

**Capstone**  
**Course Number 26:834:563**  
Course Credit (3)  
Professor Dennis E. Gale  
Spring 2003

Office: Hill Hall 808

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Office Hours: Tue 4-5 pm; Wed. 3-4 pm

Appointments preferred

Class Meetings: Wednesdays, 5:30-8:10 pm

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Classroom: Smith Hall 103

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All students in the M. P. A. program are required to successfully complete the Capstone (Policy Paper) course OR the Comprehensive Examination. The only exceptions are those students who enrolled in the program prior to the year 2000, although they are strongly encouraged by the Department to complete the Capstone or Policy Paper option.

**Course Description and Objective:** Unlike most other courses you have completed, this course requires the student, not the instructor, to take the primary initiative. That is, you are expected to define your research topic, decide on an appropriate methodology and research strategy, carry out the research completely, analyze the results and write the Policy Paper in the required format. You are also expected to meet all deadlines throughout the semester. The class will meet nearly every week as a group. Individual appointments with me may also be necessary from time to time. Students will be expected to present a progress report to the class on the status of their Policy Paper at each week's class meeting. Those who do not keep up with the schedule of responsibilities will be strongly urged to drop the course.

As Capstone instructor, my job is to be sure that you understand the various elements required of the Policy Paper and that you successfully satisfy all requirements. You will have both a Primary Faculty Advisor and a Second Reader who will work with you until you complete the course. The Primary Advisor will help you select a Second Reader. As course instructor, I may serve as a Primary Advisor or Second Reader for some students, although in some cases you may have another faculty member serve in one or the other of these capacities. The attached sheet, "Expectations of Faculty and Students....etc." explains the duties of students, faculty and staff in the Policy Paper process. Please read it carefully and be fully familiar with its contents.

**Required Texts:** There are no required texts for this course. You will probably have to invest in items needed to complete your review of the appropriate literature such as monographs, article reprints, and reports. You may need to invest in data files, etc., to carry out the original research section of the Policy Paper, if you cannot obtain them without cost. However, you will want to acquire a copy of the most current style manual you plan to adhere to in the writing of your Policy Paper (e.g. manual of the American Psychological Association or the Modern Language Assn.). In addition, you may want to acquire one or more of the items recommended in the handout under "Resources."

**Grading:** Your final grade will be determined by the Primary Faculty Advisor in consultation with the Second Reader. However, as Faculty Facilitator, I will share with them my observations on your performance throughout the semester: cooperation, class attendance, level of preparation, meeting deadlines, fulfillment of all Departmental requirements of the Capstone course, etc.

### Class Meeting Schedule

Date	Topic
Due	
Jan. 22	Introduction. Goals of Policy Paper. Timelines Student responsibilities. Roles of Faculty facilitator, Primary Faculty Advisor, Second Reader. Possible Policy Paper topics.
Jan 29 choices	Topic Selection Research one or more topic  Preliminary problem definition. Discuss your findings in class.
Feb. 5	Final selection of topic. Complete researching the feasibility of your topic- Discuss in class. Secure Primary Faculty Advisor and Second Reader.
Feb 12	Literature Review and Bibliography Present to class your preliminary review of the literature on your topic. Refine problem statement.
Feb. 19	Examination of data and information Discuss in class your primary sources. Feasibility of obtaining all source materials. Provide examples necessary sources.
Feb. 26	Final problem statement, research questions. Discuss each of these issues in identification of data sources, selection of class.

AT THIS POINT YOU WILL BE WORKING WITH YOUR PRIMARY FACULTY ADVISOR AND SECOND READER TO COMPLETE YOUR POLICY PAPER AND ORAL DEFENSE WITH A TARGET DATE OF NO LATER THAN MAY 14. FOR THOSE STUDENTS FOR WHOM I AM THE PRIMARY FACULTY ADVISOR, WE WILL ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS. OTHER STUDENTS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND AND PARTICIPATE, AS APPROPRIATE, BUT SHOULD BE WORKING CLOSELY WITH THEIR PRIMARY FACULTY ADVISOR AND SECOND

READER. ALL STUDENTS IN THE COURSE WILL BE REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PRACTICE ORAL DEFENSE MEETINGS ON APRIL 23 AND 30.

March 5 Methodology chapter discussed. Draft 1: Literature Review due.

March 12 Lit. Review returned. Discussion. Draft 1: Methodology section due.

March 19 Spring Recess. No Class Meeting. Continue research and writing due.

March 26 No class meeting. Methodology. Draft 1: Results/Analysis section due.

Apr. 2 Midcourse corrections. Progress to Draft 1: Remaining 3 sections due date. Results/Analysis section returned

Apr. 9 No meeting. Remaining 3 sections returned. Bibliography and Appendices due.

Apr. 16 Individual meetings scheduled during Work on Draft 2: Entire Policy week of April 14-17, as needed. Paper. Bibliography and Appendices returned.

Apr. 23 Practice oral defense in class Draft 2 ( entire Policy Paper) due(including abstract).

Apr. 30 Practice oral defense in class Work on completion of Final Draft Policy Papers returned Policy Paper.

May 7 Oral Defenses scheduled. Final version of Policy Paper due in class.

May 14 Oral Defenses Scheduled

May 22 Commencement

### **Week 15 (5/5): Politics of Evaluation**

Issues of politics and ethics will have been discussed throughout the class, but this week will draw together the political and ethical issues involved in evaluation. Small groups will engage in role-playing the different perspectives in evaluating programs and policies.

**Reading:** Rossi and Freeman, Chapter 10, 12

#### **Supplemental readings:**

\* “The Self-evaluating Organization” by Aaron Wildavsky

“Evaluation for Decisions: Is Anybody There? Does Anybody Care?” By Carol Weiss

\* “Participatory Expertise: Toward the Democratization of Policy Science.” Fisher. 1992