

PA5559-101 Capstone in Public Administration (2 credit hours)

Fall 2025

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Office Hours:
Wednesday 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This seminar integrates the theoretical and practical perspectives of public administration as a discipline. The capstone course engages students in management problem-solving as well as the following activities: development of executive skills; refinement of presentation skills; discussions of likely ethical situations; and securing public sector employment. Students present findings from a research project (Capstone) in a capstone conference (in conjunction with PA5558 Capstone Research). Successful completion of the course fulfills the requirement for a comprehensive examination. *Note: Students must pass both PA5558 and PA5559 this semester to fulfill the Capstone requirement and graduate.*

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- This course is an integration of, and conclusion to, the coursework in the MPA curriculum.
- This course assists students to further their public and non-profit sector careers.
- This course integrates practical and academic aspects of their MPA experience.

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Readings will be available on your class website, and they will be posted throughout the semester.
- Students will be required to access other materials as instructed and bring materials to class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Capstone Paper & Prospectus

The Capstone experience is grounded in a significant research project that demonstrates your ability to frame a research question, analyze the extant research on the topic, gather data and evidence, perform data analysis, and present conclusions and implications for the study and practice of public administration. Aspects of the Capstone paper that factor into the PA5559 course grade include meeting of deadlines, quality of work submitted at each deadline, extent to which feedback on your project/paper is responded to and incorporated into the paper, proper use of the APA style format, and the quality of the final version of the paper. A full draft of the paper is due to your director by early September. The Capstone paper is worth 15% of the course grade. The Prospectus that you initially submit is 10% of your grade.

Capstone Conference Presentation

All students who successfully complete the Capstone paper requirements will present their research at a Capstone Conference. The presentation must incorporate PowerPoint slides approved by the instructor. The initial version of your slides for your presentation and the presentation itself will account for 10% of the course grade.

Professional Development Exercises and Reflection Paper

This course formally incorporates three professional development exercises: drafting a resume, writing cover/application letters, and writing interview questions. Another skill that will be used in class is the skill of analysis. Consistent with the advice provided by a representative of the Career Development Center or other sources, a professional resume and an application letter are part of your course grade. Based on an actual job ad, questions that you would ask in an interview setting are required as well, and account for 10% of the course grade. You will write a seven-page reflection paper that reflects on the Capstone experience (including relevancy to your experience in program), and paper must be presented with section headings. The Reflection paper is 20% of grade.

Ethics Reports / Students

Students will use case studies to report on ethics conversations throughout the semester. Ethics conversations are 10%. Students will use a PowerPoint to discuss the Ethics/Management considerations and submit a one page summary of the ethics situation. Students will drop slide and paper into the appropriate DropBox. Professor will assign the Ethics case study.

PORTFOLIO: Your written assignments for this class will be collected eventually into a Portfolio that we will discuss in class. You have an opportunity to improve your grade on individual assignments (not including Prospectus and Capstone) by submission of revised work into the Portfolio.

Participation

Students will demonstrate their professionalism by attending all class meetings, demonstrating a positive and respectful attitude, and being prepared to discuss all the assigned readings or topics for the week. This course is a seminar and thus all students are expected to actively participate in class discussions every week. Students should bring any assigned reading(s) to class. There will be articles that I post to AsULearn that we will discuss in class. Students will also be required to bring in relevant material to discuss.

You are expected to be in class. As a professional courtesy, I expect advance notice if you will be absent from class, arrive late, or leave class early. Participation, which includes Portfolio is 15% of your grade.

