**PADM 5353: Public Administration Capstone Seminar**

**(Fall 2019)**

**Course Description:**

Course provides a capstone experience for students to address an important policy and administrative issue. Students draw on coursework and experiences of their education to develop specific recommendations for design, implementation, and evaluation of this project task.

**Learning Objectives**

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Integrate graduate-level knowledge in the context of an applied field project.

2. Demonstrate critical thinking skills.

3. Apply the appropriate tools and techniques to select a focused, manageable research topic.

4. Apply research methods to move from a research problem to identifying and gathering necessary, sufficient, and appropriate data (“quantitative literacy”).

5. Apply appropriate analytical capacities for policy and organizational analysis.

6. Demonstrate advanced written and oral communication skills (“information literacy”) including report writing competencies, for a variety of audiences.

**Required Textbooks**

Polonsky, M. J., and D. S. Waller (2019). *Designing and Managing a Research Project.* 4th ed. Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage [ISBN-13: 978-1544316468]

*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: APA. [ISBN: 978-1-4338-0561-5]

**Brief Semester Overview**

**Week 1: Project Management**

Week 1: Textbook, Chapter 1, Introduction (August 25-31)

Students will need to think about the nature of their paper. Will the paper primarily be a policy-oriented paper, or a process/organizational change or reform paper? Will the paper primarily focus on planning, implementation, or evaluation of a program or a policy? Will students be working with an actual government on a problem – in which case they will need to have a department head, key leader, or their own supervisor as a contact – or will the paper be more theoretical and academic in nature?

**Weeks 2-4: Project Definition**

Week 2: Textbook, Chapter 2, Choosing a Topic (Sept. 1-7)

Students will turn in a “scope of work memo” describing the topic and strategies for researching this topic. This is a plan, at this point.

Students will begin the search for literature related to their topic. Students should access hard copies or electronic journals or magazines and begin to accumulate sources or references for their paper.

Week 3: Textbook, Chapter 3, The Role of the Supervisor (Sept. 8-14)

Students will have collected and will begin to read 10 articles from journals or magazines for the paper. Students will share those 10 sources in a list of references and provide to the instructor.

Week 4: Textbook, Chapter 5, Ethical Considerations (Sept. 15-21)

**Weeks 5-8: Contextualizing Activities**

Week 5: Textbook, Chapters 6 Planning the Research Project (Sept. 22-28)

Students should turn in one-page reports, or “reading reviews,” on five of their sources (one or one-and-one-half double-spaced pages for each source).

Week 6: Textbook, Chapters 7 and 8 Literature Review and Data Gathering (Sept. 29-October 5)

Students should turn in “reading reviews” on five additional sources.

Week 7: Textbook, Chapters 9 and 10 Qualitative Data Collection and Issues in Analysis (October 6-12)

Week 8: Textbook, Chapter 11 Quantitative Data Analysis and Identifying the Implications and Establishing Recommendations (October 13-19)

Students should BEGIN the merging of their individual articles into a tight literature review.

**Weeks 9-14: Writing the Report**

Week 9: Textbook, Chapter 12, Presenting the Results (October 20-26)

Week 10: Textbook, Chapter 13, Writing the Report (October 27-Nov. 2)

Students should complete the literature review for the paper.

Students should provide an initial articulation of their data collection and data analysis strategies for the paper.

Week 11: Textbook, Chapter 14, Oral Presentations (Nov. 3-9)

Students should begin to collect the data they will use to support their policy or organizational recommendations

Week 12: No reading assignment (Nov. 10-16)

Students should begin writing the first draft of their papers, if they have not done so by now. Outlines of papers should be well developed by this time.

Week 13: Textbook, Chapter 15, Concluding Remarks (Nov. 17-23)

Students should continue writing the paper. Outlines of the papers should be complete and students should be “putting the flesh on the bones.” The work administrator should be consulted if they have not been consulted by now.

November 24-November 30 Thanksgiving Holidays No Assignments

Week 14: No reading assignment (Dec. 1-7)

Final papers are due Friday, December 13, 11:00 AM,, that is 11:00 in the morning.

**Assignments**

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the week specified.

Assessment 1 Scope of work memo Due Sept. 7, 11:59 PM 5% of grade

Assessment 2 TWO Reading Reviews Due Sept. 28 and Oct. 5, 11:59 PM 15% of grade

Assessment 3 Literature Review Due Nov. 2, 11:59 PM 30% of grade

Assessment 4 Final Report Due Dec. 13, 11:00 AM 50% of grade

**Total = 100%**

Grading Scale:

A = 90-100%

B = 80-89%

C = 70-79%

D = 60-69%

F = < 60%

**Assignment Details**

1. Scope of Work Memo

Students prepare a scope of work memo that details the project activities, due in week 2.

2. Working Paper (WP) Summaries

This assignment allows students to document and summarize material from at least 10 sources (articles, interviews, reports, books, etc.). In weeks 5 and 6, students will submit working papers on at least five sources each week. These summaries, as well as a copy of the article (or other source) will be submitted to the instructor.

