

Capstone

Spring 2023

Teaching team:

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Location

In person lecture meets in **SEM 2 E1107**

Zoom meeting ID: available on the course Canvas page.

Delivery mode for Spring 2023

This quarter the capstone course will be a HyFlex Hybrid offering. Students can participate in person and/or remotely.

Capstone classes **do not meet every week**. This is done to provide additional time for completion of the capstone project. The schedule at the end of this document and the course schedule on canvas list the dates when classes are held.

The Evergreen State College COVID policies – Spring 2023

Health and Well-Being are central to student success, and at Evergreen we are committed to creating and maintaining a learning and working environment that is healthy, accessible, and equitable.

Evergreen has adopted a [vaccination requirement](#) to ensure maximum opportunities are available on campus as conditions allow.

Vaccine Requirement. All students, faculty, and staff who come to campus are required to be vaccinated (or have an approved medical or religious exemption on file). Students and employees with an approved exemption and accommodation must always follow the guidelines of that accommodation.

Mask Requirement. Evergreen does not have a college-wide mask requirement. Though not required, mask-wearing is optional and encouraged. (Note some exceptions: masks are still required in health care settings and when exposed to or recovering from COVID-19.) Students, staff, and faculty will have different levels of comfort in wearing masks, and we should all endeavor to foster an ethic of care, consideration and acceptance in our learning community.

Any class member who feels ill with headache, excessive fatigue, fever, coughing, congestion, or other symptoms should stay home, notify the faculty, and submit a Health Verification Form (in my.evergreen.edu). Faculty will provide you with guidance on continuing your academic work and the College's COVID team will provide direction on managing your health risks.

If you have questions or concerns please contact your faculty. If you wish to report a covid safety issue contact covid@evergreen.edu.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Students “cap off” their studies in the MPA program by completing a Capstone project. Capstone is the opportunity to reflect upon, and integrate, the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) you have acquired throughout the MPA program. In the Capstone course, students engage in an applied demonstration project of their own design (demonstrating the knowledge, skills and abilities gained in the MPA program) as related to the MPA mission statement. Using the mission of the MPA program, you will reflect upon and integrate your MPA experiences in a way that is meaningful for you as you define and practice public service.

Knowledge is the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. For example, you might have knowledge of government structures used in org analysis. This doesn’t mean you know how to be a org analyst. It means you know the models.

Skills are the proficiencies developed through training or experience. For example, you have demonstrated skills in applying the org models when informing restructuring decisions. Skills are something that has been learned. You can develop skills through the transfer of knowledge.

Abilities are the qualities of being able to do something. There is a fine line between skills and abilities. The differentiator is whether the ability was learned or innate. Ability is a strength that is innate to you. The abilities to organize and prioritize structural needs are abilities that can help you develop your organization decision making skills. The MPA program improved your abilities, but the talent or ability you had for some things existed within you to start.

Learning Objectives:

- *Demonstrate* KSAs gained in the MPA program regarding their practical applications for competent transformational managers, leaders, and analysts of data, information, and decision making.
- *Integrate* the seven themes of the MPA mission: 1) think critically and creatively; 2) communicate effectively; 3) work collaboratively; 4) embrace diversity; 5) value fairness and equity; 6) advocate powerfully on behalf of the public; 7) imagine new possibilities to accomplish positive change in our workplaces and in our communities.
- *Reflect* on how and why program-wide lessons added to students’ practical learning, tools, and personal wisdom.

Required readings:

Fisher, R., Ury, W. L., & Patton, B. (2011). *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in*. Penguin.

Additional articles and chapters will be posted to Canvas.

Recommended readings:

Alexander, C. L. (2020). *In defense of public service: how 22 million government workers will save our republic*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc..

Review Assignment Requirements Thoroughly Before Drafting Submissions: This may sound obvious, but it is vitally important that you read and understand assignments before you begin to write. The pressure to just start writing can be irresistible at times. Don't! Canvas is used for course documents specifically because it enables changes as the course evolves during the quarter. Some assignments have very specific requirements. Some are intentionally a bit more open to interpretation and require creative responses. Clear understanding of your goals is important to avoiding frustration – yours and the faculty's.

Format of Assignment Submissions: All papers will be submitted as requested by your seminar faculty member. All papers must meet assignment parameters and cite works using the [American Psychological Association citation style](#). All written work will be of high quality, grammatically correct, clear and without spelling errors. If you require it, please contact the Graduate Writing Assistant. Sometimes your faculty will ask you to work with the Graduate Writing Assistant; if so, you are required to do so to the satisfaction of your faculty member.

