PADM 6700: Capstone Project in Public Administration

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PURPOSE OF SYLLABUS

This syllabus establishes the expectations for the capstone course. Successful completion of the capstone project is required to receive the MPA degree, i.e., students must earn a grade of C or better (in addition to all other graduation requirements). There is no permitted substitute to meet this graduation requirement. The capstone experience

represents the culminating demonstration of the skills, knowledge, and abilities you have developed throughout your MPA studies. Furthermore, completion of the course involves working on a project of interest to an external organization (public or nonprofit); thus, all students enrolled in this course take on the responsibility of representing the program and the University, as well as themselves, through their work. Students should use this course syllabus as their first guide/reference for questions related to the course. *Please read it carefully, and promptly contact the course instructor with any questions or sources of confusion*. You are asked to sign the memorandum of understanding at the end of this document, which attests to your understanding of the content contained within this syllabus. Please note, if for any reason you do not agree with the information and requirements discussed within this document and are unable or unwilling to sign the Memorandum of Understanding, you should consult the course instructor immediately.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Capstone Project offers each student the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the theory and practice of public administration by applying the knowledge and skills gained in the MPA program to an individualized project of the student's choice (pending course instructor approval). This involves completing a project report that reflects the application of knowledge, skills, and abilities developed in the MPA program to the project. The course is intended only for students who are completing their Master of Public Administration (MPA). In order to enroll in this course, students must have completed PADM 6130 (Research Methods), PADM 6500 (Internship) if required, and be no more than one (1) semester away from graduating. Therefore, a student who wants to graduate in the Fall, could take this course during the Fall when they expect to graduate or during the preceding Summer semester. Students who are unsure about whether they are eligible to take this course should consult their instructor and advisor right away.

COURSE GOALS

- To demonstrate knowledge gained throughout the MPA program and to apply that knowledge to relevant public management, nonprofit management, or policy problem.
- To produce written and oral deliverables that demonstrate critical thought, a level of analysis appropriate to a master's degree, and a high level of professionalism and competence both in oral and written communication.

MISSION OF THE MPA PROGRAM

Our MPA program prepares students, as ethical public and nonprofit managers and leaders, to respond *equitably*, *effectively*, and *efficiently* to the needs of a *diverse* society. We recognize the goals of our students working in, or preparing for, public service by emphasizing flexibility and quality in teaching and learning. We teach the core concepts of public administration with a focus on the practical application while strengthening students' ability to solve problems analytically. Students may build specialized skills on one of the program's areas of expertise: public policy, leadership, nonprofit management, or local government management,. As instructors and advisors, we work closely with students to support both their classroom and career achievement; in return, students are expected to pursue academic excellence and demonstrate integrity. As scholars, we engage in research and service to the University, community, and profession. By building relationships with public and nonprofit organizations in Middle Tennessee and beyond, we enhance our ability to develop students as professionals.

VALUES OF THE MPA PROGRAM

Public Service Values Statement. The guiding public service values of the MPA program in the College of Public Service at TSU are:

- EQUITY – Public servants should practice impartiality and fairness in their daily work while balancing that pursuit with the need for effectiveness and efficiency.
- EFFECTIVENESS – Public servants should work in a proficient and productive manner towards the common good, setting transparent performance outcomes to measure progress while balancing that pursuit with the need for equity and efficiency.

- EFFICIENCY – Public servants should be careful and innovative stewards who seek to create the most public value out of scarce resources while balancing that pursuit with the need for effectiveness and equity.
- DIVERSITY – Public servants should understand, value, and respect both individual differences and commonalities, working to create and maintain inclusive organizations and communities.

COURSE CONTENT – COMPETENCIES CONNECTION

Tennessee State University's College of Public Service's MPA degree is NASPAA-accredited. NASPAA has established five program competency domains that they believe are essential for students to develop through their MPA studies. Courses in the MPA curriculum are designed around specific student learning objectives (SLOs), developed by the faculty to operationalize these five program competencies. The full MPA Course Competency matrix is available online.

The deliverables of all capstone projects are directly related to SLOs 5.1 and 5.2 of Program Competency 5, "Each MPA graduate will be competent to communicate and interact productively and in culturally responsive ways with a diverse and changing workforce and society at large" as well as SLO 3.1 of Program Competency 3 "Each MPA graduate will be competent to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make evidence-informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment." However, students must choose additional SLOs from the course competency matrix which will directly relate to the specific project they develop with the client organization when the project is developed. Your proposed selection of SLOs is part of the **PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET** deliverable (included later in this syllabus; due early in the semester.) The instructor may adjust the SLOs selected in collaboration with the student as part of the Project Information Sheet feedback process. These SLO linkages must then be addressed in the reflective **PROGRAM COMPETENCIES MEMO** at the completion of the project (distinct from the final project report and presentation). Details on the required contents of the Program Competencies Memo are included later in this syllabus; it is a shorter reflective assignment (not a research assignment) and the project should be mostly complete before the Memo is prepared. The detailed rubric criteria for evaluation of specific SLOs are available here.

At the end of the semester, your presentation will be holistically evaluated using 5.1 and 5.2 (oral version); your final paper will be evaluated using 5.1 and 5.2 (written version), 3.1, plus the specific two to three SLOs that you choose in collaboration at the beginning of the semester (see rubric here). Please note that no one's work is being evaluated on the full set of SLO criteria – just 5.1, 5.2, 3.1 and the additional two or three SLOs selected as particularly relevant for your project. The MPA SLOs form a thread that runs throughout the capstone project from start to finish, and are taken into account in the instructor evaluation of your work. As you work on your project during the semester, keep those SLOs and their evaluation criteria front of mind; if you start to believe an SLO is no longer a good fit for your project, get in touch with your instructor right away.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Course Meetings

The Capstone course has up to four meetings:

(1) a beginning of semester **ORIENTATION MEETING** (RECORDED) where students will meet with the course instructor to discuss the structure of the capstone program and go over the syllabus; preliminary chat about possible ideas for projects can be included in this phase. Anyone unable to attend this meeting must watch the recording.

(2) a **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT MEETING** (mandatory at the instructor's discretion, depending on the first Project Information Sheet submitted by the student) early in the semester, where students work with the instructor to refine ideas for project proposal (this may be handled individually or as a group at the discretion of the instructor) – the **Project Information Sheet** (included at the end of this syllabus, before the Appendices) will be prepared and submitted by the student before this discussion.

(3) a **MILESTONE MEETING** (mandatory) around the middle of the term at a date specified by the Course Instructor (this may be handled individually or as a group at the discretion of the instructor) where you will present your project to date; the **2-Page Project Progress Report** will be prepared and submitted by the student before this meeting.

(4) the **PROJECT PRESENTATIONS MEETING (RECORDED)** (mandatory) at which students deliver their **Final Presentation** to the group.

Outside of these meetings, each student will work independently, and since the project is intended to represent the culmination of the student's work in the MPA program, each student will be responsible for designing and conducting all aspects of the project (in consultation with the Course Instructor). During the semester the Course Instructor will be available as a coach, mentor, and resource person. Because of the independent nature of the capstone project, much communication between students and the Course Instructor will occur via e-mail and/or telephone or Zoom meeting.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)/CITI Training
All students are required to complete a specific module of online CITI Training. This is free for TSU students. Instructions are provided under Assignment 2 towards the back of the syllabus.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND WEIGHT IN GRADE
Instructions and in some cases templates for these assignments are included later in this syllabus.

PASS/FAIL ASSIGNMENTS

- MOU Signature page – 1%
- Citi Training Completion Certificate – 2%

For the following pass/fail assignments, multiple revisions may be required to pass and proceed with the project.

- Project Information Sheet – 2%
- Proposed References List - 2% (must include at least 15 references, of which at least 7 are journal articles)
- 2-page Project Progress Report (due before mandatory MILESTONE MEETING) – 2%
- Milestone Presentation Slides (due by 11:59 pm the night of the Milestone Meeting) – 2%
- Skeleton Outline of Capstone Final Paper – 1%
- Detailed Outline of Capstone Final Paper – 4%

ASSIGNMENTS GRADED ON A 100-POINT SCALE

- Final Project Paper – 50%
- Final Presentation – 25%
- Program Competencies Memo – 9%

RECOMMENDED/OPTIONAL BOOKS
- There are no required books to purchase for this course. Instead, students are expected to utilize relevant books and texts from their MPA coursework, as well as to conduct original library and scholarly database research using peer-reviewed journal articles (see Appendix 1) and other appropriate professional and organizational resources. Appendix 2 contains a list of recommended or optional books that students could seek to borrow from the library, rent, or purchase to assist them with their project. Nonetheless, the specific texts and resources needed will largely be determined by the nature of each student's project. You will get feedback on your proposed list of references from your instructor during the semester and can ask questions about sources you are unsure of any time.

COURSE SCHEDULE – ALL TIMES ARE CENTRAL TIME ZONE. ALL FILES TO BE TURNED INTO APPROPRIATE ELEARN DROPBOXES.

	DATE AND TIME	DESCRIPTION
MEETING	**LIVE ZOOM MEETING at DATE and TIME:** This meeting will be recorded for those unable to attend, but attendance is encouraged if possible.	- Attend ORIENTATION MEETING Students will meet with the course instructor to discuss the structure of the capstone program, as well as brainstorm ideas for project topics. Participate in the Introduction Discussion, complete the MOU in this syllabus after reading the syllabus and complete the CITI training (instructions given by the instructor in eLearn)
WORK DUE	DUE BY	- Participate in **Introduction Discussion** - Upload **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** (included in this syllabus) - Upload **CITI training certificate**
WORK DUE	DUE BY →REVISED VERSION DUE IF REQUIRED BY	- Upload **PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET** (included in this syllabus) Instructor will provide rapid feedback on project information sheet and schedule follow-up workshop meeting with student(s) as needed. Revision and resubmission of sheet may be required if project is altered based on instructor feedback to student.
WORK DUE	DUE BY	- Upload **PROPOSED REFERENCE LIST** (included in this syllabus)
WORK DUE	DUE BY	- Upload **2-PAGE PROGRESS REPORT** (included in this syllabus)
MEETING and WORK DUE	**LIVE ZOOM MEETING at DATE and TIME:** **WORK DUE:** presentation at the meeting plus slides uploaded to dropbox by 11:59 pm the night of the meeting **If you have an unavoidable conflict let the instructor know at the beginning of course.** All students in group will benefit from hearing updates from the others.	- Attend and **PRESENT** updates at MILESTONE MEETING - Upload **SLIDES** used by 11:59 pm the evening of the Milestone Meeting At this meeting, students will provide updates on the current state of projects and discuss any difficulties or problems. Faculty member may require emailing of "skeleton outline" with headings planned for the paper for feedback following the milestone meeting. If so, any feedback should be taken into account in preparation of the detailed paper outline (see below).
WORK DUE	DUE BY	- Upload **SKELETON OUTLINE**
WORK DUE	DUE BY	- Upload **DETAILED PROJECT PAPER OUTLINE**
MEETING and WORK DUE	**LIVE ZOOM MEETING at DATE and TIME:** **WORK DUE:** presentation at the meeting plus slides uploaded to dropbox by 11:59 pm the night of the meeting **If you have an unavoidable conflict let the instructor know at the beginning of course.** Attendance is **mandatory** unless alternative arranged in advance with instructor.	- Give your **FINAL PRESENTATION** at the PROJECT PRESENTATION MEETING - Upload **SLIDES** used by 11:59 pm the evening of the presentation Students give their final project presentation including slides; depending on size of class this may be broken into multiple sessions at instructor discretion). Project Presentations will be RECORDED by the instructor.
WORK DUE	DUE BY	- Upload **PROJECT FINAL PAPER** (instructions in this syllabus)
WORK DUE	DUE BY	- Upload **PROGRAM COMPETENCIES MEMO** (instructions in this syllabus)

REQUIRED MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

Your capstone major assignments will take the form of an independent project, which will be composed of two elements (a final project paper and a presentation). Additionally, you will develop a reflective Program Competencies Memo as you complete the project.

