Course Number: PPPA 6019.11   Semester: Spring 2016

Course Title: Master of Public Policy (MPP) Capstone Seminar

Prerequisite: You must be in your final semester of the MPP program and have
                   already completed all core courses. If you do not meet these criteria,
                   permission of the instructor is required to take this course.

Instructor	Class Times	Research Advisor
Jeff Williams, Ph.D. Jlwills@gwu.edu Office hours by appointment	Monday, 6:10-8pm Rome 201	Joselynn Hawkins joselynn@gwmail.gwu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Congratulations! You have reached your final semester in the MPP program. The MPP program begins fairly broadly with required courses and then narrows to a more specialized field of concentration. Now, at the conclusion of the program, the capstone takes a broad perspective once more, provides you with a context in which to synthesize the many diverse components of the curriculum, launches a major pro bono project of value to an external client and brings closure to the GW MPP experience. *Although professional experience is a side benefit of the capstone, the point of the capstone is two-fold: (a) for you to demonstrate (by means other than a traditional thesis) that you have mastered the work necessary to graduate with a MPP; and (b) to provide you an opportunity to revisit and synthesize many of the more central ideas and skills of the MPP program.*

Classroom time will be spent providing you practical "clinics" to help you and your team use the academic concepts and skills you have acquired to successfully design and implement a project that meets professional standards for external clients.

The instructor supports and uses GW's Code of Academic Integrity. All deliverables in this class must be your own work and conform to GW's Code of Academic Integrity (see http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html). Material quoted from other sources must be designated as a quotation and appropriately referenced or will be considered to be plagiarized. Sources for facts used in the paper must be provided.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- *SCOPE* research to meet client needs, resolving analytic challenges in the face of ambiguity and dissonance.

- *DEVELOP* and *MAINTAIN* positive client relationship for a mutually beneficial learning experience.

- *IDENTIFY* and *APPLY* appropriate methods to execute and deliver a research-based product responsive to client needs.

- *UNDERSTAND* the various debates surrounding research ethics and *engage* in research with sensitivity to research ethics and their implications for analysis.

- *EFFICIENTLY MANAGE* an intense, demanding research process in the context of teams and clients.

- *INTEGRATE* knowledge and skills gained through various aspects of the MPP program.

- *COMMUNICATE* findings effectively to academic and client audiences, in writing and orally.

- *DEMONSTRATE* that you have mastered the material necessary to graduate with a MPP degree.

CLASS COMPONENTS

- Client Report (65% of final grade)
    - Interim deliverables
- Final class presentation of findings (10% of final grade)
- Participation & Communication (10% of final grade)
- IRB/Ethics Requirement (required for moving ahead with project and successful course completion/not graded)
- Core Course Presentation (10% of final grade)
- Team Participation Assessments (5% of final grade)
- MPP Program Assessment (required for successful course completion/not graded)

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Overview

Your capstone project is a client-oriented team project that addresses a problem, need or issue of an organization or agency in the public administration/policy arena. Student teams will design and implement a project that allows you to confront, encounter, interact, and analyze the issues raised in this program while applying the skills and tools you have acquired in previous courses—in the context of a client relationship. At the end of the semester, students will produce a final client report, and present their results—demonstrating that they have mastered the work necessary to graduate with a MPP degree.

Your team

Each team should be comprised of 4-6 students. Your team will be assigned a primary research advisor for the duration of the project (which may or may not be the Professor), and the Professor *will* advise all projects. Advisors are available to provide guidance on your project – from developing the project charter and data collection instruments to working with the client. However, the research advisor will only provide guidance; it's up to your team to decide on and implement the best course of action for your project in consultation with the client.

Finding a Client

Teams typically do one of the following to find a client: network and directly contact an organization or agency that interests them; use a formal Request for Proposal process; or select from organizations that have contacted the school directly. One note of restriction on client selection: you should seek a client that is not your current employer. However, if you do select your employer as a client, your project must be something other than your job.

