

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

## PAPP 5399—Public Administration Capstone

FALL 2016

Online

**Instructor:** Dr. Alejandro Rodriguez

**Faculty Profile:** <https://www.uta.edu/profiles/alejandro-rodriguez>

---

**Phone:** (817) 272-3357

**Fax:** (817) 272-5008

**Office:** 318 Architecture Hall

**Email:** aro@uta.edu

**Office Hours:** Tue and Thu 3:30 to 4:30 pm and by appointment

---

For general class inquiries, I will respond within 24 hours during business days.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

*"I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; I do and I understand."*

Chinese proverb

The Public Administration Capstone is the last course students take before graduating with the 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; and 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 particular 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.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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 making a decision;
- 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;

# College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs (CAPPA)

## University of Texas at Arlington

- 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.

### 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.

### REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER COURSE MATERIALS

There is no need to purchase any required textbooks or other course materials. All you will need for this section is posted to the course Blackboard shell.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### 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.

#### Attendance Policy

This is an online course. I strongly recommend in person meetings whenever possible, but it is NOT a requirement. 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. Thus, I would reduce grades by 5% for each class or work meeting absence beginning with the third absence.

## 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 through Blackboard Collaborate (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 interim self-peer and team assessments (don't confuse with evaluations)
11. Teams submit an 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 eighth online lecture and after the submission of the project report outline. Teams will meet via Collaborate independently of faculty and as many times as needed to complete project tasks. In addition, faculty may hold weekly Collaborate meetings to

# College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs (CAPPA)

## University of Texas at Arlington

ensure each team project is on track. 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 conducted via Collaborate Sessions, but in-person meetings are encourage whenever possible
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
- Students complete the post-test

### Late Assignment Policy

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates listed 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.

### Grading Criteria

This is pass/repeat course. To pass this course you need to accumulate the full 40 percent of the individual assignments are worth plus accumulate 40 of the 60 percent the team assignments are worth, for a total of 80 percent. See the table below for a list of assignments and their weighted values. Except for the pre-test, which is graded on completion, all individual assignments 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.

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 40 percent needed to pass 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 40 percent needed in the team assignments to pass the course. For example, if your teammates' evaluations of your contribution to working on anyone 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.

Graded Assignments	Percentage of Total Grade	Percentage Breakdown (by type of assignment)	
		Individual Assignments	Team Assignments
Pre-test	5	5	
Peer-Self & Team Assessments	5	5	
Problem Statement	5		5
TAM	5		5
Team Agreement	5	5	
Final Work Plan	5		5
Project Report Outline	5		5
Lecture Quizzes	10	10	
Peer-Self, Team, & MPA Evaluations	10	10	
Post Test	5	5	
Final Project Report	40		40
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>60%</b>

# College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs (CAPPA)

## University of Texas at Arlington

### COURSE CALENDAR

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates listed on this Course Calendar

Week	Definition	Due Date
8/15	<b>Introduction to Project Management I</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss the course process, objectives, and requirements</li> <li>Discuss the client's expectations</li> <li>Discuss the Institutional Research Board (IRB) requirements</li> </ul> <b>Deliverables:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete pre-test</li> <li>Assign students to project teams</li> <li>Quiz</li> </ul>	8/22
8/22	<b>Introduction to Project Management II</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss the problem statement</li> <li>Discuss the task assignment matrix and team agreements</li> </ul> <b>Deliverables:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clients present their project proposals</li> <li>Quiz</li> </ul>	8/29
8/29	<b>Introduction to Project Management III</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss the completion phase of project management</li> </ul> <b>Deliverables:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teams submit a problem statement</li> <li>Quiz</li> </ul>	9/5
9/5	<b>Teamwork</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain what are the key benefits of teamwork.</li> <li>Identify key characteristics of effective teams.</li> </ul> <b>Deliverable:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quiz</li> </ul>	9/12
9/12	<b>Task Assignment Matrix, Project Team Norms, and Team Agreements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify key components of the Task Assignment Matrix.</li> <li>Recall the relationship between tasks, objectives, and project milestones.</li> </ul> <b>Deliverables:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teams submit a task assignment matrix</li> <li>Students submit team agreement form</li> <li>Quiz</li> </ul>	9/19
9/19	<b>Work Plans</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define work plan</li> <li>Differentiate among goals and measurable objectives</li> </ul> <b>Deliverables:</b>	9/26

Week	Definition	Due Date
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teams develop and defend a draft work plan</li> <li>Teams submit IRB forms (if needed).</li> </ul>	
<b>9/26</b>	<b>Assessments and Evaluations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recall differences between assessments and evaluations.</li> <li>Recognize dimensions of the evaluation and assessment criteria.</li> </ul> <b>Deliverables:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teams submit final work plan</li> <li>Students submit interim self-peer and team assessments</li> <li>Quiz</li> </ul>	<b>10/3</b>
<b>10/3</b>	<b>Writing the Project Report</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify components of effective project reports.</li> <li>List the sections of a properly organized project report.</li> </ul> <b>Deliverables:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teams submit outline of project report</li> <li>Quiz</li> </ul>	<b>10/10</b>
<b>10/10</b>	<b>Project Execution 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teams work independently following their work plan and TAM</li> <li>Teams meet with instructor as needed (use Blackboard Collaborate)</li> </ul>	
<b>10/17</b>	<b>Project Execution 2</b>	
<b>10/24</b>	<b>Project Execution 3</b>	
<b>10/31</b>	<b>Project Execution 4</b>	
<b>11/7</b>	<b>Project Execution 5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teams submit draft project report</li> </ul>	<b>11/7</b>
<b>11/14</b>	<b>Defense of Draft Project Report</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teams present draft project report to class and faculty</li> </ul>	<b>11/14</b>
<b>11/28</b>	<b>Final Evaluations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students submit self- peer, team, and MPA program evaluations</li> <li>Students submit Student Feedback Survey</li> <li>Teams continue editing final project report based on feedback</li> </ul>	<b>11/28</b>
<b>12/5</b>	<b>Final Project Report</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teams defend final project report before faculty, client, and class</li> <li>Students complete the post-test</li> </ul>	<b>12/5</b>

## 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



# College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs (CAPPA)

## University of Texas at Arlington

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 (**refer to page 3 for specifics on the attendance policy for this course**). 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 student a grade of F, 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 on the basis of 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

# **College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs (CAPPA)**

## **University of Texas at Arlington**

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.

### **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 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>.