Capstone Project, Final Paper, and Presentation

Nature of Project

The issue/topic to be addressed via the Capstone Project, developed in consultation with the organization (if applicable) and the Course Instructor, should directly relate to the student's current or goal professional career. The project may concern a subject *internal* to the organization (e.g. human resources management, financial analysis, strategic planning) or *external* to the organization (e.g. analysis of a public policy that impacts the organization, implementation of a program related to the organization). Discussions with the course instructor at the beginning of the semester will help students sort out what topic may be best to address with the project.

Regardless of the project approach or methodology used, the capstone project should explicitly apply concepts drawn from MPA course work, reading, and practice that aid in understanding the political, social, economic, managerial, or other factors relevant to the context of the project. The outcome should be an improved understanding of professional practice in a public or non-profit organization or program, or a public policy. The project may also result in recommendations for action that could inform change. The MPA capstone is not a research-focused master's thesis (which would entail more than one semester, among other differences), but instead a professional public/nonprofit administration- or policy-focused project that prioritizes the application of concepts and skills acquired during MPA coursework.

You will undertake an independent project that meets the following guidelines:

(a) the project must be approved by the Course Instructor before detailed work begins via the Project Information Sheet, feedback, and revision if necessary;

(b) the project should be of practical use to an organization or relevant to policy as judged by the instructor;

(c) organization-focused projects should *not* already be a routine part of a student's ongoing work responsibilities – but they MAY be conducted for your current work organization or an organization you are involved with on a voluntary basis; and

(d) given the limited time available for development and completion of the one-semester project and the scale of the capstone requirement (which is NOT equivalent to a master's thesis), *no project undertaken for this course shall be of a nature to require IRB human subjects approval without discussion and approval from the instructor, and without that NO research should be undertaken involving human subjects in any way for projects. The purpose of your CITI training at the beginning of the course is in part to ensure you don't err and engage in research that should have received prior IRB approval, as well as to improve your overall research literacy.*

There are many different approaches that a student could take and successfully complete the Capstone Project. The following is a partial list of approaches and tools/methods around which a student could build their project and final deliverables; think back to the *specific courses and electives* you took to review others. You should be drawing on your MPA degree-related skills and content for the project, not attempting a completely new skill that was not included in the program or using a skill you have outside the program already from past work experience. However, the capstone can be a chance to more fully practice a skill that was included in a course but not a focus of a past assignment!

- o Management analysis (including tools such as SWOT analysis; development of detailed cost estimate and budget proposal for a new program; logic model development for a program; or other appropriate tool)

- o   Management plan (ex. strategic plan; fundraising plan; social marketing policy or plan)
- o   Performance measure development
- o   Policy problem analysis; policy benchmarking study; stakeholder analysis
- o   Policy history (investigation of the development, adoption, and implementation of a policy; or how policy evolved in a particular arena)
- o   Work process analysis/process improvement (including tools such as root cause analysis, flowchart development)
- o   Project plan (including charter, Gantt chart, etc.)
- o   Quantitative analysis of publicly available non-human data
- o   Organizational analysis (ex. proposed redesign of org chart/roles and responsibilities)
- o   Research Project Proposal (for research projects that are too large in scale and/or involve human subjects)

Program Competencies Memo

In addition to the Capstone Project Paper, students are required to develop a Program Competencies Memo (2-3 pages), wherein the student reports how the competency student learning outcomes (at least 3), knowledge, and skills gained from MPA courses impacted the student's ability to complete their project. Please refer to full list of MPA Program-level competencies and associated student learning outcomes at the end of this syllabus. *Instructions for the memo are included in this syllabus at the end.*

COURSE POLICIES

Grading

Submitting work on time

Assignments are due to the appropriate eLearn dropbox by 11:59PM on the due date. Remember that if the www.tnstate.edu website is down, you should try to access eLearn directly at https://elearn.tnstate.edu/. If you are unable to submit to eLearn, you must submit your assignment BY EMAIL TO your instructor's tnstate.edu address BY THE DUE DATE/TIME. Plan so that last-minute computer issues do not derail your submission of assignments on time.

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I reserve the right <u>not</u> to accept late work for a grade, but I often do give partial credit depending on the circumstances. All deadlines are announced in advance to allow you to plan for completion. Late work may be assessed a small penalty, a substantial penalty or receive a zero depending on the specific circumstances and degree of lateness.

➔ **If you had a formal mitigating circumstance** such as a sudden medical issue, an accident or a bereavement, please notify me as soon as you are able so we can work out a plan for completion.

➔ **If you did *not* have a formal mitigating circumstance but want to have a chance at partial credit** (ex. you forgot; you had a last-minute technical issue; you simply didn't leave yourself enough time to complete the work), you should do the following:

- • **turn in what you have done by the due date and time, even if not complete**;

  AND no matter what,

- • **complete the assignment and get it to me as soon as possible after the deadline**.

You should NOT wait for me to notice that you didn't do something or didn't upload complete work, and expect me to come asking you about it before completing it - it is *your* responsibility to proactively follow up with completed work as soon as you can do so. Dropboxes should still allow you to submit the work late, though they are marked with the due date.

For instance, if you have nothing done on an assignment you have known about for a month, that will be handled differently than if you had it mostly done, turned in what you had complete by the deadline and submitted the complete version the next day. Even if you didn't submit *anything* on time, it is also still better to *proactively* turn in completed work as soon as possible than to do nothing -- or just to email me that you didn't do it, and then not take any further action. In graduate-level studies, the instructor should not need to come after you looking for assigned work you didn't turn in or did not complete.

Capstone-specific note: Timeliness is even more of the essence in a graduation-requirement course like the Capstone, which can affect your ability to finish your degree on the desired schedule. The course IS the capstone project, and you can't procrastinate and throw the project and deliverables together in the last couple weeks of the course and expect to generate quality work and a passing grade. Students who do not successfully complete the project on time and with a course grade of C or above (along with meeting all other curricular, program, Graduate School, and University requirements) cannot graduate, so **not finishing your project on schedule WILL PREVENT YOU FROM GRADUATING if you are taking the Capstone in your final semester of coursework**. Assignment weights are designed so that you cannot pass this course if you don't pass the major project portion (final paper, presentation, and competency memo). You may not walk in Commencement exercises in the semester you take the course if you have not successfully completed your Capstone project on time, even if all other requirements have been met outside of this course.

The value I emphasize in making decisions about late work in cases without formal mitigating circumstances (ex. medical issue, bereavement, accident, etc.) is *equity*, which includes weighing the efforts of students who also had demands on their time, but submitted work on time nonetheless. Most of the students in our program work full-time, and many have additional family and voluntary service commitments. Forgetting a deadline or not planning well to allow completion of work, given other demands on your time, is not a sufficient reason for not submitting an assignment on time. Job expectations and non-emergency family events are also time commitments you should seek to plan around, not appeal to at the last minute as an excuse. Online courses offer students some desired flexibility – but the format requires careful time management, self-motivation and attention to deadlines. The assignment of deadlines for assignments is to facilitate assessment and feedback that helps your academic growth during the semester, and to provide structure that prevents you from getting into a hole time-wise from which it's difficult to dig out.

Grade of Incomplete

Timely completion of each assignment according to the course schedule is required for the student to continue to the next phase of the project. Students who fall behind in the course, or whose work is not deemed to be sufficiently completed at each stage, may be asked to withdraw at the course instructor's discretion. Students who are unable to complete their project but have been both timely and maintained good-faith efforts to complete each phase of their project, with an estimation by the course instructor of approximately 80% of the course having been completed with a passing grade, may be approved by the course instructor to receive a grade of "I" (incomplete) at the end of the semester. No student should assume on their own that the "I" will be an option available simply based on getting a slow start; falling behind in course requirements; getting busy at work; or performing poorly on early assessments; the Incomplete grade is intended to address unusual situations such as medical emergencies arising in the last weeks of the semester. Stay in communication with the instructor throughout the semester and seek help quickly if concerns or problems arise – don't "fall off the radar."

- **Attendance in an online course is recorded by log-in and submission of required work on time according to the syllabus and course schedule.** A student's lack of timely participation in course requirements is an indicator of non-attendance, and faculty are required to report this status to the University at specific dates during the semester in accordance with rules concerning Financial Aid. See also the policy below on dropping or withdrawing from a class.

- **Only official, documented excuses will be accepted for missing the milestone and presentation meetings**. If you anticipate missing an exam for a reason known in advance, you must notify the instructor as far in advance as possible to determine alternative arrangements. This is much preferable to missing the meeting without notifying and contacting afterwards.

Syllabus and course schedule adjustment

I reserve the right to adjust this syllabus and topic pacing in eLearn modules as the semester proceeds based on class progress and development, with notice to students. You are responsible for keeping up with assignments and due dates. Any substantive changes will be announced in our eLearn course homepage News area http://padm6230.wordpress.com/. Enable notifications in eLearn so that you receive an email or text when an update is posted there (click on your profile icon in the upper right corner of the eLearn window, you will see an option for Notifications settings), or use the Pulse app.

Quality of written work

As students and as professionals in training, I expect you to adhere to a high standard in your written work. Leave yourself time to reread and revise written work before the due date. Grammar and spelling errors distract the reader and lessen your credibility, in the classroom as in the workplace, and will affect the evaluation of your work.

Learning environment

You are expected to conduct yourself with civility and professionalism in class and online, so that a learning environment is maintained for all. The online setting offers many benefits for learning and engagement with your peers. However, to maintain these benefits we must adhere to norms about communicating respectfully, even when we have differences. In written exchanges, it is easy for the tone of a communication to be misconstrued, so please re-read your text with that in mind before posting or emailing. Sometimes, questioning to understand more about why someone took a particular position is more effective than simply attempting to rebut it outright. When asserting a claim, support your claim with evidence grounded in course materials or in other legitimate sources as practice for building effective arguments as a professional. You can learn more about evaluating sources for legitimacy and how to give credit for information from sources at our Departmental communications resource page, http://bit.ly/mpacommunication. Some of our writing in the course is highly formal (for instance, memos and course projects), while other writing (in online discussions) may be less formal -- but still needs to be professional and civil. Please bear in mind also that sharing of private information (whether about yourself, another person, or a particular organization you have experience with) should be avoided. In discussion posts, write in full sentences, avoid a "texting" style, and include a meaningful subject line for your thread – that will help others to engage with you more easily. Keep your comments and posts on topic, and consider how you are contributing to the overall flow of the discussion; an asynchronous online discussion is a unique kind of collaborative effort that becomes more valuable for all participants the more we adhere to these aspects.

