



## Syllabus for Political Science 5983: Capstone Paper

### Course Information

College: Liberal Arts

Department: Political Science

Course title: Capstone Paper

Semester: Spring 2020

Course number: POL 5983

CRN: 25423

Building and Classroom: LAS L05

Meeting Day/Time: 1/17-1/19, 3/13-3/15, 4/17-4/19; Friday 5:30-9:30 PM, Saturday 9 AM-5 PM, Sunday 1:30-5:30 PM

### Instructor Information

Instructor name: Dr. Alyssa L. Provencio

Office location: Liberal Arts (LAR) 100B

Office hours: By appointment or anytime during regular business hours (M-F, 9 AM-5 PM) in person, or via Skype or Google Hangout by request.

Email (*BEST way to get ahold of me!*): [aprovencio@uco.edu](mailto:aprovencio@uco.edu)

I will respond as soon as possible, within 24 hours, as long as it during regular business hours (M-F, 9 AM-5 PM); I cannot guarantee any responses outside of those hours.

Campus telephone: (405) 974-5537

Personal Google Voice phone number: (405) 896-0906 – This number forwards to my personal cell phone; I cannot receive text messages at this number.

### Course Description and Objectives

#### Course Description

This course meets the writing requirement that is part of the department's Master's degree program. The topic of the Capstone Paper is chosen in consultation with a faculty advisor and should reflect an important issue within the student's discipline. The ultimate outcome of this individual study will be a written capstone paper that when combined with an oral presentation will show the MPA/Political Science faculty tangible evidence of a degree candidate's qualifications and expertise.

#### Prerequisites

None

#### Course Objectives

- Demonstrate knowledge, concepts, and principles associated with the field of public administration/political science.
- Select an appropriate topic and be able to take that topic and develop a workable research question as well as your hypotheses and/or thesis statement.
- Plan and implement a major qualitative or quantitative research design as it relates to this capstone.
- Show that they can think critically and write effectively by producing a substantial capstone work in public administration/political science. This capstone should be worthy of presentation at a professional conference or be able to be published in a peer-reviewed journal.
- Give an effective oral presentation about that capstone in front of their peers, the instructor, and other members of the faculty in a conference-like setting and be able to defend that capstone.
- Indicate their knowledge of ethics involved in both the research and the writing of that capstone.
- Check off a significant graduation requirement, as this course meets the MPA/political science's capstone requirement.

#### Transformational Learning Objectives

This course supports the following tenets of transformative learning:

- Discipline Knowledge—students explore, discuss, and practice the techniques, conventions, and processes that produce researched written arguments.
- Leadership—students learn how to present claims and evidence fairly and civilly, to consider thoroughly and



respond ethically to counterevidence and counterarguments, and to develop a clear, well-informed stance about ongoing issues or problems.

- Global and Cultural Competency—students read and write arguments about global and cultural issues and direct writing to diverse audiences.
- Problem Solving (Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activities)—students learn to analyze complex arguments, to produce arguments informed by careful research, and to document sources following academic conventions.
- Service Learning and Civic Engagement—in service learning sections, students research and write about a significant service learning experience; in other sections, students learn how the public use of argument has the potential to affect an audience and to effect a change in their communities.
- Health and Wellness—students read arguments about, write arguments about, and discuss those intellectual, emotional, and spiritual issues that give human existence vitality and meaning.

#### Textbook Information

RECOMMENDED - Becker, H. S. (2008). *Writing for social scientists: How to start and finish your thesis, book, or article*. University of Chicago Press.

### Course Outline, Requirements & Assignment Weights, and Grading

#### Course Outline

Weekend 1 – We will be discussing the basic requirements for the course and refresh your minds on the elements of the capstone paper, such as literature review, methods, etc. Instead of meeting on Sunday, I will be asking to meet with you individually within the first week after the course begins to discuss your ideas.

Weekend 2 – We will meet as a group on Friday night, but instead of meeting on Saturday or Sunday, we will meet one-on-one in both February and March.

Weekend 3 – We will meet for presentations this weekend.

