



**School of Planning
Faculty of Architecture and Planning
Dalhousie University**

Course: PLAN 4500: Thesis Project

Prerequisites: [PLAN 4001.06](#) or [PLAN 4002.06](#) (limited to students in the Major), and [PLAN 4050.03](#) (with a minimum grade of B).

Note: A grade of 'B' in PLAN 4050 is 'Good', but most proposals need some final adjustments. A supervisor is not obligated to supervise a student who does not comply with instructions for changes to support a positive outcome for the project. To continue in PLAN 4500, students must obtain the signed agreement of the thesis supervisor indicating that the proposal meets the supervisor's final requirements. The deadline for the agreement is January 14, 2018. Use the PLAN 4500 Thesis Proposal Approval Form attached to the back of this outline.

Term: Winter 2020-21

Time: Tuesdays 2:35-5:25 pm

Note on Online Teaching: The class will be synchronous (live) on BS Collaborate Ultra

Credits: 1.0 (6 credit hours)

Location: Online

Instructor: Ren Thomas (ren.thomas@dal.ca, O'Brien 612), Office Hours Wed 11:00-12:30

Course Description Honours students in their final semester work on advanced design or research projects related to their Major concentration. Students will be organized into advanced teams working relatively independently on coordinated topics. The course uses a project management model which emulates professional practice. Each student prepares an individual thesis project report and presents it orally. Students may also work on select individual projects.

Objectives Students undertake an advanced undergraduate research or design project Learning Outcomes related to a student's major (EP or UD&P) concentration. Each student executes the project developed in his or her PLAN 4050 proposal. Specific learning outcomes will vary according to the nature of the projects and the skills required. In general, however, students will strengthen the following skills:

- Problem definition
- Clarifying project goals, objectives, and strategies
- Method or program development (refinement)
- Systematic data/information management (collection, organization and analysis; techniques will vary across the group)
- Critical thinking and analysis; design thinking and design conceptualization
- Synthesis of findings to resolve the project intent or the research

question

- Research or professional/technical report writing
- Visual representation
- Professional presentation and public speaking

This course also addresses certain functional and enabling competencies established by the Canadian Planning Standards Board (PSB) specified in the table on the last page of this course outline.

Format Seminar 3 hrs (one term): students work relatively independently under faculty supervision (the project supervisor), and meet in the course seminar to share their experiences in research and project work. We will use:

- Brightspace for class announcements, dropboxes for submitting your assignments, and discussion threads for questions and answers.
- Collaborate Ultra for our regular meeting space and to present the mid-term and final thesis.

To help students with the transition during the pandemic, Dalhousie has set up an [Online Learning website](#) where you can find all kinds of information about the different platforms. If you need any support with the course technologies, you can contact Information Technology Services at support@dal.ca

Readings **L=Available through Library collection/e-journal databases, B=Available on Brightspace, W=Publicly available on Web**

Suggested readings will be added to Brightspace (e.g. how to write literature reviews, conduct content analysis).

Requirements Students are expected to:

1. Work as individuals to prepare the mid-term report, final report draft and final report, each of which should be submitted on Brightspace, in paper format, and to the thesis supervisor.
2. Attend weekly workshops with the instructor to discuss progress on the thesis, and to answer any questions that arise during the term.

Evaluation:	Assignment	Type	Undergraduate
	Weekly workshops*	Individual	10
	Assignment 1: Mid-term report	Individual	25
	Assignment 2: Final report draft	Individual	0
	Assignment 3: Final report	Individual	65
	Total		100

Evaluation Notes: * In the event of a storm/blizzard requiring closure of Dalhousie University, the instructor will initiate a Brightspace discussion group (as long as there is power).

Students are expected to participate in their designated workshops online.

Seminars

I expect participation of the students in all sessions. Penalties apply for missed presentations (see Evaluation Notes).

Assignments

All assignments must be submitted a) on paper in the instructors' mailbox and b) as a .pdf on Brightspace. Hard copies will be returned with comments from the instructor. All assignments should be written in an academic style. Citations and reference list should be in APA format:

https://libraries.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/library/Style_Guides/apa_style_6.pdf

All assignments must be delivered on time. Failure to submit **Assignment 1 (mid-term report and presentation)** by the due date will result in a grade point reduction of the final grade for the course e.g. (3.7 to 3.3).