When writing emails to others in this course – peers or instructors – please use a business-appropriate tone and follow the usual business email etiquette. This is a core course in a professional program, and you should maintain the same standards you would adhere to in the workplace. A baseline for course-related communications to the instructor should be to always include a meaningful subject line, begin your message with a salutation reflecting your addressee's role (for example, Dear Dr. So-and-so or Dear Professor So-and-so), and identify what course you are in, prior to jumping into a request or question. That last piece (course identification) helps make it easier to respond promptly to your question, if the course is not clear from the subject line or context – particularly earlier in the semester

before we have gotten to know each other in a particular course. I often have courses with similar names in the same semester so I appreciate the course number rather than "I'm in your budgeting course" <smile>. Look at course emails as an opportunity to practice effective professional communication!

Policy regarding use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in this course

Intellectual honesty is vital to an academic community and for fair evaluation of your work. Generative AI including but not limited to ChatGPT is not permitted for any assignment in this course unless specifically and explicitly permitted by the instructor in which case further written instructions will be given. Use of such tools in this course in any scenario in which those written instructions/permission were NOT given will violate the University Code of Honor Policy and will be treated as plagiarism. Faculty within the Department of Public Administrative are permitted to choose different options in terms of permitting or not permitting the use of Generative AI (including but not limited to ChatGPT) in their courses, including the option to treat its use as academic dishonesty as described here. *Do not assume* that what is permitted in one class will be permitted in another: read every syllabus carefully and ask the instructor to clarify any questions regarding its use.

Academic honesty and plagiarism

[see the section above on use of Generative AI as well]

The MPA program mission states, "As instructors and advisors, we work closely with students to support both their classroom and career achievement; in return, **students are expected to pursue academic excellence and demonstrate integrity**" [emphasis added]. My actions regarding plagiarism on an assignment will depend on the severity of the individual case as well as whether previous instances have already occurred. In a severe case, I may elect to assign a grade of zero for the assignment or pursue other options according to TSU policy as described in the TSU Student Handbook. In summary, you are expected to do your own work and follow academic standards rigorously in crediting the ideas, words and findings of others. Academic honesty is the foundation of the scholarly pursuit of knowledge; if you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism or how to handle a specific instance of crediting another individual's work, feel free to bring these questions to me. In general, should you have questions about academic honesty, your performance, or any other issue concerning this course, I encourage you to talk with me as soon as the concern arises throughout the semester. Problems in this area sometimes arise because of feeling pressured as a deadline approaches; promptly bringing questions and problems to the instructor can help to prevent this situation. Plagiarized work is never an improvement on whatever original work with correct citations (credit given to sources) you can generate on your own. This course is part of your training as a scholar and a professional, and only evaluation of your genuine effort can serve the learning objective. Plagiarism, even unintentional, and academic dishonesty are inconsistent with these statements.

I expect that you have read carefully and understood all resources I provide to you in the statement below and in eLearn regarding avoidance of plagiarism, as well as this handout (from the Writing Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison) before you turn in any written work in this class, and I expect you to reflect that understanding in your writing process and written work. Plagiarism guidelines apply for online discussion work, written exam work, and written assignments including memos, papers, discussion posts if present in course, and presentation slides. Presentations delivered orally also should not improperly use the words of others without attribution.

Statement on academic responsibility and written work
The goal of your instructor in sharing this statement with you is to help in your professional formation; and to proactively prepare you to meet the expectations others have – in the workplace and in the academy – of those who hold the degree you seek. Plagiarism (unintentional or intentional) and academic dishonesty take a number of forms of a range of severity, including intentionally or unintentionally misrepresenting others' words, findings and ideas as your own; incomplete paraphrasing of others' words even if a citation to the source is included ("patchwork paraphrase"); modeling your entire, or large parts of your paper, on the structure of another paper's text (topics covered, flow of ideas); turning in work (in whole or in part) which you wrote for another class, as though it were new work written for this class; turning in work written by another person or with another person as though it were your own individual work. An Academic Integrity statement is included in the TSU Graduate Catalog and the TSU Student Handbook states that

"…Students guilty of academic misconduct [defined earlier in section as plagiarism, cheating, or fabrication], either directly or indirectly through participation or assistance, are immediately responsible to the instructor of the class. The instructor has the authority to assign an appropriate grade for the exercise or examination, proportional to the nature and extent of academic misconduct, including an "F" for the assignment/test or an "F" in the course" (TSU Student Handbook 2020-21, p. 17). Less severe deductions may occur for less severe issues. Although different genres of writing and communication, as well as different cultures and periods of human history, may differ in standards applied in this area, this section is meant to serve as a reminder of the standards which apply to work *in this course* and in many public and nonprofit service contexts. Learning to properly draw upon *and document the origin of* ideas, facts, findings, and quotations from sources is an essential competency for professionals in public service, and a quick Google search of "plagiarism firing" at any point in time will show you that the behavior can have real-world consequences in the public and private sectors. Furthermore, in a rapidly evolving society where artificial intelligence and machine learning are automating many human tasks at higher and higher skill levels, pushing yourself to learn to write professionally -- beyond patching together bits of language available online -- is a survival skill, as we all seek to preserve our distinctive value in the workplace and contribute effectively to social progress.

Resources explaining plagiarism and the mechanisms of proper academic attribution in detail, including the issue of incomplete or patchwork paraphrase, have been made available to you in the support modules in eLearn for this course, and it is your responsibility to explore them fully prior to writing for this course. These resources also include strategies for writing workflow that help avoid inadvertent plagiarism. You may ask your instructor in private or in class to clarify any questions about this statement as well as general or specific instances of properly representing others' words, ideas and findings, and it is your responsibility to seek such assistance as needed. Given that the syllabus includes this section, the course online includes resources to assist you, and that you can ask the instructor for assistance with questions as you work on an assignment, the claim of ignorance of the accepted academic standards for original work and plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse and will not prevent penalty for this behavior.

The ease of certain acts – such as "copy and paste" of electronic text – make it possible to lose track of what words and ideas are yours, and which were the authors', in your notes. Careful and systematic research and note-taking practices are necessary to avoid plagiarism. While online sources for determining degree of textual similarity (such as TurnItIn) provide numerical estimates of the percent of similarity, there is no such thing as an "acceptable" threshold level of misrepresenting of others' words, findings and ideas as your own. In a long document, even a single paragraph which is a patchwork paraphrase could be considered plagiarism and have serious consequences - but would receive a low "score" using TurnItIn's metric.

The goals of writing assigned in this course include:

- To permit the assessment of your understanding of materials you have read
- To permit the assessment of your ability to synthesize information, findings and ideas of others in a fluent, organized fashion, without misrepresenting them as your own
- To permit the assessment of your ability to derive new insights from existing knowledge.

Writing in a way that communicates accurately, clearly, and honestly is hard, frustrating and time-consuming – but only your dogged and repeated attempts to produce such writing will help you to improve; build confidence; and allow assessment of your progress. By your pursuit of this degree, you are indicating your sincere commitment to the professional standards of its activities, including writing.

The following are examples of common ways in plagiarism and academic dishonesty may occur in written assignments.

I. Inappropriate paraphrasing, quotation, and citation include:

(A) Including a direct quote, within quotation marks, without citing the source. You have not provided the source of the material, even though you have indicated (with quotes) that it is not your own.

(B) Incorporating facts, findings, or ideas from a source into your writing and including an in-text citation of the source but failing to paraphrase the original wording of the source either completely or partially (i.e., incomplete or patchwork paraphrase). This is a very common but serious form of plagiarism, and it is *not* acceptable even if unintentional. You have given credit for the *content* but not the *wording* of the source. You must ensure that your note-taking and writing procedures allow you to keep track of wording that is your own versus that of the source, to avoid unintentionally creating this problem.

(C) Incorporating facts, findings, or ideas from a source into your writing by expressing them in your own words (properly paraphrased and summarized), but without citing the original source. Here you have not given credit for the *content* of the source although you have changed the *wording*.

(D) Incorporating facts, findings, or ideas from a source into your writing and failing to fully paraphrase the original wording of the source either completely or partially (incomplete or patchwork paraphrase) as well as failing to cite the original source. Here you have appropriated *both* the wording and content of the source.

II. Academic dishonesty includes:

(A) Modeling your entire paper, or large parts of your paper, on the structure of another paper's text (topics covered, flow of ideas).

(B) Turning in a paper you have written for another class or using parts of a paper you have written for another class, without consulting the instructor in advance to find out if this is acceptable.

(C) Misrepresenting another person's work, or work done in collaboration with another person, as your own individual work (even with that person's consent).

(D) Taking another person's work without their knowledge and submitting all or part as if it were your own work.

(E) Buying a paper or other assignment from another individual and submitting part or all of it as if it were your own work.

III. Common poor writing practices connected with giving credit for and use of material from other sources, which can affect your grade but which do not constitute plagiarism:

(A) **Errors in details of formatting citation or references:** You should follow the conventions of whatever formatting system your instructor requests, i.e., APA or other system. The point of formatting systems is to ensure that you include each piece of bibliographic information, and that you do so in a way that makes it easy for the reader to find the source. All the major styles have detailed guides available online and your instructor can recommend one to you.

(B) **Over-reliance on quotes:** Trying to avoid plagiarism, you should *not* take the shortcut of stringing together a paper out of many quotes. Quotes should only be used sparingly. Examples of times when it is appropriate to use quotes include: when the source author has coined a particularly apt phrase; when you need repeat an exact definition, for example from a regulation, which is critical for the topic of the paper; or when reporting an informant's exact words, for example in qualitative research. Otherwise summarize and paraphrase (with proper citations) rather than using quotations. If your paper is mostly quotes, clearly you have not done much integration, analysis or synthesis of the material you have read. Scientific papers have *much* fewer quotes than, for example, literature criticism papers you may have done in a college English class.

(C) **Stand-alone quotes:** Any quotes you do feel are justified to include should have an introductory phrase which helps it to fit in to the flow of your text – not just as an isolated chunk. For example, this sentence introduces the quote in a way that makes it clear what the point is: In contrast to Smith (1988), Jones (2000) found in a study of New York City subway riders that on average, "coffee is preferred to tea as a commuting beverage." [A poorly-written version (with a quote left "standing alone") might look like: Jones (2000) studied New York City subway riders. "Coffee is preferred to tea as a commuting beverage" (Jones 2000).]

Ethics and professional preparation

The focus of this course is on concepts and practice related to public policy and administration. In application of this and other content learned in your program of study, you should be guided by the ethical standards of your field. I encourage you to consult the ethical code of the professional organization(s) relevant to your field of interest, and to continue to seek out information on their application throughout your studies. Bear in mind that the MPA mission states, that "Our MPA program prepares students, as **ethical** public and nonprofit managers and leaders, to respond *equitably*, *effectively*, and *efficiently* to the needs of a *diverse* society." [bold emphasis added]

- [American Society for Public Administration](#) [Code of Ethics](#) [http://www.aspanet.org/scriptcontent/index_codeofethics.cfm](#)

RESOURCES

Academic Calendar

The [academic calendar](#) contains critical dates for all students to know, including registration open dates, first day of classes, last day to withdraw from a course or from the University, and so on.

