



School of Planning, Public Policy and Management



PPPM 610/638/610: Capstone
Fall 2021 | Winter 2022 | Spring 2022
 Course Time: Tuesday 8:00-9:20 AM
 Location: 140 Allen Hall

Instructors

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Office Hours: Tuesdays from noon to 1:30 or
 book a time outside of office hours via

https://calendly.com/benclark_uo/meetben

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Course Description

The Capstone Applied Research Project is the culmination of the MPA program. Through experience-based learning, the academic year-long course gives students an opportunity to deepen a range of degree-specific and career competencies, that include critical thinking, leadership, professional, teamwork, technology, career & self-development, and communication skills that they have gained during the program. In the course, students apply those skills to a real-world problem.



Critical Thinking



Leadership



Professionalism



Teamwork



Technology



**Career and Self
Development**



Communication

Capstone is designed to develop professional management and analytic skills. We use an experiential learning approach to do this. Specifically, students engage in direct experience and focused reflection to:

- (1) increase knowledge and understanding,
- (2) build and develop new skills, and
- (3) prepare you for a career in team-based project work. In Capstone students work collaboratively on real projects.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- Engage professionally with a client organization to assess a client's needs.
- Develop and execute a work plan based on client needs.
- Work effectively with a team.
- Manage your own work and equitably distribute tasks across the consultant team.
- Carry out a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed analysis in a real-world setting. (Note: Minimum of 40 people interviewed for pure qualitative project. Number will vary for mixed or quant projects.)
- Appraise, critique, and summarize best practices and scholarly research specific to the client's needs.
- Clearly and professionally present your findings (written, visually, orally).
- Communicate your work (writing and presentation) using professional, non-academic style.

Materials

There are readings and videos for discussion and reflection that will be posted to Canvas. Additionally, there are two required texts available as a free e-book through the University of Oregon library for this course:

- *Better Presentations* by Jonathan Schwabish.
- *The Presentation Lab: Learn the Formula Behind Powerful Presentations* by Simon Morton.

Grading Scale **note class is pass/fail in fall term (B- or above=Pass)

100	A+	85-89	B+	70-74	C+	55-59	D+	<45	F
95-99	A	80-84	B	65-69	C	50-54	D		
90-94	A-	75-79	B-	60-64	C-	45-49	D-		

Assignments and Share of Course Grades

Fall Term	Winter Term	Spring Term
<p><i>Individually Graded Assignments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection writing—15% (Multiple Deadlines) • Attendance—25% 	<p><i>Individually Graded Assignments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual Abstract (research article)—5% • Performance Review –10% (Week 10) • Reflection writing—5% (Multiple Deadlines) • Attendance & Participation—20% 	<p><i>Individually Graded Assignments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual Abstract (project summary)—5% • Performance Review –10% (Week 10) • Reflection writing –5% (Multiple Deadlines) • Attendance & Participation –20%
<p><i>Team Assignments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope of Work—50% (Draft Week 3, Final Week 6) • IRB—10% (Draft Week 5, Submitted Week 7) 	<p><i>Team Assignments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project timeline—15% (Week 3) • Background/Methodology Report—25% (Week 7) • Mid-Project Presentation—15% (Week 9) • Team management evaluation—5% (Week 10) 	<p><i>Team Assignments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Synthesis Report –5% (Week 5) • Graphic Assignment [5%] • Presentations—10% (Week 10) • Team management evaluation—5% (Week 10) • Final Report—30% (Week 11)

** Please note that there will be no extra credit assignments in this course.

Attendance

Purpose

I have found that coming together as a class to participate in group learning activities, daylight problems that may be unique or common among groups, and have time to reflect on experiential learning is the best way to lay a foundation for a successful class. Consequently, attending class sessions is an important part of capstone. I recognize that you all have competing interests for your time, but attendance is not optional. Some class sessions are set aside for group work—assuring that everyone in your group is available to meet at the same time of week and day without any challenges. Unexcused absences will result in 5 points dropping from your attendance grade. 5 absences = 0 attendance points.

