

ADM 689 - CAPSTONE PROJECT

SYLLABUS

For the COMMUNITY PLANNING EMPHASIS

(updated 22 September 2009)

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Offered: Every Semester and Summer

Units: 3

Grading: Pass/Fail

Instructor / Supervisor: Community Planning Emphasis Faculty

Capstone Description and Expectations:

Catalog Description: Comprehensive, synthesizing project applying the knowledge and skills learned in the courses that comprise a student's degree program. Projects must have theoretical/academic and applied components.

- The Capstone Project is the final course in the program and is preferably the only course taken in a student's final semester.
- The Capstone Project is a 3 unit course that requires a minimum of 150 hours of work.
- For Community Planning Emphasis students, this may be in the form of an Internship experience with a public or private sector planning organization.
- Like a thesis, the capstone project should be a creative endeavor that produces and reports new knowledge or professional methods. At a minimum, it should demonstrate mastery of new professional skills.

Prerequisite:

- The Capstone is only open to students who are in the last semester of the Master of Administration degree program.

Applying and Preparing for the Capstone

- Students must contact the faculty supervisor or coordinator for the Community Planning emphasis three to six months prior to the semester they will enroll in the capstone.
- Students must fill out, submit, and receive approval of the "Application for the Capstone Experience" during the semester before seeking to enroll in the Capstone course. This is usually done three to four months before beginning the Capstone.
 1. Complete the application in consultation with the faculty member who has agreed to supervise your Capstone course. The faculty supervisor and the student will communicate and finalize the application, proposal, and overall plan for the completion of the Capstone.

2. After the faculty supervisor approves the final application, the faculty supervisor will submit the completed and approved application to the Director of the Master of Administration Program for final approval. Upon approval, the student will be enrolled in ADM 689.
- Once enrolled in ADM 689, the student must pay the last \$625 of the \$2500 program.

Learning Outcomes:

As the capstone course for the Master of Administration degree, the outcome will include a professional product or deliverable that demonstrates the knowledge, critical thinking, and production skills learned in the courses comprising the student's degree program.

In general, graduates of the program are expected to demonstrate the knowledge, insight, and skills that characterize organizational leadership in the Community Planning professional community. While it is not expected that every capstone project addresses all of the learning outcomes of the program, the project should demonstrate learning outcomes in each of the following five major areas:

1. **Competencies in the five core courses:** Demonstrate general knowledge of administration, leadership, and organizational theory; analytic insight, skills and abilities associated with the foundations course .
2. **Problem Solving:** Demonstrate the ability to apply problem-solving processes, technologies, systems approaches, and innovative thinking to solve problems and to create solutions. Apply both qualitative and quantitative analysis to the decision-making processes.
3. **Communication:** Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively and specifically demonstrate an ability to design, write, and produce a professional document.
4. **Self-Management:** Demonstrate the ability to work independently, creatively, meet deadlines, and operate interdependently with colleagues and the faculty supervisor using appropriate assertiveness.
5. **Competence in Field of Community Planning:** Demonstrate professional competency in Community Planning and any other emphasis area that may have been pursued by the student.

Course Structure and Capstone Report:

In consultation with the capstone faculty supervisor, the student will propose, conduct, and report on a major project that synthesizes and applies the knowledge and skills learned in the courses that comprised the student's degree program.

- The capstone project should be based in both the program's core foundation courses and coursework in the Community Planning emphasis area.
- The capstone project must have theoretical, creative, and applied components
 1. **The theoretical portion** is a formal research component associated with a review of the literature section including a review of related case studies and relevant

theories. The academic component answers the question, “What do the experts in the field say about the project topic?”

