PAD 692 - CAPSTONE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Associate Professor & MPA Director  Wednesday, 6:00-9:50 p.m.
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Course Description

PAD 692, Public Administration Capstone, is a generalist course that provides a final common experience for MPA students. I have designed it as a graduate seminar. In this course, students will integrate learning from the core MPA curriculum with professional practices encountered in public and nonprofit organizations. Specifically, I have organized this capstone seminar around the MPA Program mission.

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) Program’s mission is to advance intellectual and administrative leadership in public administration by preparing a diverse student body to assume the challenges of a diverse public service. Course work gives students a foundation in general public administration and specialized skills grounded in one of the program’s areas of expertise. It also helps students to discover, construct, interpret, and disseminate knowledge and understanding about the practice of public affairs. The MPA Program also serves the Northeast Ohio region, including the professional community, by extending intellectual resources and applying knowledge.

The MPA Program has built this mission on a commitment to nationally recognized excellence in public administration education and research, to the development of leadership in government, to public service for solutions to urban problems, and to an enhanced understanding of public policy and management in a global society. Through its activities, the Master of Public Administration Program supports the educational, research and public service missions of the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs and Cleveland State University.

Course Components

One major component of this course is the seminar discussions, both online and in face-to-face sessions. The course content uses reviews of contemporary issues, case analyses, problem-solving techniques, and faculty-practitioner panels to help students analyze public administration, public policy, and democratic governance. The seminar readings relate directly to the MPA Program’s mission and educational goals. While the assigned readings provide a structure to the seminar discussions, students will draw on the range of cognitive knowledge and analytical skills that they have acquired in the MPA Program. In discussing the readings, students will apply the critical thinking framework of Browne and Keeley.
The second major component is the integration of online learning technology into the seminar, using the University’s WEB-CT platform. One advantage of online discussion formats is that students have an opportunity to reflect and organize their thoughts before posting their contributions.

Effective class participation requires students to become familiar with WebCT so that they can participate in online discussion groups. Also, I will post important announcements on the seminar’s homepage. Students must check there for the latest bulletins.

Students will participate in small online groups, and each group will select an online name. Each group will discuss the seminar readings online, using the Browne & Keeley critical thinking framework. Most of the assigned readings will have a facilitator drawn from the group. Each facilitator(s) must post the group’s summary online on the discussion board by 11:59 p.m. of the scheduled class session. A special section of the discussion board will be reserved for each group’s summaries. Past students have reported that what they learned from the online group process was greater than what they contributed as individuals.

The online discussion groups require team work and the application of project management skills (see handout on WebCT). Group members must offer substantive postings to help the facilitator develop the reading summary. These postings must include the member’s initials or distinctive characteristic. Online facilitators are responsible for synthesizing the individual comments and producing a summary report of the reading, including the main argument (not in bullet form).

On occasion, I will post additional questions on the discussion board to which group members must respond intelligently. Face-to-face class discussions will not repeat the online discussions but will apply or augment the readings.

WebCT provides four tools to facilitate the group work. The first tool is the discussion board, which allows for asynchronous exchanges. The second tool is a private space assigned to each group so that members can share files. The third tool is the chat room, where each group may conduct synchronous discussions. The fourth tool is email. Students can forward their WebCT email to their preferred email address. These tools allow students to learn from each other. While WebCT makes it easy for students to collaborate, the online learning environment is deadline intensive. Checking WebCT every day is imperative in this seminar.

By the second week of the seminar, each group should have a unique name, and members must have assigned readings. The group will submit a grid showing the assigned facilitators to the instructor by January 24, 2007.

The third major component of this course is the preparation and defense of the capstone paper. Students will analyze and apply concepts drawn from the MPA curriculum and “smart practices” encountered in the workplace. Students are encouraged to consult MPA faculty
members and appropriate administrators or internship supervisors as they develop their papers. This capstone paper must be original work and not one submitted for another class. However, the capstone paper can build on the prior work that students have done in other MPA courses. Students who have successfully completed this course have found it useful to work on the capstone project throughout the seminar.