Requirements

- Being in class is the first step toward being counted present.
- Participate in discussions
- Be mentally present in class (i.e., not texting or working on a laptop)



Reflection Writing (Canvas Submission)

Purpose

Reflecting on what we have learned and experienced is an important part of experiential learning. This course uses several different assignments to activate your learning in different ways through doing. We will have a short ¾ page reflection assignment for these assignments (note that the end of project reflection is longer).

1. Scope of Work Reflection (fall term): This reflection asks you to reflect upon the challenges of writing a scope of work for a client and with a group. What was easier than you thought it would be? What was harder than you thought it would be? If you could change one thing about the process, what would it be?
2. IRB Reflection (fall term): This reflection asks you to reflect upon the challenges of completing the IRB process. What was easier than you thought it would be? What was harder than you thought it would be? If you could change one thing about the process, what would it be?
3. Visual Abstracts (winter term & spring term): What did you learn doing the visual abstract? What would have made the process easier? Do you think you'll ever use the skills you developed to complete the assignment in another setting?
4. Background/Methodology Report (winter term): What was most challenging for you and your group as you prepared your background research? Do you feel like you have developed the skills you need to execute the methods you have proposed to use for the project?
5. Mid-Project Presentation (winter term): What is the most challenging part about putting together a presentation? What tools could you use better prepare and execute your presentation?
6. Data synthesis report (spring term): do you feel like your team was ready at this point during the term to begin synthesizing data you are using for your project? What challenges have you faced so far and what challenges do you expect to face as you complete your data analysis?
7. Graphics Assignments (spring term): How did you go about choosing which type of graphical presentation to use for your project? Do you feel like a different choice of method would have been easier or harder? How do you feel about the final product your team created?
8. Final presentation (spring term): Compared to your mid-project presentation, was this presentation easier or harder? Please explain your answer. Did you feel like your challenges from the mid-term reflection were addressed and helped you to create a better presentation?
9. End of Project Reflection (spring term): At the end of the school, you will reflect upon working with a client and working with a group on a project that ties together different topics of the course. You will reflect upon this experience with a 1.5-to-2-page memo (single spaced).

Requirements

- Must take the time to critically reflect on what went right and wrong. Nothing in the work you are doing is perfect and admitting that it could have gone better is not a personal failing. If things are actually going very well, that is great, but please take the time to explain what about your experience is making it work so well.
- Must submit documents that are free from errors.

Criteria for success

You will complete the assignment on time and do so with honest and critical reflection.

Skills Developed



Scope of Work

Developing a scope of work is an important skill to develop. Being able to communicate and listen to a client, then synthesize their needs is a skillset that is important for virtually every job you will have. How this gets applied in your future career may take on a different form but remains an important skillset to obtain. **See SOW assignment sheet for details on tasks, skills, and path to success –as well as a template.**

Skills Developed



Institutional Review Board Project Approval

Purpose

Nearly every capstone project needs IRB approval because we conduct human subjects research. If your group is collecting data via interviews, focus groups, or surveys (or uses data collected by others that may contain personal information) we assure that our projects are abiding by all of the UO process and procedures to protect these individuals.

Knowledge and Skills Developed

You will learn to navigate the UO online submission portal and the reasons behind protecting human subjects.



Requirements

- Must obtain CITI training online (about 4-6 hours to complete)
- Must submit all required document and respond to Research Compliance Services request in a timely manner.
- Must obtain IRB approval prior to commencing your human subjects research.
- Must abide by all human subjects protections throughout the duration of the project.

Assignments due in winter and spring terms will be added to the syllabus by the start of the winter term in January.

Communication

Assignments will be turned in through **Canvas**—the class syllabus, announcements, and other materials will be posted on Canvas for the class. *Please* set up Canvas to get messages to your desired inbox for class updates—I would recommend changing the settings to give you an email when announcements are made or messages are sent to you, particularly if you do not log in regularly.

We'll use Microsoft **Teams** to manage project work in class. It is available in a desktop application, smartphone application, and a web-based interface. You can send direct messages (DMs) to your instructor, team advisor, and group on Teams. Each project has its own channel, which allows all involved in the project the ability to see what is going on. Prior to asking questions, we ask that you make sure that you have reviewed the syllabus prior to sending a note about course logistics.