The Writing Center

Students needing assistance with writing skills should seek assistance from the [TSU Writing Center](#). The purpose of the center is to support those members of the University community who are seeking to become strong, independent writers. If the Course Instructor determines (based on a review of drafts) that the student needs assistance with writing, then the student may be required to schedule and attend a session with a TSU Writing Center Tutor. They also offer a **Virtual Writing Center** for those unable to attend an appointment in person and University-wide workshops and in-class workshops at the instructor's request.

MPA Communication Resources

The department maintains a portal to a variety of resources that may be beneficial to you in preparing your project deliverables at [http://bit.ly/mpacommunication](#). You are encouraged to make use of it.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

Accommodation and accessibility

Please see the University policy statement on individual accommodation included towards the end of this syllabus. Regardless of accommodation status, if you have an *accessibility* issue with any materials provided in eLearn or other items please notify me of the issue as soon as possible.

Dropping or withdrawing from a class

I cannot withdraw you from the class myself; if you want to withdraw, you need to complete the required actions in myTSU (at the Banner Services link) by the last date of possible withdrawal (you are responsible for knowing this date, always see the appropriate [TSU Academic Calendar](#)). Faculty are, however, obligated to report non-attendance or stopped attendance at certain intervals during the semester which can affect financial aid. If you stop fulfilling class requirements but do not take the proper actions to withdraw by the deadline, and you remain on my roster at the end of the semester, you receive a failing grade due to failure to complete the minimum required elements of the course. Incompletes may be given only after consultation with me, with documentation of the official reason, and for students *who completed coursework satisfactorily past the point of the withdrawal deadline;* they are rare and meant for unusual circumstances that arise late in the semester course (such as medical emergency, bereavement, car accident) that prevent a student from completing the last items due in the course. Incomplete grades turn to an F automatically at the end of the next regular (fall or spring) semester if the student does not complete the required tasks on the schedule set by the instructor on the agreed upon plan in time for the final grade to be provided to Records for updating (before

finals week). If you want to withdraw from a single course, while remaining in another course, you use the course withdrawal form and will need to get the Department Chair's signature (Dr. Streams) before you send the form to the Records office. If you want to withdraw from *all* the course(s) you are registered for in a semester, that is "University Withdrawal" and you use the University Withdrawal form; submit it to Records directly but please copy Dr. Streams. If you withdraw from the University, you will need to apply for readmission to come back. This is not a full application like you did at the start -- contact Dr. Streams for current instructions on readmission. Leave at least a month or more before registration opens for the semester in which you want to return to allow for the readmission process and any aid/account matters to be resolved.

Costs of late schedule adjustment/registration, withdrawing from classes

Late registration/add/drop can incur a fee, and "late" begins on Day 1 of the semester (see the Academic Calendar for dates of add/drop). Dropping or withdrawing from a class incurs an increasing penalty beginning on the first day of the semester and rising to full cost of the course well before the withdrawal deadline itself -- see the Bursar's webpage for the proration schedule. Impact of retakes, withdrawals, and other issues with course completion or academic progress on financial aid is an individual situation -- any questions about aid must be directed to the Financial Aid Office. Non-financial aid-related questions about your balance and student account should go to the Bursar's Office. Always have your schedule set in place before the first day of classes with appropriate class(es) for your program of study, and with your balance or payment plan settled, to avoid problems and risk of extra costs. Registrations may be purged by the University at a certain point in semester for non- payment, without reinstatement. It is up to the student to check if their registration was purged for nonpayment and if not to withdraw formally.

Disability accommodation statement

TSU is committed to creating inclusive learning environments and providing all students with opportunities to learn and excel in their course of study. Any student with a disability or condition which might interfere with class performance or attendance may arrange for reasonable accommodations by visiting the Office of Disability Services (ODS). ODS can be reached at 963-7400 or www.tnstate.edu/disabilityservices. You will be required to speak with ODS staff and provide documentation of the need for an accommodation. If you qualify for an accommodation, you will be provided with a document stating what type of instructional accommodations are permitted to be made by the instructor. It is your responsibility to give a copy of this document to the instructor as soon as you receive it. Accommodations can only be provided after the instructor receives the accommodation instructions from ODS; accommodations are not retroactive.   You must follow this process for each semester that you require accommodations. Please visit the ODS website for details on the process and more information; the process should be carried out as early in the semester as possible for an existing need.

Student ID

TSU students at all levels are expected to have their IDs with them any time they are physically on campus, and security officers may ask you to show it when you enter the building (ID office and policy).

Course program of study (CPoS) requirements

https://www.tnstate.edu/financial_aid/cpos.aspx. Federal financial aid will NOT PAY for any courses not showing in your program of study in DegreeWorks (access via DegreeWorks link under Student Services in myTSU; it is farther down than Banner Services link). While some common substitutions an advisor may make have been coded into the system, less common substitutions have not. Additionally, certain courses/scenarios may not be accurately assessed by the system. It is the student's responsibility to check DegreeWorks after registering to check if any registered courses are showing as "Fall Through" (these are the course(s) that will generate a CPOS alert/flag in the financial aid system) -- those courses will NOT be covered for by financial aid unless proper, prompt action is taken. Furthermore, if a CPOS alert on one course drops your "financial aid enrollment" below 6 credits, NO financial aid can be released even if the second course is in CPOS because Federal financial aid requires graduate students to be taking at least six credits. You must check DegreeWorks after every registration *OR change in registration* to make sure no current courses are listed under "Fall Through" or "Additional Courses" (look below the Major Requirements section). If you see any courses in those areas,

contact Dr. Streams immediately at mstreams@tnstate.edu; she will advise you if it is not the right course to take or else request the Graduate School to code in the substitution in DegreeWorks. Once the change is made in DegreeWorks, it can take up to two full business days for it to reflect in CPoS so do not delay. You should **also** check your CPoS record in myTSU>Banner Services>Financial Aid [tab]>CPoS - Course program of study [link]. CPoS should show your current registrations – verify that it shows the **same total** of aid eligible credits as you are enrolled (both must be 6 or more to receive any aid). If there is still a difference between the two totals after several days have elapsed since a correction in DegreeWorks, you need to seek advising right away just like with the Fall-through class in DegreeWorks. All issues must be resolved well before Day 14 into the fall or spring semester (weekends count) because on Day 14, financial aid enrollment is "frozen." The equivalent freeze date may be different in summer terms (ask Financial Aid for exact date); yet another reason to get any issues resolved before the first day of classes every time.

TSU Graduate School Policies – a reminder

All TSU graduate students are subject to a set of policies regarding admission, retention, graduate probation and suspension, definition of good standing, and a variety of other matters. You are responsible for knowing and abiding by these policies, described in the front portion of the Graduate Catalog (other year catalogs available from the drop-down menu in upper right). Departmental/program level policies also apply, described in the College of Public Service section of the Graduate Catalog, and you should know and abide by these policies as well. Many helpful resources, required forms and FAQs are made available to you regarding our program on the CPS website; these include the MPA handbook and the PhD handbook; and program information for the graduate certificates in public policy, nonprofit management, public administration executive leadership, and local government management. Students should seek advising regarding course selection prior to each semester to ensure they are on track, given their program of admission.

A few things to keep in mind from Graduate School policy are summarized here for convenience (NB: this document does not supersede the applicable Catalog, and not all policies are summarized here). You will not complete any program or degree to which you have not been formally admitted, meeting all admissions conditions. You may not sit for a benchmark exam or receive a degree or certificate if you do not have a cumulative TSU graduate GPA of 3.0 or better (i.e., you are not in "good standing"). You may only take a given course once to replace a grade, and the second grade replaces the first. Financial aid may not pay for a retake, see Financial Aid office webpage for details. You may only retake a total of two courses counting towards satisfaction of program curricular requirements. Grades of D or F count towards the GPA but do not count towards meeting certificate or degree curricular requirements (note that the PhD has more stringent GPA requirements for good standing; see the CPS section of the relevant Graduate Catalog). Incomplete or "I" grades turn to an F automatically if the student does not satisfactorily complete the agreed-upon course activities determined by the instructor on the required timeline (see the Graduate Catalog for more information).

The TSU Graduate School has the following **time limits on use of courses towards a program**: Graduate Certificate (on its own) - 3 years; Master's Degree - 6 years; Doctorate - 10 years. Courses "expire" as they age past those limits, while they remain on your transcript they cannot be used to meet degree requirements. Policies on "stopping the clock" and seeking to appeal for time extension are included in the Graduate Catalog. It is the student's responsibility to remain aware of applicable time limits and to meet them; successful appeal for time extension is NOT guaranteed, and even in a successful appeal you can be required to retake some courses that have expired to graduate as part of the revalidation plan (Graduate Catalog as of 7/31/2024).

Students in any program (degree or certificate) must **apply for graduation** inside myTSU (Banner Services link; create separate graduation applications for MPA and certificate, if applicable) at the beginning of the semester in which they intend to graduate or complete a certificate by the deadline specified on the University website. If a student does not actually graduate in that semester, they must reapply in the subsequent semester in which they plan to graduate.

See the MPA Handbook and the Graduate Catalog (other year catalogs available from the drop-down menu in upper right) for details and information on other program elements such as the internship requirement and the capstone project/course.

Course evaluations

University-wide student course evaluations at TSU are conducted online inside myTSU (fall and spring). It is expected that all students in the course will complete the brief online evaluation process in order to provide important feedback to the instructor and the University, which will benefit future students. Student course evaluations are found at mytsu.tnstate.edu.

Every semester (Fall, Spring, Summer), students taking PADM courses are also requested to complete a departmental end-of-course survey which is focused on the course content. This survey may be accessed at http://bit.ly/tsu_dpa_eoc; complete it one time for each course taken during the semester.

Sexual misconduct, domestic/dating violence, stalking

TSU recognizes the importance of providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or is experiencing any of these incidents, there are resources to assist you in the areas of accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and making referrals for assistance with legal protective orders and more.

Please be aware that most TSU employees, including faculty and instructors, are "responsible employees", meaning that they are required to report incidents of sexual violence, domestic/dating violence or stalking. **This means that if you tell me [or email me] about a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, I must report the information to the Title IX Coordinator.** Although I must report the situation, you will still have options about how your situation will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

You are encouraged to contact TSU's Title IX Coordinator to report any incidents of sexual harassment, sexual violence, domestic/dating violence or stalking. The Title IX coordinator is located in the Office of Equity and Inclusion (615-963-7435 or equity@tnstate.edu; General Services Bldg. (main campus) Room 210). For more information about Title IX and TSU's SART or policies and procedures regarding sexual, domestic/dating violence and stalking please visit: www.tnstate.edu/equity.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, who is not required to report, you can contact the TSU Counseling Center, located in the basement of Wilson Hall, at 963-5611 or TSU Student Health Services, located in the Floyd Payne Campus Center room 304, at 963-5084. You may also contact the following off campus resources: Sexual Assault Center of Nashville at 1-800-879-1999 or www.sacenter.org or the Tennessee Coalition to End Domestic & Sexual Violence at 1-800-289-9018, 615-386-9406 or www.tncoalition.org.