Students will present (and defend) a summary of their capstone paper at a Public Administration Forum. The plan is for each student to make a fifteen minute presentation and then to allow the panel to ask questions for five minutes. Given the large size of the class, I have scheduled three dates for this forum – **Wednesday, April 18th**, (5-10 p.m.) in the Dively Auditorium, **April 25th** (5-10 p.m.) in the Dively Auditorium, and **Friday, April 27th** (9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.) in the Bonda Board Room. **Wednesday, May 2nd** (5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.) will be the contingency date, and the Forum will take place in the Dively Auditorium. A random selection process will determine the schedule of the presentations, and attendance at these Forums is mandatory.

Each forum will bring MPA faculty members, alumni, and practitioners together to serve as a review panel for the capstone presentation. The capstone presentations are open to the Levin College community and to the public. Questions from the audience will be encouraged. These forums will function as one part of a comprehensive examination for the seminar and the MPA Program. The other part of the exam is the written capstone paper, and it is due **May 9th** at 6:00 p.m. I reserve the right to refuse to accept papers submitted after this date and time.

In designing your oral presentations, please include your name and a title for your presentation. The presentation should have: (1) a beginning, (2) a middle, and (3) an end. First, share your problem statement (i.e., research question) and show why it is a significant problem in public or nonprofit administration. Students must ground their problem in a specific organizational or institutional context. Second, list and answer the questions that flow from the statement. Students must demonstrate their capacity to apply knowledge gathered through their research and public administration concepts. Inform the audience of some specific (data) findings from the analysis. Charts and graphs are effective visual aids to support the capstone presentations. Third, students must demonstrate their capacity to develop alternative solutions to their problem, evaluate the effectiveness of their solutions, and offer recommendations to decision makers. Fourth, students should conclude with conclusion that informs the audience how the MPA Program helped in the preparation of this capstone project. I have posted the capstone presentation rubric in the “Content Module” of WebCT so that students can see in advance how the panel will assess them. (I have also posted the capstone paper rubric in the Content Module on WebCT.)

In particular, the oral presentation should have no more than six power point slides to support it. Students must submit the power point presentations to the instructor via the WebCT Assignment Function so that they can receive their grades. Nevertheless, students should bring a disk or C.D. with them to the Forum as part of a backup plan.
The fourth major component of the capstone seminar is an assessment of the MPA Program’s educational outcomes. The MPA faculty members engage in an ongoing quality improvement process. Therefore, in the last class session, students will have an opportunity to do a self assessment, and their answers are confidential. The results will help the MPA Program faculty to evaluate the curriculum’s effectiveness and to make content modifications. Students will also have an opportunity to participate in a SWOT analysis of the Program. SWOT is an acronym that stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The data analysis will not identify anyone individually. None of this information will affect a student’s course grade.

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Spring 2007  PAD 692  Capstone Seminar Readings:

REQUIRED BOOKS:


CAPSTONE PAPER RESOURCES (OPTIONAL BOOKS)


REQUIRED ARTICLES (on electronic reserve at the CSU Main Library and accessible through WebCT):


**ETHICS CODES**

American Society for Public Administration, Code of Ethics; download at http://www.aspanet.org/scriptcontent/index_codeofethics.cfm

International City/County Management Association, Code of Ethics: download at www.icma.org


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Seminar Assignments

I have listed your assignments below. Your final grade is based on the following combination:

1. Face-to face class attendance - 5%
2. Active online participation & group collaboration - 10%

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3. Written exercise on leadership/globalization (February 21st) - 20%
4. Capstone problem statement, outline (subproblems), etc. (February 28th) - 5%
6. Oral presentation and defense of a capstone paper
   (April 25th or April 27th; May 2nd is the contingency date) - 20%
7. Completed capstone paper - 6 p.m. - May 9th - 40%

Group assignments are due on the discussion board of WebCT by 11:59 p.m. of the scheduled seminar date. Individual assignments are due as specified in the assignment feature of WebCT. Please note that grades will be lowered for assignments turned in late. Remember to put your name on all written assignments and on every WebCT file name.

