



**PAPP 5399-501 – Online – Spring 2019**  
**Public Administration Capstone Course**

Department of Public Affairs  
College of Architecture, Planning, and Public Affairs (CAPPA)  
University of Texas at Arlington

Professor: Kay Godbey, Ph.D.	Email: <a href="mailto:kay.godbey@uta.edu">kay.godbey@uta.edu</a>
Office: 601 West Nedderman Drive, Suite 203	Adjunct Office by Appointment
UTA Profile: <a href="http://mentis.uta.edu/explore/profile/helen-godbey">http://mentis.uta.edu/explore/profile/helen-godbey</a>	
Course Duration: January 14 – May 3, 2019	

**A. Course Description**

The Public Administration Capstone is the last course students take before graduating with the Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree. The capstone experience is grounded on four interrelated pedagogical principles:

- 1) it integrates all the coursework taken before the capstone;
- 2) it strengthens students' professional competencies in ethical public decision making and management of organizational resources;
- 3) it enhances project management and teamwork skills; and
- 4) it develops students' research skills including the use of appropriate methods to collect, analyze, and report data on a real-world organizational issue.

The MPA capstone program is a practical approach to service learning and facilitates the linking of theory with practice. This practical approach is a win-win situation for students, the community at large, and the university. Students learn by doing, provide a public service to the community, and the capstone projects are a university contribution to advance community interests. While students' primary responsibilities are to contribute to the team's successful completion of their assigned project, teams collaborate with one another in establishing a learning community and furthering the goals of the MPA program. Thus, teams develop work plans and carry out their projects (intra team responsibilities), but also provide periodic progress reports to the class, and produce a final written report and oral presentation of findings, which enhances class learning of the capstone research and process.

## **B. Student Learning Outcomes and NASPAA Competencies**

Universal competencies (domains) required by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA [www.naspaa.org](http://www.naspaa.org)) for students graduating from all accredited MPA programs are addressed in this course.

The applied and public service nature of the capstone project provides students with opportunities to enhance their competencies in managing organizational resources, project management, teamwork development, and research skills. Students who successfully complete the capstone project should demonstrate their ability to:

- 1) **Lead and manage in public governance:** Contribute to a team effort in the completion of the project to the satisfaction of the client. This will be measured by the extent to which each team member demonstrates the competencies listed below.
  - a) Manage projects;
  - b) Manage teams by fostering joint commitment, open communications, conflict resolution, and trust;
- 2) **Analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions:** Manage the assigned project. This will be measured by the extent to which each team member demonstrates the competencies listed below.
  - a) Plan, design, and implement evaluation strategies to improve a program or project;
  - b) Differentiate among goals, measurable objectives, related tasks, and outcomes for a program or project;
  - c) Use analytical tools and techniques—including collecting, analyzing, presenting, and interpreting data—to help policy makers make public decisions;
  - d) Think critically as demonstrated by giving careful and unbiased consideration to relevant evidence, to contextual factors of the question at hand, and to fair standards for decision making;
- 3) **Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry:** Research, analyze, and communicate findings relevant to the project. This will be measured by the extent to which each team member demonstrates the competencies listed below.

- a) Written communications proficiency—writes concise reports based on sound research and analysis to help public decision making;
  - b) Oral communications proficiency—presents information accurately, clearly, concisely, and persuasively to help public decision making;
  - c) Value diversity and the contribution of multiple ‘world views’ to the effective identification of the most appropriate policy option;
- 4) **Articulate and apply a public service perspective:** This will be measured by the extent to which each team member demonstrates the following competency.
- a) Advance public values by serving the community and the profession.

### C. Prerequisites

To be eligible to take and receive credit for this course, students must have:

- selected an emphasis area;
- completed all MPA core courses; \*
- completed all emphasis area courses; \*
- earned at least a 3.0 GPA.

\* The capstone course is to be taken during the student’s last semester in the program. It is possible to complete up to two other courses (either core or emphasis area courses) in addition to the capstone during the student’s last semester in the program.

### D. Required Textbooks

There are no required textbooks for this course. All course materials are provided within the Blackboard course shell.

### E. Participation

The success of the capstone project as a learning experience depends, to a large extent, on the level and quality of student participation. The effective and responsible participation by all team members is therefore required. Students are expected to:

- complete all class assignments on time;
- attend and actively participate in class and team meetings (see **attendance policy** below); and
- participate in any field assignment required to complete the project.

