

Course Syllabus

Course Information

<i>Course Number/Section</i>	PA 6399 / 501
<i>Course Title</i>	Capstone in Public Affairs
<i>Term</i>	Fall 2016
<i>Days & Times</i>	Thursdays, 7:00 – 9:45 PM, CB3 1.304

Professor Contact Information

<i>Professor</i>	John McCaskill, PhD
<i>Office Phone</i>	972-883-6274
<i>Email Address</i>	john.mcccaskill@utdallas.edu
<i>Office Location</i>	GR 2.204
<i>Office Hours</i>	4:00 – 6:30 PM, Thursday and by appointment

Course Description

The capstone in public affairs is the culminating experience for graduating MPA students. Students integrate knowledge from across the MPA curriculum in a faculty-directed semester-long applied research project. The project for this semester is assisting the City of Allen, Texas with the background research and design aspects of a Citizens' Academy. Students will be working with city staff and elected officials in benchmarking, gathering best and innovative practices, and making recommendations for the new Citizens' Academy, which will be presented to the city staff at the end of the term.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Upon completing the course, students will be able to:

- Apply the theory and concepts derived from courses throughout the MPA curriculum.
- Conceive and conduct an original research project independently.
- Determine appropriate methodological approaches to complete their projects and successfully utilize those methods of analysis.
- Demonstrate professional technical writing skills through the development of a final written report.
- Present their research and critical defense skills through the policy management forum.

Mission

The Master of Public Affairs (MPA) program advances excellence in public service. The program accomplishes this mission through three sets of activities aimed at preparing its students to serve as capable and ethical stewards of the common good. It imparts essential knowledge, competencies and perspectives to a diverse array of future and current professionals in government and nonprofit organizations. It supports the wider community through in-service professional and leadership training, through policy and management analysis services, and it produces new knowledge through practice-centered research.

Required Textbooks and Materials

Materials will be made available via the course homepage on eLearning.

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Topics, Reading & Project Assignments, Due Dates

August 25th

Course introduction / project overview / Office of Regulatory Compliance Approval. You must become certified by IRB to participate in this project.

September 1st

Topic: Social Capital

Assignments: Thoroughly review the research questions, video, and articles posted in eLearning.

Submit:

- IRB Certification
- Research question bullets of web search results on benchmark cities (*individual project*) – 5 points

September 8th

Topic: Introduction and Q&A session with Kathleen Vaught, CPC, Interactive Media Manager, Public and Media Relations Office, City of Allen

Assignment: Select team members and teams.

Submit:

- SWOC Analysis of the programs (*individual project*) – 5 points
Must include questions about the Allen Citizens Academy concept.

September 15th

Topic: Project Management

Possible tour of Allen facilities / staff

Assignment: Project team action items

Submit:

- Project outline and plan of action (Team Submission) – 5 points
Must include a division of individual responsibilities

September 22nd

Assignment: Project team action items (Team lead's option to meet with instructor)

Submit: Project plan update

September 29th

Assignment: Project team action items (Team lead's option to meet with instructor)

October 6th

Assignment: Project team action items status presentation

Submit: Project plan presentation to include status on all action items.

October 13th

Assignment: First draft for Master Plan recommendations.

Submit: First draft (3000 words) – 15 points

The Master Plan recommendations must include a literature review: the lit review should be based on at least 5 scholarly sources reflecting best practices for Citizens Academies.

October 20th

Meet with city staff to review current recommendations. Q&A session with staff.

October 27th

Assignment: Project team action items (Team lead's option to meet with instructor)

November 3rd

Assignment: Project team action items (Team lead's option to meet with instructor)

November 10th

Submit: Final draft (5000 words) – 20 points

The Citizens Academy recommendations should include at three recommended plans to include best practices as well as emerging programs (include at least one more unique program suggestion). The final write-up also must include a literature review: the lit review should be based on at least 5 scholarly sources reflecting best practices for Citizen Academies. A 20-30 minute PowerPoint presentation is to be submitted as part of the final draft.

November 17th

Present to PNM faculty – 15 points

December 1st

Present to Allen staff – 20 points

Grading Policy

Grading for this course shall be structured as follows: 94-100=A, 90-93=A-, 87-89=B+, 83-86=B, 80-82=B-, 77-79=C+, 70-77=C, Below 70=F. Final grades will be based on

(1) SWOC Analysis.....	5%
(2) Web research submission.....	5%
(3) Project outline and plan of action.....	5%
(3) Team Project First Draft.....	15%
(4) Team Project Final Draft.....	20%
(5) Presentation to PNM Faculty.....	20%
(6) Presentation to Allen staff.....	20%
(7) Teamwork.....	10%

Course Policies

This course will run as a project and as such, each student will be an integral team member. This project will interface with multiple external stakeholders, which will cause varying degrees of fluidity in the timeline. Your instructor will make every effort to

ensure you are made aware of any changes to the project timeline but you will need to plan to be as adaptable as possible with scheduling and task assignments. Communication with other team members and your instructor is critical to the success of the project. If you have a scheduling issue that prevents your participation in team activities of any sort, you need to inform your team members and instructor as soon as possible.

Each piece of the project is integrated with the others, which causes a delay or oversight in one area to ripple through the entire project. Also keep in mind that we will be working closely with city staff and perhaps elected officials; all of us will need to be cognizant and respectful of each other's time and other professional commitments. To that end, we will establish communication protocols to avoid miscommunication and redundant request for information. Finally, please be mindful that you will evaluate each other's performance as team members at the conclusion of the project.

Make-up exams

NA

Extra Credit

NA

Late Work

Any late work must be fully coordinated to be accepted.

Special Assignments

We may have additional assignments develop as we work through the project.

Class Attendance

We will develop a schedule of team meetings and review sessions during our first few class meetings that will enable the most effective and productive use of the scheduled class time.

Classroom Citizenship

This is a professional level course. Failure to maintain professional decorum in all interactions may result in a dramatically reduced role on the project team which will in turn, result in an adverse academic outcome.

Comet Creed

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

"As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do."

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.

Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.