Class participation standards include the following criteria:

- Arriving promptly at face-to-face sessions and participating with your cell phone turned off
- Using laptops for PAD 692 related note-taking only (playing computer games during face-to-face class sessions is not permitted)
- Participating constructively, actively, and with collegiality in online groups
- Avoiding the use of improper language and showing courtesy to others
- Producing work that is at the graduate level
- Attending the Public Administration Forums (capstone presentations)
- Showing familiarity with all assigned readings
- Showing improvement in skills performance
- Initiating and responding to questions – from the instructor and co-learners in the class
- Sharing relevant perceptions, experiences, and approaches in a professional way
- Preparing fully and presenting effectively assigned reading and a group’s summary
- Actively supporting classmates in the group work

Students will receive an individual grade for their face-to-face participation and a group grade for their online contributions. Everyone in the group will receive the same group participation grade. Nevertheless, I will track the contributions of each individual to the development of the group summaries. There is no exception to this. If one person does not do any work or close to no work, then that student will get a “0” and the rest of the group will be graded for their collective contribution. You are not to do the work of others, but must take responsibility for creating a collaborative online environment.

Students who require reasonable accommodation due to a disability must notify the instructor as soon as possible.

Grading Policy

During the semester, I will use CSU’s 4.0 grading system. Therefore, an A grade = 4.0, a B grade = 3.0, etc. As an additional tool, I will use letter grades with “+” or “-” and combined
grades, such as A-/B+ (that equals 3.5). I permit students to resubmit their papers as part of my continuous learning philosophy. Be sure to submit both versions of the paper when requesting regrading. The latest date for resubmitting the leadership & globalization paper is **April 13th**.

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

A = 95-100%  A- = 90-94%  B+ = 85-89%
B = 80-84%  B- = 75-79% (below graduate standards)
C = 70-74%  (below graduate standards)
D = 60-69%  (below graduate standards)
F = Below 60%  (failure)

A student must remove a grade of “I” within a maximum of one semester (i.e., by the last day of instruction of the second semester) of the term received or it converts to a grade of F.

**Academic Responsibility**

Students are personally responsible for completing all program requirements on time, given that this is the last course in the MPA Program. Please note the University’s requirement for graduation. According to the University’s graduation requirements, students must register for at least one graduate credit during the semester in which they will graduate. Also, if a student does not finish the MPA course work this semester, then he or she must enroll in another one-credit hour class to meet the University’s graduation requirements (see the Graduate Catalogue).

Finally, the MPA Program expects students to follow the highest standards of academic and professional honesty. Plagiarism will result in an automatic grade of F. Please consult the CSU Policy on Academic Misconduct that appears in the Student Handbook. This handbook is available through the University’s website www.csuohio.edu.

### Spring 2007  MPA CAPSTONE SEMINAR SCHEDULE AND OUTLINE

**January 17th**  **Face-to-Face Session: Introduction**

**Capstone Overview and Expectations**

- Discuss the seminar purpose and schedule
- Review the syllabus, MPA program mission, & education goals
- Assign teams/individuals to present class readings
- Discuss the capstone project and rubric for evaluation
- Review APA Style Guidelines
- Review reading assignment grid
- Describe your professional experience or internships

**Navigating the WebCT Platform via Computers on Wheels (COW)**
• Discuss how to create your WebCT Account
• Locate seminar materials on WebCT site
• Review WebCT Participation Guidelines
• Become familiar with navigating on WebCT (homework)
• Get tips from capstone alumni (Rob Ziol, T.J. Scholemer - invited)

Applying Critical Thinking
• Discuss areas of interest that might be appropriate for the capstone paper
• Discuss the Browne & Keeley critical thinking framework
• Identify common fallacies
• Discuss how to write a problem statement
• Learn how to recognize the strengths & weaknesses of your own analyses

Between sessions work:
1. Post a message on the discussion board under “First Try”
2. Add some content to the personal Student Homepage option so that your class mates can get to know you while learning to navigate WebCT

January 24th  Face-to-face Session: Managing & Leading Transitions
(Read the Bridges article)
• Analyze the Bridges article by applying the critical thinking framework; post the group summary online
• Recognize barriers to change & teamwork
• Learn to lead personal transitions
• Develop a transition management plan as a complement to a change management plan

What is your passion?
• Practice writing problem statements
• Give feedback to peers

