

Capstone Project (20:834:563) [3 credits]

Course Description

This course encourages students to integrate knowledge and skills from across the MPA curriculum to develop a professional portfolio, or a research paper, that demonstrates core competencies. The course is organized as a project-based seminar in which students work individually under the guidance of the professor while sharing feedback and advice with each other. By completing and presenting their capstone projects, students will demonstrate their abilities in the five core competencies of the MPA program.

Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Integrate the knowledge and skills they have acquired from across the MPA curriculum.
- Demonstrate their abilities in the five core competencies of the MPA program:
 - To lead and manage in the public interest;
 - To participate in, and contribute to, the policy process;
 - To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make evidence-informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment;
 - To articulate, apply, and advance a public service perspective; and
 - To communicate and interact productively and in culturally responsive ways with a diverse and changing workforce and society at large.

Requirements

Requirements will vary by instructor and may include:

- *Discussions and advisement sessions:* Students will actively engage in class discussions and participate in regular advisement sessions with the instructor.
- *Proposal and workplan:* Students will prepare and present a capstone proposal to the class and a written document (workplan), which will serve as a roadmap for the project.
- *Final presentation:* Students will present their capstone papers or portfolios to an audience of faculty and fellow students.
- *Final project:* Each student in the class will prepare and submit a final capstone paper or portfolio that demonstrates their abilities in the five core competencies of the MPA program.

Schedule / Outline of Topics

- Week 1: Introduction and Overview
- Weeks 2-3: Picking a Project and Making a Plan
- Week 4: Proposal Presentations
- Weeks 5-7: Phase I Work on the Project
- Weeks 8-10: Phase II Work on the Project
- Weeks 11-13: Phase III Work on the Project
- Week 14: Final Capstone Presentations

Texts / Materials / Resources

The selection of textbooks and readings will vary by instructor. Listed below are some of the possible textbooks, materials, and resources an instructor may select for this course:

- Bardach, E., & Patashnik, E. M. (2019). *A practical guide for policy analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving (6e)*. CQ Press. (Useful guide for students doing capstone papers.)
- Some options for software that can be used for e-portfolios (professional websites): Wix, Weebly, WordPress, Google Sites