#### Important Due Dates

Research Proposal – February 6, 2020 @ 11:59 PM

Presentation Slides – April 15, 2020 @ 11:59 PM

Capstone Presentation – Weekend 3

Capstone Paper

Near Final Copy – April 24, 2020 @ 11:59 PM

Final Copy – May 6, 2020 @ 11:59 PM

### Course Requirements & Assignment Weights

#### OPTIONS:

Scholarly Project – A scholarly project questions or otherwise contributes to an existing body of knowledge. Your paper will analyze an existing MPA/political science concept or phenomenon in light of current theory and research. You may use qualitative or quantitative methodologies to design a systematic analysis of this concept or phenomenon, framed by existing literature.

Applied Project – An applied project requires a final product as a potential deliverable for a workplace audience. Example deliverables include a training manual, a set of public relations materials, a website (design and content), program evaluation, or policy brief. This material will still need to be arrived at through original research, designed qualitatively or quantitatively. The paper will document how the deliverable reflects the scholarly principles supporting the execution of the deliverable.

#### CAPSTONE PROPOSAL (20%)

Typically, when a student is asked to complete any research project, he /she will be asked to create a prospectus. A prospectus is a written document that shows that the student has already put substantial thought into the project. In a prospectus, the student will not only include the topic and its significance, but also the research question and/or thesis statement that have been developed as part of that topic. The student will also explain how he/she plans to proceed by placing the topic within its relevant literature (thus showing that this literature has been looked at), but also discussing the methodology, the ethical concerns, and the potential outcomes of this project. Thus, the prospectus is really a “mini” capstone that gives a strong impression that you have done some



thinking about both the research and how this research will proceed. When you submit this prospectus, you should make sure that it includes the following (all in APA format):

- A title page that includes a descriptive title, your name, university affiliation, this course's name and number, and date
- A preliminary abstract
- An outline of your research paper which has:
  - Your topic, research question, and/or thesis statement
  - Key hypotheses (if applicable)
  - Theoretical/conceptual framework (if applicable)
  - Methodology including operationalization of variables
  - Expected findings
- Address any ethical concerns with your paper – including a discussion about whether or not your research needs to be officially approved by the UCO Institutional Review Board
- A preliminary list of references that contains at least 10 substantive journal articles and/or related academic literature

#### *CAPSTONE PRESENTATION (20%)*

As part of the capstone requirement, you will present your capstone to an audience that will include your instructor and your fellow students, but may also have other invited guests such as UCO faculty, other UCO students, etc. In preparation for your capstone presentation, you should provide to the audience multiple copies (the number will be determined as we get closer to the presentation date) of a capstone summary document. If possible, you should fit the contents of this document on a single page (you can use both sides). It should be typed and should contain the following items, which you will notice are the exact same as those required for the thesis summary document required by the College of Graduate Studies:

- Statement of the Problem or issue (one paragraph)
- Brief summary of the literature (one or two paragraphs)
- Research question(s) or primary hypothesis (one or two sentences)
- Statement of the Research Methodology (one sentence)
- Methods
  - Examples of Qualitative Analysis, most applicable to studies of small groups, whole populations, or non-repetitive and non-repeatable phenomena, include but are not limited to: case study, participant observation, narrative, biography, focus group, textual and contextual, qualitative theory, philosophical and artistic.
  - Examples of Quantitative Analysis, most applicable to studies of population samples and repetitive or repeatable phenomena include but are not limited to: experimental, survey, statistical, and predictive.
- Brief summary of findings (one paragraph)
- Confirmation, modification or denial of hypothesis (one sentence)
- Statement of the significance of the findings (one or two paragraphs)
- Suggestions for future research (one or two sentences)

Along with your capstone summary document, you will be expected to present a multi-media presentation (Power Point or Prezi) of 30-35 minutes in length, with up to 15 minutes for a question and answer period. You will be asked to submit a copy of your slides to me before the presentation.

#### *CAPSTONE PAPER (60%)*

As part of this process, you will be expected to complete a capstone paper that addresses some contemporary aspect of public administration. Your research paper should be 35-45 pages long in terms of its actual text, and should be no longer than 80 pages including supplemental materials (title page, abstract, table of contents, bibliography, tables, figures, appendixes, etc.).