Late assignments: Are not accepted without prior (to deadline) approval by your seminar faculty member. Multiple late assignments put you at risk for no credit.

Participation & Attendance: Students are required to attend each class meeting. Participation includes focusing on class content, being engaged in class and seminar, listening to others, taking notes, completing class interactive exercises, avoiding distractions, and listening to and dialoging with the guest speakers. If an absence is unavoidable, faculty must be notified prior to a class and/or seminar absence. After one absence per quarter, make-up work may be assigned at faculty discretion, on a case-by-case basis. Make-up work must be completed by the end of the quarter for course credit. Multiple absences put you at risk for no credit.

Teamwork: The expectations of students as individuals applies to expectations of individuals in project teams as well. Each team member is expected to behave as part of a learning community. The division of labor in teams should respect differences among members while ensuring maximum participation of all team members. Conflicts with the team should be resolved by team members to the greatest extent possible. It is not the role of faculty to adjudicate conflicts within teams unless they involve violations of college policies.

Credit: Students will receive 6 graduate credits at the end of spring quarter 2020 if all course requirements have been satisfactorily completed. Students will be evaluated based upon their progress towards the learning objectives, assessed from classroom, seminar, and assignment performance. No partial credit or incompletes will be awarded. Full loss of credit decisions will be made by the faculty team. Full loss of credit for two terms of core may result in dismissal from the MPA program. Plagiarism (i.e., using other peoples' work as your own) may result in total loss of credit for the class and may result in dismissal from the MPA program. See the MPA Handbook and College statement on academic honesty for more information. Failing to meet

course requirements (ex. not completing one or more assignments, completing one or more assignments late, or multiple absences) may constitute denial of total credit at the discretion of the faculty. Students at risk of losing credit will receive written notification prior to the end of the quarter.

Evaluation: Student's spring quarter self eval and eval of faculty are required for credit.

Accommodations: are provided for any student who desires them through Access Services, the Graduate Writing Assistant, and the Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning Center. To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the office of Access Services for Students with Disabilities (867-6348 or 6364). Information about a disability or health condition is regarded as confidential. Please refer to TESC's Students With Disabilities Policy [here](#).

Washington State law (RCW 28B.10.039) requires that institutions of higher education accommodate students by allowing two days of absence and make-up work for religious holidays per year. While Evergreen moves toward putting religious holidays into the online campus calendar, check the University of Washington's [religious holidays calendar](#).

Other Expectations of Students and Faculty: We commit to promoting a cooperative, supportive atmosphere within the community; give everyone opportunity for self-reflection and expression; use high standards in reading the text and preparing our papers, lectures, and comments in seminar; handle all disputes in a spirit of goodwill; respect our differences; and, discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved.

We abide by the [social contract](#), the [student conduct code](#) and the [non-discrimination policies and procedures at TESC](#).

All students are expected to support and contribute to a well-functioning MPA classroom learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the MPA program.

Guest Policy: Guests are welcome to visit our learning community during class time and seminar meetings with approval from course faculty in advance of each requested visit. It is the host student's responsibility to contact the faculty with details about the requested guest visit and await approval. Prospective students may visit one class meeting of second year Core without advance faculty approval, but must notify faculty that they are present prior to the beginning of class. All guests must abide by all social contract, conduct code, and nondiscrimination policy guidelines as aforementioned in this syllabus. Per faculty discretion, guests may be asked to leave and not permitted to return to class if these guidelines are violated in any way including behavior that disrupts the learning community. All guests are expected to minimize their participation in class and seminar discussions.

Inclement Weather: In the event of bad weather or emergencies students should check with television, web pages, and radio stations for announcements of campus closures. Students can also call the main campus line 867-6000 to get the latest news regarding a campus closure or delay. Since many students in the program travel from relatively distant locations, faculty may

decide to cancel class even if campus is open. If we do this we will send an all-class email by 3:00 pm. If you've not already done so, sign up to receive alerts about campus closing or other emergencies [here](#).

Communicating with Each Other: Email and Canvas are our primary means of communication. You are responsible for checking your Evergreen email and Canvas regularly.

ASSIGNMENTS & Evaluation Criteria

Assignments are evaluated on four criteria:

1. Demonstrates conceptual accuracy
2. Demonstrates application and/or synthesis of the content
3. Supports arguments or assessments with appropriate sources
4. Demonstrates clear communication

The specific instructions for each assignment provide specific details on how these criteria are applied. For each criterion, the submitted work is assessed on whether it “Fully Demonstrates”, “Significantly Demonstrates”, “Partially Demonstrates”, or “Does not Demonstrate” the relevant standard.