Office Hours

I will host “live” office hours through Microsoft Teams each week (see time at top of syllabus). Just call me using Microsoft Teams during office hours. I may be in my actual office. If I'm there you can visit me there, but I may ask that we move our meeting outside to reduce risk to all parties.

I welcome meetings outside my regular office hours, too, knowing that there is considerable uncertainty in all of our lives right now. Just schedule a meeting via https://calendly.com/benclark_uo/ to set a time.

How long will it take for me to respond to a question via email? How long until a grade will be posted?

If you contact me with a question, I will try to respond within one business day. This means during work hours 9-5 on weekdays. I typically provide feedback on assignments within one week.

Additionally, we will evaluate your individual and team performance with rigor and provide you with substantive feedback throughout the class on your performance. We evaluate you as if you were working in a professional environment and not a school project.

All group written work will be resubmitted to your instructor (via Canvas) until it is deemed to be presentable and acceptable to be given to your client. This means that your first submission may be given a low grade, but you are given an opportunity to resubmit the assignment and raise that grade. Our goal is to deliver a high-quality product. Period. Work that is not resubmitted is not eligible for a regrading.

Why should you reach out to me?

Talking with my students about our course material and public administration is a true pleasure. Confused or excited about something? Wondering how what we're learning relates to current events, career choices, or other classes you can take UO? Please be in touch!

Please also be in touch to tell me how you are doing in these difficult times—are you having a tough week? Having trouble with some aspects of the course? I would like to strategize with you. I will do everything I can to help you succeed. I want you to succeed and change the world for the better.

Course Format and Workload

Capstone requires a substantial time commitment. This is a five-credit graduate course. Historically, our most successful students have approached Capstone like a part-time job. We strongly encourage you to approach this course with that mindset. While your workload will vary from week to week, on average, we expect you to spend about 20 hours a week (January – June). Between scheduled team meetings and class time, you will be spending at least five (5) hours each week in the

classroom (or other team meeting space on campus). You can expect to spend an additional 15 hours per week doing individual and team research, meetings, travel, writing, data analysis, presentation practice, and assignments. Some travel may include nights and weekends. **Your project team will need to meet at least one time each week to complete your assigned work. We expect that all teams will check in with their Team Advisor every week at a designated time.**

Late Work

All work needs to be turned in via Canvas at or before the designated time (see Canvas for specifics for each assignment). Work turned in up to two hours late receives a half-grade deduction. Each 2-hours after that is a full-grade deduction for each hour. Late assignments (without grade deduction) can be gladly

accepted in extreme circumstances and with documentation to support your need for turning the assignment in late.

If answers to an assignment are given in class, late work will not be accepted unless the extreme circumstance policy is met.

Work Conflicting with Religious Holidays or Festivals

Let me know of any assignments that overlap with religious festivals (Yom Kippur, Eid, Diwali, etc.) that are not university holidays, and I am happy to find an alternative. Let me know if you need any accommodations in class/exams on a festival day (e.g., if you are fasting).

Incomplete Policy

I follow the university policy on incompletes.

Academic Misconduct

The [University Student Conduct Code](#) defines academic misconduct—be familiar with it. Academic misconduct is prohibited at UO. I will report misconduct to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards—consequences can include failure of this course.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism consists of any form of passing off or attempting to pass off, the knowledge or work of others as one's own. It is *cheating*, but more importantly, makes it much harder to build trustworthy knowledge. In an era of claims of “fake news” or actual fake news, building trust in knowledge is exceedingly important. You are expected to understand what is and is not plagiarism. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at <http://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism>. University policy can be found here: <http://policies.uoregon.edu/vol-3-administration-student-affairs/ch-1-conduct/student-conduct-code>.

Students must properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Ignorance is not an excuse for plagiarizing.

Citations and References

We ask that all teams utilize an in-text citation format for **all** written work. MLA, Chicago, and APA styles are all acceptable, but be consistent and accurate in how you use in-text citation, quotes, and your reference list at the end of your document.