Harassment & discrimination

Tennessee State University is firmly committed to compliance with all federal, state and local laws that prohibit harassment and discrimination based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability, religion, retaliation, veteran status and other protected categories. TSU will not subject any student to discrimination or harassment and no student shall be excluded from participation in nor denied the benefits of any educational program based on their protected class. If a student believes they have been discriminated against or harassed because of a protected class, they are encouraged to contact the Office of Equity and Inclusion at 615-963-7435 or equity@tnstate.edu. This website contains contact information for OEI staff and more information: www.tnstate.edu/equity.

APPENDIX I – PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION JOURNALS

Below is a list of acceptable academic journals that can be used to meet the external research requirements.

Please do not hesitate to propose the use of an article from another journal, this list is simply a reminder or starting point. Journals that are more specific to a particular content or policy area will typically also be relevant or appropriate, given the nature of a particular project or client organization. It is important, however, to pay attention to the quality of a journal, as in the internet era many online for-profit "journals" have appeared which do not hew to accepted standards of expertise, peer-review, and scholarship. The course instructor can help you vet potential sources.

The department's MPA Communications Resources portal also may help you in this process - see http://bit.ly/mpacommunication.

- Public Budgeting & Finance (PB&F)
- Public Administration Review (PAR)
- Administration & Society
- Administrative Science Quarterly
- Administrative Theory & Praxis (ATP)
- Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory (JPART)
- Public Administration Quarterly (PAQ)
- International Journal of Public Administration
- American Review of Public Administration (ARPA)
- Journal of Policy Analysis and Management (JPAM)
- Canadian Public Administration
- State and Local Government Review
- Public Administration (UK)
- Public Integrity
- Public Personnel Management
- Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs
- Public Finance Review
- American Journal of Political Science
- Journal of Politics
- Policy Studies Journal
- International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations
- Law and Society Review
- Public Administration and Development

APPENDIX 2 – RECOMMENDED/OPTIONAL BOOKS

These books, along with many other texts, could be useful resources for students in the Capstone Project course. The instructor may suggest books or articles to you based on the nature of your project.

- Hart, C. (1998). *Doing a literature review: Releasing the social science research imagination.* SAGE Publications.
- McNabb, D. (2002). *Research methods in public administration and nonprofit management: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Routledge.
- O'Leary, Z. (2017). *The essential guide to doing your research project* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications
- Wholey, J. S., Hatry, H. P., & Newcomer, K. E. (1994). *Handbook of practical program evaluation*. Jossey-Bass.

- Also a dictionary, a thesaurus, a current APA format guide online (such as Purdue OWL) and a writer's a guide/college-level English composition text.

ASSIGNMENT 1A – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

PADM 6700 Capstone Project

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) attests that I understand the content contained within the syllabus (PADM 6700).

Please note, if for any reason you do not agree with the information and requirements discussed within this document and are unable or unwilling to sign the Memorandum of Understanding, you should consult the course instructor immediately.

Successful completion of the Capstone project is required to graduate with the MPA degree. Incompletes are only an option for a student who has already been keeping up with all deadlines in the course until the last week or two, and has an emergency that prevents completion in a timely fashion – an incomplete is not a solution for a student who has not begun their project or met expectations satisfactorily during the semester till that point. Students in that situation who do not successfully complete a passing (C or better) project on schedule during the semester will receive a failing grade and have to retake the course to replace that grade. Students who do not successfully complete the project on time and with a course grade of C or above (along with meeting all other curricular, program, Graduate School, and University requirements) cannot graduate, so **not finishing your project on schedule WILL PREVENT YOU FROM GRADUATING if you are taking the Capstone in your final semester of coursework**. You may **not** walk in Commencement exercises if you have not successfully completed your Capstone project on time, even if all other requirements have been met.

Student Signature

_____   _____

NAME   DATE

# ASSIGNMENT 1B – COMPLETION OF CITI HUMAN SUBJECTS TRAINING

You need to complete one CITI "course" called "Basic Human Subjects Research: Social & Behavioral Stage 1" (has 15 short modules), obtain the certificate of completion, and upload it to the appropriate dropbox in eLearn. **The only way to locate this course and take it is to first REGISTER with CITI, affiliate with Tennessee State University inside their system, and then answer a few questions**.

Here is a link to step-by-step instructions on how to do this. These instructions worked as of **Summer 2024**; if you have problems after attempting to follow these instructions, take a screenshot of the trouble point and contact your instructor promptly as something may have changed:

https://scribehow.com/shared/Register_for_CITI_Program_with_Tennessee_State_University__XtGKkU9dTbyDhkKQb1DvBA

The CITI training site itself is located at http://www.citiprogram.org/.

This is what it should look like when you are about to start the correct course:
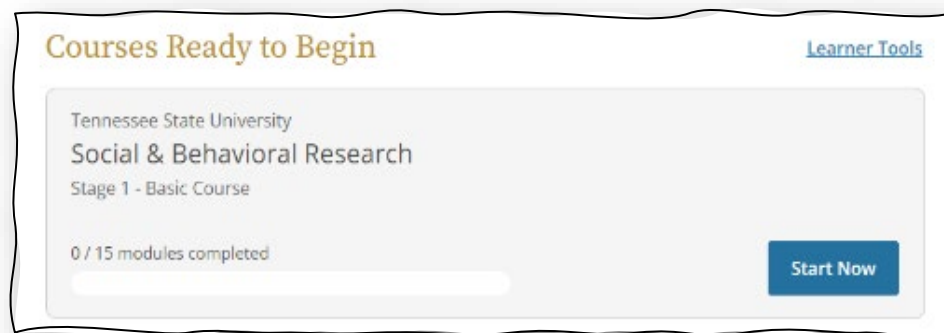
Completion of this module will result in your receiving a CITI certificate, which must be uploaded to the appropriate dropbox in eLearn by the deadline specified by your instructor. If you already hold a valid CITI certificate for Social & Behavioral Research – Basic – Social & Behavioral Research (via a different class, or because of your job) you may upload that to the dropbox to meet the requirement. Biomedical human subjects training will not count though. Ask your instructor if you have questions.

Your certificate will include the information shown below along with other items and a live link for verification:

Upload your certificate to the dropbox to complete this assignment.

ASSIGNMENT 2 – PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET

Student Name:

Email:

Date:

Project Title/Topic:

Choose TWO to THREE MPA Program Competency Student Learning Outcomes to be emphasized. Your project will be evaluated using these as well as PC SLOs 5.1, 5.2, and 3.1 which are relevant to all Capstone projects. The rubric criteria associated with each possible SLO choice are included in this Master Rubric.

1.
2.
3.

List TWO to THREE relevant MPA Courses on which you intend to rely in the project (may be core courses and/or electives):

1.
2.
3.

Brief Description of Project:

Description of the organization (if management/administration-oriented project)

OR

Rationale for the Importance of the Policy area (if policy-oriented project):

If you are proposing an organization-focused project, explain your relationship to the organization in question and how it is that you will have access to the information you would need to do the project (which cannot be human-subjects based)

A word of advice: Do not go into this project believing you already have the answers and then select sources to support the recommendations you already want to make. The approach we are following in this project is that research and analysis come first, not solutions. Keep an open mind to learn from what you find, -- and seek out *disconfirming* as well as *confirming* evidence to ensure you are not letting the cart in front of the horse, so to speak! This practice is particularly important when we get to choose the topic of study – because we often choose it based on our own preconceived ideas about it….

MPA Course Competency Mapping

Black blocks indicate the competency is a major emphasis in the course, tied to at least one major graded course element. That course element may be used as an artifact for student learning assessment on that competency/associated SLO at the program level.

Gray blocks indicate the competency is relevant to the course as taught, but is not a major emphasis of a graded course element.

PP = graduate certificate in Public Policy; NPMN = graduate certificate in Nonprofit Mgmt.; PAEL = graduate certificate in PA Executive Leadership; LGM = graduate certificate Local Government Management; HCAP = graduate certificate in Healthcare Admin & Planning

* Capstone competency SLOs other than 5.1 and 5.2 are specific to the type of project involved.

Program-level competencies (PCs) & Student learning outcomes (SLOs)

MPA CORE COURSES: SEMINAR PA 6210 · ORG THY 6310 · POLITICS ADMIN 6490 · PUB FIN BUDGET 6230 · PERSONNEL 6240 · PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS 6410 · RESEARCH METHODS 6130 · STATS 6110 · CAPSTONE* 6700

MPA ELECTIVE COURSES: DECISION TOOLS (pp) 6450 · CONTEMP. TOPICS POLICY (pp) 6430 · ETHICS & VALUES (pp, NPMN) 6390 · BUDGET'G AS A MGMT. TOOL (PAEL) 6260 · CONFLICT MGMT & RESOL. (PAEL, LGM) 6420 · SEMINAR IN ADMIN LDRSHIP (PAEL) 6270 · PROJECT MGMT & IMPLEM. (PAEL) 6400 · FIN. MGMT, NP, & HEALTH. (NPMN, HCAP) 6190 · INTRO TO NPs (NPMN) 6950 · RESOURCE DEV. FOR NPs (NPMN) 6960 · HEALTH ORG & DELIVERY SYS (HCAP) 6515 · EPIDEMIOLOGY (HCAP) 6550 · SEMINAR IN INTERGOV. ADMIN. (LGM) 6290 · SEMINAR IN URBAN ADMIN. (LGM) 6440

PC 1 — Each MPA graduate will be competent to lead and manage in the public interest
- SLO 1.1 — Analyze organizational behavior to improve systems and manage performance
- SLO 1.2 — Apply theories that can inform leadership and management in organizations
- SLO 1.3 — Understand intergovernmental and intersectoral relationships, which characterize modern public administration

PC 2 — Each MPA graduate will be competent to participate in, and contribute to, the policy process
- SLO 2.1 — Recognize and articulate public economics rationales for policy choices
- SLO 2.2 — Understand institutional, legal, and political dynamics of the policy process

PC 3 — Each MPA graduate will be competent to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make evidence-informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment
- SLO 3.1 — Identify and apply appropriate decision tools to support evidence-informed management, evaluation and policy choices
- SLO 3.2 — Employ and interpret data analytics and statistics appropriately
- SLO 3.3 — Apply systematic research processes to novel problems and produce research in written format

PC 4 — Each MPA graduate will be competent to articulate, apply, and advance a public service perspective
- SLO 4.1 — Assess practical situations in public administration and take positions founded in public service values
- SLO 4.2 — Appreciate the foundations and context of the field of public administration

PC 5 — Each MPA graduate will be competent to communicate and interact productively and in culturally responsive ways with a diverse and changing workforce and society at large
- SLO 5.1 — Clearly and accurately express problems, concepts, analysis, and recommendations in written or oral communications
- SLO 5.2 — Prepare written and oral communications in appropriate voice, medium, and depth for a variety of audiences and stakeholders
- SLO 5.3 — Identify and explain issues of cultural diversity given the changing demographics of society

ASSIGNMENT 3 – LIST OF PROPOSED REFERENCES AND THEIR RELEVANCE

Please use this form to create your proposed references list (starts on next page); you should leave the instructions in.

From the instructions for the final paper: "ALL papers will include a literature review section and references and should follow APA format for citation and bibliography. All papers must include at least 15 references which are also cited in the paper, of which AT LEAST 7 must be relevant peer-reviewed journal articles, and others may include course textbooks, organization documents, and other legitimate, relevant sources based on the project. **IMPORTANT**: Also include with your bibliographic entry a link to information about *each published source* online to allow the instructor to verify its existence."