The professors reserve the right to veto a client or project. This might be because the project is too close to one of the team member's jobs, there is a potential conflict of interest for at least one of the team members, or the project does not meet the requirements of the capstone.

Project Charter

In collaboration with your client, you will develop a project charter (i.e., scope of work) that will guide your project. You can conduct a variety of data collection activities for a client – such as surveys, interviews, observation, or focus groups – and analyses – such as statistical, SWOT, financial, or evaluative analysis. However, these activities must be shown to meet the needs of the client and the purpose of the project.

This project charter will serve as your first interim deliverable.

Interim Deliverables for the Project

You will submit a final consulting report at the end of the semester. Interim project deliverables are due throughout the semester to provide you feedback. These are not graded on the original date of submission, but you will receive feedback on each. You must submit all of them in order to receive full credit for the project.

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The Interim Deliverables are as follows:
1. A project charter (will provide template) and project timeline.
2. A draft literature review with bibliography/reference list. This will serve as the second section of your paper.
3. A draft methodology including a summary of your data collection methods, a discussion of the research, and a statement on how you protected human subjects (following IRB requirements). This will serve as the third section of your paper.
4. A detailed outline of the analysis and findings (fourth section) and recommendations and conclusions (fifth section) of your paper.
5. Weekly check-in/update with your research advisor and four in-person or phone meetings with your advisor. Additional meetings can be requested at any time during the semester.

While you will receive a letter grade only for your *final* report (with client deliverables), we will take into account whether or not your team addressed issues identified in the interim deliverables for the final letter grade.

Work can be submitted by email to both the instructor and the research adviser.

The Final Consulting Report
A final consulting report is a product tailored to the client. Ideally, the report should include: an introduction, background, and statement of the problem; a literature review; methodology; analysis and findings; recommendations; and conclusions. However, the final report format is per the client's wishes. However, if the client request a report that lacks the rigor expected of an MPP Capstone, then the professor may request a second, more rigorous product.

This paper will be given a letter grade and serves as the majority of your grade for the course. The length of the report should be no shorter than 20 pages and no longer than 30, double-spaced.

Please complete an addendum to the report that identifies and discusses how the core courses impacted or helped you complete your project. This addendum should be no longer than one page and be as specific as possible.

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The Presentation
You will also present your client project in two settings. The first presentation will be to your MPP Capstone classmates and invited faculty and alumni. This presentation is based on your research paper, the activities you undertook, and the final results of those activities. Your client is NOT invited to the in-class presentation because one of the topics many groups cover is how they interacted with their clients and solved any problems that arose.

Your client will also want you to present to them. The client presentation will be scheduled *after* submitting your research paper and products and receiving comments from your research adviser and Professor Williams. This presentation should be tailored to the client and their expectations.

For course purposes, please complete an addendum to the presentation that identifies and discusses how the core courses impacted or helped you complete your project.

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ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES

NAME	DUE DATE	ASSIGNMENT TYPE	PERCENT OF GRADE
Participation & Communication	Throughout the semester	Individual Letter Grade	10%
IRB/Ethics Requirement	Week 3 1/25	Not Graded but must send copy of completion certificate to Professor Williams.	If you do not complete the test with an 80% or better, you will not be permitted to move forward with your project
Core Course Presentation	Week 4 2/1	Team Letter Grade	10%
Team Participation Assessment Part 1	Week 6 2/14	Individual Letter Grade	2.5%
Project Paper Class Presentation	Week 15 May 2	Team Letter Grade	65%
Interim Deliverables:			
a) Project charter with research questions	Week 4	Not graded but will receive feedback	Required to receive full credit for project
b) Draft literature review section with bibliography	Week 8	Not graded but will receive feedback	Required to receive full credit for project
c) Draft methodology section	Week 11	Not graded but will receive feedback	Required to receive full credit for project
d) Detailed outline of analysis, findings, recommendations and conclusions	Week 13	Not graded but will receive feedback	Required to receive full credit for project
Team Participation Assessment Part 2	May 3 (2nd assessment)	Individual Letter Grade	2.5%
MPP Program Assignment	May 3	Not Graded	Necessary to receive a grade for this course.