Reference management software like Zotero or RefWorks or EndNote are awesome time savers and are highly suggested. These tools help to store, manage, and format references that will save you hours of headaches. Ben uses Zotero (a lot!!) and can give advice on that software package. This research guide from the UO library can be a great help: <http://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism/citationtools>

Land Acknowledgement

The University of Oregon is located on Kalapuya Ilihi, the traditional indigenous homeland of the Kalapuya people. Following treaties between 1851 and 1855, Kalapuya people were dispossessed of their indigenous homeland by the United States government and forcibly removed to the Coast Reservation in Western Oregon. Today, descendants are citizens of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians of Oregon, and continue to make important contributions in their communities, at UO, and across the land we now refer to as Oregon.

Capstone projects take place at various locations in Oregon, and wishes to acknowledge and express respect for the traditional homelands of all of the indigenous people of Oregon. This includes the Burns Paiute Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the Coquille Indian Tribe, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, and the Klamath Tribes. We also express our respect for all other displaced Indigenous peoples who call Oregon home.

Capstone Position Descriptions

The MPA Capstone course is an applied learning course that can be viewed as if it were a consulting firm at the University of Oregon that provides technical assistance to help solve issues and improve management of public and non-profit organizations, mainly in Oregon.

Consultants (all students in the class)

Start Date: October

End Date: June

Hours per week: 20=About 5 hours in class/team meetings and about 15 outside of class

Consultants conduct management and policy research analysis. People in this role engage in a variety of tasks and will work independently and with their teams (*no projects* are individual projects). [Workload in the fall term is about 1/5th of that in winter and spring terms.]

JOB DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Client Interaction

- Establish and maintain good working relationships with client groups
- Prepare regular progress reports
- Communicate with the client on a regular basis

Project Work

- Plan and facilitate meetings, including team meetings, meetings with clients, focus groups, and workshops.
- Data collection and synthesis
- Write technical memoranda and reports
- Develop and deliver oral presentations
- Conduct phone and in-person interviews
- Interact with community residents or stakeholders
- Conduct primary research
- Develop graphical representations of your research and analysis
- Oversee and coordinate day-to-day tasks

Process

- Develop and steward professional relationships
- Provide creative input to team and project
- Attend all team meetings and work sessions
- Ask questions of team advisor and course instructor
- Be honest with teammates, advisor, and faculty
- Attend all Capstone classes
- Communicate all concerns to the advisor
- Ask for help when needed
- Be willing to fail
- Reflect on the project and experiences in the class.

Team Advisor

Start Date: October

End Date: June

Team Advisors work closely with the course instructor (Clark) to coordinate selected projects. Responsibilities include providing management, guidance, and coordination consulting teams. The Team Advisor will review work, provide oversight of the project, and assess progress. They are not doing the work of the team, but instead helping to smooth out bumps along the way by helping the consultants think strategically about their projects, find ways to get around problems that arise and give you all sorts of advice on how to get the job done.

JOB DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Client Interaction

- Meet with consulting team and client for the kick-off meeting
- Communicate directly with the client at times to assess project
- Help ‘grease’ the wheels of the client-team interactions/communications, if needed.

Oversight

- Provide advice to students on project and products
- Assess team progress
- Answer questions and mentor students
- Help team members meet their learning and professional goals
- Meet with course instructor weekly to provide an update on progress and challenges.
- Provide feedback to the team about project timeline, deliverables, and deadlines
- Ensure the consulting team have a comprehension of project
- Oversee and coordinate big picture goals and tasks
- Provide high-level feedback on drafts
- Provide directional guidance of project
- Answer large scope questions
- Conduct individual and team assessments/reviews
- Provide prompts for consultants’ reflection on project and experiences.

What they don’t do

- Report Line editing
- Conduct interviews, focus groups, analysis
- Take notes
- Develop meeting agendas
- Run meetings

Course instructor (Clark)

Start Date: July

End Date: June

The course instructor works closely with the clients to develop the projects—this is a year-round job. He also works hand-in-hand with the Team Advisors to assuring all consulting groups are succeeding, and consulting with the advisors to find solutions to problems, should they arise. The instructor provides most of the course instruction and coordinates joint course sessions and guest lectures. The instructor grades all work in the course, though team advisors provide input and feedback to the instructor to help in the grading process.

The instructor will review work, provide oversight of the project, and assess progress secondarily to the team advisor, with the exception of research design and methodology—which the instructor has primary responsibility for advising.