Failure to submit **Assignment 2 (draft final report)** by the due date will result in a grade point reduction on the final grade. The student also does not benefit from feedback on the drafts.

Failure to submit Assignment 3 (**final report**) by the due date will result in the complete loss of the grade value for the report. The grade in the course will be F.

Detailed instructions for all assignments, including assessment criteria, are below and on p. 6-7.

Note on Technology: All assignments must be submitted as a .pdf on Brightspace under Assessments.

Evaluation of Assignments, Feedback

The instructor will give directions for the assignments during the introductory session, and will provide feedback during the Seminar sessions. Written comments will accompany the assignment grade. If more explanation is needed, the student can make an appointment with the instructor.

The thesis supervisor also reviews student progress throughout the semester, and at mid-term (following the presentations), will complete the second part of the supervisor approval form (attached), indicating one of the following:

- The student is making appropriate progress and is on track with the project;
- The student is required to complete small or more substantial adjustments (to work strategies, project focus, for example) to improve progress; or,
- The student is not progressing in a manner that supports successful completion of this project; student must explore options for continuing with or withdrawing from the course.

In the event that a supervisor advises withdrawing from the thesis project the coordinator will meet with the student and the supervisor to discuss the recommendation and options available to the student.

Both the thesis supervisor and the instructor provide critique on the mid-term, draft final report, and final report and the supervisor will provide comments on any other materials they might request in draft form.

The instructor will communicate the final grade in the official Dalhousie format by the date required by the School of Planning.

General criteria for assignments ([rubric on Brightspace](#)):

- **Structure:** Is the assignment structured and formatted as required? Do text, figures and tables complement each other?
- **Argumentation/Analysis:** Is the argumentation clear and consistent? Is there evidence of original insights, and of critical and creative approaches?
- **Writing Quality:** Is the paper clearly organized with a professional tone? Is it written to meet expectations for scholarly publications? Are literature references appropriate and correctly reported? Is evidence properly sourced and referenced?
- **Grammar:** Is the paper easy to read and grammatically correct?

You are expected to have good communication skills, including graphic and written material. Presentation skills, graphic clarity, and writing style and composition will be considered in assigning grades for each component of work in this class.

- The style, composition, organization, and presentation of written work may count for up to one-third of the grade for the report or paper (See the School of [School of Planning Grading Policy](#)).
- Any accommodation of absence from class requires completion of a Student Declaration of Absence form or documentation from a health care professional in accordance with the [University Student Absence Policy](#).

Notes on University Regulations

General	This course is governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the University Calendar and Senate policy.
Academic Integrity	Dalhousie University has regulations deal with intellectual integrity . Make sure that you give full and proper acknowledgement when you use the words, ideas, or images of another author. To find out more about intellectual integrity and Dalhousie's regulations, please refer to the Academic Calendar or the Academic Integrity pages of the Dalhousie website .
Student Accessibility and Accommodation	Students may request accommodation as a result of barriers related to disability, religious obligation, or any characteristic under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. Students who require academic accommodation for either classroom participation or the writing of tests, quizzes and exams should make their request to the Office of Student Accessibility & Accommodation (OSAA) prior to or at the outset of each academic term (with the exception of X/Y courses). Please see the Dalhousie Accessibility pages for more information and to obtain Form A - Request for Accommodation.
Student Code of Conduct	Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner—perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution. Please see the Dalhousie Student Conduct pages for more information.

Diversity and Inclusion	Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Please see the Culture of Respect pages of the Dalhousie website for more information.
Recognition of Mi'kmaq Territory	Dalhousie University acknowledges that the University is sited on Traditional Mi'kmaq Territory. The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office in the McCain Building (room 3037) or contact the programs at elders@dal.ca or 902-494-6803 (leave a message).
Writing Skills and the Dalhousie University Writing Centre	<p>Writing is an essential communication skill for planners and designers. The School of Planning emphasizes the need for clear, articulate writing.</p> <p>The University Writing Centre is a Student Service academic unit that supports student writing development. Make an appointment or attend a seminar. Learning more about the writing process and discipline-specific practices and conventions will allow you to adapt more easily to your field of study.</p> <p>The Writing Centre also has an Online Resource Guide, which offers information on writing resources including annotated writing models from a number of disciplines.</p>
University Grading Practices policy	The University Grading Practices policy applies to all credit-bearing courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels at the university. Please see the Dalhousie Grading Practices pages for more information.
School Grading Policy	School of Planning grading policy interprets the Dalhousie Grading Scale with reference to course objectives, writing standards, and course schedules.
Course Schedule	L=Lecture, S=Seminar, P=Presentation