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Participation & Communication *(10% of individual letter grade):*
- Regular, on time class attendance.
- Meaningful remarks in class discussion and team presentations.
- Consistently meeting all deadlines.
- Regular communication with research advisor and professor

Institutional Review Board/Ethics Requirement *(Not Graded but required to continue project and successfully complete the course):*
Federal regulations require researchers to undergo ethics training and certification for each research project they undertake. As the field projects for this course are considered professional training (as opposed to generalizable research) and they are not going to be published, the requirement does not cover these projects (although if you do decide to publish your project you will need IRB approval). Nevertheless, these federal IRB requirements will be relevant to your capstone projects and to your careers so it is important that you are familiar with these regulations. We also want to be able to provide ethics assurance to our clients. To that effect:

Students will be required to complete the Citi Training Program (available at www.citiprogram.org) with a score of 80 percent & or higher and provide certification of such to the professor by the due date. Students typically download a PDF of the certification page and email it to the instructor or print out a copy of the certification to submit to the instructor in class. (Please note: you are to do the general module and when you are given a choice of area of interest, you are to select "Social and Behavioral Sciences.")

Note: If you do not complete the test with an 80% or better, you will not be permitted to move forward with your project.

Specific Instructions from CitiTraining Program:

·   Register as a new user at www.citiprogram.org
·   Be sure to remember your user name and password.
·   Institution: George Washington University (ignore other institution types)
·   Then answer questions 2 through 4.
·   For step 5, Q1, check "no"; Q2 "no" is fine.
·   Next page only requires: GW email, Department=Trachtenberg School; and Role=Student researcher–graduate level
·   Next page, check only "Human Subjects Research Training"
·   Next page, click "no" to go to "CITI Basic Course"
·   Next page, check only "Social and Behavioral Sciences"
·   Next "no" for HIPS; "no" for GCP,Click Finalize registration .
·   Click "Social & Behavioral Research" under "George Washington University Courses" to start the ten modules.

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(the extra module is just something from GW)

Core Course Presentation (10% of Team Letter Grade):
The purpose of the Core Course Presentation is for each student to reflect on the impact of the MPP curriculum on his or her development as a Public Administrator and to share important lessons with other students. Students will select one reading, one concept, or one class that had an outsized impact on their perceptions of a key element of the role of public administrators, and then will provide a brief summary that includes: 1) an overview of the topic/idea; 2) why that topic idea had an impact for that student. An example would be discussing the impact of economic course materials, or the impact of a reading on accommodating gender in public administration. Students will make joint presentations with their Team, with each student taking no more than 3 minutes to summarize his or her individual element.

Each group will prepare one or two PowerPoint slides that list the selected readings/topics and a very brief (one or two lines) summary of the readings/topic. If students within a team select the same reading/topic, then one of those students will need to select a different reading/topic to avoid repetition. Additionally, groups will indicate how each of the readings/topics selected by their team members might impact their understanding of the team's project issue.

Team Participation Assessments for Client Project *(5% of Individual Grade):*
Team assessments are used to gauge team interactions and the level of effort individuals contribute to the client project. **Assessments will occur twice** during the semester.

Each individual student will provide feedback to your instructor and the research advisor on the work of your team members <u>and yourself</u>. The instructor will take this feedback into account in arriving at <u>individual</u> grades for "course participation/communication/teamwork."

Submit teamwork peer reviews by **EMAIL to both the instructor and the research advisor**. This email will contain numerical teamwork ratings, and identification of strengths.
- **Numerical Teamwork Rating**
  Please <u>rate each team colleague AND yourself</u> on each criterion.
  (5=excellent; 4=good; 3=fair; 2=poor; 1=very poor)

  - **Collaboration** (effective, constructive, collegial decision-making)
  - **Contributions** (conceptualizing effective research design; conducting valuable data collection and analysis; preparing well written, well research work)
  - **Consistency** (reliability meeting agreed target dates)
  - **Overall** (summary evaluation of team member)

  NOTE: You may rate a team member as a "2" or below in any of the categories, but <u>ONLY AFTER</u> you have raised the specific issue(s) with them personally. Any rating

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of "2" or below must be accompanied by an explanation of the issue(s) and what you did to try to resolve it.