Similar to the Team Advisors, the course instructor does not do the work of the team, but instead helping to smooth out bumps along the way by helping the consultants think strategically about their projects, find ways to get around problems that arise, and give you all sorts of advice on how to get the job done.

JOB DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Client Interaction

- Develops project the client prior to the start of the class.
- Will communicate with the client on behalf of the consulting team, but only upon the request of the consulting team.
- Will help to ‘grease’ the wheels of the client-team interactions/communications, if needed.
- Tends not to have much communication with the client as the project progresses—meaning the consultants are responsible for communication with the client, not your instructor.

Project Work

- Provide advice to students on project and products
- Assess team progress by in consultation with the team advisor
- Answer questions and mentor students
- Help team members meet their learning and professional goals
- Provides methodology and research design advice and consultation to consulting teams.
- Statistical consults available upon request
- All course grading
- Oversee big picture goals of the class
- Provide high-level feedback on drafts
- Provide directional guidance of project
- Feedback on work products
- Large scope questions

What they don't do

- Report editing
- Interviews, focus groups, analysis
- Take notes during meetings
- Develop a meeting agenda
- Run meetings (unless that is a class meeting)

COVID-19 and this Class

Good Classroom Citizenship

- Wear your mask and make sure it fits you well (no chin beard masks or noses peeking out please).
- No food and bev in the class—so mask stays on all class. Period.
- Stay home if you're sick. Seriously—stay home. Ben will work with you to accommodate you if you are sick. Again, stay home if you are sick.
- Get to know your neighbors in class, and let them know if you test positive
- Get tested regularly
- Watch for signs and symptoms with the daily symptom self-check
- Wash your hands frequently or use hand sanitizer
- Complete the UO COVID-19 [case and contact reporting form](#) if you test positive or are a close contact of someone who tests positive.

In the event of a campus emergency that disrupts academic activities, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change. Information about changes in this course will be communicated as soon as possible by email, and on Canvas. If we are not able to meet face-to-face, students should immediately log onto Canvas and read any announcements and/or access alternative assignments. Students are also expected to continue coursework as outlined in this syllabus or other instructions on Canvas.

In the event that the instructor of this course has to quarantine, this course may be taught online during that time.

As the University of Oregon returns to in-person instruction, the key to keeping our community healthy and safe involves prevention, containment, and support. Here is information critical to how the UO is responding to COVID-19.

- **Prevention:** To prevent or reduce the spread of COVID-19 in classrooms and on campus, all students and employees:
 - Must comply with the [vaccination policy](#)
 - Must [wear face coverings](#) in all indoor spaces on UO campus
 - Complete weekly [testing](#) if not fully vaccinated or exempted
 - [Wash hands](#) frequently and practice social distancing when possible
 - Complete daily [self-checks](#)
 - Stay home/do not come to campus if feeling [symptomatic](#)
 - Complete the UO [COVID-19 case and contact reporting form](#) if you test positive or have been in close contact with a confirmed or presumptive case.
- **Containment:** If a student in class tests positive for COVID-19, all relevant classes will be notified via an email by the Corona Corps Care Team with instructions for students and staff based on their vaccination status. Specifically:
 - *Vaccinated/Asymptomatic students:* Quarantine not required, but daily self-monitoring before coming on campus advised; sign up for testing 3-5 days after notification through [MAP](#)
 - *Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated students:* 14-day quarantine advised – do not come to class – and sign up for testing 3-5 days after notification through [MAP](#), if asymptomatic, or through University Health Services (541-346-2770) or your primary care provider, if symptomatic.

- *Symptomatic students:* stay home (do not come to class/campus), complete the online [case and contact form](#), and contact University Health Services (541-346-2770) or your primary care provider to arrange for immediate COVID-19 testing.

Students identified as close contacts of a positive case will be contacted by the Corona Corps Care Team (541-346-2292).

- **Support:** The following resources are available to you as a student.
 - [University Health Services](#) or call (541) 346-2770
 - [University Counseling Center](#) or call (541) 346-3277 or (541) 346-3227 (after hrs.)
 - [MAP Covid-19 Testing](#)
 - [Corona Corps](#) or call (541) 346-2292
 - [Academic Advising](#) or call (541) 346-3211
 - [Dean of Students](#) or call (541)-346-3216