

Capstone Seminar PUBA 696

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Course Description

The capstone is a nine-month, two-semester project designed to be the culminating experience of your MPA degree. In *Capstone Planning* students in a group of 3-4 chose a topic and conducted research to learn what may have already been written or discussed about the issue(s) chosen, and developed a proposal that outlined the work to be completed in the following semester in *Capstone*. In this course, you will complete the project you proposed in *Capstone Planning*.

The purpose of the capstone is to have you make a contribution to a public issue in Hawaii or the region. The work should display what you have learned while in the program. It is also a way of giving back to our communities.

The capstone has three primary goals (1) to demonstrate that you have learned, and can make use of, what is taught in the program; (2) to make use of that knowledge on behalf of an issue in Hawaii or the region; and (3) to demonstrate the ability to work effectively in groups.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Frame research questions, identify and gather appropriate information, and recognize applicable statistical techniques for systematically analyzing evidence, in order to answer the research questions
- Develop a proposal for the capstone project to be conducted next semester
- Practice inter-personal, collaborative theories and best practices, and work successfully in teams through conflict resolution and negotiation skills;
- Communicate effectively orally and in written forms
- Demonstrate knowledge, skills and values that you have learned in your previous courses

Group Interaction

One of the most rewarding and challenging aspects of the capstone is that it is a group project. This can be rewarding because you get to work with other bright people with different ideas, perspectives, and styles. The challenging part is to coordinate these differences, along with time constraints, to complete the capstone project.

The capstone may address a wide range of issues, ranging from an organizational analysis, to a broader policy study, to a community issue. Finding a topic can be a difficult part of the process, since there is a huge set of potential topics. Students need to find a project that interests and group and also is possible to complete in the two semester time frame.

Expectations

Attendance and participation: It is expected that you show up on time to all class meetings and that all students will participate in and contribute to the group fully and regularly. Failure to attend and participate in group meetings (where the instructor is or is not present) will result in a lower grade. The instructor understands that life happens. If you cannot attend mandatory class meetings (ones in which the instructor is present) you must notify the instructor and the group immediately so that accommodations may be made.

Late policy: It is expected that all assignments will be turned in on time. This is extremely important given the finality of the course. If you or your group falls behind, it may jeopardize your graduation in December.

Timeline for the Capstone Seminar

The following is meant to give you some idea of the milestones your group should have met by specific dates:

Finish collecting and entering data.

Analyze Data.

Submit a complete first draft of the final capstone paper.

Complete a poster presentation of your capstone.

Submit a revised second draft of the capstone, incorporating faculty comments.

Submit a final draft of the capstone paper.

Proposals submitted after this date will receive an incomplete.

Submit the self and peer evaluations.

Group Process: Self-aware development and maintenance of effective group processes forms an integral part of the Capstone, and you should attend to these in every Capstone phase. As a starting point, try to become aware of each other's styles and strengths, and look for ways to talk openly about process issues. We will discuss ways to assess your collective strengths and potential pitfalls throughout the semester.

Grading: The Capstone Planning grade will depend upon three items:

<u>Quality</u> of the Capstone Project Proposal:	80%
<u>Instructor's assessment</u> of how well each individual worked with the other group members (this includes attendance and showing up on time, participating in an open and flexible way, making substantial contributions to your group's work):	10%
<u>Self and Peer Evaluations:</u>	10%

It is possible that group members may receive different grades.

Grading rubric and suggested outline for the project:

10% Introduction

Introduce the topic (including defining or describing unfamiliar terms)

Why is it important (i.e. why should we care)?

Statement of your research question

Brief summary of what you are going to do in the project (i.e. outline your project)

20% Information/Literature Review

Provide more information about your topic (stats, numbers, etc.) if needed

What does the literature say about your research question?

What are the general findings?

How did they study it?

What doesn't the literature say about your research question (i.e. what's missing)?

Restate the research question

15% Statement of the Issues

Why is this missing piece important to study?

What are some important questions and concerns that arise with your research question and topic?

15% Research Approach

How did you attempt answer your research question?

Why did you be using that method?

Sample interview/survey questions if needed.

Who did you talk to? Where did you get data?

How did you analyze the data?

20% Findings

What did you find?

How do your findings address your research question?

Explain any surprising results.

20% Conclusion

Summarize what you found.

Who will the information be important to and what can do with this information.

How do your findings and study contribute to the topic, to the public, to the client.