- **Identification of Strengths**
  - o Please identify one particular <u>strength</u> of each team member, INCLUDING yourself, that has significantly facilitated the team's work.

MPP Program Assignment (required, but not graded):

One of the requirements of your capstone course is that you provide feedback about your experience here at the Trachtenberg School. This feedback is collected with an online survey that should take about fifteen minutes to complete. All students enrolled in the Spring 2016 sections of the MPP and MPA capstones must complete this survey by May 3 as a course requirement. You cannot receive a course grade until this requirement is met.

Survey responses will be aggregated before being shared with TSPPPA faculty, and will not be shared with faculty until after Spring 2016 grades have been submitted. Your specific responses will not be associated with your name. The survey software will, however, track whether you've completed the survey and satisfied the requirements of your capstone course.

You will receive an email about halfway through the Spring semester with more instructions on how to complete the survey. That email will be sent to the email address associated with your Blackboard account, so please be sure that address is correct.

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Required readings and other resources for this course will be available on Blackboard. These are chosen and designed to provide you with additional resources for successfully completing your project. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the resources. In addition, we strongly urge you to refer to the materials from previous courses that may support your project.

WEEK	TOPIC	AVAILABLE RESOURCES	ASSIGNMENT DUE
Week 1 1/11	**Consultant-Client Approach** -Brief Review of syllabus -Working with clients -The Project Charter -Project Timeline -Group Updates	Sample Project Charters Sample Introduction Selected Chapters from Peter Block's *Flawless Consulting*	
Week 2 **1/25**	**Research Design, Questions, & Literature Review** -Creating Research Questions -Alternative Research Designs -Drawing on Courses -The Literature Review -Ethics and IRB	Research Question Matrix Literature Review Tip Sheet Sample Literature Review B.C. Martinson et al, "Scientists Behaving Badly" *Nature*, 435, 737-738. Dyer, "The Monster Study" (on BB)	**IRB/Ethics Requirement**
Week 3 2/1	**Evidence** -Secondary Data -Gathering Primary Data -Fieldwork	Urban Institute. 2009. *Fieldwork Training Guide.* Washington, DC	

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WEEK	TOPIC	AVAILABLE RESOURCES	ASSIGNMENT DUE
Week 4 2/8	**Core Course Presentations** **Communicating Findings & Recommendations** -Analysis & Findings -Recommendations -The Report -Effective Presentations	Syllabi, books and materials from assigned core courses	**Project charter with research questions, research matrix and timeline** **Core Course Presentation**
Week 5	**No Class until Week 15—Expected to spend time on client project**	**Teams must meet with their research adviser at least three times during weeks 6-14 to discuss client project. Meetings may be in person or on the phone.**	**Team Participation Assessment Part 1**
Week 7	**No Class**		
Week 8 2/29	**No Class**		**Draft Literature Review with Bibliography**
Week 9	**No Class**		
Week 10	**No Class**		
Week 11 3/21	**No Class**		**Draft Methodology Section**
Week 12	**No Class**		
Week 13 4/4	**No Class**		**Outline of Analysis and Findings, Recommendations and Conclusions**
Week 14	**No Class**		
Week 15	**No Class**		
Week 16	**No Class**		
Last Week of Classes **May 2**	**PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**		**Project presentation**
May 3	**TEAM PARTICIPATION ASSESSMENT**		**Team Participation Assessment Part 2**

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WEEK	TOPIC	AVAILABLE RESOURCES	ASSIGNMENT DUE
REMAINDER	**MAKE REVISIONS TO PAPER/PRODUCTS FOR SUBMISSION TO CLIENT AND SCHEDULE TIME TO PRESENT TO CLIENT**	We strongly recommend that you wait to receive comments on your paper before submitting anything to your client.	