3. Literature Review

Due in Week 10, this assignment is intended to reinforce in-depth understanding of the readings. It is not a summary of the readings. Authors should explore theoretical and practical concepts in the readings to identify their strengths, limitations, and benefits. Authors should identify how the approach/model/theory/framework may apply to practical situations. The assignment is intended to continue the development of critical and analytical thinking and writing. The literature review should present a thesis (an argument or viewpoint) about a particular practice, theory, or set of theories. The thesis statement must be included in the first paragraph and must take one of these forms:

1. This paper will demonstrate that the “market theory of efficiency” is not a clear measurement of efficiency when compared to the “polis” view of efficiency.

2. This paper examines Meg Greenfield’s experiences reporting Washington politics in light of Deborah Stone’s discussion of the “distortion of facts in the polis.” The discussion will demonstrate that . . .

3. This paper will examine the effect of the absence of clarity about goal priorities. This paper will show that when goal priorities of the organization are not clear and understood by all executives and senior managers, the organization will not be successful.

4. This paper will show that no matter how much officials talk about the importance of performance measurement, nonprofit and public managers will not be able successfully to adopt and implement the practice.

The paper should demonstrate that the student can related the content to other concepts presented in the class. It is important to demonstrate the ability to write clear, simple, organized prose that is easily understood by any reader.

Although you may include more sources in the final paper, the literature review assignment will ask the student to provide a thorough review of relevant literature and a “complete” bibliography, to create a coherent background in support of project objectives. The review concludes with research questions and hypotheses/propositions.

4. Final Report

This report integrates and extends prior documents to provide a comprehensive report. You may submit a first draft to the instructor and to a government contact, if you have one. The final paper should include:

* Executive summary
* Literature review
* Research design
* Findings
* Recommendations for policy or organizational change
* Next steps

The Final Report will be graded on these Criteria:

1. The project itself will consist of a substantial project that offers an intellectual contribution to the field and/or a practical contribution to the organization or jurisdiction under which the project is undertaken.

2. The project will be well-researched, with a relatively large number of high-quality published resources being cited in the paper.

3. Students must demonstrate a capstone level of proficiency in critical thinking. According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities (the AACU), “critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.” On the Value Rubric for Critical Thinking created by the AACU, grading will be focused on the student’s ability to “select and use information to investigate a point of view or conclusion” (the use of evidence). A “capstone” level of proficiency would be demonstrated by showing that “information is taken from sources with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.”

4. Students must demonstrate a capstone level of proficiency in information literacy. According to the AACU, information literacy is “the ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively and responsibly use and share that information for the problem at hand.” On the Value Rubric for Information Literacy created by the AACU, grading will be focused on the student’s ability to “use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.” A “capstone” level of proficiency would be demonstrated by showing the ability to “communicate, organize, and synthesize information from sources to fully achieve a specific purpose, with clarity and depth.”

5. Students must demonstrate a capstone level of proficiency in critical thinking. According to the AACU, quantitative literacy is “a habit of mind, competency, and comfort in working with numerical data. Individuals with strong Quantitative Literacy skills possess the ability to reason and solve quantitative problems from a wide array of authentic contexts and everyday life situations. They understand and can create sophisticated arguments supported by quantitative evidence and they can clearly communicate those arguments in a variety of formats (using words, tables, graphs, mathematical equations, etc., as appropriate.” On the Value Rubric for Quantitative Literacy created by the AACU, grading will be focused on the student’s “ability to make and evaluate important assumptions in estimation, modelling, and data analysis.” A “capstone” level of proficiency would be demonstrated when the student “explicitly describes assumptions and provides compelling rationale for why each assumption is appropriate. The student shows awareness that confidence in final conclusions is limited by the accuracy of the assumptions.”

**Final Note on Written Assignments**

All written assignments will have the following minimum requirements, which are in keeping with standards of the American Psychological Association (APA), which will serve as the style manual for the paper: Paper should be double-spaced; use of 12 pt. font; numbering of all pages; complete citation of sources by author and date, including page number for direct references or quotations; use of a reference section; and careful, well-edited writing.

University Mandated Statements

**Students’ Rights and Responsibilities**

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

**Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies**

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness/grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester’s Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar. Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions that students need to be aware of. These include:

1. Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail, or Credit/No Credit.
2. Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date).
3. Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a W grade).
4. Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment.
5. Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

**State-Mandated Course Drop Policy**

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

# **Disability Services**

In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodation must provide documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services counselor. If you have a disability, including a learning disability, for which you request an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services Office in UC 3150, or call 903-566-7079.

**Student Absence Due to Religious Observance**

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

**Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities**

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

**Social Security and FERPA Statement**

It is the policy of the University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The university has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

**Emergency Exits and Evacuation**

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor’s directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not reenter the building unless given permission by University Police, the Fire Department, or Fire Prevention Services.

# **The Writing Center**

Located in BUS 202, the UT-Tyler Writing Center provides professional writing tutoring for all students in all disciplines. If you wish to use the Writing Center, you should plan for a minimum of two hour-long tutorials per assignment: the first to provide an initial consultation and drafting plan, and the second to follow up. Be prepared to take an active role in your learning – you will be expected to write and/or discuss your work during the tutorial. While Writing Center tutors are happy to provide constructive criticism and teach effective writing techniques, under no circumstances will they fix your paper for you. Appointments: 565-5995. More information: [www.uttyler.edu/writingcenter](http://www.uttyler.edu/writingcenter).