Week	Date & Time	Activity	Content
1	Tuesday January 5, 2:35-5:25	S	Course introduction, instructions
2	Tuesday January 12, 2:35-5:25	S	Workshop with Ren Thesis Proposal Approval Form due
3	Tuesday January 19 2:35-5:25	S	Workshop with Ren
4	Tuesday January 26, 2:35-5:25	S	Workshop with Ren
5	Tuesday February 2, 2:35-5:25	S	Workshop with Ren
6	Tuesday February 9, 2:35-5:25	P	Mid-term presentations Assignment 1 due
7	No class—Study Break		
8	Tuesday February 23, 2:35-5:25	S	Workshop with Ren
9	Tuesday March 2, 2:35-5:25	S	Workshop with Ren
10	Tuesday March 9, 2:35-5:25	S	Workshop with Ren
11	Tuesday March 16, 2:35-5:25	S	Workshop with Ren Assignment 2 due

12	Tuesday March 23, 2:35-5:25	S	Workshop with Ren
13	Tuesday March 30, 2:35-5:25	P	Final presentation
Assignment 1 due Tuesday, February 9, 2:35pm!! Assignment 2 due Tuesday, March 16, 2:35pm!! Assignment 3 due Tuesday, April 6, 2:35pm!!			

ASSIGNMENTS

Weekly workshops

Students will meet with the instructor (and Susanne Marshall, in Week 10) in pairs. Each student must sign up for **one time slot on each date** with the instructor (Jan 13, Jan 20, Jan 27, Feb 3, Feb 10, and March 16). Each student must sign up for **one** time slot with Susanne Marshall (March 9). The weekly meetings are worth 10% of the grade.

Students should come prepared with questions about their thesis report (e.g. literature review, methods) and progress, which will be discussed in pairs so that other students may benefit. They should also ask questions about their writing, particularly of Susanne Marshall. Students should also be prepared to report on the progress they have made to date and any challenges they are experiencing.

Assignment 1: Mid-Term Report

Due Monday, February 9, 2:35pm

The mid-term report should be presented as a paper in a professional format (e.g. headings and subheadings as appropriate, academic and professional literature cited in-text and included in a reference list). The assignment should follow the general criteria in the Evaluation section of this syllabus (rubric on Brightspace). Assignment 1 is worth 25% of the final grade, which will be determined by the instructor in consultation with the thesis supervisor. The project proposal and the work schedule guide the requirements for each student, so these materials will differ among projects. For Assignment 1, all students will submit *at least* the following:

- A draft Table of Contents
- A final Background section and Literature Review or other appropriate review section
- A final Method section
- A draft Research Results section including data collection, analysis and results
- An updated project schedule, including all work completed and in progress

Students will present their in-progress work to their supervisor, instructor, and peers on February 24/March 2 (time slots will be assigned at the beginning of the term). The format is a PowerPoint presentation 8 minutes in length with 7 minutes allotted for questions; the presentation file is due at the same time/date as the report. Students will also be assigned to provide peer reviews to their colleagues.

Assignment 2: Draft Final Report

Due Tuesday March 16, 2:35pm

The draft final report should be presented as a paper in a professional format (e.g. headings and subheadings as appropriate, academic and professional literature cited in-text and included in a reference list, bound). The assignment should follow the general criteria in the Evaluation section of this syllabus (rubric on Brightspace). Assignment 2 is not graded, but is meant to provide students with sufficient and timely feedback to finalize their Assignment 3: Final Report.

The draft final report will be **reviewed by the supervisor** before finalizing the thesis project report and should be as complete as possible to ensure the opportunity for meaningful feedback to the student. The

course coordinator will complete a checklist of required document sections, described below, to assess completeness of the draft final report.