Objective: This proposed reference list is not meant to be final — you are likely to add to it as you continue to work on your project, and you may also find that some of the items you thought would be useful are not (so they must drop off before the final paper). But ultimately the reference list of your project paper must meet the description above. This proposed reference list is also an opportunity to show your Capstone instructor how you are thinking about sources for your project, and to get feedback on these choices as well as new ideas, and to practice APA format so you make sure you know it before you prepare your final paper.

Tips: For help on understanding what a peer-reviewed journal article is and how to locate them (NOT just by Googling — but Google Scholar is valuable, for example!), and how to evaluate sources of various types for quality, you are expected to use the resources available at http://www.bit.ly/mpacommunication. In the final paper you won't have to separate out the source types as they are here in this worksheet but put them all in alphabetical order. All sources that are ultimately used must be cited in your final project paper text and all cited sources must be included in the reference list at the end of the final project paper. Use Purdue OWL to assist you in determining the proper format and information to include in the reference list for any kind of source you use. URL addresses by themselves are not sufficient bibliographic entries for any kind of source.

➔ For each proposed published source, in addition to the bibliographic entry as it would appear in your reference list, ALSO include a link to evidence that the source exists (ex. DOI for journal articles, or link to the library record for the source, or link to the report at a government agency, etc.). For ALL sources you list, also include one sentence explaining how you currently think this source relates to your project. This doesn't mean you had to have already read the whole thing (YET <smile>), but your instructor wants to see your thought process about choosing sources.

Example (hypothetical): Includes APA 7 format bibliographic entry, a link to evidence the article is real, and a sentence about why the article should help with the project.

Kasdin, S. (2010). Reinventing Reforms: How to Improve Program Management Using Performance Measures. Really. *Public Budgeting & Finance*, *30*(3), 51-78. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5850.2010.00962.x

This article will be relevant to my capstone project because I am proposing a set of performance measures to evaluate success of the new program being designed, and Kasdin (2010) focuses on better selection of performance measures in our functional area.

LIST OF PROPOSED REFERENCES AND THEIR RELEVANCE

Student Name:

Email:

Date:

i. PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES RELEVANT TO THE CAPSTONE PROJECT:

List a full citation for each, in APA format, and include at least 7 articles here (in alphabetical order, as they would appear in a bibliography). **IMPORTANT**: Also include with your bibliographic entry a link to information about *each published source* online to allow the instructor to verify its existence. Also, with each citation include one sentence about how you think this relates to your project (see example on previous page).

ii. OTHER TYPES OF LEGITIMATE SOURCES YOU PLAN TO USE:

These may include books (please don't discount this source of information!), textbooks, policy reports from appropriate, legitimate sources; newspaper articles from appropriate newspapers of record (should not be a frequent source, but may be helpful for sources of anecdotal information that illustrates more substantial evidence you cite from journal articles or books); government documents or reports; statutes; policy documents; specific organizational documents that are appropriate and relevant to the project; etc.

List your sources below with complete APA bibliographic entries appropriate to the type of source. **IMPORTANT**: Also include with your bibliographic entry a link to information about *each published source* online to allow the instructor to verify its existence. Finally, with each citation include one sentence about how you think this relates to your project, as in section (i).

In addition to the peer-reviewed articles you listed in (i) above, these should add up to at least 15 total proposed references. If you included more than 7 appropriate articles above, you may have less than 8 items here as long as the total is at least 15.

ASSIGNMENT 4a – PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT (2-PAGE)

Student Name:

Email:

Date:

Please use this document to create your 2-page project progress report; you should leave all the instructions and section instructions in.

This report is due to the instructor BEFORE the Milestone Meeting (see syllabus for due date). Your required PowerPoint presentation at the Milestone Meeting to your colleagues should be based around this structure as well, so this assignment is helping you to prepare — please see syllabus for the date and time of the Milestone Meeting and the instructions for the milestone presentation which follow.

YOUR TOTAL MAY NOT BE MORE THAN 2 PAGES

1. **Project Proposed Title**:

2. **Describe the *problem*** (organizational, policy, management, etc.) which is motivating your project. Draft this problem statement formally as if it were going straight into your paper (1 paragraph).

3. **List the specific *theor(ies) and/or concepts* from the MPA** that you currently plan to draw upon to analyze or prepare a response to the problem for your project (bulleted list only).

4. **Describe in one sentence the key *approach(es)/tools/methods* you are using** for your project (a bullet list of possible approaches was included in the syllabus under "Nature of Project", yours may be one or more of these or something else based upon your feedback from instructor and project info sheet).

5. **List *actions taken* so far to move forward** with your project (should by this point hopefully NOT just be the items that were already required to turn in; bulleted list only):

6. **Describe the *literature search strategy* you have used so far** (where have you searched for sources – databases, search engines, journals, etc.; what kinds of keywords have you used in your literature search) (1 paragraph):

7. **Summarize any *challenges* you have encountered** as you work on your project to date. How do you plan to resolve these and move forward? (1-2 paragraphs)

8. **SLO review** - review the SLOs that were approved for your project on the information sheet AND the specific evaluation criteria that go with those SLOs (see [master rubric spreadsheet](#)). Given the rubric criteria, now that you have worked further on your project, do you still feel that the original SLOs are a good fit? If not, please list suggested alternative(s) SLOs, along with any you want to retain. Explain briefly why the original(s) are no longer a good fit, but the proposed SLO(s) would be. Your total SLOs should still be either two or three. (up to two paragraphs)

ASSIGNMENT 4b – MILESTONE MEETING PRESENTATION (POWERPOINT)

Objective: To provide a 5- to 7-minute update on your capstone project, sharing the nature of your project and the progress you have made so far. This task achieves several purposes: continue to develop project, learn about others' projects, practice Zoom presenting in a low-stakes way in preparation for the final presentation, get feedback on presentation tools (slides) and skills (verbal delivery)

Participation Expectation: Everyone is expected to keep their camera on and participate actively in the entire meeting. Engage with your colleagues, give your full attention to each presentation, and feel free to ask questions to promote discussion and enhance understanding.

Presentation Format:
- Duration: 5-7 minutes
- Slides: 3 PowerPoint slides

Content Guidelines:

Title Slide:
- Project Title: Current title of your project (it may still evolve!). Keep it straightforward and factual. Avoid the temptation to make a title that is grandiose, cutesy, all-encompassing, or that overstates the nature of the work – don't overpromise with the title and underdeliver with the project.
- Name
- Capstone semester

Introduction Slide:
- Brief Project Overview: Provide a 1-2 sentence statement of the problem/issue your project is focused on (organizational or policy). Normally we don't put full sentences on slides, but this is an exception, because it is the crux of your project and it's worth refining till it is spot-on.
- Approach(es) to be taken: What are the specific approaches/tools/methods you will use, based on your MPA learning? (bullet points). You will verbally explain why these approaches/tools/methods the "right fit" for your project. Note: the approach/tools/methods is *not* the same thing as the SLO. Example of an approach/tool/method: flowchart; descriptive statistics; policy benchmarking; stakeholder analysis; etc.
- Concepts/theories to be drawn upon: Looking back at your MPA coursework and the classes you are specifically relying on for your project, what concepts or theories are you drawing on? (bullet points). Verbally explain why these are concepts are
- SLOs: Which SLOs did you select? How do you think they fit with your project?

Progress Update Slide:
- Actions Taken: Summarize the steps you have taken so far to move forward with your project
- Next steps
- Challenges and Solutions: Briefly describe any challenges you have encountered and how you plan to resolve them to continue progressing.

Presentation Tips:
- Practice: Rehearse your presentation to ensure it fits within the 5–7-minute timeframe and flows smoothly.
- Clarity: Use clear and concise language. Avoid overcrowding your slides with text.
- Visual Aids: Use visual elements such as images or diagrams if they make sense and can make your slides more engaging.

- Engagement: Make eye contact with your audience (look at the camera) and speak clearly and confidently.

Tips for Presenting in Zoom:
- Camera Position: Position your camera at eye level to make it feel like you're making eye contact with your audience. Make sure your full face is shown and that you are not too far back or too far forward
- Lighting: Ensure you are well-lit from the front, avoiding strong backlighting that can create shadows.
- Audio: Use a good quality microphone or headset to ensure clear audio. Test your audio before the meeting.
- Video: Check your video before the meeting, adjust background if needed
- Screen Sharing: When sharing your screen, only share the specific application (e.g., PowerPoint) instead of your entire desktop to avoid distractions. The exception to this is if you need to show the audience more than one application during the presentation, in which case you will need to share the screen and not just the PowerPoint application. If you are sharing a browser be mindful to only have the needed tabs open, and make sure all unneeded applications are closed.
- Practice Screen Sharing: Practice screen sharing in Zoom before the meeting to ensure you are familiar with the process and can switch smoothly between slides.
- Dual Monitors: If you are using dual monitors with PowerPoint:
  - Start your PowerPoint presentation in Presenter View.
  - In Zoom, go to "Share Screen" and select the window showing your slides.
  - If Zoom is sharing the Presenter view (with your notes etc.) and the actual Slideshow presentation is on the other monitor, go to the Display Settings button along the top of the Presenter View; click and choose "Swap Presenter View and Slideshow" and they will switch.
- Mute Notifications: Turn off or mute notifications on your computer to avoid interruptions during your presentation.
- Backup Plan: Have a backup of your slides easily accessible in case of technical issues. Having a print copy handy or open on your phone just in case you have to deliver it verbally without slides is always a good idea!

Submission:
- Upload your PowerPoint slides to the appropriate eLearn dropbox before or after the Milestone Meeting, but no later than 11:59 PM on the day of the meeting.

Everyone's capstone project will use a selection of **approaches/tools/methods** appropriate to the problem at hand, building on your learning from relevant coursework; will explicitly make connections with specific **concepts or theory** selected from relevant coursework; and will be evaluated using a **rubric** based on the **student learning outcomes** that you chose along with SLOs 5.1, 5.2, and 3.1. An approach/tool/method, a concept/theory, and a student learning outcome, and a rubric are not interchangeable terms. Below are some examples of each.

➔ **Approaches/tools/methods** include:
- o policy benchmarking;
- o policy history (could be organizational or legislative or regulatory, etc.);
- o descriptive statistics (ex. trend from census data);
- o process analysis w/flowchart;
- o Gantt chart;
- o stakeholder analysis (multiple tools possible); budget justification;
- o SOP development
- o …there are many more possibilities

➔ **Concepts or theory** examples include:
- o administrative discretion,
- o representative bureaucracy,
- o principles of taxation,
- o intergovernmental relations,
- o public service values (ex. efficiency, transparency, diversity, effectiveness…)
- o ….so many more! Look back through your textbooks, readings, and notes.

➔ **MPA student learning outcome (SLO)** example:
(these come directly from the **course competency matrix**)
- o SLO 1.1 - Analyze organizational behavior to improve systems and manage performance

➔ **Rubric criteria for evaluating performance on an MPA SLO** example:
(these come directly from the **master rubric**, which is easier to read!)