2. **The applied component** may relate to solving problems in the workplace, preparing for career advancement, learning what practitioners are doing in relation to the project topic, or doing some creative, not routine, work. The applied component should have a professional development facet.
- The length of the project report is expected to be from 30 to 60 pages, depending on graphic material, and excluding appendices.
 - The preferred guidelines for formatting and referencing is that of the *Journal of the American Planning Association*, (<http://snipr.com/japa-guide>), though other formats are acceptable if approved by your faculty supervisor.
 - The capstone project report should generally contain the following sections:
 - Cover Page, Table of Contents, and Abstract
 - Section 1: Introduction, significance, context, and application of the project
 - Section 2: Background literature and theory review
 - Section 3: Methodology for the collection of the data and completion of the work
 - Section 4: Findings and recommendations
 - Section 5: Summary, conclusions and reflection
 - References and Appendices
- * A more detailed outline of these sections is attached to this syllabus, below.** These outlines provide a general guideline and may be altered in consultation with the student's faculty supervisor.
- You only need to provide a printed copy if material in the report cannot be provided digitally. Otherwise, you can submit your report by email unless your advisor requests a paper copy.
 - Students are expected to work independently; however, students must be in periodic contact with their supervising faculty member to report progress and to discuss ideas relating both to the topic and how closely the project is following the plan.

Course Schedule:

Each section of the final report should be submitted and approved before beginning the next section. Students should submit each section no later than specified in the following timeline:

3 to 4 Months Prior to Term	Capstone Proposal and Application*
Week 2 of Semester, or Week 2 of Summer	Draft of Section 1 (see above)
Week 5 of Semester, or	Draft of Section 2

Week 4 of Summer

Week 14 of Semester, or
Week 8 of Summer

Drafts of Sections 3, 4 and 5

Final Week of Term
Week 16 of Semester, or
Week 10 of Summer

Full Document Submitted

- Assignments must be submitted via email no later than the Friday of the week when they are due. If a point system is used, then submissions after the due date will receive a significant reductions in points, as determined by the faculty supervisor.
- Your faculty supervisor will need at least a few days to read the paper. The desired time line will vary among advisors, so you must check on this when planning your work.
- If revisions are necessary, then the paper will be sent it back to you.
- If there is not enough time for your advisor to read the paper or if necessary revisions cannot be completed before the grades are due then you will receive an Incomplete grade which will be changed once the paper is finalized.
 - If the capstone was your last class prior to graduation, you can still graduate in the session that you took the Capstone, though it will not appear in your transcripts until the Incomplete is changed to a regular grade.

*The application for the Capstone Project is on the Master of Administration website for students to download, complete, and submit.

Grading (Assessment) of Student Learning Outcomes:

- The student must demonstrate professional level writing skills, that is, writing skills comparable to those possessed by managers in the Community Planning profession or as illustrated in professional literature.
- The Capstone project must demonstrate academic standards at the graduate school level.
- The faculty supervisor will record grades for each submitted sections of the project report.
 - Submission of Sections 1 to 5 (above) are each worth about 10% of the final grade.
 - Submission of the final project report is worth 50% of the final grade.
 - Grading will assess the degree to which each assignments or deliverables demonstrate student achievement in mastering the five learning outcomes for the course.
 - It is recognized that not every assignment will address all 5 learning outcomes.
- If the faculty supervisor uses a point system, then students must receive 80% (80 points) or above to Pass the Capstone Course.

Course Policies:

- **Academic Dishonesty** is a form of misconduct that is subject to disciplinary action under

the Student Code of Conduct and includes the following.

- Plagiarism: any attempt to knowingly or deliberately pass off the work of someone else as your own.
- Cheating: any attempt to gain an unfair advantage over one's fellow students.
- Fabrication: any attempt to present information that is not true when the author knows the information presented is false.
- Fraud: any attempt to deceive an NAU instructor or administrative officer.
- Facilitating Academic Dishonesty: any attempt to assist an act of academic dishonesty by another individual.

Capstone supervisors may bring cases of egregious plagiarism or other forms of cheating to the attention of the Master of Administration Program Director. The complete policy on academic integrity is in Appendix F of NAU's *Student Handbook*.