Sample Gantt Chart for Capstone *Project*	Nov Dec	Jan			February				March				April				May	
Wk	Wk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Remainder
Assemble team; Get client	■																	
Ethics certification		■	■															
Develop Project Charter w/research questions			■	■	■													
Draft lit review w/bibliography						■	■	■	■									
Data collection							■	■	■	■	■	■						
Data analysis									■	■	■	■						
Draft Methodology section											■	■						
Outline of analysis & findings, recommendations and conclusions													■	■				
Prepare final client project paper and products													■	■	■	■		
Prepare final project presentation													■	■	■	■	■	

NOTE: THIS IS A SAMPLE OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT TO HELP YOU SET MILESTONES FOR YOU TEAM AND CLIENT. PLEASE SEE ABOVE FOR SPECIFIC DUE DATES FOR THE PROFESSOR AND RESEARCH ADVISERS.

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PPPA 6019 MPP Capstone Spring 2016
Feedback on Project – Grading Matrix

Research Paper	Excellent: Thorough, well reasoned, creative, sophisticated, well written (with no errors), exceptional scholarly or practical quality. **A**	Very good: Signs of creativity and a strong understanding of material, analytical approaches, etc. Thorough and well reasoned and meets professional standards. **A-**	Good: Sound work; well reasoned and thorough, without *serious* analytical shortcomings. Report fully accomplishes basic objectives for the assignment for this course. **B+**	Adequate: Competent work with some weaknesses. Demonstrates competency but understanding or application of some important concepts (or the like) is less than complete. **B**	Borderline: Weak but meets minimal expectations. Understanding, analysis or application is incomplete. **B-**	Deficient: Inadequate work; Does not meet minimal expectations. Work is poorly developed and flawed by errors and misunderstanding of important issues. **C**	Unacceptable: Work fails to meet minimal expectations for credit. Weaknesses and limitations are pervasive. **F**
Overall organization of paper							
Clarity of writing							
Responsiveness to client needs/request							
Introduction - Background - Problem statement - Project description							
Literature review							
Methodology - Research design & questions - Research methods & limits - Data collection activities & human subject protections							
Analysis & findings							
Conclusion - Summary findings - Recommendations to client (if applicable)							
Products & tools, if any, for client							

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Policies in Trachtenberg School Courses

1. Incompletes: A student must consult with the instructor to obtain a grade of I (incomplete) no later than the last day of classes in a semester. At that time, the student and instructor will both sign the CCAS contract for incompletes and submit a copy to the School Director. Please consult the TSPPPA Student Handbook or visit http://www.gwu.edu/~ccas/faculty/files/Incomplete_poli0.pdf for the complete CCAS policy on incompletes.

2. Submission of Written Work Products Outside of the Classroom: It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that an instructor receives each written assignment. Students can submit written work electronically only with the express permission of the instructor.

3. Submission of Written Work Products after Due Date: Policy on Late Work: All work must be turned in by the assigned due date in order to receive full credit for that assignment, unless an exception is expressly made by the instructor.

4. Academic Honesty: All examinations, papers, and other graded work products and assignments are to be completed in conformance with the George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity. (See http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html .)

Note especially the definition of plagiarism: "intentionally representing the words, ideas, or sequence of ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise; failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information."

5. Changing Grades After Completion of Course: No changes can be made in grades after the conclusion of the semester, other than in cases of clerical error.

6. The Syllabus: This syllabus is a guide to the course for the student. Sound educational practice requires flexibility and the instructor may therefore, at her/his discretion, revise content, and requirements during the semester.

7. Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: In order to receive accommodations on the basis of disability, a student must give notice and provide proper documentation to the Office of Disability Support Services, Marvin Center 436, 202-994-8250. Accommodations will be made based upon the recommendations of the DSS Office.

8. University Counseling Center: The University Counseling Center (UCC), 202-994-5300, offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:
   - crisis and emergency mental health consultations
   - confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals

http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices

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