Program Competency 1: Each MPA graduate will be competent to lead and manage in the public interest						
		NOVICE (1)	ADVANCED BEGINNER (2)	COMPETENT (3)	PROFICIENT (4)	EXEMPLARY (5)
SLO 1.1 Analyze organizational behavior to improve systems and manage performance	1.1a Analysis of organization or component(s)	Demonstrates little to no ability to break down and describe an organization or component(s) (such as a process or organizational problem); lack of logic and/or clarity makes it very difficult to understand the relevant aspects of the organization.	Demonstrates attempt to break the organization or relevant component(s) into parts for explanation; logic or clarity issues prevent the audience's full understanding of the relevant aspects of the organization.	Explanation and break-down of the organization or its component(s) is sufficiently clear and logical that the aspects relevant to the task are understandable by the audience.	Contains clear and logical break-down of the organization or its component(s) beyond a summary, description or explanation. Audience fully understands relevant aspects of the organization or its component(s).	Contains extremely clear, logical, and easy-to-understand break-down of the organization or its component(s), far exceeding mere summary, description or explanation. Audience gains deep insight into relevant aspects of the organization or its component(s).
	1.1b Application to system improvement or performance management plan	Little to no attempt to explicitly connect organizational analysis logically and/or appropriately to system improvement or performance management (improvement or plan may be proposed or completed).	Some attempt made to explicitly, logically, and appropriately connect the organizational analysis to system improvement or performance management.	Logical, appropriate, and explicit connections are made between the organizational analysis and system improvement or performance management. Conceptual as well as practical linkages are established.	Skillful, logical and appropriate connections are made between the organizational analysis and system improvement or performance management. Detailed conceptual linkages are established. Audience understands clearly the proposed relevance of the analysis to the improvement or management plan.	In addition to skillful, logical, and appropriate connections between the organizational analysis and system improvement or performance management, extensive conceptual linkages are established. Audience is convinced of relevance of the analysis to the improvement or management plan.

ASSIGNMENT 5 – SKELETON OUTLINE AND TYING METHODS TO GOALS

Student Name:

Email:

Date:

Objective: To plan and receive feedback on the major section headings of the final paper (i.e. the high-level organization of the paper), in preparation for development of a detailed outline in the next assignment. Your instructor will provide feedback on your skeleton. Then in the detailed outline assignment, you will flesh out the revised skeleton with subheadings and greater detail.

SKELETON OUTLINE

At this stage, you do NOT have to add the actual details to be included in the numbered sections below – this skeleton outline is literally meant to be just a list of **section headings** (the "bones") envisioned for your final paper. Some sections everyone will have, such as conclusions and references – these are already provided for you, but in some cases you can choose the version that best fits (ex. "Organizational Context" vs. "Policy Background"). You then need to add in the section headings that will be specific to your project in the indicated gap. Don't include the SLOs you chose – those are not directly included in the Capstone final paper. You will address how your project and paper relate to the SLOs in the Program Competency Memo, which is the very last assignment in the course.

Before you start your own outline using the template below, please review the example of a skeleton outline which follows it.

➔ **YOUR OUTLINE STARTS HERE** – delete out the blue text after reading, and where a choice is indicated in the heading edit it to reflect your choice. An EXAMPLE follows, so read all the way through before you start yours.

Project title

I.   **Abstract** or **Executive Summary** (choose one)

II.   **Introduction**, including the 1-2 sentence **Problem Statement**

III.   **Organizational Context** or **Policy Background** [choose one]

IV.   **Conceptual and Theoretical Linkages**

V.   **Approach** or **Tools** or **Methods; AND Justification for Use** (choose whichever label(s) best fits. This section will include a description of the approaches/tools/methods you used as well as a justification of their appropriateness for the project – that is where you tie your method(s) to the goals of your task. This section should also include a description of how you identified relevant sources for your project, either policy or organizational.)

VI.   [**Add your own planned section headings starting here** – what makes sense will depend on the nature of your project. There's no perfect number of headings to add, that is up to you for what you think will make sense. Numbers of subsequent sections will change based on how many sections you add here, that is fine]

VII.   **Conclusions and Recommendations** (not every project should logically include Recommendations; if not, just use heading of Conclusions)

VIII.   **References**

IX.   **Appendix** (optional, but many papers should have this section: if your project involved generation of a product distinct from the paper itself, it should go in the Appendix; for example, a draft policy or procedure; a budget justification or cost analysis; etc. The Appendix is also where you can put items you want to include that would interrupt the flow of the paper.)

EXAMPLES OF SKELETON AND DETAILED OUTLINES

SKELETON OUTLINE EXAMPLE - Note the black headings were chosen based on the template — but the red headings were added by the author to reflect the unique content of their own project. Each paper will have some sections that are unique to the project. This hypothetical project is to develop a strategic planning process for a specific nonprofit organization. Note not every project would have recommendations, that depends on the nature of the work. T[he Appendix to this capstone paper would contain the draft strategic planning process document designed by the student to guide the organization through the strategic planning process itself. Note that is not the same thing as the paper main text – it is the "product" of the project, while the paper describes the need for, development of, and connection of the product to existing literature such as textbooks and articles. Not all capstones will have a separate "product" like this, but if they do, it goes in the Appendix. It is not a replacement for the paper itself.

Project Title: Development of a Strategic Planning Process for XYZ Nonprofit

I.   Executive Summary
II.   Introduction
III.   Organizational Context
IV.   Conceptual Linkages
V.   Method and Tools, plus Justification for Their Use
VI.   Development of Strategic Planning Framework
VII.   Implementation Guidelines for the Strategic Planning Process
VIII.   Conclusions and Recommendations

References

Appendix - Draft Strategic Planning Process Document

DETAILED OUTLINE EXAMPLE – Below is an example detailed outline with subheadings under each section, building on the Skeleton outline. Caveat: this is just a sample I made up; it isn't built on specific research. Do NOT follow this religiously – it is for a specific project – but you need to get to at least this level of detail for the Detailed Outline assignment. Please don't get bogged down in the formatting of the outline (number/letter aspect), but you should get to at least a second level of subheadings and probably a third level in at least some sections in a detailed outline (here the third level is bullets, that's not "correct" formatting but it was easiest). Organizing a paper with a hierarchical outline helps you identify gaps and work on the overall structure before you launch into writing paragraphs and potentially get off track!

Project Title: Development of a Strategic Planning Process for XYZ Nonprofit

I. **Executive Summary**
        A. Problem statement (1-2 sentences)
        B. Overview of the strategic planning process development
        C. Key components of the developed process
        D. Anticipated benefits for XYZ Nonprofit
        E. Summary of conclusions and recommendations

II. **Introduction**
        A. Problem statement (1-2 sentences)
        B. Significance of developing a strategic planning process (why does the problem matter?)
        C. Project objectives
        D. Scope and limitations of the project

III. **Organizational Context**
        A. Present the mission and vision of XYZ Nonprofit
        B. Brief overview of organizational structure and/or other key facts about the organization (with focus on what is relevant to the current project)
        C. Current challenges faced by the organization
        D. Importance of strategic planning for organizational effectiveness
        E. Previous planning efforts (if any)
        F. Need for a formal strategic planning process

IV. **Conceptual and Theoretical Linkages**
      A. Strategic management theory and relevance to nonprofits
      B. Review of selected major strategic planning models or tools in nonprofit sector (ex. SWOT analysis, Balanced Scorecard…) which connect ideas from literature with the project
      C. Relevance of planning frameworks to XYZ Nonprofit's needs

V. **Methods, Tools, and Justification for Use**
      A. Research methodology for developing the planning process
- Literature review
- Case studies of similar organizations

      B. Tools used to inform the process design
- SWOT analysis
- Environmental scanning
- Stakeholder engagement methods

      C. Justification for chosen tools and methods given the goals of the project ← **this is important to include!**

VI. **Development of Strategic Planning Framework**
      A. Core components of the strategic planning process
- Goal setting
- Performance metrics
- Stakeholder involvement

      B. Customization for XYZ Nonprofit
- Alignment with mission and vision
- Flexibility for future organizational growth

VII. **Implementation Guidelines for the Strategic Planning Process**
      A. Recommended steps for implementing the strategic plan
- Engaging stakeholders
- Defining roles and responsibilities
- Setting timelines and milestones

      B. Suggested timeline for the planning process
- Short-term implementation phases
- Long-term review cycles

      C. Resource allocation and budgeting for implementation
      D. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms
- Establishing success indicators
- Feedback and adjustment protocols

VIII. **Conclusions and Recommendations**
      A. Summary of the developed strategic planning process
      B. Anticipated organizational benefits
      C. Recommendations for refining the planning process
- Periodic reviews
- Stakeholder feedback loops
- Adaptability to future changes in organizational needs

      D. Long-term outlook for sustaining the strategic plan

IX. **References** (APA 7 format)

X. **Appendix**
      A. Draft Strategic Planning Process Document
- Step-by-step guide to the process
- Example templates (e.g., SWOT analysis, goal-setting forms)

      B. Supplementary materials
- Stakeholder interview questions

ASSIGNMENT 6 – DETAILED OUTLINE OF FINAL PAPER

Student Name:

Email:

Date:

Objective: To structure the different sections of your Capstone paper in an organic, logical, and coherent manner.

Instructions: Start by copying over the skeleton outline you submitted in the previous assignment below. Adjust to incorporate any feedback provided by the instructor. Then flesh out your skeleton's "bones" by adding the subsections or key points you plan to include on each section. Keep in mind that this is still an outline; do not write full paragraphs. Instead, use a phrase or a single sentence for each subheading or key point included under a given section. In each section you should get to at least one level of subheading and in at least some sections you should get to the third level of subheadings (that's why it's detailed and not just a top-level, skeleton outline like you already prepared).

ASSIGNMENT 7– FINAL PRESENTATION SLIDES AND DELIVERY

Objective: To present key elements of your project to the instructor and course peers in a polished, professional Zoom presentation (12-15 minutes, unless otherwise specified by your instructor – length may be adjusted due to class size).

INSTRUCTIONS:

- An oral presentation of your project is required, delivered virtually through Zoom. All presentations will occur on the date(s) and time designated by the instructor.

- Students should dress professionally and treat the presentation as though it is occurring in a workplace. Practice your presentation for smooth, on time, and professional delivery. Your grade will reflect your presentation delivery as well as content. See the **rubric criteria for MPA SLOs 5.1 and 2 (oral versions).**

- Presentations must be 12-15 minutes in length unless you are otherwise instructed (instructors may need to adjust timeslots due to class size).

- Format slides carefully; a white, uncomplicated background often helps legibility. Spell-check, remembering that text in all caps is often not checked automatically.

- You may choose to create a handout to go with your presentation (don't bother doing this if it just the slides themselves – if you use a handout, it should be created specifically; for instance if there is something that you want your audience to refer to during multiple slides. *Slides and any handouts must be uploaded to the dropbox for the instructor's records as well – see submission details at the end of these instructions.*

- Presentations will be recorded. The purpose of the recording is so that the presentations can be used in as artifacts in *program* evaluation efforts in the future by the program faculty – your presentation will NOT be publicly posted.

- At the end of the presentations, the instructor will provide feedback. You are highly encouraged to take notes on these comments and take them into account as you finalize your Capstone paper.