Assignments: description and due dates

Assignment 1: Learning Inventory & Resource List

Due April 6 posted to canvas by 6:00pm to be reviewed by peers in seminar.

Purpose: Reflect on KSAs gained from coursework and create a list of resources.

Instructions: Create a list, or grid, or outline, or chart, or image, or website, or essay of your learning in the MPA program. *How you present the information is up to you.* The only requirements are:

1. Include the titles, quarter, year, and a brief description of the classes, individual learning contracts, or internships you took that were most valuable to you in the MPA program.
2. Include at least one KSA you learned from each class, individual learning contract, or internship you identified. What did you take away from each experience?
3. Most importantly, also submit a list of key essential resources that you have amassed during the program. This will be a “go to” list that you now use or anticipate using for your daily work in the PA field. The resources may be books, articles, tools, databases, websites, blogs, journals, magazines, professional associations, or fellow students/leaders you’ve met during the program.

Assignment 2: Effective E-mail & Highlights Paper

Due April 13 posted to canvas by 6:00pm.

Purpose: Practical Applications of Critically Analyzing Emerging (Persistent) Issues

Public administration, as a field and a profession, is facing a number of big questions. The questions/issues are stated broadly and some are persistent as outlined by the readings.

Instructions: For this assignment, identify an issue or a problem within an organization. This may be an organization you have worked with, are working with, or are aware of. After you identify the problem, what solution would you propose? Your task is to identify a concrete example from your experience and integrate the competencies you have accumulated as an MPA student to propose a viable solution. As part of your solution, what KSAs from the MPA curriculum are you utilizing? This may include core, elective, and ILC courses and all of the tools you have acquired throughout the program.

To successfully complete Assignment 2, you are to:

- Identify, and clearly state the problem (issue) facing the organization.
- Propose a solution informed by the KSAs you have acquired throughout your time at the MPA program.
- Write an effective e-mail using this resource.
<https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/EmailCommunication.htm>
- Attach a one-page highlights paper to the e-mail. Example highlights papers will be posted on canvas. Your highlights paper should persuasively explain the issue and support your solution.

Assignment 3: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

Due April 20 posted to canvas by 6:00pm

Purpose: More commonly, practitioners in a wide variety of public administration roles are being asked to speak to their knowledge, skills, and abilities concerning diversity, equity, and/or inclusion (DEI) as a part of the hiring process. These application questions are intended to explore how an applicant's experiences or perspectives concerning DEI may help change or contribute to the organization's culture and/or strategic goals. Responses to DEI questions and more formalized DEI statement submissions can take many forms, but should ultimately include informed and thoughtful reflection on one's experiences, perspectives, and skills that can help advance access, representation, and equitable distribution of public services and goods.

Preparing a DEI response or statement is not just an important component of developing competitive employment application materials but also serves as a unique opportunity to reflect on and consider one's experiences and willingness to develop and implement practices that

advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in public administration. Through reflection, practitioners should be able to acknowledge and articulate their own use of DEI concepts and principles as they apply to leadership, collaboration, communication, and service delivery.

Instructions: In this assignment, you will respond to the following three DEI questions as if they were supplemental questions requested as a part of a job posting. Although the questions are broad, your answers should be concise, well-formulated, and speak to the contributions and insight you hope to bring to a position relevant to your own career ambitions. Responses should be provided within a single Word document and abide by the APA formatting requirements.

- Describe your previous experience working and collaborating in diverse, multicultural and inclusive settings.
- Please describe how you would contribute to a division committed to identifying and implementing equitable and inclusive practices.
- Describe some specific things you have done (workshops, trainings, certifications, etc) or plan to do to increase your own cultural competency and commitment to diversity, equity, and/or inclusion.

Key Skills: Practice concise and targeted writing; demonstrate knowledge of DEI related concepts and practices, make connections between program learning and professional practice.

Additional Resource:

UC Berkley: Rubric to Assess Candidate Contributions to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
https://ofew.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/rubric_to_assess_candidate_contributions_to_diversity_equity_and_inclusion.pdf

Assignment 4: Public Administration Job Application

Due May 25 posted to canvas by 6:00pm

Purpose: Capstone is the last step of your MPA career. Whether you are planning to utilize your new degree in a new position or not, it is important to update your resume with your new skills and prepare for whatever your next position will be.