## **F. Attendance Policy**

Because the capstone is a project-driven and team-based course, full participation of all team members (online or on campus) is critical for the completion of projects.

## **G. Course Requirements**

To effectively contribute to the successful completion of the capstone project, students are expected to meet the requirements listed below. A complete description of each assignment is found in Blackboard. Students will complete these individual and team assignments in three phases.

**Phase 1** starts the first day of class and ends with the submission of an outline of the project report. The following tasks and activities will be completed during this phase.

1. Faculty holds an initial information session (we use Blackboard Collaborate if online course; see tutorials in the Students Resources link of the course menu) to discuss
  - a. course process
  - b. course objectives
  - c. course requirements
  - d. faculty's and clients' expectations: Clients' proposals are carefully discussed to clarify what deliverables are expected from each project team. The discussion focuses on the clients' vision of what they would consider a successful project. Teams should not discuss process or methodology.
2. Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements (if needed).
3. Faculty assigns students to project teams based on students' preferences, enrollment, and the need to form complementary teams comprised of students with diverse skills.
4. Students complete the pre-test.
5. Students review eight online lectures and take corresponding quizzes
6. Teams develop and submit a clear problem statement based on the clients' project proposal, initial communication with the client, and any other communication between teams, clients, and faculty.
7. Teams develop a task assignment matrix (TAM) and sign team agreements specifying each member's role, tasks, and responsibilities based on the project proposal and the problem statement. Teams submit their respective TAM and each team member submits a signed team agreement form.
8. Based on 6 and 7 above, teams develop and present a draft work plan to faculty
9. Teams and faculty finalize the work plan.
10. Each team member submits self-peer and team assessments (don't confuse with evaluations which are completed later in the course).
11. Teams submit an annotated outline of the project report.

**Phase 2** is the execution phase of the course. It entails teams working independently on the execution of the work plan and carefully completing all tasks in the Task Assignment Matrix (TAM). It starts after completing the submission of the project report outline. Teams will meet (via Blackboard Collaborate if online) independently of faculty and as many times as needed to complete project tasks. In addition, faculty may hold weekly meetings to ensure each team project is on track (via Blackboard Collaborate if online). Phase 2 ends with the submission of the project report draft. The following tasks and assignments will be completed during this phase:

1. Teams follow their work plans and complete every task in the TAM.
2. Teams meet independently of faculty to coordinate the execution of the work plan and the TAM.
3. Team meetings in-person or via Blackboard Collaborate.
4. Teams meet with faculty as required to ensure projects are on track and to answer any questions students might have.
5. Teams submit a draft of the project report.

**Phase 3** focuses on the presentation of the project and completing all evaluations and the post-test. It starts with the teams' defense of their project report draft. Faculty and an invited panel of experts (when appropriate) will give students feedback on their presentation skills as well as on the execution of their projects. Teams revise and edit their reports based on faculty and invited panel feedback. This phase ends with the presentation of the edited and revised project report draft and completion of the post-test. The following tasks and assignments will be completed during this phase:

1. Teams defend their draft project report.
2. Students submit:
  - a. Self-peer evaluations,
  - b. Team evaluations,
  - c. MPA program evaluations.
3. Students submit Student Feedback Survey (UT-Arlington survey).
4. Teams revise their project reports based on faculty and invited panel of experts' feedback.
5. Teams submit and defend their final project report.
6. Students complete the post-test.

## **H. Late Assignment Policy**

All assignments are due as stated on the Course Calendar. The pre-test will not be accepted after its due date. All other assignments would be deducted 10% for each day the assignment is late. No assignment will be accepted after three days late.

## **I. Amendments to the Syllabus and/or Course Calendar**

This syllabus, including the Course Calendar, may be amended. If so, amendments will be posted on Blackboard under the Syllabus tab, and course announcements will be made alerting students to those amendments. As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this syllabus and course calendar schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course.

## **J. Grading Criteria**

Your final grade is based on several individual assignments that are worth 40 percent. Team assignments are worth a maximum of 60 percent. See the table below for a list of assignments and their weighted values. Except for the pre-test, which is graded on completion, the eight lecture quizzes are set up to give you an unlimited number of attempts, with the highest grade recorded for the assignment. If you do not score 100%, review the assignment's requirement, and resubmit the quiz.