- **Incompletes:** Please note that the university policy for an incomplete is that it is only granted to students who have completed most of the work for the class and are only tardy on a couple of assignments that would enable them to pass the class. In addition, the reason for not completing the tardy assignments must be beyond the student's control. Finally, the policy states that "After a grade is submitted to the Registrar, the grade may not be changed as the result of the addition of extra credit work not available to all students in the course and/or work not outlined in the syllabus or an addendum which was distributed during the semester."
 - You must have completed at least 75% of the course to be considered to qualify for an Incomplete.
 - Incompletes must be requested and an incomplete contract form must be approved by the class professor.

- **Retaking the Class to Raise Your Grade:** If you do not Pass the capstone, then the recommended action is to retake the class in another semester and apply for a Grade Replacement using the form on the NAU Registrar's Students who have just been academically suspended from NAU who have proof which appears to articulate extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control (medical/psychological or family trauma) that seem to merit a retroactive withdrawal from the term immediately past, should contact the Office of the Registrar for withdrawal consideration.

- **Policies for all NAU Courses:**
 - NAU policies on: safe environment + students with disabilities + institutional review board + academic integrity
 - <http://snipr.com/nau-policies>
 - *NAU Student Handbook*
 - <http://snipr.com/nau-sh>

APPENDIX

SAMPLE COMMUNITY PLANNING EMPHASIS CAPSTONE PROJECT REPORT

(updated 4 August 2009)

Master of Administration degree program, Northern Arizona University

This is a Sample Outline of a Community Planning Emphasis Area Capstone Report for the Master of Administration Program. Each Capstone will be different, so use this sample as a rough guide only. Adjustments should be made as appropriate.

The length should be about 30 to 60 pages (double spaced, 12pt font, 1 inch margins), excluding the Appendix.

1. Cover Page and Table of Contents

- a. The Cover Page needs to include (1) a descriptive Title for the paper, (2) your Name, (3) the text: Northern Arizona University, Master of Administration, Community Planning Emphasis, Capstone Project, and (4) Date of submission

2. Abstract

- a. An abstract is a summary of the entire paper, including your findings or conclusions. It does not say what you "will" do, but instead tell what you did and what the results were. The reader should be able to understand the basics of your paper through the abstract, without having to read the paper.

3. Introduction

- a. Overview of the Capstone Topic or Project
- b. Background on the Community (Where the capstone is taking place)
- c. Description of Community's Planning Structure and Process
 - i. Review of relevant past existing planning and plans

4. Description of the Specific Capstone Project

- a. Description of the specific project place(s)
- b. Description of the specific project issue(s)
- c. The capstone's place in the context of the community's planning
- d. Description of specific goals and milestone for the capstone project
 - i. Including the significance of the capstone project for the community and the student

5. Theoretical Background

- a. Description of the capstone project within the larger context (beyond the community) of:
 - i. Relationship Community Planning
 1. based on Public Planning (PL) courses taken in the Master of Administration Program
 - ii. Relationship to Administration
 1. based on Master of Administration (ADM) core courses taken in the Master of Administration Program
- b. Theories Relevant to the Capstone Project
 - i. Theories of Community Planning
 - ii. Theories of Administration Organizations
 - iii. Theories Specifically Related to the Capstone

6. Capstone Details, Findings and Recommendations

- a. Description of Internship
 - i. Detailed Description of the Community
- b. Data Gathering Process and Analysis
- c. Findings, Recommendations and Products produced
- d. Other Accomplishments

7. Summary Conclusions and Reflection

- a. Short Summary of Background to the internship
- b. Short Summary of the Goals of the internship
- c. Final Conclusions for the Internship
- d. Lesson Learned by student in the coursework and internship

8. References Cited

- 9. Appendices** - consisting of some of the major products created by the intern to the extent that they are not too large and in an appropriate format.