Instructions:

1. Find a **current** job posting for a job you want (move upward, lateral, to a different agency, or even your dream job for your new MPA) in any area of public service (federal, tribal, state, county, city, or nonprofit). Make sure it is a job you would actually want. You can usually find job postings online at the organizations' human resource or personnel website, for example <https://www.careers.wa.gov>, Public Service Careers, or Nonprofit Jobs in Washington State.
2. Write a **cover letter** and submit an **updated resume** tailored for the job you found. Use the same key terms from the job posting within your resume and cover letter.

3. Develop a **list of questions** you will ask the interviewers about the job you are applying for.

Your assignment must include a link to the job posting, a cover letter, a resume, and list of questions (these can one document, or multiple documents).

Note: HT to Amy Gould for this assignment. If you took Managing Organizations with Dr. Gould, you must submit a different job application for Capstone.

Assignment: Capstone and Visual Aid – PLEASE NOTE THERE ARE MULTIPLE DRAFTS DUE THROUGHOUT THE QUARTER

Posted on canvas by 6:00pm.

Draft 1 Due: Week 5 – May 4

Draft 2 Due: Week 7 – May 18

Draft 3 Due: Week 9 – June 1

Final Draft Due: Week 10 – June 8

Purpose: Demonstrate to the program and the community what you have learned in the MPA program. This project can take any form you wish, as long as it demonstrates the knowledge, skills, and abilities you have gained in this program. It may be a research study, organizing a neighborhood, facilitation of a public meeting, a case study, an organizational assessment or intervention, policy analysis, program evaluation plan, business plan, etc.

Projects must be about public service. Public service is defined very broadly to include efforts of governments, community-based organizations, citizens, nonprofits, and political organizations (perhaps even private organizations doing public activities). You may work on your projects individually or in teams.

Projects must:

1. Produce an output of some kind (something tangible) as well as a written report and a presentation on the process/production of the output;
2. Be outcome oriented with a focus on making change or having an effect in some way;
3. Be MPA mission-centric, and represent KSAs learned/gained as they relate to all or part of the mission; and
4. Be applied – potential outcome in application in an agency, community, organization, discipline (for traditional research paper, for example), etc.

What did your Capstone project produce? The purpose of this assignment as a product is to demonstrate what you've learned in your MPA program (KSAs) through an applied Capstone project that integrates the MPA mission.

- Presentation: 15 minutes. We expect the presenters to take 15 minutes to explain what their Capstone project demonstrates (connection to MPA mission, KSAs, and how project is applied to public service).
- Q&A Session: 5 minutes.
- A visual aid is required for the presentation. Consider using one or more of the following tools: slide shows (prezi.com, haikudeck.com, projeqt.com, visme), word cloud, website (wix.com, weebly.com) infogram (Piktochart, thinglink.com), animation (sparkol.com, powtoon.com), timeline (timetoast.com, dipity.com), interactive worksite (trello). All presentations should adhere to the following guidelines:

1) Any photographs or graphs/charts should have a summary about what is being displayed.

2) All photographs or graphs/charts should be cited with their source.

3) Accessibility: contrast (dark background, light font), limit red and green (color blindness), font size, readability, universal design accessibility.

<http://www.vetpd.qld.gov.au/resources/pdf/universal-design-checklist.pdf>

4) If using a video, it may not take up significant presentation time.

5) All members of the group are expected to participate in the presentation/facilitation as able.

Invite family, friends, colleagues, supporting organizations to final presentations as appropriate.

Weekly schedule:

| Week | Topic | Reading | Due |
|--------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Week 1 April 6 | Mission 1&2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thinking critically and creatively • communicate effectively | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings and resources posted on canvas | Learning inventory assignment |
| Week 2 April 13 | No class | | Effective email and highlights paper assignment |
| Week 3 April 20 | Mission 3&4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work collaboratively • embrace diversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings and resources posted on canvas | DEI statement assignment |
| Week 4 April 27 | No class | | |
| Week 5 May 4 | Mission 5: value fairness and equity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings and resources posted on canvas | Draft 1 |
| Week 6 May 11 | No class | | |
| Week 7 May 18 | Mission 6: advocate powerfully on behalf of the public | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting to Yes! | Draft 2 |
| Week 8 May 25 | No class | | Job application assignment |
| Week 9 June 1 | Mission 7: imagine new possibilities to accomplish positive change in our workplaces and in our communities | | Draft 3 |
| Week 10 June 8 | Course wrap-up | | Final draft |
| Week 10 Saturday June 10 | Final presentations | | |