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Office Hours: Monday & Tuesday 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 – 7:00 p.m., Wednesday 11:00 am – Noon, by appointment as necessary.

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 their conceptual knowledge of Public Administration by defining the specific issues case studies in each of five areas of competency as suggested by the Nation Association of Schools of Public Administration (NASPAA) which are:

- citizen engagement
- governing board/administrator relationships
- ethics and integrity
- intergovernmental and interorganizational relationships
- designing and managing the public organization.

Demonstrate their working knowledge of Public Administration by utilizing skills acquired in the program to solve applied cases in each area of competency above.

Demonstrate their ability to apply their conceptual knowledge and utilize their working and analytical knowledge of Public Administration to solve an actual policy or management issue within one of the five competency areas above through a researched study in which the student defines specific problems or policy issues, conducts research, prepares data and findings, and presents recommendations for resolution of the issue.

Demonstrate the ability present reports, orally and in writing, that are clear, concise and address various constituencies.

REQUIRED TEXTS

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR'S COMPANION

EMERSON
Edition 10
Publisher: Congressional Quarterly
ISBN: 9780872899094
STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Grade Proportion

1. Service Learning Project or Research Paper  45%
2. Learning Portfolio  50%
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deliverable</th>
<th>Due Date (Specific dates are list on the Blackboard Course Calendar)</th>
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<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, PADM 5312</td>
<td>Week 13</td>
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Conclusions, Further Research

5. Final Paper w/Bibliography
   Practice Oral Presentation  Week 15

6. Final Oral Presentation  Final Exam Day as Listed by University Registrar

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. The portfolio will be a collection of case studies in five areas of competencies of public management as suggested by NASPAA. They are citizen engagement, governing board/administrator relationships, ethics and integrity, intergovernmental and interorganizational relationships and designing and managing the public organization. In each of the cases students will be expected to:

1. Demonstrate their conceptual knowledge of Public Administration by defining the specific issues in each case.

2. Demonstrate their working knowledge of Public Administration by utilizing skills acquired in the program to solve each case.

This will be done through preparation and discussion of these cases either in an on-line forum or in the classroom setting. Student will keep all of their work, calculations and problem solving notes in a either an electronic file or physical binder and turn into the instructor at the end of the course.

Additionally, by the final day of the course students will turn in a reflective essay of three to five pages which discusses how their competencies in the five areas covered in the case studies has changed as a result of their graduate experience and how they plan on continuing to developed their competencies in their career. Specific due dates and case assignments will be posted on the Blackboard calendar.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

All responses and worked turned in to the instructor are to be your own personal work product. You are expected to understand and uphold the Academic Honor Code published in the Student Handbook. In addition to information listed in these sources, you are advised that:

1. If, on a rare occasion, you take material that is not yours, from any source whatsoever, and copy it into assignments for this class, you must provide a footnote, endnote, or parenthetical reference to the source of the material. I specifically expect you to use the styleguide of the American Psychological Association.

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2. Any material which quotes verbatim from other sources must be enclosed in quotation marks and its source attributed as noted in rule #1 above.

3. Material not taken verbatim from a text but paraphrased must also be attributed as in rule #1.

4. Violations of these rules in any assignment may be subject to a minimum penalty of a grade of zero (0) for the assignment and may result in a grade of “F” for the course.

5. Violations of these rules can also result in administrative removal from the MPA program and the University depending on the instance.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services Office at (361) 825-5816 or visit the office in 116 Corpus Christi Hall.

ACADEMIC ADVISING OFFICE

If you are majoring, or planning to major, in a field taught in the College of Liberal Arts, and if you have not yet obtained a signed degree plan, you should see your Academic Advisor immediately. Degree plans are important and useful to successful progress toward graduation.

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.

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

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OTHER NOTES

1. Syllabus Disclaimer and Changes. The instructor reserves the right to make changes in the syllabus. Such changes will be announced in class.

2. Attendance Policy. No points are deducted for student absences but, the lack of class attendance will affect student learning and, hence, performance.

3. Late Hand-in. Acceptance of late hand-ins or postings is at the discretion of the instructor. Points will be deducted for late hand-ins.

4. Distance Learning. Electronic, on-line learning may be substituted for in-class lectures. Students are responsible for accessing modules and completing assignments according to announced time tables.

5. Computer and Software Access. The hands-on, computer-based laboratory assignments are an important part of homework and this course. You will need to have access to SPSS, at least the graduate base version. I suggest that you install it on your own computer. If you do not have easy access to a computer there are student computer labs on campus which have the full version of SPSS.

6. Rules and Tips for Success. Statistics is a challenging course for most students, and most students will experience one or more episodes of moderate to severe confusion. Though these are normal occurrences in the completion of a graduate course, the sources of confusion must be identified and addressed. To reduce such episodic discomfort and promote learning efficiency, students are required to adhere to the following rules: (i) Students must come to each class prepared, that is, having fully familiarized themselves with the reading material and any assignments, specifically, identifying passages that are unclear and hence require extra attention during the classroom period. Students who fail to identify unclear passages prior to class typically experience a deceptive sense of ease during the class, only to be followed by intensified confusion at some point in subsequent weeks. Remember: Preparing for class means that you know what you don’t know. (ii) Students should always study with other students before and after each class. You can make a study group, or simply call each other a day or two before and after each class. The nature of such interaction can vary from joint reading, to verifying each other’s understanding of the material, and addressing points of uncertainty. (iii) Students who are unclear about material should generally first consult other students before contacting the instructor. Questions that remain unclear after consultation with other students should be brought to the attention of the instructor, who generally will discuss the matter at the beginning of the next classroom period. The preferred way of contacting the instructor is through e-mail. (iv) As the saying goes, technology fails you when you need it most. Files become unreadable or simply disappear. Software programs fail to open, and computers go on the blink. Successful students plan ahead and allow for unexpected failures and crises to occur. Specifically, you should plan to complete your homework several days before the deadline!
7. **Contacting the Instructor.** The preferred way of contacting the instructor is through e-mail or during office hours. I check my e-mail almost daily (except when on travel), and will respond. If you send an e-mail, I may ask you for a phone number to contact you for follow-up, if necessary.

8. **Student Conduct.** Students should conduct themselves in ways that are consistent with promoting an efficient learning environment for themselves and everyone else. Students should be conscientious, helpful, properly motivated to learn, honest, and respectful of others and their opinions at all times. Such conduct is consistent with generally regarded norms of professionalism, including those found in graduate, professional degree programs. Points may be deducted for inappropriate conduct, and students referred to the University for further investigation of the matter.

Students should also familiarize themselves with the university Code of Student Conduct. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give an unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructors, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment), or the attempt to commit such an act. Other acts of misconduct are stated in the Code of Student Conduct. Please note that plagiarism is a serious academic offense that may result in a student being expelled from an academic program or institution.