• Submit group’s “name” & reading facilitator assignments

January 31st  Face-to-Face Session: Conceptualizing a Capstone Paper
(Read the Pfeffer & Sutton article; facilitated reading)
(Read the Bardach book as cited below)

Guest Lecturer, Dr. Larry Keller (confirmed)
• Analyze the Pfeffer & Sutton article by applying the critical thinking framework; post the group summary (facilitated reading)
• Review Guest Video Lecturer, Dr. Larry Keller
• Read Dr. Keller’s handouts posted in the Content Module
• Read Bardach, Introduction & Part I, Appendices A, B, C (no facilitator)

Capstone Development Time: What is Your Problem?
Face to Face or Online Synchronous Chat - Student’s Choice
• Each student presents a draft problem statement online to their small group for input
• Suggestion: Use synchronous chat room and assign time for each member of the group to present; chat room activities are recorded
• Group members must react and offer online suggestions for improvement, based on Bardach reading

February 7th  
Face-to-Face Session  
Leadership of Public & Nonprofit Organizations (Read the Kotter, Porter, & Frederickson local leadership articles)  
• Analyze the Kotter article by applying the critical thinking framework; post the group summary  
• Analyze the Porter article by applying the critical thinking framework; post the group summary  
• Analyze the Frederickson local leadership article by applying the critical thinking framework; post the group summary  
• Post & discuss the individual findings & group synthesis  
• Apply Kotter’s framework to an analysis of organizations

February 14th  
Online discussion - Change and Globalization  
(Read the Friedman book)  
• Summarize the book and apply the critical thinking framework online  
• Post individual findings online in the designated group section  
• Facilitator(s) posts the group’s summary on the discussion board  
• Participate in an asynchronous discussion online

February 21st  
Face-to-Face Session  
Performance Measurement Methodology  
(Read the ASPA book, Performance Measurement, Concepts & Techniques - no student facilitator; read Kaplan & Norton, “The Balanced Score Card”)
• Post individual and group analysis about the balanced score card article  
• Discuss the importance of performance measurement  
• Identify different categories of performance measures
• Apply the Balanced Scorecard to an organization
• Identify the implications for public administration practice

Submit via WebCT an 8-page essay that uses the APA style & contains a bibliography/citations. Please answer the following questions relating to the Friedman, Kotter, Porter, & Frederickson articles. What do leaders really do? How is public leadership different from public management overall? What does Friedman mean when he says that the world has been flattened, and how did it happen? How flat is your organization, and how has the flat world affected your work as a public or nonprofit administrator? If you are not working, please analyze how a community group or a school-related organization has been flattened. What is government’s role in a flat world characterized by shared leadership? What are the strengths and weaknesses of Friedman’s argument?

February 28th  Capstone Development: Library Time

Submit via WebCT your written problem statement and outline (subproblems). You must include an initial set of references and advisors for the instructor’s approval. The instructor reserves the right to reject a topic.

This assignment requires you to specify:

1. Why your issue is significant in public or nonprofit administration.
2. What research framework or concepts will inform your capstone.
3. What are your sources of information and whom you will consult.
4. What methods you will use to analyze this information.

Please note that the preparation of an outline is a middle stage in the capstone paper development process.

March 7th  Face to Face Session: Ethics and Integrity in Public and Nonprofit Service (Read the Bailey article & professionals codes)
• Analyze the Bailey article online using the critical thinking framework; post the group summary online
• Review the ASPA & ICMA codes with a code of your choice & note the similarities and differences among them & to Bailey’s analysis
• Review & apply ethical decision making models

March 14th
Spring Break (no class)

March 21st
Face-to-Face Session & Online Discussion
Embracing Social Equity in Public Administration
(Read the Thomas & Ely, Frederickson & Krumholz articles)
• Guest Speaker, Professor Krumholz
• Professor Krumholz presentation (& online summary)
• Analyze the Frederickson article by applying the critical thinking framework; post the group summary online
• Analyze the Krumholz article by applying the critical thinking framework; post the group summary online
• Analyze the Thomas & Ely article by applying the critical thinking framework; post the group summary online
• Watch the video, Dark Days, by Mark Singer

• Seminar Discussion: Is social equity the latest fad in public administration or a new touchstone for strengthening public administration in a global society? Why or why not? Please support your statements with evidence from the readings.