ALL WRITTEN WORK MUST INCLUDE:

Grades will be lowered if work is submitted late:

- Submit in Word, not a PDF (allows me to make comments on your document)
- Cover Page showing the assignment, date, course, and your name
- Reference Page in APA format providing all references/sources used in assignment (see OWL)
- Page numbers on every page
- Times New Roman 11 or 12 point font
- Double spaced with 1" margins on all sides
- Self-edit before submitting
- All written assignments will be submitted in appropriate DropBox on AsULearn. After submitting, open the file you attached and make sure you submitted the correct assignment
- Follow required length of assignments. Cover Page and Reference Page do not count in length
- Final PORTFOLIO will have other requirements that we will discuss in class.
- NO AI (artificial intelligence) allowed

UNIVERSITY POLICIES: ASU has official policies that students are required to follow. Academic Integrity, Disability Services, Attendance and other policies are found at <http://www.academicaffairs.appstate.edu/syllabi>. Please read the complete policies at this site.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Academic integrity is expected of every student. Any violation of this policy will result in an “F” for the assignment and for the class, and referral to the appropriate University official. Please consult the University catalog for complete policy information. NO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE is to be used in my class.

CLASS POLICY ON CELL PHONES, IPADS, COMPUTERS...TECHNOLOGY:

Other than using E-Books or class notes, the use of cell phones, iPads, or computers during the class will lower your final semester grade. This policy applies to having cell phones or iPads on your desk or in your lap, or at the edge of your book bag, to “glance at” for a text or email message that might arrive, and this also includes tapping your Apple Watch to see what is there. Please don’t do it.

INCOMPLETES:

Incompletes will be granted only under extraordinary circumstances and require the prior approval of the instructor and appropriate university officials.

Out-of-class communication

Email to ASU accounts will be the primary means of communication outside of the classroom. You should check your ASU account daily and respond to a professor’s request for information within 24 hours. The preferred method of contacting me is mitchelljp@appstate.edu.

Grading

Professional Exercises	10%
Ethics Discussions / Students	10%
Prospectus	10%
Capstone Paper	15%
Presentation Slides	10%
Conference Presentation	10%
Reflection Paper	20%
Portfolio/Participation	15%

Grade Scale

A	95-100	C+	77-79
A-	90-94	C	74-76
B+	87-89	C-	70-73
B	84-86	F	below 70 (0.0)
B-	80-83		

Note: Students must also pass PA5558 to pass this course.

***HAVE YOU APPLIED FOR GRADUATION THROUGH YOUR STUDENT PORTAL?
HAVE YOU CHECKED YOUR DEGREEWORKS? IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP CHECK ON IT
AND MAKE SURE YOU ARE ELIGIBLE TO GRADUATE.***

COURSE CALENDAR OF ASSIGNMENTS

August 20	Discussion of Prospectus Discussion of Capstone Review of Assignments and Class Structure
August 27	Discussion of the below assignments: Bring in hard copies of 2 actual job postings <u>and</u> have them available electronically...analyze them prior to class. Bring in a draft resume for one of the job postings. Bring in a draft cover letter for one of the job postings.
September 3	Discussion of Prospectus – September 6 deadline
September 10	Professional Assignments (resumes, application letters) Job Postings (2) Interview Questions All are to be in the DropBox for Professional Exercises prior to class
September 17	OUT OF CLASS – you will be assigned work on your Capstone Dr. Mitchell will be attending a Career Fair at Campbell University
September 24	Job Analysis assignments Discuss the Portfolio and assignments completed.
October 1	Interviews
October 8	Professor Attending NASPAA Conference – NOT IN CLASS
October 15	Ethics Case Studies worked in class
October 22	Work on Capstone and report to me at the end of class time.
October 29	Ethics Case Studies presented (from case study assigned to you) Case Study PowerPoint slide and <u>summary page required</u> Each student will present (10-15 minutes) for their Case Study, using one slide. The Slide will be dropped into the appropriate DropBox, and the Slide will be part of your Portfolio.
November 5	Work OUT OF CLASS on Slide and Presentation
November 12	Draft Slides Presented in Class
November 19	Draft Slides Presented in Class Capstone Slides into Dropbox (you may edit after our presentations)

November 21	CAPSTONE CONFERENCE
November 19	PORTFOLIO DUE INTO DROP BOX Exit Survey is Due Reflection Paper Due into DropBox
November 26	UNIVERSITY BREAK / THANKSGIVING
December 3	TBD / Guest Lecturer