the U.S. Census, data from interviews with professional planning staff in Topeka, data on species counts from natural surveys, data from a survey of transit riders in London, etc.
4. In 2-3 sentences, describe what the authors found.

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<sup>1</sup> There is and will always be some disagreement about this. One big shortcoming of those journals is their strong North American focus. If you plan to do your Thesis or TP outside of the U.S. or Canada, talk with a faculty member about which journals to use.

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**Table 1 – A sampling of planning journals**

Find at least one article in each	Find at least one article in at least two of these	
List 1 Planning journals	List 2 Substantive journals	List 3 Relevant publications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Journal of the American Planning Association (JAPA)</i></li> <li>• <i>Journal of Planning Education and Research (JPER)</i></li> <li>• <i>Journal of Planning Literature</i></li> <li>• <i>European Planning Studies</i></li> <li>• <i>Town Planning Review</i></li> <li>• <i>Journal of Environmental Planning and Management</i></li> <li>• <i>Planning Theory and Practice</i></li> <li>• <i>Environment and Planning (actually five journals each with a different focus, only one of which is the natural environment)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Housing Policy Debate</i></li> <li>• <i>Transportation Research (actually six journals, each with a different transportation focus)</i></li> <li>• <i>Regional Studies</i></li> <li>• <i>Economic Development Quarterly</i></li> <li>• <i>Community Development Journal</i></li> <li>• <i>Journal of Urban Affairs</i></li> <li>• <i>Urban Studies</i></li> <li>• <i>Housing Studies</i></li> <li>• <i>Cityscape</i></li> <li>• <i>City and Community</i></li> <li>• <i>Journal of Transport and Land Use</i></li> <li>• <i>Journal of Transport Geography</i></li> <li>• <i>Transportation</i></li> <li>• <i>Transport Policy</i></li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Brookings Institute</i></li> <li>• <i>RAND Corporation</i></li> <li>• <i>Urban Institute</i></li> <li>• <i>Planning Magazine</i></li> <li>• <i>National Academies of Sciences Transportation Research Board</i></li> <li>• <i>Urban Land Institute</i></li> <li>• <i>Lincoln Institute of Land Policy</i></li> <li>• <i>NYU Furman Center of Housing Studies</i></li> <li>• <i>Harvard University Joint Center for Housing Studies</i></li> <li>• <i>Citylab</i></li> </ul>