March 28th
Capstone Development Time (Library Time)
• Read Kraft & Furlong - Chap. 1 (pp. 1-30);
Chap. 4 (pp. 100-124); Chap 6 (pp. 150-177)
• Optional reading to identify your policy preferences (see the Durning & Osuna article)

April 4th
Face-to-Face Capstone Development Session (optional):
Powerpoint Technology Presentation
• Discuss the use of technology to support the capstone presentation
• Learn tips for effective presentations

April 11th
Capstone Development Time (Library Time)
Optional Face-to-Face Session: Oral Presentation and Practice
• Work with your classmates to practice giving your oral presentation
• See how your presentation appears on the large screen
• Provide feedback to your classmates on their capstone presentations
• Receive feedback from your classmates
• Location: Dively Auditorium

April 18th, 25 & 27th

Face-to-Face Public Administration Forum
MPA Capstone Presentations
• Submit powerpoint presentation via WebCT assignment 24 hours before your scheduled time
• Provide an executive summary & handouts of your presentation for panelists
• Deliver a fifteen-minute summary of your capstone paper to a panel of faculty and practitioners, using technology
• Answer questions from the panel and audience for five minutes
• Receive written feedback from the panel and integrate into the final written capstone paper
• Location: April 18 & April 25 — Dively Auditorium (UR 112)
• Location: April 27 — Bonda Board Room (UR 254)

May 2nd

Back-up (Contingency Date) for MPA Capstone Presentations
Dively Auditorium — UR 112

May 9th

Face-to-Face Session: So What? Now What?
• Submit written capstone paper and executive summary via WEB CT assignment function by 6 p.m. (Papers received after may be refused by the instructor.)
• Submit a SWOT Analysis of the MPA Program & PAD 692
• Self-assess your skills and learning from your MPA education
• Participate in the MPA Program Exit Survey
• Other topics: Students’ Choice

Suggestions for the Public Administration Capstone Paper

Each student must prepare a professionally written analysis on a significant public administration topic. This paper should explore a relationship between theory and practice by applying theories and concepts drawn from the MPA curriculum.

The following is a list of selected titles and authors of completed MPA capstone projects.
“Cleveland Hopkins Airport: A Vision for the Future” by Chris Corrigan

“Using Best Public Administration Practices for Promoting EITC” by Marlene Perdan
As shown below, a variety of formats for the capstone paper are possible.

1. **An Agency/Office Profile and Analysis**

Your assignment is to write approximately a 25-30-page double-spaced paper that is a profile and analysis of your agency or office. Your profile should apply the concepts, tools, and theories that you have learned in this and other MPA courses. You should examine your agency’s capacity to change, to plan, and evaluate its activities, and to resolve interpersonal and inter-organizational conflicts. You should look at specific issues of leadership and management within your office and across your agency or across jurisdictions. You may interview agency officials but not human subjects. This paper requires analysis, not advocacy, sensitivity, and honesty. It also requires that you point out your organization’s constitutional or legal form, its mission and enabling legislation or bylaws, its vision and values, along with its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. Overall, examine your agency or office in terms of its advancement of the public administration goals. Specify the MPA theories and concepts that you applied in this analysis, and include your own analysis of the paper’s strengths and
weaknesses.

2. **A Program/Project Evaluation**

This paper provides an analysis and assessment of how well an existing public program or project is working to accomplish its stated goals. This analysis also requires identification of alternative ways the goals could be achieved, based on a literature review. Examining the costs associated with the different alternatives is important. Cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analyses are used frequently in program or project evaluations. What recommendations emerge from this analysis? This paper should be 25-30 double-spaced pages in length. Specify the MPA theories and concepts that you applied in this analysis, and include your own analysis of the paper’s strengths and weaknesses.

