PADM 5365:
Public Administration Capstone

Prepared by
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Course Overview & Syllabus
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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 11:30am – 12:30pm; 5:00pm – 7:00pm; Wednesday 11am - noon
or by appointment

COURSE GOAL

In this course students will integrate the skills, knowledge and values discussed and acquired throughout the core courses in the MPA program; reflect on the meaning of this knowledge to one’s individual values, experience, knowledge and career goals; and demonstrate the integration of one’s learning in the MPA curriculum with professional practices encountered in public and nonprofit organizations.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Capstone Course offers each student the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the theory and practice of public administration by applying the skills and knowledge gained in the MPA program. This course is designed to allow students to apply the concepts in public administration literature to actual management and/or policy problems. Students accomplish this by reading and reflecting on theoretical readings in public administration, completing a learning portfolio, and completing a Capstone Project. The Capstone Project can be a research study, a case study, an organizational assessment, a policy analysis or service-learning project that demonstrates a student’s knowledge and skills. All projects must be about public service, which is defined broadly to include efforts of governments, community-based organizations, and nonprofit organizations.

To enroll in this course, students must have successfully completed at least 30 hours of coursework in the MPA program including all of the core courses and be in his/her last long semester prior to planned graduation.

COURSE CALENDAR -- Specific Learning Modules, Content, Class Reading, Topic Summaries, Assignment Due Dates are list in the Blackboard Course Calendar. It is your responsibility to monitor your Blackboard account regularly to keep up with the course calendar.
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Demonstrate the knowledge gained throughout the MPA program and apply that knowledge to a relevant public management or policy problem.

- Produce a learning portfolio as a means of assessing student learning in the MPA program, as well as to provide insights into how students construct knowledge.

- Present reports, orally and in writing, that are clear, concise and address various constituencies.

- Write a project report from a service learning project or research paper that demonstrates the students’ ability to define specific problems or policy issues, conduct research, prepare data and findings, and convey results to a non-technical audience.

REQUIRED READING


SUGGESTED READING


STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Grade Proportion

1. Service Learning Project or Research Paper 80%
2. Learning Portfolio 15%
3. Final Oral Presentation 5%

STUDENT PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

1. Service Learning Project or Research Paper

To complete the requirements of the Capstone course for the MPA degree, students must write a major research paper of relevance to the public or nonprofit sectors or participate in a significant service-learning project. Appendix A outlines the research paper guidelines. This assignment will be worth 80% of the final grade. Students will receive a grade of Incomplete if any part of the research paper is graded as unacceptable by the MPA Faculty.
Regardless of the project approach or methodology used, the final research paper should explicitly apply concepts drawn from MPA coursework. Students doing the major research paper must complete a Capstone Prospectus by the second week of class. The final project paper due date is noted in Blackboard and must be formatted as a Word document using Times New Roman 12 point font, double-spaced using APA formatting. Papers should not exceed 50 pages or be less than 20 pages long (without bibliography and appendices). The paper must include a bibliography and be a final product of the student’s work. Late papers will not be accepted.

Students can choose to write a one of the following types of research papers: policy analysis, program evaluation or administrative analysis. The format is described for each type of paper in Appendix A. The rubric utilized by MPA faculty in grading the research paper is in Appendix D. To ensure student progress in writing the Research paper, students will be expected to utilize the Shields book assigned for the course additionally they should have rough drafts of specific parts or chapters of their paper completed by the deadlines listed:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deliverable</th>
<th>Due Date (Specific dates are list on the Blackboard Course Calendar)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Capstone Prospectus</td>
<td>Week 2</td>
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<td>2. Chapters 1 &amp; 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review</td>
<td>Week 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Chapter 3: Policy Alternatives, Research Methodology, Data Analysis</td>
<td>Week 11</td>
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<td>4. Chapter 4: Recommendations, Conclusions, Further Research</td>
<td>Week 14</td>
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<td>5. Final Paper w/Bibliography Practice Oral Presentation</td>
<td>Week 16</td>
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<td>6. Final Oral Presentation</td>
<td>Final Exam Day as Listed by University Registrar</td>
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2. **Learning Portfolio**

As part of the Capstone Course, students will create a learning portfolio that serves to demonstrate and highlight student learning during the MPA program. A portfolio is defined a “multidimensional, documented collection of a student’s work put together in an organized way and including a reflective discussion of the materials contained in the portfolio. The portfolio is not merely a collection of the student’s best work but rather a carefully reasoned, reflective narrative that captures the scope, progress and value of learning of the student over the course of the MPA program. This narrative is complemented by a representative compilation of evidence or artifacts of learning that may consist of research papers, critical essays, data analysis, literature reviews, or policy analysis papers.
Students will complete a paper portfolio as described in Appendix C (This will be handed out in class). The portfolio will be put in a three-ring binder and parts will reviewed during the course. The following are deliverables that are due as part of the portfolio assignment:

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Section 1</td>
<td>Week 4</td>
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<td>2. Section 2</td>
<td>Week 9</td>
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<td>3. Section 3</td>
<td>Week 12</td>
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<td>4. Portfolio Due</td>
<td>Week 15</td>
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3. Final Oral Presentation

The ability to communicate difficult and complex issues effectively to policy makers and elected officials is a critical skill for all MPA students. Thus, students will be required to give a professional 10-minute presentation on their service learning project or research paper during the final week of classes. Students will be expected to dress professionally and use powerpoint slides or other types of multimedia. A scoring rubric will be provided to students. The presentation will be worth 5% of the final grade.

GRADING SCALE

90-100: A
80-89: B
70-79: C
60-69: D
59 or below: F

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All federal and state copyrights in my lectures and course materials (ie. Syllabus, handouts, powerpoints) are reserved by me. You are authorized to take notes in class for your own personal use and for no other purpose. You are not authorized to record my lectures or to make any commercial use of them or to provide them to anyone else other than students currently enrolled in this course without my prior written permission. In addition to legal sanctions for violations of copyright law, students found in violation of these prohibitions may be subject to University disciplinary action under the Code of Student Conduct.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All written work done for this course is to be the product of a student’s own efforts with proper academic attribution to sources. Students are expected to do their own work and abide by the Texas A & M Corpus Christi Student Code of Conduct.
Students will be expected to provide the proper identification of source data including language, ideas, and products of another author using APA style in all written assignments. Plagiarism, which includes the use of paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment, or the purchase and selling of academic papers, or cutting and pasting items from the internet without proper citation will not be tolerated in this course. Students found to be plagiarizing will be given a minimum of 0 points for the assignment and will be reported on the Student Misconduct Form and reported to the Vice Provost of Student Affairs in accordance with TAMUCC policies.

ASSIGNMENT INFORMATION

All assignments are due the day given on the Blackboard Course Calendar. Please make a copy (or electronic backup) of your assignments before submitting them to me. Please submit assignments utilizing the assignment function in Blackboard. Please DO NOT e-mail, fax or hand deliver them to me.

**Excused later papers will be allowed only for significant and verifiable personal emergencies (serious personal illness, etc.) Unexcused late assignments will be penalized a half of a full letter grade for each day it is late.** (Ex. After 2 days a paper goes from an A to a B). Please contact the instructor if you will not be able to complete an assignment on time. If you are not able to attend class, you still must turn in the assignment via e-mail by the due date. No unplanned extensions will be granted due to pressures of academic life (such as work due in other classes).

ASSIGNMENT Formatting

For the written assignments, please use standard fonts (times new roman, size 12) and 1-inch margins and double spacing. Please send all documents to me in MS Word. Please submit them in word (.doc) format. Please ensure your name is on all documents submitted to me.

For most paper assignments students are expected to use APA style formatting and include proper citations, title sheet, list of references, and page numbers. Papers are expected to be written using proper English grammar and have minimum spelling errors. References or sources of information for papers must consist of scholarly articles or journals, government reports or legal citations, or the readings for the class. The use of Wikepedia or other Internet encyclopedia for any paper is not acceptable for graduate level work and will not be accepted. There will be other types of in class writing assignments that will use other formatting and will be described by the instructor.

COMMUNICATIONS

Over the past two decades there has been a dramatic expansion in electronic mail, cell phones and PDAs. While these devices are helpful they have also created some communications issues with which we are all familiar. First, when writing e-mails regarding issues or assignment with regard to this class please utilize the messages function in Blackboard. Please be aware that I access Blackboard every weekday to answer e-mails, provide feedback to students and answer
questions. If you do send e-mails in the evening, please be aware that they may not be read and no response provided until the next day at the earliest. Finally, do not assume that I have received an e-mail because you sent one. There are numerous system problems in software and in Internet Service Providers that can mean that e-mails do not reach their intended destination. I will acknowledge e-mail when I receive it.

Important information for this course will be distributed via Blackboard. Class readings, discussion forums, and additional course resources are available on the Blackboard site for this course. **It is your responsibility to monitor your Blackboard account regularly to obtain these materials.**

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Texas A & M University-Corpus Christi complies with the American with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Driftwood 101, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

**ACADEMIC ADVISING:** The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

**GRADE APPEAL PROCESS:** As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at [http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html).

For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.