



Master of Public Administration Program

MPA Tacoma Capstone  
 Spring 2021  
 Most Wednesdays, 6:30-8:30pm  
 Saturday June 5, 9a-5p

Location: Online meeting room, Canvas site

Faculty Team	Email	Office Hours
Tyrus Smith	<a href="mailto:smitht@evergreen.edu">smitht@evergreen.edu</a>	By appointment
Doreen Swetkis	<a href="mailto:swetkisd@evergreen.edu">swetkisd@evergreen.edu</a>	By appointment

**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**

Students “cap off” their studies in the MPA program by completing a Capstone project. 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; i.e., how you are demonstrating your ability to think critically and creatively; communicate effectively; work collaboratively; embrace diversity; value fairness and equity; advocate powerfully on behalf of the public; and imagine new possibilities in order to accomplish positive change in our workplace and in our communities.

**Learning Objectives**

- Demonstrate KSAs (knowledge, skills, and abilities) as competent transformational analysts of data, information, and decision making.
- Exhibit an understanding of the practical applications of analytical techniques in public and nonprofit administration.
- Integrate the concepts of social science, public service, governing, and leadership into course discussions, writings, and Capstone projects focused on practical issues in public and nonprofit administration.
- Utilize exemplary presentation skills to explain individual learning reflection and how this is integrated and demonstrated throughout Capstone projects.

### 2020-2021 Year-Long Curriculum:

Quarter	Knowledge Content Areas	Skill & Ability Development
<b>Fall ATPS I</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research Theory</li><li>• Research Ethics</li><li>• Service Learning</li><li>• Research Design</li><li>• Research Methodologies</li><li>• Open Data</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Applied research design</li><li>• Consequences of Design</li><li>• Primary &amp; Secondary Research</li><li>• Instruments for Data Collection</li><li>• Human Subjects Review</li><li>• Research Proposal Writing</li><li>• Research Limitations</li></ul>
<b>Winter ATPS II</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Data Collection</li><li>• Data Analysis &amp; Interpretation</li><li>• Prediction &amp; Forecasting</li><li>• Transforming Data to Information</li><li>• Data Visualization</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analyzing Government &amp; Non-profit Reports</li><li>• Research Report Writing</li><li>• Data Collection &amp; Analysis</li><li>• Data Presentation</li><li>• Communicating the Research Story</li></ul>
<b>Spring Capstone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MPA Reflection, Integration, &amp; Demonstration</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Applied learning</li><li>• MPA mission driven outcomes &amp; KSA demonstration outputs</li></ul>

### REQUIRED BOOKS:

Cedric L. Alexander, 2020: *In Defense of Public Service: How 22 Million Government Workers Will Save Our Republic*. Paperback ISBN: 978-1523085071

Linda A. Hill. 2017. *HBR's 10 Must Reads for New Managers* (with bonus article "How Managers Become Leaders" by Michael D. Watkins). Paperback ISBN: 978-1633693029

Sonia Sotomayor, 2013. *My Beloved World*. Paperback ISBN: 978-0345804839

### ASSIGNMENTS

#### **Assignment #1 Capstone Items Submitted Winter Quarter** (Team or Individual Assignments)

Complete the one-page proposal form on Canvas. Post on canvas by the dates below:

February 10: Draft proposal

February 24: HSR Proposal (if needed)

March 10: Signed Capstone Project Contract with attachments

#### **Assignment #2: Learning Inventory & Resource List** (Individual Assignment)

Purpose: Professional reflective writing is a standard practice that can help the practitioner uncover patterns, unpack experiences, and link theory to practice. In addition, this assignment

helps students to organize and synthesize data points indicating their academic journey and development of their knowledge, skills, and abilities in the field of public administration.

Instructions: **Post to Canvas by start of class to be reviewed by peers in seminar.** 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 public and/or nonprofit administration. The resources may be books, articles, tools, databases, websites, blogs, journals, magazines, professional associations, or fellow students/leaders you met during the program.

Key Skills: reflective practice, creative writing and presentation, synthesis, self-analysis and understanding

### **Assignment #3: Bring Your Own Book** (Individual Assignment)

Purpose: Public and nonprofit administration is a dynamic field with so many areas of interest for students. This assignment allows a student to read and present on a topic in the field that speaks to that student’s passion and interest.