3. **Polemic in Defense of Public Administration/Management**

Your polemic should run approximately 25-30 double-spaced pages in length. According to the dictionary, a polemic is “an argument, especially one that is a refutation or an attack upon a specified opinion, doctrine, or the like.” For example, MPA students in Minnesota have written on “The Trial Court System in Minnesota: A Case for Bureaucracy in the Third Branch.” Your polemic should not be a blind defense of bureaucracy out of loyalty to your agency, individuals, or a doctrine. Rather, it requires you to confront the myths and stereotypes surrounding public administration and bureaucracy and to explore the legitimacy of the bureaucracy with evidence and eloquence. Use Charles Goodsell’s book, *The Case for Bureaucracy*, 4th ed., as a reference. Specify the MPA theories and concepts that you applied in this analysis, and include your own analysis of the paper’s strengths and weaknesses.

4. **Program/Project Implementation Plan**

This paper involves the design for the start-up or creation of a public program or project. It could be a strategic plan with proposed goals, objectives, and a set of balanced performance measures. The plan must include a steering group, a stakeholder analysis and a public participation component, along with a communication/follow-up plan. Identifying how the elements of the plan are related to one another is important. Creating an implementation time table is helpful. Sources of funds and the adequacy of both operational and capital budgets (if appropriate) should be considered. You must prepare an analysis of critical success factors. Please indicate how decision makers will evaluate this plan. All plans must be realistic by including an analysis financial realities and political circumstances surrounding the program or project. The length of the paper should run 25-30 double-spaced pages. Specify the MPA theories and
concepts that you applied in this analysis, and include your own analysis of the paper’s strengths and weaknesses.

5. **Policy Analysis**

This paper analyzes a significant public policy from a series of perspectives, including, but not limited to the following: 1) administrative, 2) efficiency, 3) social equity or justice, 4) legal & political; and 5) economic. As Bardach (2005, xvi-xvii) notes, policy analysis originates in politics, channeling political conflict while building community. He also points out that policy analysis serves opposing sides. While cases and public policies may differ, but the following questions help you to structure a capstone paper. This paper should run 25-30 double-spaced pages.

1. What is the policy problem? Define it specifically and present your problem statement. Make sure you are clear as to the policy goals.
2. What are the value conflicts?
3. What is the context of the policy (administrative, political, legal, etc.)?
4. What are the relevant facts? Describe what happened and the influential actors and their institutional contexts. Who supports the policy, and who does not? Why or why not?
5. What public administration theories and analytical approaches are relevant for understanding and evaluating this policy problem?
6. Analysis: What are the central issues raised by the policy case?
7. Analysis: What are the major factors in the development of the policy, the implementation of the policy, or the evaluation of the policy?
8. What are the costs/benefits of the policy, and which groups are helped or harmed?
9. What alternatives are appropriate for addressing this policy problem? Why are these approaches appropriate?
10. What recommendations emerge from this analysis? Justify them.
11. What are the conclusion and the political implications?
12. How did the MPA Program assist in this analysis? What are the strengths and weaknesses of your analysis?

6. **A Position Paper**

A position paper is similar to a policy analysis. This assignment marshals the arguments in support of or against a specific policy, program, or issue. Normally, the best form for a position paper is to present the opposing arguments in their best light, and then expose their weaknesses. After that, the writer must offer a suitable substitute and argue why it is better. The conclusion should also point out why this issue is significant and the role of government (or governments). The length of the position paper should run 25-30 double-spaced pages. Please
consult the Bardach book. Specify the MPA theories and concepts that you applied in this paper, and include your own analysis of the paper’s strengths and weaknesses.

7. A Literature Review

A significant public administration problem has a body of literature addressing its causes and solutions. The function of a literature review is to “look again” at what others have done and to place a contemporary issue in a historical context. Research presented in scholarly articles often begin with a review of the literature while dissertations will devote an entire chapter to a literature review. Some journals publish literature reviews, and those articles are accessible by using the search term “review” as the descriptor, along with the main topic.

A typical literature review starts with a broad topic and shifts its focus to specific research hypotheses, purposes, or questions; it ends with suggestions for future research. A literature review is NOT an annotated list, moving from one researcher’s findings to another. In reviewing literature, use direct quotations sparingly. Below is the literature review that is based on the suggestions of Pyrczak & Bruce, Writing Empirical Reports (2005). The paper should run 25-30 double-spaced pages.