- A final Executive Summary
- A final Acknowledgements section
- A final Table of Contents
- A final Background section and Literature Review or other appropriate review section
- A final Method section
- A draft Research Results section
- A draft Discussion section
- A draft Conclusion section
- A final project schedule, including all work completed
- Any Appendices, e.g. detailed GIS processes, data, lists of documents reviewed, which provide information to the reader but are not needed in the main body of the report

The format should be MS Word with 3 cm on binding margin and 2 cm for other margins, 1.5 spacing (not single-spaced), minimum 12 point font Calibri or Times Roman or equivalent for text; minimum 11 point font for tables, charts, etc. Page numbering starts with Pg. 1 at the Introduction; all pages before Pg. 1 should be in Roman numerals and the title page should not be numbered. Integrate graphic materials (charts, figures, tables, maps, and images) into the body of the document or, depending on the supervisor's advice, include these materials at the end of the document. Number tables and figures sequentially. Regardless of where you place them in the report, the figures and tables must link with the text. Submit one bound document to the seminar coordinator and one bound document to the supervisor, unless the supervisor requires only the electronic document. NO STAPLED documents.

Assignment 3: Final Report

Due Tuesday, April 6, 2:35pm

The final report should be presented as a paper (maximum 40 pages or 10,000 words, double spaced) in a professional format (e.g. headings and subheadings as appropriate, academic and professional literature cited in-text and included in a reference list, bound). The assignment should follow the general criteria in the Evaluation section of this syllabus (rubric on Brightspace). Assignment 3 is worth 65% of the final grade, which will be determined by the instructor in consultation with the thesis supervisor. Some changes and additions to Assignment 2 (draft final report) are normal and expected following supervisor critique. The student should use the feedback from the supervisor to revise the final report, complete with all sections described below, and other sections or materials that the supervisor requires:

- A final Executive Summary
- A final Table of Contents
- A final Background section and Literature Review or other appropriate review section
- A final Method section
- A final Research Results section
- A final Discussion section
- A final Conclusion section
- A final project schedule, including all work completed
- Final Appendices, e.g. detailed GIS processes, data, lists of documents reviewed, which provide information to the reader but are not needed in the main body of the report

The format should be MS Word with 3 cm on binding margin and 2 cm for other margins, 1.5 spacing (not single-spaced), minimum 12 point font Calibri or Times Roman or equivalent for text; minimum 11 point font for tables, charts, etc. Page numbering starts with Pg. 1 at the Introduction; all pages before Pg. 1 should be in Roman numerals and the title page should not be numbered. Integrate graphic materials (charts, figures, tables, maps, and images) into the body of the document or, depending on the

supervisor's advice, include these materials at the end of the document. Number tables and figures sequentially. Regardless of where you place them in the report, the figures and tables must link with the text. Submit one bound document to the seminar coordinator and one bound document to the supervisor, unless the supervisor requires only the electronic document. NO STAPLED documents.

Students will present their final work to their supervisor, instructor, and peers on March 25/April 1 (time slots will be assigned at the beginning of the term). The format is a PowerPoint presentation 8 minutes in length with 7 minutes allotted for questions; the presentation file is due at the same time/date as the report. Students will also be assigned to provide peer reviews to their colleagues.

Research Ethics

As students should know from PLAN 4050, involving people in a thesis project may raise issues of ethical research practice and may require ethics review. Dalhousie University has protocols that all researchers must follow when involving people as research participants and Research Services at Dalhousie University has two mechanisms for ethics review of research proposals. Course-based projects that involve no more than the minimal risk undergo review at the department level through Unit Level Review. All other research, including undergraduate and graduate thesis research, faculty research, and course-based projects involving more than minimal risk must be approved through the Research Ethics Board. Undergraduate student thesis research posing no more than minimal risk may undergo a streamlined review. Streamlined review takes less time than full REB review. Undergraduate thesis research proposals are first reviewed at the Unit level. If approved at this level, the School Director recommends they are eligible for REB streamlined review.

Students who wish to use people as research participants must first read the information on the Dalhousie Research Ethics Website.