While there is very little doubt that you will be able to get the 40 percent on the individual assignments, you will have to fully participate on team assignments to get the other 60 percent to do well in this course. Your classmates, through the self-peer and team assessments and evaluations, will help the instructor in determining to what extent you have earned the 60 percent team assignments. For example, if your teammates' evaluations of your contribution to working on any one of the team assignments shows that you have not fully contributed to its completion, you would get less than full grade on that assignment. Not fully participating on team assignments could result in preventing you from passing the course.

During live meetings with the instructor, you will receive immediate feedback on draft assignments being presented. For assignments turned in separately, feedback will be given within 48 hours during business days.

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Graded Assignments	Percentage of Total Grade	Percentage Breakdown (by type of assignment)	
		Individual Assignments	Team Assignments
Pre-test	5	5	
Lecture Quizzes (8)	10	10	
Assignment 1 -Problem Statement	5		5
Assignment 2 - Task Assignment Matrix (TAM)	5		5
Assignment 3 - Project Team Agreements	5	5	
Assignment 5 - Final Work Plan	5		5
Assignment 6 - Self-Peer & Team Assessments (two documents)	5	5	
Assignment 7 - Project Report Outline	5		5
Assignment 9 - Self-Peer, Team & MPA Evaluations (three documents)	10	10	
Assignment 10 -Final Project Report	40		40
Post Test	5	5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>60%</b>

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**Note:**

**Assignments 4 and 8 must be completed and turned in by the due dates but are not graded.**

209 **K. Course Calendar.** All assignments due at 11:59 p.m. Central Time on the due dates.

Week	Activities	Due Date
<b>ONE</b> <b>Jan 14-20</b> <b>2019</b>	<b>Course Orientation on Blackboard Collaborate</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discuss the course process, objectives, and requirements</li> <li>▪ Discuss Lectures &amp; Quizzes 1-8</li> <li>▪ Discuss Teams and Projects</li> <li>▪ Discuss the client's expectations</li> </ul> <p><b>Students complete pre-test by Jan 16<sup>th</sup> 11:59 pm</b></p>	<b>Mon, Jan 14; 7:00 pm Central Time</b>  <b>Jan 16</b>
<b>TWO</b> <b>Jan 21-27</b>	<b>Read Phase 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students read Lectures 1-4 and take the related Quizzes 1-4</li> <li>▪ Instructor will notify teams of their team assignment and project through a Course Announcement</li> </ul>	  <b>Jan 27</b>
<b>THREE</b> <b>Jan 28-Feb 3</b>	<b>Continue to read Phase 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students read Lectures 5-8 and take the related Quizzes 5-8</li> <li>▪ Teams create and submit Assignment 1 – Problem Statement for their assigned project (See Lecture 3 in Phase 1)</li> </ul>	  <b>Feb 3</b>
<b>FOUR</b> <b>Feb 4-10</b>	<b>Read Phases 2 and 3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teams create and submit Assignment 2 – Task Assignment Matrix (TAM) (See Lecture 5, Phase 1)</li> <li>▪ Each student submits their Assignment 3 – Project Team Agreement (See Lecture 5, Phase 1)</li> </ul>	  <b>Feb 10</b>
<b>FIVE</b> <b>Feb 11-17</b>	<p>Teams conduct research via their project organization's websites, any other material provided, other organization's websites, etc. Team members perform their agreed-upon tasks per the TAM. This is also a good time to review Samples on Blackboard.</p> <p>Each team develops and submits Assignment 4 – Draft Work Plan for their project (See Lecture 6, Phase 1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>All 8 quizzes should be completed by Feb 17; 11:59 pm</b></li> </ul>	     <b>Feb 17</b>
<b>SIX</b> <b>Feb 18-24</b>	<p>Team research continues.</p> <p>Teams submit Assignment 5 – Final Work Plan (See Lecture 7, Phase 1)</p>	  <b>Feb 24</b>
<b>SEVEN</b> <b>Feb 25-March 3</b>	<p>Team research continues.</p> <p>Each student submits Assignment 6 – Self-Peer and Team Assessment (two separate documents via email to Dr. Godbey) (See Lecture 7, Phase 1)</p> <p>Teams submit Assignment 7 – Project Report Outline (annotated) (See Lecture 8, Phase 1)</p>	  <b>Feb 25</b>  <b>March 3</b>



