CAPSTONE!
Spring, 2021

Online: Canvas and Zoom
See Canvas for up-to-date schedule and assignment information
This syllabus is subject to revision as necessary.

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<th>Faculty</th>
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TESC MPA MISSION STATEMENT

“Be the Change”

Our students, faculty and staff create learning communities to explore and implement socially just, democratic public service. We think critically and creatively; communicate effectively; work collaboratively; embrace diversity; we value fairness and equity; advocate powerfully on behalf of the public; and imagine new possibilities to accomplish positive change in our workplaces and in our communities.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Capstone is the opportunity to reflect upon, and integrate, the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) you’ve acquired throughout your MPA program. 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. Students “cap off” their MPA program 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.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- **Demonstrate MPA KSAs (knowledge, skills, and abilities)** as competent transformational managers, leaders, and analysts of data, information, and decision making.
- **Integrate the 7 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, practitioner tools, and personal wisdom.
- **Utilize exemplary presentation skills** to explain individual learning reflection and how this is integrated and demonstrated throughout Capstone projects.
EXPECTATIONS

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 creative responses. Clear understanding of your goals is important to avoiding frustration – yours and the faculty’s.

Format of Assignment Submissions: Unless otherwise stated, all papers should be typed, double spaced, 12 point font, and follow APA format and citation style. All written work will be of high quality, grammatically correct, clear and without spelling errors. Follow the Federal Plain Language Guidelines for writing that is clear, concise, and accessible. 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, case-by-case. Make-up work must be completed by the end of the quarter for course credit. Multiple absences put you at risk for no credit.

Holidays for Reasons of Faith or Conscience: Please inform us in writing within the first two weeks of class if you will miss specific class sessions because of holidays of faith or conscience, or for an organized activity conducted as part of a religious denomination, church, or organization. If you let us know within that time frame, we will offer you reasonable accommodations, and the absence(s) will be excused. For more information, please refer to the Evergreen policy at: https://www.evergreen.edu/policy/religious-observance.

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

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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.

**Accommodations:** are provided for any student who desires them through Access Services, the Graduate Writing Assistant, and the QuaSR 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](#).

**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. We also abide by our Community Agreement(s), designed and agreed to at the beginning of the Fall 2018 quarter.

**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. All guests must abide by all social contract, conduct code, and nondiscrimination policy guidelines as aforementioned in this handbook. 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. Guests are invited to Capstone demonstration projects presentation; no prior approval is needed.

**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

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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.
READINGS


- **BYOB: Bring Your Own Book** - here’s your chance to read a book about administration or policy that you’ve been wanting to read throughout your MPA, but haven’t had time nor have your instructors assigned it. Three “rules:”
  - must be about administration/policy
  - cannot have been assigned in a class you’ve enrolled in (Core or Elective)
  - must be approved by your seminar faculty member (run it by us via email)
ASSIGNMENTS

Learning Inventory (Week 1, April 1)

Create a document (table, grid, outline, chart, power point, beautiful visualization, or essay) that contains an inventory of your learning in the MPA program. How you present the information is up to you. Prepare to share your learning inventory online in class; you will use it in a workshop activity. The only requirements are:

- include the book titles, quarter, and a brief description of the classes, contracts, or internships that were most valuable to you in the MPA program, and why; and,
- include the most important knowledge, skills, and/or abilities (KSAs) you learned from each class, contract, or internship you identify. What are you taking away from each experience? What are your aggregate take-aways?

BYOB Book Talk (Week 3, April 15)

Here’s your chance to read a book about administration or policy that you’ve been wanting to read throughout your MPA, but haven’t had time nor have your instructors assigned it. Three “rules:"

- must be about administration/policy
- cannot have been assigned in a class you’ve enrolled in (Core or Elective)
- must be approved by your seminar faculty member (run it by us via email)

Write a book review, targeting a particular journal (tell us what journal you picked and why). Book reviews tend to be about 1500 words, but check your journal. Follow the journal’s guidelines for book reviews. Maybe read a few and see what they are like.

Cull from your book review a 5 minute (maximum) book talk to present in seminar. These talks will be recorded and the recording of your talk will be shared with you individually. See the short reflection paper due Week 6.
Administrators of the Future (Week 5, April 29)

Given the readings for this week, identify a public administrator you believe administers in a way that reflects the future of public/nonprofit administration and/or public policy, as you see it. Interview this person (you decide on questions and structure) and write an essay around the interview that speaks to the interview as well as your future as an administrator/public servant/active citizen. Incorporate the readings in your essay. 3-5 double-spaced pages.

BYOB Talk Short Reflection Paper (Week 6, May 6)

Watch your BYOB talk video. Think about your presentation style. What went well? What would you like to change? What lessons/takeaways will you carry with you into other presentations? No more than 2 double-spaced pages.

Racial Equity Impact Assessment and Stakeholder Analysis (Week 8, May 20)

Racial Equity Impact Assessments (REIA) allow for a systematic way to assess and prevent potential disparities from arising as it pertains to the impact of policies, practices, programs, plans and budgetary decisions. By addressing these important questions, you can better understand where racial disparities may appear, why they are occurring and determine how best to proceed.

For the purposes of this assignment, please choose a real decision or action currently being considered or recently made by a government agency of your choice that impacts public service delivery (e.g., decision to close a low performing school, decision to reallocate funding from police to mental health professionals, etc.). Once you have chosen a concrete decision or action consider the questions in the detailed assignment in Canvas (some questions may be more or less applicable given your context) and submit a written summary of no more than 3 pages, single spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins. References should be included and this will not count toward your page limit.

Demonstration Project

The purpose of this project is to demonstrate to the program and the community what you’ve learned in the MPA program.
This project can take any form you wish, as long as it demonstrates the knowledge, skills and abilities you’ve 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, a policy analysis, 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 but we strongly encourage teams.

Projects must:

1) Produce an output of some kind (something tangible) as well as a written report/presentation on the process/production of the output;
2) Be outcome oriented – focus on making change or having an effect in some way;
3) Be MPA mission-centric (mission reprinted above) – e.g., 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 a traditional research paper, for example), etc.

Capstone Project Presentations (Week 10, June 3 and 5)

All Capstone deliverables must be submitted on Thursday. Presentations will take place on both Thursday and Saturday.

Presentations are limited to 10 minutes plus 5 minutes for Q & A = 15 minutes total. As part of your presentation, be sure to state the following about your project:

- How does your project demonstrate your KSAs?
- How does your project integrate the MPA Mission?
- Choose your audience: let the learning community know if you are presenting to a particular type of stakeholder group so that we can put on those “hats”

Students will present their final Capstone projects publicly. Presentations can take myriad forms, but must include a visual aid. You are encouraged to invite family, friends, colleagues, and project stakeholders to your presentation.

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