1. What is the issue and why is it significant?
2. What are the major sub-topics that the literature addresses? Start with the most recent research and work backwards. Be selective in the choice of topics and then provide at least two references to support each.
3. What are the major theories that have relevance to the research? Provide a brief discussion of each.
4. What are the major empirical findings of research in the field? Are they contradictory?
5. How reliable is the methodology that led to these findings?
6. What are the trends and recurring themes in the literature? Are there gaps in the literature?
7. How can future researchers build on this literature?
8. How did the MPA Program’s concepts and theories help in the preparation of this capstone paper? Please reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of your paper.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The capstone paper must address a significant public administration issue. Students must type their paper, using a 12-point font in either Word or WordPerfect. The paper must be logically organized and must not contain grammatical errors. Please use Bardach’s eightfold
path to produce the final paper. The capstone paper must include a table of contents, appropriate citations, endnotes, and a complete bibliography. The preferred format for the capstone paper is the APA style; see the APA style handout posted in the WebCT’s content module. APA formats are available as a “macro” in most word-processing programs.

A one-page executive summary must appear at the beginning of the final paper, after the table of contents but before the introduction. The executive summary should be keyed to the paper as a whole, and its subproblems (or parts) and is built from the outline. The best summaries are written after the paper is done.

The paper should contain a section entitled “References.” The references must show the sources of information used to prepare the paper. Your paper must include at least ten scholarly (peer-reviewed) references. Please limit internet references to no more than half your sources. Your paper should contain in-text references. Long quotations must not be used. Full references must be cited at the end of the paper. Guidelines are in the APA style sheet and at the CSU Library’s webpage: http://www.ulib.csuohio.edu/vrd/citations.html. For assistance in citing references, please consult the following website: www.citationmaster.com.

The capstone papers will be graded on the basis of the MPA learning goals. A student’s grade will also reflect difficulty of the issue chosen as well as the paper’s comprehensiveness, accuracy, readability, and quality as a graduate level analysis. Please see the capstone rubric posted in the content module.

The format of the capstone paper (25-30 double-spaced pages) is as follows:

I. A title page with the student’s name, a short capstone title, & date. The title of the paper should be consistent with the capstone paper’s main issue, not the conclusion.
II. Table of Contents
III. Acknowledgments
IV. Executive Summary
V. Introduction - which includes the problem statement, the problem’s significance, along with the argument, and the organization plan
VI. Body of the Paper
   a. Research/Information/Experts Consulted (no human subjects)
   b. Research Methods Applied
   c. Specific Findings & Analysis (referencing the subproblems)
   d. Recommendations, Justifications & Action Plan
VII. Conclusion - which includes a summary, a restatement of the argument, & the conclusion, an assessment of the paper’s strengths & weaknesses, and a concluding paragraph (why and how the paper addressed the significant problem)
VIII. Lessons learned from the MPA Program (2-3 pages)
IX. Footnotes (or endnotes) and References/Bibliography
X. Charts, Tables or Graphs (to provide supporting data)
VIII. Appendices

A problem statement, containing an outline (the subproblems), the problem’s significance, and a tentative list of references, are due on February 28th. This assignment should include the names of faculty members or practitioners who will serve as advisors. Early submission is encouraged. The final paper is due on May 9th at 6:00 p.m. Late papers may be refused by the professor.

Consistent with the MPA Learning goals, the oral and written capstone papers must show that the student:

- Has learned something.
- Has demonstrated effective data gathering and critical thinking skills.
- Has placed the capstone in the context of the MPA Program’s core courses.
- Has considered the theoretical roots of the particular professional application.
- Has shown a capacity to gather information effectively.
- Has avoided simple advocacy.
- Has considered the limitations of the analysis.
- Can express an argument effectively in written and oral forms.
- Has met the learning goals of the MPA Program.

The capstone paper is both an academic and a professional paper on a significant public administration topic. This paper must be logically organized and show competence in written expression. The work product must contain clear and concise writing. Please avoid jargon and acronyms. The paper must use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The instructor reserves the right to refuse any paper that does not meet these criteria. Once the instructor has approved your revised capstone paper, you must hand in one final copy for the MPA Program assessment.

Appendix - How to Create Your WebCT Account
Date Prepared: January 9, 2007