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<b>EIGHT March 4-10</b>	Team research continues.	<b>March 10</b>
<b>NINE March 11-17</b>	Teams work independently following their work plan and TAM Teams meet with instructor as needed	<b>March 17</b>
<b>TEN March 18-24</b>	Teams continue to work independently and meet with Instructor as needed	<b>March 24</b>
<b>ELEVEN March 25-31</b>	Teams continue to work independently and meet with Instructor as needed	<b>March 31</b>
<b>TWELVE April 1-7</b>	Teams submit Assignment 8 - Draft Project Report (See Phase 2)	<b>April 7</b>
<b>THIRTEEN April 8-14</b>	Teams make amendments to draft project report per feedback from Dr. Godbey	<b>April 14</b>
<b>FOURTEEN April 15-21</b>	<b>Final Evaluations Week</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students take their Student Feedback Survey (See Phase 3)</li> <li></li> <li>Teams submit Assignment 10 – Final Project Report (See Phase 3)</li> </ul>	<b>April 21</b>
<b>FIFTEEN April 22-28</b>	<b>Final Project Report</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teams defend final project report before faculty, client, and class – via Blackboard Collaborate</li> <li>Each student submits their Self- Peer, Team, and MPA program evaluations (three separate documents via email to Dr. Godbey) (See Phase 3)</li> <li>Take the post-test – open April 22; Due April 28; 11:59pm</li> </ul>	<b>Monday April 22 7:00 p.m.</b>  <b>April 23</b>  <b>April 28</b>
<b>SIXTEEN April 29 – May 3</b>	Students and Teams wrap up any remaining course items  Last day of semester – Friday – May 3, 2019	<b>May 3</b>

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### **UTA Diversity, Inclusiveness, and Climate Statement**

Public administration at its core requires diversity of thought and perspectives towards effective and representative government. To quote our mission:

*The mission of the Master of Public Administration program is to strengthen public decision making and the delivery of public services in a globalized and diverse society by educating students to lead and manage organizations at all levels of government and nonprofit institutions ethically, democratically, and effectively.*

The MPA program embraces diversity among its students, staff, faculty, and administration. Diversity is essential in the achievement of our academic mission. Diversity means sustaining an intellectual, ethical, cultural and sociological environment that embraces and fosters academic freedom without prejudice, intimidation, intolerance, or discrimination. We promote an environment that accepts and appreciates every individual's uniqueness and characteristics regardless of race, gender, gender identity, language, age, ethnicity, physical abilities, sexual orientation, spirituality, socioeconomic status, or national origin.

Students are encouraged to review our principles of community and diversity plan at [mpa.uta.edu/diversity.php](http://mpa.uta.edu/diversity.php). We welcome feedback and suggestions.

### **UT Arlington Policies and Student Resources**

#### **Drop Policy**

Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

## Attendance

At the University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required but attendance is a critical indicator in student success. Each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. However, while UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients "begin attendance in a course." UT Arlington instructors will report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a grade of F to a student, faculty report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Blackboard. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

## Disability Accommodations

UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, *The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA)*, and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate based on disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a **letter certified** by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:

**The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD)** [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability).

**Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS)** [www.uta.edu/caps/](http://www.uta.edu/caps/) or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems, and make positive changes in their lives.

## Non-Discrimination Policy

*The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit [uta.edu/eos](http://uta.edu/eos).*

## **Title IX Policy**

The University of Texas at Arlington (“University”) is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. *For information regarding Title IX, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX) or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or [jmhood@uta.edu](mailto:jmhood@uta.edu).*

## **Academic Integrity**

Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the

### **UT Arlington Honor Code**

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence. I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code in their courses by having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents’ Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University. Additional information is available at <https://www.uta.edu/conduct/>.

## **Electronic Communication**

UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

### **Campus Carry**

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>

### **Student Feedback Survey**

At the end of each term, students enrolled in face-to-face and online classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” are directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback via the SFS database is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. Students’ anonymity will be protected to the extent that the law allows. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law and aggregate results are posted online. Data from SFS is also used for faculty and program evaluations. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

### **Final Review Week**

For semester-long courses, a period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located to the left as you leave the classroom. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

### **Student Support Services**

UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include [tutoring](#), [major-based learning centers](#), developmental education, [advising and mentoring](#), personal counseling, and [federally funded programs](#). For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-610, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>.

Emergency Phone Numbers: In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at 817-272-3003 (non-campus phone), 2-3003 (campus phone). You may also dial 911. Non-emergency number 817-272-3381.

~~~ **End of Syllabus** ~~~