Content: A 12-15 minute presentation normally should involve no more than 6-7 slides (though you still need to practice for time, as no one makes their slides with exactly the same amount of content!) Some slides may take longer to explain (a graph or flowchart, for example) while others are quick (title slide). Remember you are telling a story about your project, hitting the highlights – there is not time for you to tell the audience everything from your paper, or even all the important things. Consider the following headers, but you have flexibility given the nature of your project; your skeleton outline may be helpful (the main headings of your paper). Do not include a references slide, it is understood that your author, year citations go with the references listed in your paper. It is good to include key citations on slides where appropriate but only in (name, year) format – not the full reference entry. You don't have space to include every citation. Remember the text on the slides can't be whole paragraphs; only put enough text on slides to jog your memory and help your audience follow the talk.

- **Title**
- **Problem statement and Context** (org or policy-related, based on the type of project you did)
- **Theory and concept linkages** (this slide should include some (author, year) citations)
- **Approach(es) or Tools or Methods** (include why they were appropriate)
- **Findings or Results or Product(s)** (1-3 slides; exactly what makes sense here depends on your project; if a visual display – graph, table, figure, etc. – can be included, that is excellent)
- **Conclusions and (if applicable) Recommendations** (include challenges encountered and limitations to the project as well as its value for practice)

Presentation Tips (general):
- Practice: Rehearse your presentation to ensure it fits within the allotted timeframe and flows smoothly.
- Clarity: Use clear and concise language. Avoid overcrowding your slides with text.
- Background: Use a background format that is not overly distracting and provides high contrast with text to facilitate readability (could be light background with dark text or the reverse).
- Visual Aids: Use visual elements such as images or diagrams if they make sense and can make your slides more engaging. Avoid decoration for the sake of decoration.
- Engagement: Make eye contact with your audience periodically (look at the camera) and speak clearly and confidently. Do not read your slides to the audience.

Tips for Presenting in Zoom:
- Camera Position: Position your camera at eye level to make it feel like you're making eye contact with your audience. Make sure your full face is shown and that you are not too far back or too far forward
- Lighting: Ensure you are well-lit from the front, avoiding strong backlighting that can create shadows.
- Audio: Use a good quality microphone or headset to ensure clear audio. Test your audio before the meeting.
- Video: Check your video before the meeting, adjust background if needed
- Screen Sharing: When sharing your screen, only share the specific application (e.g., PowerPoint) instead of your entire desktop to avoid distractions. The exception to this is if you need to show the audience more than one application during the presentation, in which case you will need to share the screen and not just the PowerPoint application. If you are sharing a browser window, be mindful to only have the needed tabs open, and make sure all unneeded applications are closed.
- Practice Screen Sharing: Practice screen sharing in Zoom before the meeting to ensure you are familiar with the process and can switch smoothly between slides.
- Dual Monitors: If you are using dual monitors with PowerPoint:
  - Start your PowerPoint presentation in Presenter View.
  - In Zoom, go to "Share Screen" and select the window showing your slides.
  - If Zoom is sharing the Presenter view (with your notes etc.) and the actual Slideshow presentation is on the other monitor, go to the Display Settings button along the top of the Presenter View; click and choose "Swap Presenter View and Slideshow" and they will switch.
- Mute Notifications: Turn off or mute notifications on your computer to avoid interruptions during your presentation.
- Backup Plan: Have a backup of your slides easily accessible in case of technical issues. Having a print copy handy or open on your phone just in case you have to deliver it verbally without slides is always a good idea!

Submission:
- Upload your PowerPoint slides and, if applicable, handout file to the appropriate eLearn dropbox by 11:59 pm on the night of your presentation (unless your instructor has specified a different deadline).

ASSIGNMENT 8 – FINAL PAPER

OBJECTIVE: *To produce a final document which communicates effectively and efficiently the work you have done on the project this summer.*

INSTRUCTIONS:

- EVALUATION: It will be evaluated based on SLOs 5.1, 5.2, 3.1, and the SLOs you selected with feedback from the instructor – review the relevant rows of the **master rubric**.

- QUALITY: The quality, depth, and sophistication of the final Capstone Project Paper should be higher than that of a traditional course paper. It must represent the best of your work, a concrete demonstration of the value of the degree in which both you and the faculty have invested. In comparison to a typical course paper, many more hours will be spent on this project and deliverables. Students are expected to demonstrate writing proficiency and should seek assistance from the TSU Writing Center if needed (or requested by the Course Instructor).

- AUDIENCE: The audience for the final paper should be conceptualized as professional colleagues in a public or nonprofit setting, with an interest in the project but without pre-existing knowledge of the organizational or policy context.

- ORGANIZATION: Depending on the project, there are different appropriate ways to organize your paper. The Skeleton Outline and Detailed Outline assignments helped you develop your organization plan with instructor feedback. You can still adjust or refine a bit more if needed as you finalize the paper. ALL papers must be organized clearly, with headings and subheadings throughout.

- REFERENCE AND CITATION FORMAT: ALL papers will include a reference section, and include source citations throughout the body of the paper. You should follow APA format for in-text citations and bibliographic entries in the references section. Every source cited must be included in the references section and vice versa. Include a link with each reference entry to a printed or online source so that the reader can easily verify that the listed reference exists (do this even if it is not an APA requirement). You should include citations to all academic sources, as well as policy or organizational sources you used in your Capstone. This includes citations to data sources, reports, handbooks, etc.

- REQUIRED MINIMUM NUMBER OF REFERENCES: All papers must include at least 15 references which are also cited in the paper, of which AT LEAST 7 must be *relevant* journal articles, and others may include course textbooks, organization documents, and other legitimate, relevant sources based on the project. Depending on your project you will use academic sources from Public Administration and related disciplines. Review the list provided on page 18 of the syllabus; make sure to include articles from some of these journals.

- ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, PLAGIARISM, GENERATIVE AI USE: Plagiarism of any kind, including patchwork paraphrasing (which is a problem even if the source is cited) must be avoided. All written work in the course will be put through Turnitin for detection of issues in this area, and problems can result in a lowered grade or more severe consequences depending on extent. Use of generative AI in the editing or revision of the final paper must adhere to the expressed intent of the instructor – if you are not sure what is permitted, ASK do not assume. In the absence of explicit guidance from ***your instructor*** that AI use is permitted for this assignment, its use is prohibited and may result in a lower grade or other penalties.

- NOTE RE: READERSHIP: Your paper will NOT be posted publicly, but other department faculty (beyond your instructor) may read it in future for purposes of program-level assessment.

- FORMAT:
  - Final projects should be 8 to 10 <u>SINGLE-spaced</u> pages, or at discretion of instructor, 16 to 20 DOUBLE-spaced pages (*excluding* references and any appendices)
  - All pages should be numbered
  - Proper APA in-text citation and references style must be used
  - Check spelling and grammar (at a minimum, use your word processing program's grammar and spelling check functions); use of Grammarly's free service is permitted
  - Proofread for awkward sentence styles and construction
  - Use 1-inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right)
  - Use a standard 12-point font (Times New Roman, Cambria, Calibri, Aptos, or Arial)
  - Maintain a formal and professional tone throughout, in keeping with a workplace-ready project prepared by a masters-degree graduate
  - Left-justify text (headings may be centered or left-justified)
  - All final written projects should be converted into a **single PDF file** and uploaded to the appropriate dropbox

ASSIGNMENT 9 – PROJECT COMPETENCIES MEMO

OBJECTIVE: To reflect on how your work on the project aligns with the MPA student learning outcomes (SLOs) you selected as well as the SLOs which apply to all capstone projects.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Go back to your *instructor-approved* version of the Project Information Sheet (that version may not have been the first version you submitted). On the sheet, take note of the two or three MPA program Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) which were selected for your specific project in collaboration with your instructor. [If there were any subsequent changes to the specific SLOs for your project, for example during the Progress Report stage, be sure to use the last set of approved SLOs].

In this reflection, you will address those two or three *specific* outcomes along with SLOs 5.1, 5.2, and 3.1 which are evaluated for every capstone project. *Visit* https://www.tnstate.edu/cpsua/documents/programs/competencies_by_course_mpa.pdf *for PDF version of the MPA Course Competency map if needed to check wording of SLOs.*

Use the outline below to prepare your reflective competency memo — you should simply type your reflection paragraphs into the outline, along with the specific SLOs chosen for your project where indicated. This is **not** another research assignment; it is an opportunity to *reflect* on the process of the capstone and how it has affected your connection to the skills and knowledge you developed through your coursework.

- SLO 5.1 - Clearly and accurately express problems, concepts, analysis, and recommendations in written or oral communications.
- SLO 5.2 - Prepare written and oral communications in appropriate voice, medium, and depth for a variety of audiences and stakeholders.
- SLO 3.1 - Identify and apply appropriate decision tools to support evidence-informed management, evaluation, and policy choices.

➔ *Write one paragraph here addressing how the capstone course/project allowed you to deepen and demonstrate your MPA learning regarding SLOs 5.1, 5.2, and 3.1 above. Address both the written and oral presentation aspects. Please review the detailed rubric criteria for these SLOs again, as this can help you understand how the SLO is operationalized – you can download a PDF copy of the rubric criteria at* https://www.tnstate.edu/cpsua/documents/programs/MASTER%20MPA%20SLA%20RUBRICS_current.pdf.

- **Your *first* specific Project SLO** [*include the number, and then copy the text of the SLO in this box, following pattern above for the 5.1, 5.2, 3.1 section*]

➔ *Write one paragraph here addressing how the capstone course/project allowed you to deepen and demonstrate your MPA learning regarding the specific project SLO you entered above. Include some specific examples for this reflection, not just vague generalizations. Please review the detailed rubric criteria for these SLOs again, as this can help you understand how the SLO is operationalized – you can download a PDF copy of the rubric criteria at* https://www.tnstate.edu/cpsua/documents/programs/MASTER%20MPA%20SLA%20RUBRICS_current.pdf.

- **Your *second* specific Project SLO** [*include the number, and then copy the text of the SLO in this box, following pattern above for the 5.1, 5.2, and 3.1 section*]

➔ ***Write one paragraph*** *here addressing how the capstone course/project allowed you to deepen and demonstrate your MPA learning regarding the specific project SLO you entered above. Include some specific examples for this reflection, not just vague generalizations. Please review the detailed rubric criteria for these SLOs again, as this can help you understand how the SLO is operationalized – you can download a PDF copy of the rubric criteria at* [*https://www.tnstate.edu/cpsua/documents/programs/MASTER%20MPA%20SLA%20RUBRICS_current.pdf*](https://www.tnstate.edu/cpsua/documents/programs/MASTER%20MPA%20SLA%20RUBRICS_current.pdf)*.*

➔ **IF APPLICABLE - Your *third* specific Project SLO** [*include the number, and then copy the text of the SLO in this box, following pattern above for the 5.1, 5.2, and 3.1 section. Not everyone will have a third, in which case you can just delete this section.*]

➔ *Write one paragraph here addressing how the capstone course/project allowed you to deepen and demonstrate your MPA learning regarding the specific project SLO you entered above. Include some specific examples for this reflection, not just vague generalizations. Please review the detailed rubric criteria for these SLOs again, as this can help you understand how the SLO is operationalized – you can download a PDF copy of the rubric criteria at* [*https://www.tnstate.edu/cpsua/documents/programs/MASTER%20MPA%20SLA%20RUBRICS_current.pdf*](https://www.tnstate.edu/cpsua/documents/programs/MASTER%20MPA%20SLA%20RUBRICS_current.pdf)*.*