You will submit this paper twice as noted below:

Near Final Copy of Paper (20%)

Final Copy of Paper (40%)

#### *MORE DETAIL*

Here are some of the format requirements for the final capstone paper:

- 35-45 pages long of pure text, no more than 80 pages in its entirety. Your pure text pages should NOT exceed 45.
- APA Style



- No breaks in the text whatsoever, except for small breaks for any headers – thus your capstone paper should not be broken into chapters and should not include any tables, figures, charts, etc. These should all be placed in an appendix. There should also not be “paragraph breaks”. This is the default if you use Microsoft Word that adds automatically about half of an empty line between each paragraph. Please activate the “remove space before (after) paragraph” in order to remove these paragraph breaks.
- Your paper must be double-spaced, use Times New Roman, size 12 font, and must have 1” margins.
- Your paper should have page numbers on pages with the text starting on p. 1. Thus pages before your text (abstract, acknowledgement, etc.) should either not be numbered or should be done in the Roman numeral style.
- Your paper must include a connection to public administration and the knowledge that you have gained from your MPA degree.
- Your paper must contain at least 20 sources. These must be high-quality sources academic sources.
- When you submit the final copy of your paper, you will actually be giving me two copies, one for me to grade and the other for the Dean’s office. The Dean’s office gets a copy because all capstone papers (undergrad and grad) are reviewed blindly by a faculty committee. The Dean’s office copy must be anonymous so please do not identify yourself in the paper in any way, except on your title page. In particular, please do not put your name in the pagination on every page, such as Smith 1, Smith 2, etc. as that will take an industrial size bottle of White Out to fix!

The actual structure of your paper should follow this format:

- Title page
- Acknowledgements
- Abstract
- Table of Contents
- Text of Paper – this is what should be 35-45 pages, and this is where you start numbering with page 1!
- Bibliography
- Appendices

## Grade Scale

A 90-100  
B 80-89.9  
C 70-79.9  
D 60-69.9  
F 0-59.9

## Class Policies

### Contesting Grades

If you have received a grade on an assignment that you see as unfair, you have the right to contest the grade with a written explanation sent to me by email. I will consider it, but I reserve the right to give the grade initially given with an explanation of why your request was denied.

Final grades will NOT be changed. You will have had ample opportunity to contest your grades on assignments and/or exams. For example, while figuring final grades, if I find you are one point away from the next highest grade, you will receive the lower grade. If you are .1 point from the next highest grade, you will receive the lower grade. I will NOT raise your grade at the end of the semester if you are one or two points away from the next higher grade. What you earned is what you get. If I do it for one person, I will have to do it for all.

## Fine Print

### Incompletes

All students are expected to complete course requirements by the end of the semester. In those rare circumstances in which completion by semester’s end is not possible, I may decide either to submit a final grade based on the work completed or submit a grade of “I” along with a default grade based on work completed. In no case will an “I” grade be submitted unless at least 50% of the required work has been completed by the end of the semester. If an “I” grade is submitted, the student will be allowed no more than one year from the end of the semester to complete course requirements; else, the “I” grade will convert to the default grade.



### Academic Integrity

I seek to uphold equity and fairness in my classroom. Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated in consideration of your fellow students. I abide by UCO's Academic Dishonesty Policy, which is available in the syllabus attachment. If you are caught violating this policy, I will prosecute to the fullest extent possible.

### ADA Statement Regarding Special Accommodations

The University of Central Oklahoma complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students with disabilities who need special accommodations must make their requests by contacting Disability Support Services, at (405) 974-2516. The DSS Office is located in the Nigh University Center, Room 305. Students should also notify the instructor of special accommodation needs as soon as possible. Per Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX"), pregnant and parenting students may request adjustments by contacting the Title IX Coordinator, at (405) 974-3377 or [TitleIX@uco.edu](mailto:TitleIX@uco.edu). The Title IX Office is located in the Lillard Administration Building, Room 114D.

### UCO Policies

Any topic not covered here is covered by university policies.

**Here is the link to the UCO Information Sheet. This information sheet applies to all courses at UCO. The link:**

**<http://www.uco.edu/academic-affairs/files/aa-forms/StudentInfoSheet.pdf>**