<http://www.dal.ca/dept/research-services/responsible-conduct-/research-ethics-.html>

In particular, students must read the FAQ section:

<http://www.dal.ca/dept/research-services/responsible-conduct-/research-ethics-/faqs.html>

For PLAN 4500, students requiring review should have already submitted their applications to the Research Ethics Board, using the following form: <http://www.dal.ca/dept/research-services/responsible-conduct-/research-ethics-/apply-for-reb-approval.html>

The form requires an approved research proposal from the student completed using the appropriate REB form for graduate or undergraduate students, including a description of the research tools and methods (identification of participants (target group); settings of observation and interviews or surveys; means of observation, interviewing or surveying; recruitment; obtaining consent (if necessary or not, if so, how); mitigating risk; protecting identity, dignity and confidence of the participants; security of research data. The form also requires all tools of recruitment, informing and obtaining consent (recruitment materials, project descriptions, survey questionnaires, question guides or scripts, consent forms, among other things). The student must ensure that review and approvals are obtained **BEFORE** recruiting for and conducting interviews and surveys, or before starting observations.

This course covers the following Planning and Standard Board Functional and Enabling Competencies	
Human Settlements	
Forms, scales and settings of human settlements	
Processes and factors of change in human settlements	
History & Principles of Planning	
History of planning in Canada and other countries	
Planning theories, principles and practices	
Planning ethics	X
New developments in planning	X
Government and Law	
Political and institutional frameworks of planning	
Planning laws	
Issues in Planning and Policy-Making	
Environmental, social and economic sustainability	
Equity, diversity and inclusiveness	
Public finance and economics	
Land use, design and infrastructure	X
Processes of Planning and Policy-Making	
Visioning, goal-setting and problem-framing	X
Information gathering and analysis	X
Public consultation and deliberation	
Plan and Policy Implementation	
Regulatory tools	
Fiscal/financial tools	
Design and management of public projects	
Monitoring and evaluation	X
Critical and Creative Thinking	
Gathering and analysing quantitative and qualitative data	X
Identifying patterns and trends	X
Thinking at various geographic scales	
Designing scenarios and plans	X
Social Interaction and Leadership	
Mediation, facilitation, negotiation, and conflict resolution	
Inclusion of diverse people and values	
Team-work and team-building	
Relations to bosses, officials and the public	
Communication	
Written communication	X
Oral communication	X
Graphic communication	X
Use of information technology	X
Professionalism	
Managing complexity, uncertainty and change	
Learning from practice	
Handling ethical dilemmas	X

PLAN 4500.06 Honours Thesis Project**School of Planning, Dalhousie University**PLAN 4500 THESIS PROPOSAL APPROVAL FORM

All students must receive approval of their proposed project from a thesis project supervisor. Students must achieve a B or higher in PLAN 4050: Thesis Proposal to register in PLAN 4500: Thesis Project. Ideally, the student will be ready to undertake the project based on the PLAN 4050 thesis proposal. However, the potential thesis project supervisor may have flagged issues with the proposal that the student must resolve before the faculty member will approve the project. The faculty member may ask a student to address deficiencies in a proposal as a condition of continuing supervision of the project. By approving the project, the supervisor confirms that the proposal is sound and agrees to supervise the student as he or she undertakes the work.

The student has until the second week of PLAN 4500 to resolve the issues and secure the approval of the project supervisor: Monday, January 13, 2020. The PLAN 4500 instructor will be the second reader for most of the project reports and will secure a second reader for projects that she herself is supervising.

Student: *Please have your thesis project supervisor complete this form and return it to the PLAN 4500 Seminar Coordinator no later than January 13, 2020. Students cannot proceed with a project without a supervisor's approval. Without a supervisor, the student must withdraw from the course.*

Student Name: _____

Thesis project title: _____

I agree to supervise this project Yes ___ No ___ **Date:** _____

Ethics Approval required Yes ___ No ___ **Date Approved:** _____

Supervisor name: _____ **Signature:** _____

PLAN 4500.06 Honours Thesis Project

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PLAN 4500 MID-TERM PROGRESS REPORT

Project supervisors must check one and return to the instructor by Monday, March 2, 2020.

Student Name: _____

_____ **The student is making appropriate progress and is on track with the project.**

_____ **The student is making progress, but I have advised the student of necessary strategies or adjustments to support successfully completing the research project.**

_____ **The student is not progressing in a manner that supports successful completion of this project. The student should be advised on options regarding continuing with PLAN 4500.**

Supervisor name: _____ **Signature:** _____