Instructions: Choose your own book that brings you full circle from Year 1 through Year 2. Must be policy/administration related and your choice must be approved by your Capstone project faculty sponsor. You will prepare a short talk (5-7 minutes) on your BYOB. You will give this talk to your seminar colleagues and submit 1-page of talking points in Canvas.

Key Skills: learn beyond prescribed instruction, concisely communicate findings, small group presentation skills in a remote setting

### **Assignment #4: DEI Statement** (Individual Assignment)

Purpose: Practitioners in a wide variety of 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 and nonprofit 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 APA formatting. Please limit responses to 500 words per prompt.

- a. Describe your previous experience working and collaborating in diverse, multicultural and inclusive settings.
- b. Please describe how you would contribute to a division committed to identifying and implementing equitable and inclusive practices.
- c. 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.

#### **Assignment #5: Research Report/Product Draft + Draft Visual Aid.** (Team or Individual Assignment)

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to demonstrate to the program and the larger community what you have learned in your 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 and is a project about public service. It may be a research study, organizing a neighborhood, facilitation of a public meeting or strategic plan, a case study, an organizational assessment or intervention, a policy analysis, a film, podcast, etc.

Instructions: Capstone projects must:

- 1) Be approved by faculty in Winter Quarter.
- 2) Produce an **output** of some kind (something tangible) as well as a written report/presentation on the process/production of the output;
- 3) Be **outcome oriented** – focus on making change or having an effect in some way;
- 4) Be **MPA mission-centric** (mission reprinted above) – e.g., represent KSAs learned/gained as they relate to all or part of the mission; and
- 5) Be **applied** – potential outcome in application in an agency, community, organization, discipline (for a traditional research paper, for example), etc.
- 6) Meet with the sponsoring faculty member a minimum of four (4) times.

**Key Skills:** synthesis of years of learning, professional public demonstration of knowledge, skills and abilities learned

**Assignment #6: Final Research Report/Product, Visual Aid, and Presentation.** (Team or Individual Assignment)

See assignment requirements for #5. Invite research study participants, supporting organizations to final presentations if appropriate.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

**Human Subjects Review:** is included in assignments for the fall. Data collection activities are dependent upon the Human Subjects Review application (aka IRB application) being reviewed and approved by the College. Any major changes to your research questions, data collection instruments, sampling, or respondents must also be cleared by faculty and possibly the College. <http://www.evergreen.edu/humansubjectsreview/application>

**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 [Office of the Governor's Guidelines](#) for writing that is clear, concise, and accessible.

**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 in its entirety. 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 interacting with 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.* 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/holidays-reasons-faith-and-conscience-students>

**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 Evergreen's Students With Disabilities Policy [here](#).

**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.

**Evaluation:** A written self-evaluation and seminar faculty evaluation are required for credit. All final evaluations are to be submitted via our online evaluation system no later than one week after the last class. Evaluation conferences may occur in person or over the phone and should be scheduled with your seminar faculty. Evaluations are considered "submitted" only when posted through the College portal.

**Credit:** Students will receive 6 graduate credits at the end of spring quarter 2021 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.

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.

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

We abide by the [social contract](#), the [student rights & responsibilities](#) 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. 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:** This is not an issue since the entire course will be taught remotely.

**Communicating with Each Other:** Evergreen email and Canvas are our primary means of communication. You are responsible for checking Evergreen email and our course Canvas site regularly. In case of loss of power, inform your group members and your faculty via text.

**Use of Student Work Posted to Canvas:** Students post their work to an online learning platform known as “Canvas”. Our class canvas site is accessible to faculty and students registered for this course only. The work students post on Canvas is their private intellectual property and may not be used or distributed without their expressed consent. Some work may also be owned by governments, organizations, or communities. Their informed and voluntary consent would also need to be obtained for use and appropriate cultural protocols would also need to be followed.

**Audio or Video Recording:** No audio or video recording may occur during class without the informed and voluntary consent of the students and faculty involved.

***Course Schedule Posted to Canvas***